



Education Committee

Oral evidence: [Supply of teachers](#), HC 538

Wednesday 9 December 2015

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Written evidence from witnesses:

- TeachVac ([SOT0003](#))
- National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers ([SOT0047](#))
- Universities Council for the Education of Teachers ([SOT0004](#))
- National Association of Head Teachers ([SOT0013](#))
- National Union of Teachers ([SOT0054](#))
- NASUWT ([SOT0052](#))
- National Governors' Association ([SOT0055](#))
- Department for Education ([SOT0046](#))

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Members present: Neil Carmichael (Chair), Lucy Allan, Ian Austin, Michelle Donelan, Suella Fernandes, Lucy Frazer, Kate Hollern, Ian Mearns, Caroline Nokes.

Questions 1 – 95

Witnesses: **Professor John Howson**, TeachVac, **Martin Thompson**, Executive Director, National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers, **Sam Freedman**, Executive Director of Programmes, Teach First, and **James Noble-Rogers**, Executive Director, Universities Council for the Education of Teachers, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: Good morning and welcome to this session of our inquiry. We are aiming to make sure that we can determine whether there is a crisis of recruitment and retention in teaching. We want to consider the impact of whatever we come up with in terms of what it is like in a school and basically the education system as a whole. We then want to understand the root causes of whatever crisis we think is under way and examine proposals that the

Government has already put out into the public domain or might be framing. In short, we want to know if there is a crisis, what impact it is having and what is going to be done about it if we say there is a crisis. We are going to be publishing this reasonably quickly with the aim of then moving on to a process of setting out what might be done in addition to what is happening already to improve the situation. My first question is to all of you. How bleak is the current picture in terms of supply of teachers?

Professor Howson: I think we are on a scale that is probably getting worse. You have to define it in two different areas. One is recruitment into training and the other is then recruitment into employment where the trainees coming off preparation programmes are joined by returners into the profession, those people moving around the profession and anybody else that people can find to fill any shortfall that those groups do not provide for. In some subjects we are now in the third year recruitment into training where the figure set by the teacher supply model, which one might regard as the Department's baseline for what is necessary to staff the school system, has not been met. There will be others who will be better able to tell you what that is now translating itself into in terms of recruitment. Between the evidence I submitted in written evidence form, where we had tracked 18,000 main-scale vacancies so far this year in secondary schools, and yesterday, we have added another 2,700 at a time of year that is normally pretty quiet for recruitment, I suspect one of the indications is that the schools are increasingly beginning to think about recruiting people much earlier in the cycle because if they can get them then there is a pool. If they leave it too long, as we can see in some of the subjects, there is not anybody left.

Q2 Chair: Thank you. Martin, just quick answers to this question because it is really yes or no; is it very serious or not serious?

Martin Thompson: It has been a challenge for probably a number of years, and for three years an increasing challenge, and certainly now I think it is a crisis in some areas. I think one of the crises that we might not be as aware of is the viability of ITT providers. If we start to lose them as a result of the way in which things are working at the moment, that will be very serious because once they have gone, they have gone.

James Noble-Rogers: I would agree with that entirely. It is very problematic at the moment, particularly in some secondary subjects with 82% of the secondary target met this year, only 82%. We would have problems anyway because of the demographics with pupil numbers going up and forecast to go up quite a lot, with people leaving the profession and also competition for graduates. That would be the case anyway, but I think the Government is potentially making it worse by destabilising the teacher supply base by making a lot of very well-established ITT providers, both SCITTs and universities, potentially unviable by fragmenting the teacher education supply base through the establishment of lots of very, very small ITT provision, which will be in it for short term, potentially just to meet their immediate recruitment needs and then pack up and go out of business. That will undermine the viability of very good quality programmes, most of which are, according to Ofsted, good or very good.

Q3 Chair: You would not agree that the Department will solve this problem by thinking just about returners and other routes to teaching?

James Noble-Rogers: No, you need someone to train the teachers and supply the new teachers. We do need new providers, the Government is right, but those new providers need to be focused in the blackspot areas that Sir Michael Wilshaw identified where there is a proven demand for more teacher education to take place. They are accrediting many new providers in areas where there is no demand, which not only has resource implications but undermines existing very good quality provision, both SCITT and HEI.

Professor Howson: Can I just say the Department is running a special programme in relation to returners and they may be able to tell you later on how successful that has been.

Chair: We will ask about that later, John. Thank you. Sam, do you have any thoughts?

Sam Freedman: Just from a Teach First perspective, recruitment has definitely got tougher over the last couple of years driven by a big improvement in the graduate jobs market more broadly. In terms of what teachers and schools are feeling on the ground, there has been a big increase in demand for Teach First teachers in the schools as well over the last couple of years. I would agree with the comments made about the geography. It is clear that there are some parts of the country that are more affected than others and there are parts of the country where we could place our teachers five times over if we had the supply to place them. There is very heavy demand.

Q4 Chair: Do any of you have any thoughts on future projections of a shortfall of teachers?

James Noble-Rogers: I think the NFER report is identifying particular problems in secondary subjects and secondary EBacc subjects. The NFER report I think is very balanced and tries very hard to be so and is less doom and gloom than some of the other reports, but it is quite clear that we are not training enough teachers and that secondary subjects and secondary EBacc subjects are an issue.

Professor Howson: My anxiety is not only the EBacc subjects but some of the subjects that are important to about 50% of the school population that does not go on to higher education immediately. Two that I will single out are business studies and design and technology. In design and technology, we are already over the last three years probably a cohort and a half of trainees short against the teacher supply model target. One of the problems is that unlike baked beans in shops, when they sell out they have gone, schools cannot say, "We do not have a teacher. You are going to go home". We have to find somebody to teach that group or move the curriculum around. That I think sometimes leads to this being looked at as an annual problem rather than the long-term consequence of failing to meet the target for three or four years. One consequence is that five or six years down the line we do not have enough people to be heads of department.

Martin Thompson: It is very important to recognise that this has not just happened in the last year. This has been growing over a number of years and we have failed to notice how all the little changes in each area are suddenly impacting together to bring about what the gentleman on my left always calls the perfect storm. I think that really is what it is. We have not noticed that the amount it is costing someone to become a teacher now is four times nine, £36,000 for the fees, plus whatever living costs they have. They are investing well in excess of £50,000 on becoming a teacher and when you go back 10 or 15 years it

was almost entirely funded by local authorities and the Government. That is going to make a big difference unless salaries reflect that kind of investment. Our teachers really come in wanting to make a difference but the other side of this is retention and making sure we do not lose those who do want to make the difference.

Q5 Chair: What would be your analysis of the vacancy situation at the moment? James, would you like to comment on that?

James Noble-Rogers: No, John is better placed to talk about the vacancies. Could I say quickly a word about primary because primary sometimes get overlooked because the primary recruitment target is generally fairly easily met? There are two issues on primary. First, this is anecdotal but most primary head teachers I speak to are struggling to recruit enough teachers and are doubtful about the teacher supply model suggestion that we are overtraining on primary teachers, if anything. The second one is primary maths specialists in primary schools, which there is a need for. The new recruitment methodology, which NCTL has introduced, which is basically first come, first served until the national target has been hit, basically means that ITT providers are recruiting as quickly as they can to primary generalist courses. Places for primary specialist maths courses are not separately identified. They tend to recruit later, but once the national target has been hit, recruitment ceases, including to primary specialist maths.

Chair: John, a comment on vacancies?

Professor Howson: Even the way that the Department measures vacancies, which is to look at the numbers in the school workforce census in November as highlighted by the chief inspector in his recent annual report, shows that numbers have been going up. If you look at, as we do with TeachVac, the number of advertisements that are placed by schools throughout the year, and again focusing just on main-scale secondary, it is quite clear that it is London and part of the home counties, and particularly those home counties to the north-east of London, that appear to be struggling the most in terms of recruiting teachers. Perhaps because it is the part of the country that has the largest number of teacher training places across a range of subjects in primary, the north-west appears to be so far the least troubled. I would not say that there are not problems there, but in the round it is the part of the country that is least challenged.

Chair: Thank you. Ian Austin, you are going to be talking a little bit on the subject of recruitment.

Q6 Ian Austin: Yes. I wanted to pick up on this point that Sam and Professor Howson both talked about. To what extent are problems geographical in terms of recruitment or are they about subjects or both? Are there any areas of the country where the system is producing an oversupply?

Professor Howson: It is both geographical and in terms of secondary subject related. Yes, we are producing, in my view, too many PE teachers across the country and it is a tragedy that if we put them through a course where they have acquired £9,000 worth of extra fees, we are not finding a way of using them. There is probably history in some parts of the country where there may have been too many of them, but more of them are being absorbed into things like humanities where schools are teaching humanities rather than history and geography separately.

At the other end of the scale, I would say there are shortages in the two subjects I mentioned, which are business studies and design and technology, and probably within design and technology particular aspects of that, but I think there has been a particular problem in English. There has been some discussion as to whether the last version of the teacher supply model, which has now been superseded, really got the numbers right for English.

Q7 Ian Austin: Just on design and technology, you have said there is a problem in design and technology, but why has this occurred do you think? What has been the cause of it?

Professor Howson: There may be a number of reasons. To give you the figures, in 2011-12 I think we recruited up to the TSM number of about 1,100 trainees. In the last couple of years we have been recruiting around about 450, so that is a significant shortfall. It is the sort of subject where I think we frequently attract people who have some industrial experience into the profession. Although if you are a 22 year-old coming off a three-year undergraduate course where you have just picked up £27,000 worth of fee debt, adding another £9,000 probably does not matter because you are never going to pay it back, if you are a 32 year-old who has been out in industry for 10 years and you have paid off your student debt that you acquired 10 years ago, as soon as you start work as a teacher you will be paying that £9,000 back. I think that in a subject like design and technology with no bursaries, that looks like a disincentive to me.

Q8 Ian Austin: On the geographical issues, Sam, what do you think is driving this? In what areas is it most difficult? Is it more difficult to recruit high quality teachers in areas where, as we saw last week from the Ofsted report, schools are performing less well, so in the Midlands and the north, for example?

Sam Freedman: It has always been harder to recruit in more isolated areas. I think one of the effects of School Direct has been to concentrate new people coming into the profession into schools that are already doing quite well because they tend to have the most advanced and successful School Direct programmes. They also tend to be in more urban locations as well. A lot of the best School Direct programmes are focused in London, which already has less of a problem with initial recruitment or has done over the last few years, whereas somewhere like Peterborough, for instance, which does not have those same kind of School Direct programmes, has found it harder to get recruits into those schools. The problem areas that Ofsted has identified are also the areas that are finding it hardest to recruit.

Martin Thompson: One very significant thing is that the training year for teachers involves a lot of travel, far more travel going to placements and things like that than you would expect on a normal degree course. We are finding that that expense puts people off and it means that they more and more want to work or want to train and then work somewhere near where they are residing at the moment. In the case of those who are undergraduates or just graduating, they tend to often go back home where they can get free or cheap board and lodging for that period of time. It is quite important that there is a spread of training in the right areas because people are no longer travelling. When I first started some 15 or 20 years ago, quite happily people would travel 100, 120, maybe more

miles to attend a SCITT. Now we are talking about practically everybody coming within 25 miles.

James Noble-Rogers: The idea of schools growing their own teachers has a lot of attractions and I am supportive of it, but there are some schools that are not necessarily in a position to be able to do that and their supply needs must be met as well.

Chair: Lucy, you have a supplementary.

Q9 Lucy Frazer: Yes. I think teaching is an incredibly important profession and that we are building students for the future. If there is a shortage, and it sounds like there is from what you have said, obviously we need to address that. Do you think we should be very careful about the language that we use in addressing this, for us in our report, for Government and for the teaching profession generally? James, you spoke of destabilising the supply base and, Martin, you have talked about a crisis in some areas. If we are trying to recruit teachers to the profession, do they not want to enter a profession that is flourishing and has prospects? If we talk about a crisis, are we putting teachers off? Should we not be very careful in our report and about the language that we are using?

Sam Freedman: I have been particularly frustrated over the last year or two about retention. There have been some quite scaremongering stories that have been put out reporting that 60% are thinking of leaving the profession or massive increases in numbers leaving the profession, which is not true. The NFER paper makes it quite clear that the numbers leaving the profession has not really changed for quite a long time. It has been pretty static. When people who are thinking about going into teaching hear that everyone wants to leave, obviously that is going to put them off starting. Given that that is not the case, I think we need to be very careful about talking about why people would want to leave the profession. Again, the NFER report makes it clear that most people who do leave teaching who are not retiring are going into education-related jobs. Once people are in, they tend to want to stay in the sector because it is such a fascinating one.

James Noble-Rogers: I agree we do need to be careful with language. We have stepped back from using some of the more emotive language when we have been asked to comment, but there is a real problem and it does risk becoming a much more serious problem if the supply base is destabilised. We need to take action in some secondary subjects. I do agree we do not want to put people off going into the profession by frightening them away because of the language we use.

Martin Thompson: I agree with that absolutely and, as I said, one of the things we have constantly noted is how people come into this profession. They want to come in to make a difference, to make a change, to make a difference in children's lives. I think we would be doing everybody a disservice if we, in trying not to talk down, actually did not also speak what appears to us to be the truth. I think there are significant issues with retention. Those who speak about it in staffrooms deserve to have a forum like this to record how they feel. I think that is important. You are right, we do not want to talk the profession down, but on the other hand we must not use that as an excuse not to face up to the problems.

Professor Howson: The Recruitment and Employment Confederation sent me a piece of research that they have done recently, admittedly across the public sector, and morale did

come out as one of the serious reasons why they were being asked to get involved in finding people. Clearly, if morale is low, retention is likely to become a problem.

Q10 Ian Mearns: There are ongoing problems with particular subjects in secondary and it is not the first year that they have arisen. Are any of you aware that the DfE is taking any steps to rectify those problems?

James Noble-Rogers: The recruitment incentives are designed to address areas of shortfall. I know D and T is an area that is not getting a bursary or sufficient bursary and that really does need to be looked at. The recruitment incentives play a role and they help people to get in, but I think we need to shift from recruitment incentives to retention incentives. You need both. Some of the top bursaries for physics are worth £30,000 or whatever—you would have to be earning a salary of £45,000 to receive the equivalent—but once you qualify, you see a huge drop in earnings. There might be a case for using that sort of money for retention, paying off fees or loans or whatever to keep people in after a couple of years. Things did look very problematic but they have got a bit better, which might be because of the recruitment campaign that NCTL launched. Those sorts of measures do have an impact.

Chair: Caroline is going to talk about routes to teaching.

Q11 Caroline Nokes: James, I think you mentioned uncertainty in the HE sector.

James Noble-Rogers: Yes.

Caroline Nokes: Is that the biggest challenge to the HE sector in providing initial teacher training or are there other challenges in the sector?

James Noble-Rogers: The main challenge is the uncertainty and the destabilisation of long-established and good quality programmes. As I said, 99% are rated by Ofsted good or outstanding, as is SCITT provision. I do not want to see it as universities versus schools because Martin and I have done some work on this. If you look at the written evidence submitted, and I read through all of it at the weekend, a consistent message in a lot of that is the need for larger and more sustainable teacher education partnerships involving schools, universities and other organisations, which are schools led, which are focused on the needs of schools, in which schools have a determining say in what is done and how it is done. That should be carried out in partnership with universities, each bringing their own thing to the party and each seen as cohesive wholes in genuine partnerships, not inflexible ones, with the school buying in training from all these different places through inflexible contractual arrangements, which are necessarily restrictive. The sustainability of the teacher supply base would be served by larger partnerships meeting regional needs, training the number of teachers to meet those regional needs plus a pool to meet national supply demands as well. I do not like this university versus school-led label anymore. It is old-fashioned. It is out of date. They are partnerships involving universities, schools, SCITTs, Teach First and other organisations. We want universities in there. We need to keep them in there but it is not the old university-led model that we are proposing to go back to.

Q12 Caroline Nokes: Would you say that the key problem is that there is a lack of joined-up strategy that overarches the whole thing and that the current system is far too piecemeal?

James Noble-Rogers: It is. Both universities and SCITTs need to be able to plan. If a university or SCITT is going to retain, for example, someone with expertise in geography, they need to have an idea of how many geography teachers they are going to be expected to train to meet the needs of local schools over a three to five-year period. They need a general idea, not an exact idea. The current system means they do not know from one year to the next whether they are going to be expected to train a geography teacher or, if they are, how many they are going to be expected to train. They are not going to necessarily maintain the expertise to allow them to do that and they will close their geography provision. It is planning and sustainability is what we need.

Professor Howson: Historically, we have had three-year rolling targets for a large part of the history of this particular area. Annual targets with no indication as to the likely continuation from year to year are, I think, destabilising for anybody who is trying to plan what is, in effect, a business.

Q13 Caroline Nokes: A quick question on teacher supply model: not sufficiently accurate?

Professor Howson: It is difficult to say that now because we are in a new version of it. The last one clearly was not sufficiently accurate in some particular areas, hence my views that we seriously undertrained the number of English teachers. The jury is out and discussions are probably taking place with the Department about what the indications are for the present iteration of the model. I think one of the problems is that the Department is responsible for the public sector but a very large number of qualified teachers also work in the independent sector. Indeed, a UK teaching qualification is now of interest to people globally as teaching becomes an international profession.

Q14 Caroline Nokes: Is the national college making things better or worse?

Martin Thompson: At the moment I do not think it is making things better, shall we say?

Professor Howson: We are going back to the position pre-1991 when, in fact, everything was run within the Department. We still have a titular national college but effectively it is part of the Department. It has a chairman of a board, but, as far as I know, there is no one on that board, so it is very difficult to see how the discussions between the other people around this table and the Department can be moderated in such a way that there can be an effective dialogue to achieve the aim that we all want, which is the largest number of qualified teachers to be able to drive a world-class education system.

Q15 Caroline Nokes: Do you think undergraduates, people hoping to enter the teaching profession, are finding the current proliferation of routes into it too confusing and is that maybe putting them off?

Martin Thompson: I do not think so in many ways because one of the big advantages we have at the moment is that we have a route that suits almost every type of applicant that we might envisage. We would not want to opt to reduce the number of routes. Publicising how they are different would probably be very useful in making sure that people

understand that these routes are tailored to what particular people want and in particular areas it is something we could do more of, but I do not think we necessarily want to see too much of a change to the number of available routes.

Sam Freedman: If you go back to the 2010 White Paper, the section on School Direct, it is clear in there that there was an initial proposal for a central application allocation model for School Direct. If you have that, you can move away from the problem that there is at the moment of people not knowing which schools to apply to. You have to apply to multiple schools if you want to go through a School Direct programme, unless you are absolutely certain which school you want to teach in. In terms of School Direct, more structure at the beginning of the process could help those who wanted to use that route. It would be good to have some kind of central process that you could apply through, so that after an initial sifting process, you could be connected with a school, because if you are new to teaching, you do not necessarily know which school is right for you.

Q16 Caroline Nokes: Do you think that might also help some of the problems that there are with regional differences?

Sam Freedman: Yes, certainly because then you can be much clearer. As we do at Teach First, everyone says which region they would like to be in but we do not necessarily allocate them to the region that they would like to be in. We allocate them to where the need is. I think if you could do more of that, it can work exactly the same way, but if you did more of that with School Direct you would help to ease some of the regional problems.

James Noble-Rogers: I cannot remember who wrote it, but in one of the evidences they said more attention should be given to explaining the similarities between the different routes because despite this talk of 23 separate routes, they are not totally separate. School Direct versus PGCE is often mentioned. Most School Direct programmes also lead to a PGCE. Teach First trainees get a PGCE at master's degree level. There are differences but there is a lot of commonality. I like to think of it as one teacher education system with different segments meeting different needs, but it is within an overarching envelope.

Martin Thompson: When you are working with a school, particularly if it is a School Direct school, it is important that the provider has the greatest understanding of all the routes open under its auspices. If the applicant went to the provider rather than necessarily going to the school, they might have a better conversation about which particular route would be more suitable for their needs. We find that talking to applicants makes it much clearer what kind of advice you want to give them as to which would be the most suitable way for them to learn this trade.

Q17 Caroline Nokes: Just a very specific quick question on Teach First: does that have either the capacity to address the shortage or, even if it does have the capacity, is that necessarily the right answer?

Sam Freedman: We have never seen ourselves as a mass route into teaching. It works for a specific group of very high-level graduates. At the moment, I would say we are finding it difficult to recruit the numbers that we would like to even under our current arrangements because the graduate market has boomed so much over the last couple of years and the salary differentials are now so big between some of the career options available to the type of graduates that we seek to recruit. I think it would be very difficult for us to grow

beyond those numbers in the near future and in the longer term we would probably like to grow a bit more but we are certainly not going to be a solution to the whole problem.

Caroline Nokes: You are not the whole answer?

Sam Freedman: No.

Q18 Ian Mearns: I think that is an important issue, Sam. Are you actually saying to us that in terms of resolving the integrity of the problem, for instance, the Teach First thing is not scalable to do the whole thing? Is there a problem as well with the Teach First model in terms of training specialist teachers, particularly for secondary subjects?

Sam Freedman: Again, we have never positioned ourselves or seen ourselves as a solution to the whole issue of teacher recruitment. We feel confident that we will still be able to get to the numbers that we want to get to. Yes, as I say, particularly in STEM subjects, which have always been the hardest to recruit to, some City firms are now paying £65,000 starting salaries and that is what we are competing against. That is where the challenge is for us.

Q19 Ian Austin: I just want to ask whether the panel thinks that universities should be limited in the number of people that they can recruit to train as teachers in the first place. Why not let anybody who wants to train as a teacher train as a teacher? Let the market decide, just as we do with people who want to train as lawyers. Nobody expects everybody who has a law degree to get a job as a lawyer, so why should universities be limited in the number of teacher trainees? When I talk to universities involved in the training of teachers, this is a central point that they have made to me.

Martin Thompson: First of all, one of the things is that the rhythm of the university year and the rhythm of the school year are different. If you want schools to lead in this sort of area, you have to look at the pressures that they are under and at the times of year when they can do things. Secondly, given the way in which a School Direct or a SCITT partnership is set up, various sorts of people will be involved. The Government always asks for more schools to be involved in that recruitment process, but if you involve schools, you are involving people who have other jobs. The ability to hold a lot of interviews at the very beginning of the academic year, or something like that, means they get spread out and they are multi-layered so it takes longer.

Q20 Ian Austin: But that is just about universities deciding how many places they want to offer. That is not an argument for universities being told how many places they can offer.

James Noble-Rogers: When you talk about all providers being able to recruit as many as they like, it is an interesting idea and it comes up from time to time. Should we have a genuine open market and if the jobs are not there, buyer beware? That would imply the Government having to ration bursaries otherwise there would be public expenditure issues to deal with. It is an interesting thought and people do discuss it from time to time. It would be a radical departure and I think we would need to model how behaviour might change in relation to what providers do and what potential applicants do. We moved towards a quasi-open recruitment methodology for 2016-17, which has not worked very well, where within national limits each provider could in theory recruit as many trainee

teachers as it wanted. That market was, however, rigged because the universities' share of that was artificially constrained because, other than the national limit, there was no limit put on the SCITT/School Direct route. We moved towards that and recruitment behaviours changed in ways that people might not have anticipated. I think it is an interesting idea but it needs to be—

Q21 Ian Austin: Are you using the word “interesting” in the way a civil servant says “challenging”, i.e. it is mad?

Professor Howson: I do not think it is a good idea at all. It is rather like saying to the Ministry of Defence, “You can take as many people as you like at Sandhurst”. That is not on for planning the future of the British Army. If we are talking about the system and we are talking about public expenditure, either you say you can come along, do a teaching qualification, pay for it yourself and we will take the risk that not enough people will do that and then we will try to work out what we do as a result, or we fund it, as we are effectively through the Treasury. In that case the Treasury at some point is going to say that unless we treat it like the current model of undergraduate courses, where universities can recruit as many people as they like and it is a blank cheque, it does not matter at this stage of the economic cycle that we are struggling to fill the courses. In the middle of a recession, however, where teaching looks like a pretty safe bet, I suspect the numbers of people who might turn up would go through the roof. That does not help to plan a consistent, high-quality system.

Q22 Chair: James, can I ask you a question? Earlier you were talking about partnerships between universities and schools. How do you see a framework evolving to make that work in response to the answers to the questions you have already given to Ian and others?

James Noble-Rogers: Okay. We have developed, with NASBTT, who represent the SCITT providers, and other colleagues a model of schools-led teacher education, which we think meets the Government's objectives for a schools-led system but also continues the role of universities, is sustainable and is not too overly fragmented. Under that model, we would look at partnerships as cohesive wholes. You would almost look at the partnership between schools and universities as being the accredited provider, not two separate organisations working through contractual arrangements. They would be large enough to be sustainable. Colleagues from schools would have a significant or major say in how those partnerships were governed with university partners playing a part as well. Therefore, any decisions reached by those partnerships would almost by definition be schools led. It would also have the attraction that they would be large enough to make sure training reflected the needs of a variety of schools, not just individual schools, and they would be well placed to join up initial teacher education and early professional development, which I think is what we have to look at next.

Q23 Chair: Could you drop us a line with a bit more detail on that?

James Noble-Rogers: Absolutely.

Chair: It sounds quite interesting.

James Noble-Rogers: I would be delighted to.

Chair: Thank you. Suella, you are going to be talking about measures to improve the situation.

Q24 Suella Fernandes: Yes, thank you. Good morning. As Lucy mentioned, I think teaching is a noble profession and making it more attractive is what we all want to do. I was interested in Sam's comments about how the teaching profession is competing with the private sector for our talented graduates these days. The Government has increased the amount of bursaries and scholarships and it is quite generous. A good graduate in science and our core target subjects can get up to £30,000 tax free these days to help them into the profession. What more do you think can be done to make it more attractive?

Sam Freedman: One thing that we are quite keen to see, and which we have tested with potential applicants and know would be very popular, is some kind of loan forgiveness programme. As one of the panellists said earlier, graduates are now coming out with very significant debt to repay across their career. Some of the people that we are competing with are now offering various ways of supporting them with that loan repayment over time. It would be quite expensive, so we think it probably could be restricted to teaching in certain types of schools, schools that are finding it hardest to recruit, which are often the ones with the most disadvantaged populations. You could possibly restrict it by subject as well, perhaps to the STEM subjects, which are the hardest to recruit to. Having tested a few ideas with potential applicants, we think that that would have a very, very significant, positive impact.

Martin Thompson: One of the things that always concerns me is that teaching is a very collegiate profession and the idea that you might be paid different amounts just because of the subject that you happen to be teaching is probably a road that I certainly would not want to be forced down. In terms of the profession that says that if you want to teach primary and you have a 2:2, we will give you nothing, and if you have a first class degree in maths and you are going to be teaching, we will give you £30,000. If you take a collegiate approach, that is not how a school and schoolteachers would think among themselves. If you are going to talk about a profession that is what you have to look at. It has to be something that is attractive to all.

I do not think we have a difficulty with people being attracted to the profession; so many want to do it because they realise how important it is. It is what we do to stop them staying and to stop them getting in that really is the cause of the problem. This is such an important thing. We tend to see education as a cost, but it is an investment. It is the biggest investment we can make. If we needed to find money for the army, we would find it. If we needed to find money for the health service, we would find it. Then we suddenly say education is a cost. No, this is the biggest investment there is. This is investment No. 1.

Q25 Suella Fernandes: What more do you think that training providers or school-based organisations could do to make the profession more attractive and inviting?

Martin Thompson: I don't think providers themselves can do an awful lot. We do all kinds of things to try to mitigate the problems we have. We lose very, very few in training. It is a very, very small percentage but 40% of those that go in training go because of workload and stress. To say you just have to make them more resilient, which is one of the things that we had from some partners, is not the answer. It is how we really address the

fundamental issue about workload and stress so that people can see it moving forward. So often a trainee will say to you, “Does it get better than this?” and the honest answer is no, it does not.

Q26 Suella Fernandes: That is about professional development then.

Martin Thompson: It is, yes.

Suella Fernandes: Turning to the others, who do you think should be responsible for professional development?

James Noble-Rogers: Something training providers could do if they were enabled to do so is provide structured early professional development that builds on and complements the initial training. A PGCE is, in effect, only nine months long. You can only cover so much ground in sufficient depth in such a short space of time. A PGCE needs to be the first step and training providers with support—it would need resourcing—could provide structured early professional development after that for one, two or subsequent years to help keep people in the profession. It would make them better teachers and it could partly be funded because I do not think you would need to recruit so many new teachers. It would also, as well as a retention measure, help to attract new applicants because people would see the professional development opportunities available and be more attracted to applying for teacher training in the first place.

Q27 Suella Fernandes: Lastly, in terms of school leaders and leadership and people who are preparing or on the route to that level of work in the profession, what is your view of the supply of the future school leaders?

Professor Howson: As I hinted earlier on, if you have a shortfall coming into the profession, you will not have as many people from that cohort available to become middle leaders later on. I think the problems that we may be experiencing at senior leadership level at present are probably compounded by a number of different factors. One, in the secondary sector we are busy inventing large numbers of extra new schools, whether they are studio schools, UTCs, free schools or whatever. Those extra schools each need a head. We have also invented the executive head of the multi-academy trust, which is an additional demand pressure. I do not think anybody did any serious modelling to work out whether the supply mode was there to fill all those sorts of vacancies.

We also have a profession where half the profession is under 40 and a very large number of that profession are women. We need to know more about the way in which the women in the profession are prepared to move into leadership posts, particularly in the primary sector where many people are encouraged to move into it in their early 40s. I think we need to re-educate governing bodies because there is an assumption, I think, in some governing bodies that if you have not reached a particular leadership point by a particular age, they are not going to either encourage you to go for it or to appoint you. If you have not become an assistant head by the time you are 35 and a deputy head by the time you are 40, you are at higher risk of never making it into those grades.

Martin Thompson: One of the important things in the submission from me and James about schools led is the interesting addition of “s” to “school led”. It is important that we see that this is educational training for a profession and not for an individual school. That

is going to help leadership because it would be difficult if those aspiring leaders have not had the breadth of experience that they would really need to be good leaders in a variety of contexts.

Chair: Okay. That is the end of panel 1. I want to thank you all very much indeed for your answers to our questions and I am looking forward to hearing more from you, James. Thank you very much indeed.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Russell Hobby**, General Secretary, National Association of Head Teachers, **Kevin Courtney**, Deputy General Secretary, National Union of Teachers, **Darren Northcott**, National Official for Education, National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, and **Emma Knights**, Chief Executive, National Governors' Association, gave evidence.

Q28 Chair: Okay, welcome. Can you all say what you are representing?

Darren Northcott: My name is Darren Northcott. I am from the NASUWT.

Kevin Courtney: Kevin Courtney from the National Union of Teachers.

Russell Hobby: I represent the National Association of Head Teachers.

Emma Knights: I represent the National Governors' Association.

Chair: Thank you. The theme in this second panel is to assess the situation as it currently stands. Lucy is going to be asking just how bad the situation is.

Q29 Lucy Allan: Good morning. I would like to ask whether this is a problem of lack of candidates and/or lack of quality candidates, but also follow that up with a question of subject and whether it varies by subject or school to school. Emma, maybe you would like to start first with that.

Emma Knights: Obviously, governing boards have the experience primarily of recruiting senior leaders and certainly we have been saying for a number of years that generally there is an issue of too few applicants but also about the quality of applications, but it is definitely getting worse. Clearly, you only need one great applicant to appoint your head teacher, but when we come to look at teaching supply that is an issue that governing boards are discussing more and more. Clearly, if you do not have enough teachers it becomes a strategic issue.

As was being said on the earlier panel, obviously we have had problems with recruiting maths and physics teachers forever really and lots and lots of initiatives over the years, but we are seeing more and more problems in other subjects. In particular, the ones that we identified in our survey of governors and trustees this year were English and modern foreign languages. It is secondaries that are under slightly more stress, but primaries are increasingly under pressure as well. For quite a long time we have had issues in special schools, which I do not think we have mentioned yet. Do you want me to talk about those areas or are you coming back to that?

Chair: I think we will try to keep our answers short and pithy.

Russell Hobby: With that hint, issues of quality and quantity shade into each other, as Emma has said. If you cannot get enough applicants you then start considering applicants you might not otherwise have considered. At the heart of it, that is why you see such a big gap between what the profession is saying is happening in schools and what the Government statistics are saying. When you sample it in November, schools have already taken measures to fill the vacancies that they have, but that may mean appointing a non-specialist teacher to a subject, appointing an unqualified teacher or appointing a long-term supply teacher as well. You cannot have an empty classroom. You have to make it work. Whether that is the person you would have wanted in front of those children is another matter.

Q30 Lucy Allan: Kevin, I wonder if I could widen that out a little bit. We keep getting told by surveys that there are this many teachers leaving the profession and I am wondering how many teachers really do follow through on some of these thoughts of leaving that we see documented.

Kevin Courtney: I am sure less than say in a survey that they are contemplating it, but the fact that so many say in surveys that they are contemplating it tells you that there is a big problem with morale that needs to be addressed. In one sense, there is no problem with the supply of qualified teachers. There are more than enough qualified teachers to fill the jobs, they just do not want to do it. A lot of them do not want to do it. That is the problem we have.

I want to agree with what Russell said. The November census data on vacancies really understate the problem. Even though that is showing an increase, it still understates it because by the time you have reached November, the head teacher has to have filled the vacancies—in some cases they collapse nine teaching groups into eight, increasing class sizes in a way they do not want to because they do not have a teacher, or they fill the job with a non-specialist or with someone where they are not satisfied with the quality. Those head teachers have filled the vacancies by the time you get there, so that understates the problem rather.

Q31 Lucy Allan: Is there also a similar shortage at the senior leadership level?

Kevin Courtney: Certainly, the NGA—and we see this evidence from our members—has a great deal of difficulty with appointing to some headship positions. We talked with some heads in Leeds across the weekend and we are getting comments back from them saying in seven years of headship the situation has moved from difficult to critical; for the first time ever it is a problem. Head teachers commented that a few years ago they were getting 100 applicants per position but they were now finding it very difficult to recruit staff. Another spoke of only four applicants for maternity cover advertised for January, none of whom were suitable. It is anecdotal evidence, but people are reporting real difficulties.

Q32 Lucy Allan: Darren, do you have anything to add to that?

Darren Northcott: I would echo many of those comments. The point Kevin made is very important. There are a lot of qualified teachers out there sitting in what is known as the

PIT, the pool of inactive teachers. It is a question of how attractive teaching is. I think that is fundamental to the problems we are discussing this morning.

Chair: Lucy, you are going to talk about recruitment.

Q33 Lucy Frazer: Yes, I am going to talk about the impact the teacher supply situation is having on schools. Do you think, given that there are issues with recruitment, that schools are being a little bit more creative about how they recruit? In one of the schools I went to this week the head teacher said she was advertising in universities for PhD students, not to be a teacher but for support in the school. Are other heads doing that sort of thing and, if so, is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Emma Knights: In fact, we know that some multi-academy trusts are going abroad to try to find teachers. You have to say well done for a bit of innovation to those folk that are doing it, but we have real worries that across the system it is going to entrench some of the differences that we have, that those that are doing well and have the capacity and the money—which is really important—to do those sorts of things will do that and the schools that we desperately want to attract good teachers and good leaders will not have the same wherewithal. We have real worries that the fact we do not have enough of a supply both at classroom teacher level but also at senior leadership level will pull the schools apart even further than is currently the case.

Q34 Lucy Frazer: Emma, that is a good point, but why does it cost money to recruit, to put an advert in a PhD students' forum or to look overseas? Why is that a question of—

Emma Knights: That might not cost particularly, but certainly looking overseas does. There are chief executives of multi-academy trusts who are flying out to Australia now, so that is a massive investment in recruitment.

Russell Hobby: I think we should expect schools to be creative and that is a good thing. If you have to act in the interests of children, you will do whatever you can to make sure there is someone who can teach those children. I think Emma's point is creativity requires capacity and it is not just a money issue. If every second of your day is spent focused on making sure that the teachers that you have are being coached and developed in some of the most challenging areas, leadership can be a very fragile and all-consuming activity. Your ability then to take a couple of days out to fly out to a Commonwealth country to recruit is going to be limited. I think school leaders have a right to expect some of the basics to be supplied to them by the system, enough money to do it and enough teachers to recruit.

Kevin Courtney: We have to be grateful that there are teachers from overseas who want to come to help. There are lots of Irish teachers. There are lots of Spanish teachers who have arrived recently. The NUT set up a network for Irish teachers in London, there are so many of them. But we have to be a little nervous. During the last teacher shortage there was substantial recruitment from Commonwealth countries and it led to problems in some of those Commonwealth countries with losing their teachers. A Commonwealth education protocol had to be established to try to regulate that. We have to have a concern about that and try to grow our own and look at the problems here.

We are seeing problems with schools having to spend an enormous amount of money on recruitment, partly because the teacher supply agencies will start a negotiation saying, “We want 20% of the teacher’s salary in order for them to come and work with you”. Sometimes heads manage to bargain that down to 15% of salary, but that means that in London schools and schools around the country people are paying those sorts of fees for 15 or 20 teachers a year. It is £60,000 to £100,000 a year going out of school budgets just in finders’ fees for agencies. I hope that the Committee will look at that as an area to investigate further.

Chair: We will.

Q35 Caroline Nokes: Can I pick up on that? I think all three of you have mentioned the cost of recruiting good teachers. I would have to say one of the best head teachers in my constituency, who I have discussed this issue with, told me that recruitment was not about the amount of cash that you spent on it, it was about the attitude and the prevailing behaviour of the children in your school and that if you had nice, polite pupils who behave themselves—much of her ethos is about making sure that standards of discipline are extremely high—she says that makes it easier to recruit.

Emma Knights: Absolutely. Cost is not the only thing by any stretch of the imagination and that is why we cannot make gross generalisations about this because some of it will absolutely be down at school level. The ethos of the leadership in the school can be a great attraction to folk or, indeed, it can put people off. I think that is incredibly important, but I do want to support what Kevin said about the cost of agency staff. It is a phenomenal cost and you are not necessarily getting the best folk. We do not want to go down the route that has happened with the NHS with costs escalating because of that. I do think that is incredibly important at a time when we are all constrained by costs. I completely agree with you that retention is also an issue as well as recruitment. I do not know how long we have to talk about this because certainly that is something—

Chair: Not that long.

Emma Knights: Not that long. I thought you might say that, Neil. Perhaps we can come back to it in another inquiry. I really hope that you will as a Committee spend some time looking at school leadership and school management because we have structures that are being developed without necessarily the thought that one would want to give to them. They could be real forces for good in terms of recruiting good people and having the best people leading our schools, but we are sort of muddling along. This is something we have been trying to get the Department and STRB to take seriously for the last four or five years. It has not been grappled with and I really hope it will be.

Q36 Lucy Frazer: I would welcome your expertise on an idea in relation to recruitment. In my own constituency I ask every single school every time I go to them, “What issues do you have with recruitment?” I must say the answers are very patchy. It is not just about outstanding schools and it is not just about location, although that plays into it a lot. The teaching schools do not have a problem with recruitment and, as I understand it, but this is very anecdotal, the cost of that pays for itself. Is a potential answer that more schools, particularly in areas where they have poor recruitment, become teaching schools—then they are nurturing their own staff, then it is indigenous, then it is locality driven—or that they have

relationships with other teaching schools and they share provisions? Would that be a potential assistance or answer to the problem?

Russell Hobby: I think expanding the teaching school networks and alliances is part of the answer to that, but not every school is able to participate in those. The risk of the system that we have is that those that have the capacity can get even more capacity. If a teaching school is short of staff, it has no problem recruiting, as you have noticed, because it can take the pick of the best graduates. Yet not every school can and should participate in those teaching schools. If you have just taken over a failing school where the behaviour is not good enough, every part of your attention must be on turning that school around. Your ability to get involved in wider system leadership activities is not necessarily there, and yet that is the school where we do want our best teachers to go. The danger is where the networks are not all-encompassing because those that fall between them lose out.

Q37 Lucy Frazer: Is there a potential link between a multi-academy trust, the sponsor of a school, who nurtures the talent and spreads its fruits around? Kevin, what do you think about what Russell said?

Kevin Courtney: Multi-academy trusts, the ones of size, maybe can do some of that but the way the model looks like it is developing means that the groups of schools are going to be much smaller because the sponsors are going to be successful schools rather than these big chains. Given how the model is developing, I am not sure that the answer is there. I thought the first panel addressed most of these questions and identified that we need to have a system for teacher recruitment, that the model that generates the numbers of teachers needs to have regional information, and then we need to run that system nationally. Even if the training is being done in schools it would be better if people could apply to the system and then be allocated to a school rather than apply to the individual schools because the risk of the differences opening up is really profound. Caroline is absolutely right that the variation can be between schools based on school characteristics and it certainly has been easier to recruit to a school that Ofsted has called outstanding than to a school that Ofsted says is not. There are more pressures in such underperforming schools, so it is understandable why teachers do not go there as a first option.

Darren Northcott: Can I just briefly follow up on that? I think you make a good point. Different schools can adopt different approaches to recruitment. Some might be more successful than others. There might be a way that a particular school can promote its ethos that helps. Of course that is true, but fundamentally if we are talking about significant shortfalls between the number of teachers we need in the system overall and the number of teachers who are coming through, no end of ingenuity will address that issue across the piece.

Yes, there are local solutions and approaches, absolutely. There is also a national systemic issue we will have to address because where some schools gain through their more effective approach, other schools will lose out in the teacher recruitment battle and the people who suffer most are the children in those schools. You have to look at it systemically, not just school by school or trust by trust.

Q38 Lucy Frazer: If we do look at it systemically, is there also a place to increase teaching schools? Should the teaching school system be increased?

Darren Northcott: Just reflecting again on the evidence you heard earlier, I think it is variable. Some teaching schools have well-established approaches, they provide high quality training and good links with HEIs. I think some of the problems with some teaching school reliance is they are still fixed into growing their own, growing our teachers for our particular collection of schools and the danger you sometimes identify with that is we should be developing teachers to work across the system wherever they are needed. Sometimes that training it is rather too localised, I suppose.

I think we need to have a system that includes schools, absolutely, but we need to look at the needs of that system. Teachers are mobile and they want to move around. Sometimes it is attractive and worthwhile that they do that but I think the teaching school approach is in some instances the means to solve an immediate problem but not to provide the longer-term solution we need to look for, if we look at it systemically.

Emma Knights: We get a lot of reports, and they are increasing, that the lead schools in the alliances or partnerships of various sorts are now snaffling the best trainees and that is what I mean about being divisive. If you are up there running a great TSA then yes, you have a nice stream of great people coming to work for you whereas the schools that are struggling more will not have that. We are great fans of groups of schools, whether that is multi-academy trust or federation and one of the main reasons why is that they provide great professional development for their staff and they have the ability to move staff to where they are needed most within their group. We are encouraging schools to become part of school groups. Again, that does not help our stragglers and I would absolutely agree we need to have enough people in the system.

Q39 Chair: Russell, I have just been looking through your school recruitment survey, on Emma's point and John Howson's earlier point about multi-academy trusts, have you been looking into that and the effectiveness of MATs in providing training opportunities, leadership roles and so forth? If so, can you give us some evidence?

Russell Hobby: Certainly from that survey we found that academies were experiencing the same level of recruitment difficulties as any other school and one of the interesting things that is not happening in our system is the use of pay flexibilities. One of the major reasons to convert to academy status was supposed to be that you could then structure the pay. In the face of recruitment difficulties, one obvious answer is pay more to get people in. But we are not seeing, for example, academies offering differential salaries for different subject areas or anything like that. I think that implies that heads want a very simple pay framework that they can make ready decisions within rather than having to reinvent their pay frameworks. So that casts doubts on the issue of the freedom.

Where you see schools in multi-academy trusts and where you see, say, a group of a dozen schools who can work together, then you start to see some very interesting stuff going on. It particularly comes alive when we are talking about middle leadership, heads of department and senior levels because you have far more career opportunities. If you are head of a department in a small rural school, you can look and say, "It is going to be 20 years before I get into a senior position". If you are looking across six schools, there will be opportunities all the time so you can develop people's careers. You can create more structure around the very senior positions and it is easier as a younger leader to step into headship in a group of six schools where you have five other heads supporting you than it

is to stand alone. I do not think it is the freedom that makes the difference. I think it is the collaboration that makes the difference for those schools.

Kevin Courtney: To resolve the problem, pay, workload and CPD must be addressed. Another issue is the routes into teaching and I thought that James and Martin, from the universities and the schools providers, made a call that there should be much more co-ordination. I think you saw the furore over the Cambridge history PGCE and the way that was really messed up by Government targets. The Committee needs to make some recommendations so that Government will sort that out.

Government, it seems to us in the NUT, is running down university training but it needs to be a vital part of it. Government describes university training as university-based training and it is not. When it is organised by university, it is still based in schools. The teachers are in the school all the time and schools and universities need to be working together in a seamless system.

Chair: You saw me ask James earlier for more details because I think that is an important point, but Russell's point is also valuable in the context of senior leadership in a MAT. Lucy, do have any further questions?

Lucy Frazer: No, that is it, thank you very much.

Q40 Ian Mearns: We are going back to retention, Emma, so we are not leaving it alone, but we have a panel here that among its membership represents a huge proportion of the teaching profession and the leadership profession in the country. What have you been doing to gather evidence on the reasons why teachers are not staying in the profession?

Darren Northcott: We surveyed our members' work as classroom teachers and school leaders across England and we have tried to find out what the drivers are. Why is there this dissatisfaction, this expression that people are contemplating leaving teaching? I think it boils down to a number of important issues and we have touched on them already. One is increasing workload. Another is that pay in real terms for teachers has declined relative to other graduate occupations. I think the way sometimes that teaching is portrayed does not help. Sometimes the teaching profession is demeaned in some quarters and that is found by teachers to be unattractive. I also think the extent to which teachers are able to concentrate on teaching and leading teaching and learning in their working lives is another issue. With all those challenges, the stress, I think it is very clear from the evidence we have gathered that those are the fundamental drivers making teachers stop and think, "Is this the career I want to continue with?"

Kevin Courtney: We have used YouGov to do scientific samples of all teachers and we have done surveys among our own members; the YouGov sample had this figure of 53% of teachers contemplating leaving—53% of teachers will not leave. They will not be able to find other jobs to go to but the fact they are contemplating it is an issue and it means there will be a recruitment and retention problem. When we ask them in a free-form question why they contemplate leaving, it is remarkable that it is workload and accountability that come top however you ask the question, higher than people behaviour by a considerable margin. The latter is an issue for teachers but by a considerable margin it is workload and accountability that people cite as their reasons for contemplating leaving. I think that is important.

I am glad you have another inquiry looking at the purpose of education, to understand why teachers are so concerned about the accountability system and the hours, because the hours they work is one issue but the content of them is another. Teachers feel demeaned by the fact that they are being asked to write down the verbal feedback they give to a class because otherwise how will Ofsted know they gave that feedback? They are demeaned by the fact that they are told to take photographs of the practical work they do with their maths classes because otherwise how will somebody know they did the practical work?

It is important to get to the issue of what is done in the hours and really crack on so that hours come down and teachers feel trusted by the system. What Darren says about the language matters. It feels to teachers like all the blame is put on them, so when the Secretary of State says she will not tolerate areas of the country where fewer than 50% of children gain five A* to C and she names Rochdale, Salford and Knowsley, the teachers in Rochdale, Salford and Knowsley believe that all the blame is being placed on them. That is not the right way to do it.

Chair: Are there any more questions?

Q41 Ian Mearns: Can we get an initial answer from Russell, please?

Russell Hobby: Those are all valid points that are echoed in hours. It is not the number of hours you work; it is how you spend those hours that is the crucial thing. Teachers should work hard and it is good they should work hard in front of the children rather than late at night. Picking out the issues of leadership retention and recruitment, probably the No.1 issue is the risk associated with the role. Head teachers and senior leaders should be held to account in quite strict ways, I think, but consider the idea that a single year's data could end your career, particularly if you are trying to support a family of your own and particularly as that is most likely to happen in the most challenging schools that are under the greatest scrutiny. You go in there and you have one bad inspection, one set of cohort measures, and of course we are changing the measures every time so you do not know whether next year will be a bad year or not. That means a lot of people decide to stop at deputy level rather than going on to take the full lead. We need to find a way to hold people strongly accountable but they should know why and when and how it will happen.

Emma Knights: I agree with that as well. We also survey our members and it has been quite noticeable in the last couple of years that this issue of recruiting and retaining staff both at senior leadership level and classroom level has shot up the agenda. Three years ago it was not in our members' five top concerns, this year it is right up at the top alongside funding and you all know how critical that is. Therefore, in the coming year we are going to ask much more about that to try to get to some of these particular issues.

It was very interesting to note from our surveys that the issue about valuing and trusting teachers came absolutely to the fore in the open comments section in a way that has not been seen in our surveys before. I know that by and large governing boards are really concerned about the sort of issues that people have been talking about here and of course the Department has its own inquiry and working groups on workload. But it is a very serious issue. There is so much change going on and I would agree with the point made about middle leaders. We have not talked very much about them but if you are head of a department, you have an awful lot of change in each of your key stages. In secondary level that is a lot of work to be getting on with at one time.

Q42 Suella Fernandes: Can I just clarify something? What are you basing your statistics on because the school workforce census from last year suggests a slightly different picture in that the actual total number of in-service teachers is up by 5,000 in the last year, up by 13,000 in the last five years? The retention rate is stable. About 90% of teachers are staying in the profession, and of people leaving, over 70% of teachers are still working five years later. That presents quite a different picture from your one, and that is school workforce census data.

Russell Hobby: One of the biggest problems for us is that we do not have a shared view of the problem. What schools and governors are saying is happening and what the Government's data say is happening are two different things. Both sides are being sincere in their presentation and I feel at one level the vacancy data are the wrong measure to be looking at because by November head teachers have filled in the gaps but not in a way they would wish to have filled them.

They may, for example, have reduced the number of classes they are running and increased the class size so they do not have a vacancy anymore. If you are newly recruited, and if you have not yet decided teaching is right for you, you are ready to leave by November. So, I do not think we are sampling in the right way at the right time, particularly, for example, for recruitment into leadership positions.

Looking at the number of times the school has to re-advertise is, I think, one of the best indicators of the challenge. That number is going up and, from memory, 25% of secondary and plus 30% of primaries have to re-advertise at least another time. That means for the duration of that period, and it takes at least a term, you do not have a full-time head in post so you may have persuaded the old head to stay for a bit longer, long after they wanted to, you may have a deputy acting up, you may have an interim head or you may have the head of a neighbouring school running the school. That shows there are all sorts of interim solutions that hide what the data are saying.

Emma Knights: I completely agree the vacancy data does not work because we have to find a head.

Q43 Ian Mearns: We are talking about retention but do you think everything you have talked about is also adding to the problem in terms of recruitment in the first place? Is it the same reasons, do you think, that are leading to problems with recruitment?

Darren Northcott: Do you mean in terms of the way teaching is perceived?

Ian Mearns: You describe scenarios from your own perspectives in terms of what your members are telling you. Do you think the reasons that are providing problems for the retention of teachers are the same reasons for finding it difficult to recruit teachers in the first place?

Darren Northcott: I think there are links. For example, I would stress absolutely that the issue of workload is about what teachers do with their time. It is also about excessive workload. That is not just my saying that, that is the Secretary of State saying that last year. It is accepted that overall workload levels are too high. That is obviously going to send a signal to graduates choosing what career they are going to undertake. Is the workload in this job excessive? That is a kind of tick in the negative box rather than the

positive box but clearly an issue like workload then also feeds through into retention. If teachers feel the workload they have is unmanageable, that it impinges upon their work-life balance, their family life, all those critical things, that is going to make them more inclined to consider leaving teaching. There is read across between certain factors; pay, workload and the way teaching is organised, the way it is perceived, absolutely has an impact on the retention and on recruitment.

Kevin Courtney: Probably at entry pay is more of a key issue for graduates considering other graduate professions but we do get anecdotes of student teachers who are on their placement who see the stress and the workload in their school and they say, “I do not think this job is for me”. If a school is having difficulty recruiting and you are the head of physics and you do not have physicists to teach your lessons, there is a lot of work you have to do supporting the biology or chemistry teacher teaching that subject. If there is a turnover in your department, your role in inducting that member of staff increases the workload for those middle leaders if you do not have those—

Q44 Ian Mearns: We are running out of time. Just one last one from me. We heard from James earlier on about the 23 routes into teaching and how some of those are the same routes so there are not really 23 at all. Is that landscape of the way teachers or potential teachers can get into the profession causing any confusion or is it putting people off?

Chair: Yes or no will do.

Darren Northcott: I think there is a little bit of confusion out there, to put it mildly, around the different routes and James made a good point earlier about there being a lot of commonality between them. Just one point I do not want to get lost in that is that having some diversity of routes into teaching is quite important because some routes target, for example particularly underrepresented groups in the teaching profession. There are some programmes that target teaching assistants who have a lot of experience who want to make that step to become a qualified teacher, so some diversity is important but you do not want confusion and you also have to make sure that whatever the type of route, those benchmarks of quality of training apply across the piece.

Chair: I think we are all nodding at that so we are going to move on to Kate for the final question.

Q45 Kate Hollern: It has been interesting listening to both panels because it appears they are setting out a looming crisis in the system and it appears to be in two parts; the attracting of teachers and retention. The Government obviously has a bursary scheme. How effective do you think that bursary is in attracting people into a profession?

Russell Hobby: The evidence suggests the bursaries do work but they are an expensive choice and you cannot deploy them for every subject in every way you would like. One of the problems we are now facing is we are robbing Peter to pay Paul, so we are taking stuff away from primary bursaries because the need at the moment is now more acute at the secondary level. But then we are expecting 500,000 more pupils to enter the primary system over the next few years so will we be then taking it back from secondary to pay back to primary? Yes, bursaries are a good strategy but they are expensive.

Q46 Kate Hollern: Do you think there needs to be a re-look at the bursary, how it is allocated or should there be an incentive, perhaps a reduction in the fees and that graduates leave the debt when coming into the profession?

Russell Hobby: I think Sam's suggestion of loan forgiveness is a strong one to be considered.

Darren Northcott: I think bursaries may have a role. I am just looking here at the latest recruitment and some of the biggest paying bursary subjects are still under their target, so it makes a contribution but it is not getting to that crucial point. In terms of subjects across the education system, it is about getting some of the fundamentals right, so getting the basic issues on pay and workload right. If you address those, you are going to make a difference in all subjects including those that attract bursaries.

I am not saying those incentives do not have a role. I think the evidence is a bit mixed, to be honest, over time but there are fundamental issues around pay and working conditions that we have to address. If we address those we can tackle some of those problems and it is important to bear in mind we have been here before. We were here 15 years ago with vacancy rates, a teacher supply crisis, and that was addressed because there was a will to address it at the time. Part of the solution was looking at those fundamental issues of pay, workload and working conditions.

Q47 Michelle Donelan: Just on the bursary note, would it not be better though if it was mandatory so they had to work in the profession for five years or so, otherwise they have to pay some back, to ensure that teacher retention?

Russell Hobby: That is one of the reasons why I think a loan forgiveness thing could work because you could forgive it after three years in the profession or something like that, so you could secure a certain level of retention. It is very hard to predict at the start of someone's career whether they will stay, or whether they should stay, and a certain amount of experience shows that you have to weed people out as they learn more about the profession as well. So there are tactics you could use to strengthen retention.

Emma Knights: The idea of doing it to pull people through the system in a positive way is really important because let's face it, you were talking about it being a noble profession; we are never going to be able to compete with the sort of salaries being paid by banks where a lot of our young mathematicians are going at the moment. We cannot equalise things on that score, it has to be a much bigger issue in promoting the profession and certainly I think concentrating more on the people who are committed to staying in our schools is important.

Q48 Kate Hollern: I will just come back then on retention because that is obviously an issue. There is a lot of investment going into teaching and the retention appears to be a problem. Is that because there was bad press over the last few years on Ofsted inspections? Do people, teachers in particular, feel undervalued and how do we work with teachers to improve the system, so that it improves reputation, improves recruitment, improves retention but mainly improves the chances of children?

Kevin Courtney: Whether people agree with this or not, whether it is true or not, teachers believe the dominant narrative from politicians is of school failure, coasting schools and locating that blame with teachers. We think that narrative has passed its sell-by date. We

are all in favour of school improvements but you have to do that with the profession; the narrative has to change and that applies to trusting teachers about accountability and workload.

Chair: Thanks, Kevin. One quick question.

Q49 Kate Hollern: The National Teaching Service, do you think there will be real improvements?

Darren Northcott: I do not think we know enough about how that service is going to operate. Are you talking about the National Teaching Service the Government is proposing?

Kate Hollern: Yes.

Darren Northcott: We do not know enough about how that is going to operate so we do not know the extent to which it can address those issues. It is unlikely to be big enough to address the scale of the recruitment and retention issue and there is also a bit of confusion about its purpose. I thought the purpose of that service, whether you agree with it or not, was to help raise standards in particular parts of the country, not to address teacher supply problems. We need to be clear about what functions we think this service is going to fulfil before we can begin to answer that very good question about whether it will contribute. I think the jury is out, to say the least.

Q50 Chair: Russell, do you have any thoughts on that?

Russell Hobby: It is a good idea but like Teach First it is only one part of the jigsaw. The numbers are not sufficient enough to cope with a national problem. I think also at a time of recruitment problems, getting these teachers out of their current school to deploy them in another school is going to be quite hard because the heads are going to hold on to those talented teachers as hard as they can.

Q51 Lucy Frazer: I have to be really quick so I would appreciate a yes or no answer. I think we know the demand for secondary teachers has increased by nearly 5,000 in the teacher supply model, so is one of the factors in relation to teacher shortage not just that people might be not interested in joining the profession but, as a fact, there just is an increase in demand as well?

Russell Hobby: Yes.

Darren Northcott: Yes.

Emma Knights: Yes.

Kevin Courtney: We are all saying yes to that.

Emma Knights: Very quickly, I just want to talk about the regional issue. The small-scale schemes will not address the problem that we have all identified in that London and the south-east are very much at the heart of this crisis, if we are going to call it that, followed quite closely by the north-east and the east of England. The problem is not just in those areas that HMCI and the Teaching Service are looking at.

Q52 Chair: Thank you for the clarification. I just want to ask one question myself. What about the College of Teachers and the idea of professional training? Have you any thoughts on that quickly?

Emma Knights: A very good idea.

Russell Hobby: Yes, a very good idea.

Kevin Courtney: An entitlement to good quality CPD would be very welcomed by teachers.

Q53 Chair: How would you like that college to emerge because you were quite definite in your answer there, Russell?

Russell Hobby: A profession needs a body that can speak up for it that is not about pay and conditions as the unions are. When teachers have a voice in the public debate maybe that rhetoric of failure will be replaced and we can have a rhetoric of ambition instead.

Q54 Chair: Could you give us a bit of rhetoric by letter on the subject because I would quite like to hear more about your thoughts?

Russell Hobby: I would be happy to.

Darren Northcott: Chair, there may not be unanimity on this on the panel. We think a College of Teachers might have a contribution to make but we have serious reservations about the current model that has been proposed by the Claim Your College coalition. We would be happy to write to you.

Q55 Chair: I would like a letter from you as well. Kevin, are you in letter writing mode?

Kevin Courtney: Certainly we will write to you about the College of Teachers. We think the profession needs a voice. There are concerns about the way the thing is developing but we are engaging with the college.

Chair: Express those concerns in your letter. Emma, we might as well go for you as well.

Emma Knights: We will write to you too.

Ian Mearns: Put a Christmas card in for him.

Chair: A letter from all of you on the subject of a College of Teachers and how that might address some of the issues you have been discussing would be much appreciated. Thank you all very much indeed for your contributions. We are only seven minutes over time but I think we have covered some interesting ground. Thank you.

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Mr Nick Gibb MP**, Minister of State, Department for Education, gave evidence.

Q56 Chair: I want to say first of all I am certainly very impressed that you came to listen to all the evidence we have heard from 9.30 am. That is an example to other Ministers, so I think the Committee should note that, thank you.

Mr Gibb: May I write to you about that?

Chair: You certainly can, Nick. I like correspondence and your letters are notably brief but to the point so that would be appreciated if you feel the need to amplify the point I have just made, thank you. Michelle, you are going to start.

Q57 Michelle Donelan: Thank you for coming. Just to get down to what we are talking about, have you changed your mind, having heard the evidence this morning, and do you think there is now a crisis rather than just a challenge with teacher recruitment and retention?

Mr Gibb: I spend a lot of time visiting schools around the country and meeting head teachers in groups and I do hear the same message I have heard this morning from those professionals around the country. I do know there is an issue and, to quote what Darren Northcott said about dealing with this issue when it arose 15 years ago, if there is a political will to tackle it, that is what is needed. I have to tell the Committee there is a political will to deal with these challenges. If I can just put these issues into some perspective. We have at the moment 454,900 teachers and that is an all-time high and, as Suella cited earlier, that is 5,200 more teachers this year than last year and 13,000 more teachers than 2010. There are also record numbers of returners to the profession. Some 14,000 more returners joined the profession again last year compared to 11,000 a few years before that, so the idea there is some view prevailing that teaching is not a profession that people want to join is simply not true. There are record numbers in the profession and record numbers returning to the profession. This is a time of huge opportunity for teachers to join the profession when there are challenges, particularly in shortage subjects like maths and physics. There are huge opportunities now for graduates in those subjects to join the profession and to do extremely well in it.

Q58 Michelle Donelan: I am not denying there are fantastic opportunities or that it is a fantastic career, as we have already stressed as a Committee this morning, but just because a situation is improving does not necessarily mean that it is not still in crisis. There were 2,300 shortages in 2014-15, coupled with the fact of the baby boom, which puts added pressure on to the situation. I think what I am trying to boil down is: do you think that there is still a massive problem, even though it is improving and the Government is acting on it, that it is a substantial issue of concern?

Mr Gibb: It certainly is an issue of concern, but it is an issue that we are addressing. We have taken a huge number of measures to address these issues, such as introducing the bursaries, £30,000 for a top physics graduate, £25,000 for top graduates in other subjects, and a whole range of other bursaries. We issued something like 16,000 bursaries last year, and we have had a wonderful marketing campaign to encourage people to come into teaching. If you look at the figures this year compared with last year, we are seeing an increasing number. For example, in physics, the number of people recruited to the physics teacher training has risen from 637 last year to 746 this year. In mathematics, it has risen

from 2,100 last year to 2,400 this year. So in absolute terms we are increasing the number of people coming into teaching in those shortage subjects.

Q59 Michelle Donelan: Would you say it is a regional problem? I am an MP in the south-west, and there are eight times the levels of vacancies there. Would you say that it is particularly a regional problem, as opposed to a national problem?

Mr Gibb: The overall national figures show that the vacancy rate for teachers is very low, at 0.3%. I take on board the comments about the date of the census, and that is something that we did consult with schools about too. We originally wanted to take that census in January; we were told by schools that it was a burden because they were doing the pupil census at that time. We wanted it to be September, but of course that is the beginning of the school year, and that brings with it other challenges. We are talking to the unions about what data sets we should be using and when we should be taking this census. But I think all these figures do conceal, if you like, the regional variations that you are hinting at. It is not just local and regional variations. Within a region and within a locality it can be variations between schools as well, that—

Q60 Michelle Donelan: Yes, and subjects. That moves us on to design and technology, which is a very important thing in my own constituency, which has a strong engineering background. I know that Dyson have joined with you in reforming some of that course, and it is an excellent course, but we already have such low levels of teachers in that area of subject. Then with EBacc and no vocational element, do you think that will exacerbate the situation further? Yes, there are bursaries, but there are no scholarships for design and technology, and the levels of the bursaries are a third less than physics. So I am wondering what message we are sending to people going into the teaching profession. If we are pushing so hard on the academic core, do you think there is a danger that in 10 years' time it is going to be a massive problem?

Mr Gibb: I accept the problems with design and technology. The numbers taking the subject have been in decline for several years, in fact before we introduced the English Baccalaureate measure. I think part of that problem was the content of the curricula.

Michelle Donelan: Yes. Exactly. Yes.

Mr Gibb: We have revised that, and we have worked with Dyson and we have worked with the design and technology association to improve both the GCSE and the A-level, and I think we have a very high quality product as a consequence of that. I am optimistic we will see an uptake in those subjects in the years ahead, and then that, of course, will feed through into qualified teachers. In terms of design and technology numbers, we have again increased that number from 409 last year, coming into ITT, to 526 this year. There are bursaries for design and technology.

Q61 Michelle Donelan: Yes, there is no scholarship, but there is a bursary, but it is a third less than physics. I am concerned that if we are trying to attract the same people that are taking those kinds of subjects, the message we are sending out, and the very financial incentive, is to opt for pure science when going into the teaching profession.

Mr Gibb: Yes, but, £12,000 is a significant bursary. We are taking this issue seriously. This is a generous bursary.

Q62 Michelle Donelan: There are no plans to try to attract more people?

Mr Gibb: We address these issues every year. We look at the bursary levels every year in terms of the numbers coming into the profession and where the shortages are. We have a limited pot, and we take a lot of time allocating the level of bursary, both to the subject and to the degree class, and it will be reviewed every year.

Q63 Ian Mearns: Minister, you have quoted some raw numbers there in terms of the number of recruits this year as opposed to last year, but the figure that we have is that it is 41% of the target. It might be an improvement, but it is 41% of target in terms of design and technology.

Mr Gibb: Yes, but of course we increased the target as well. We have increased the targets across all subjects that we are concerned about. But it is a challenge, there is no question, and we have engaged in marketing campaigns as well to try to recruit specifically for design and technology. I am optimistic for the future because we have improved the curriculum. I think that will feed through to more youngsters taking the subject, and in turn more qualified people ready to come in to teaching in years ahead.

Q64 Ian Mearns: On the broader spectrum, and we have seen other data, certainly the chief inspector was sitting there a number of weeks ago and repeated the statistic about the number of youngsters going into apprenticeships aged 16 to 19 are only 6% of the cohort. That is a problem, because the Government have a target of getting 3 million apprenticeships in the next five years, and if only 6% of the cohort are going in, and we have so few design and technology teachers, who are going to be important to that whole agenda, really some urgency might be required.

Mr Gibb: Yes, but design and technology is not the only preparation for apprenticeships.

Ian Mearns: I agree with that. Yes.

Mr Gibb: All the EBacc subjects, all the other high-quality vocational subjects that are taken in schools as a consequence of the Wolf Review in 2011, are also very good preparation for apprenticeships. I am very confident that with all the other measures we are taking we will meet our target for 3 million apprenticeships.

Q65 Ian Mearns: But equally in specialist subjects, maths is under-recruiting, physics is under-recruiting and business studies and computing are under-recruiting. They are all aspects of the vocational agenda which is so important to that part of the Government's agenda for recruiting apprentices in the future.

Mr Gibb: There are two points; first, in absolute terms, those numbers are going up. We have increased the target because we are ambitious to recruit as many people in those shortage subjects as possible. Absolute numbers are going up. That is in the context of a strong and growing economy and an increasingly competitive graduate market in terms of the employer, from the employer's perspective. That is a consequence of success in our economy, but it is a challenge that we face. It is a challenge that Teach First face and it is a challenge that many employers face as they are competing for better graduates.

Q66 Ian Mearns: One the of the reasons you have had to increase the targets this year in particular is that a number of those subjects have under-recruited in the previous two years as well. Therefore, you have had to increase the targets for this year in order to try to rebalance that.

Mr Gibb: Yes. We have also increased them because of the changes to the curriculum. We have increased them because of the point that Michelle Donelan was making about the increasing numbers coming through into the school system. But if you look at things like maths, we recruited 2,170 graduates into the maths training last year. This year it is 2,400. In physics it is, as I said, 637 to 746, chemistry from 823 last year to 1,003 this year, which is 95% of our target. So in absolute terms it is going up, but of course our targets are going up, and that is why the percentage overall for secondary is 82% rather than 100%.

Q67 Chair: Nick, it is really a question of scale, is it not? Because many of us will remember when Jim Callaghan returned from Guadeloupe facing strikes left, right and centre, and his slightly understated response was quickly turned into, “Crisis? What crisis?” Do you think there is a crisis or do you just think it is a challenge?

Mr Gibb: It is a challenge. What concerns me about the use of that word— and I am concerned by some of the words used in the previous sessions and words used by people in issuing statements to the press—is that people are in some ways talking down the profession. Actually the profession is in very good shape. Record numbers of people are in the teaching profession. We have a very high qualified profession; 18% of new recruits now have a first-class degree, and these figures are increasing in percentages. There are large numbers of returners coming back into teaching. This is not evidence of a profession in crisis or a profession that has a morale problem. These figures would not show that improvement if that was the case.

If we look at the pupil/teacher ratios around the country, those figures are not increasing; they are still relatively low. If we look at vacancy rates, they are still low. I accept all the points about challenges that head teachers are facing in recruiting around the country, and we are addressing that. In terms of policy, we are doing all the things that a Government that has the political will to address these problems is doing, such as the marketing campaign, such as the bursaries. There are a whole range of incentives to encourage returners to come back into the profession, such as looking at School Direct salaries and making sure that that is at a sufficient level to encourage career changes. There is not an area that we are not examining. The researchers in schools, the chairs in schools, our steps to encourage more PhDs to come into our schools, all that is a very successful programme. We are looking at every single aspect of policy to see what we can do to improve recruitment, and it is working. We are seeing larger numbers of graduates coming into teacher training as a consequence of those measures.

Q68 Chair: Earlier you heard a discussion about data, and the different aspects of data, and the question about vacancies, and so on. Do you think that the Department has suitable data to make the judgments you have just made?

Mr Gibb: Last year we published for the first time the teacher supply model, the black box that outcomes the numbers at the other end. We have opened up that black box so that people can see precisely what the assumptions are that we make in coming up with those

numbers, and we invite people to submit views about that. We are very happy to tweak and change that teacher supply model if it is not coming up with the right numbers or we are not using the right data on which it is based. This is a very transparent, open Government in terms of data. If there are improvements that can be made, we will make them.

Q69 Michelle Donelan: At the moment one-sixth of the teachers going into the profession are qualified overseas. Are there any learnings that you have taken on board from other countries where you think that they are getting it right, they are getting more people who want to go into the teaching profession and whom we are now employing here in the UK?

Mr Gibb: You have to be careful with these kinds of stats, because a lot of people who qualify using our qualification system here are teaching abroad and have been abroad. So it is not always the case that these figures necessarily reveal what you imply that they are revealing. What was your question? I am denying that statistic.

Q70 Michelle Donelan: I was just wondering if, as a Government, you have taken on board any learnings from other countries as to how they are getting people into the teaching profession or managing to keep them there. I am in big favour of do not reinvent the wheel if we have other learnings from elsewhere.

Mr Gibb: Yes. There are a lot of surveys about this country, about why people leave the profession and why they are concerned. They were mentioned today in this session, things like excessive workload, pupil behaviour, and pay and conditions as well. These are the issues that affect the profession and we are addressing these issues. The excessive workload is something that I take very seriously and the Secretary of State takes very seriously. We had the Workload Challenge, which had 44,000 responses. We have set up three working groups to address the top three concerns raised in that survey, and Darren Northcott is on the marking working group. That is, I think, the second largest issue people raised about workload. So we are addressing workload, we are addressing pupil behaviour and we are giving teachers more powers to deal with poor behaviour in the classroom. We have clarified the powers that they have. We have removed the ability to undermine the head teacher's authority in terms of expulsions and exclusions from school. We are taking measures, and they have been successful. All these help deal with the concerns that teachers have about their own profession.

Q71 Chair: Nick, what is the life cycle of your current recruitment plan?

Mr Gibb: The teacher supply model does look several years ahead. This is a slightly technical question, in which case I will write to you about the precise elements of the—

Chair: Thank you. I am looking forward to the post. Thank you. Excellent. Thank you very much. Suella.

Q72 Suella Fernandes: Yes. Minister, you said that there are opportunities now in the teaching profession for entrants and people already there. Could you say a bit more about some of the schemes that you have mentioned that have been piloted, like the Workload

Challenge, like pay flexibilities? I am interested to hear a bit more about the support for returners and career changes.

Mr Gibb: Yes. In terms of pay flexibility, that is something that we introduced in 2013. If schools are finding difficulty recruiting a maths teacher or a science teacher, they can use the flexibilities that we have now given them to address that. We have introduced a scheme for returners. We are piloting it at the moment in, I think, about 43 schools. That is about an incentive scheme to the school, £1,900 per returner that comes to the school in order to encourage the school and also to provide things like training, because some people have been out of the profession for several years. They may be very knowledgeable about mathematics, but they may have forgotten how you teach long division to a class of 9-year-olds, or how to teach physics to a secondary school pupil. So there are schemes in place now to help with that return as well.

Q73 Suella Fernandes: There have been some changes to the initial teacher training allocation to help the recruitment drive, so could you say a bit more about that?

Mr Gibb: Could you clarify your question a bit more?

Suella Fernandes: Yes. As part of the drive, the approach to ITT allocations has been changed in that there is not going to be a specific number of places given to individual organisations.

Mr Gibb: Yes. One of the elements of the political will to address this issue is that we decided this year to remove the cap from universities. We did not want people at universities who had reached the target level to stop recruiting suitable candidates simply because they had reached that cap, so we took off the cap. That has been very successful. In fact, in one instance it has been too successful and we have had to use the reserve powers that we took to re-impose the cap in order to protect a number of universities that had a slightly slower recruitment progress. But it has been successful. Right across the board we are seeing higher numbers and a speedier application process than has happened in previous years. We will have to look at the situation at the end of the year to see how successful it has been in recruiting, in absolute terms, more than last year, or whether it has just speeded up the process.

Q74 Suella Fernandes: This is the last question. There has been a lot of talk about morale of the teaching workforce. You obviously visit a lot of schools and meet teachers and members of the profession. What is your sense of the attitude of people coming into the profession and those who are long-standing members of it at the moment, based on your experience?

Mr Gibb: We have a very dedicated, highly qualified profession who, as we said earlier, do want to make a difference. It is a vocation, but it is also a vocation of professionals who want to do the best for their pupils. There is an issue about the pace of reform. There is no question but that the pace of reform over the last five or six years has been very intense. That has been deliberate. We have to make sure that our education system continues to improve, because other jurisdictions around the world are continuing to improve and we want to make sure that our youngsters leaving school are able to compete, not just for jobs in this country, but in the global jobs market. We do not apologise for that. I know sometimes that is taken as criticism, but it is not meant to be taken as criticism.

If you read the speeches of the Secretary of State—this Secretary of State and the previous Secretary of State—and you read my speeches, you will see that they pay huge tribute to our profession. But the pace of reform has been intense and the Secretary of State has made it clear that she wants a period of stability over the next few years. Of course the reforms that were put in place are really coming into fruition now. It takes many years to bring about a GCSE. The English and Math GCSE are beginning now, this September 2015; next year we have a number of other EBacc GCSEs coming on-stream for the first time; and the year after that the remaining GCSEs. The same with the A-levels, a whole raft of new A-levels are coming on-stream this year. Last year, in September 2014, we had the new primary curriculum coming on-stream. You can see why the profession is under pressure as they implement all these reforms, but we are going into a period of stability. These reforms are very important and schools are responding well to the introduction.

Q75 Chair: Thank you, Nick. Can I ask one question that has been overlooked, I think, and that is the role of the regional schools commissioners in this issue of recruitment? Do you think there is a role for them in identifying priorities and working with teaching schools, for example?

Mr Gibb: It is important that the regional schools commissioners confine themselves to the job that they are responsible for doing, which is to tackle underperformance, to tackle the brokerage into academy status for those schools that are failing, and to look at how the academies in their regions are performing. Of course they have very hands-on and locally based experience of who the players are in a region, and they can play a role in ensuring that high-quality leaders of education, national leaders of education, are deployed to help those schools that are in difficulty.

Q76 Ian Austin: I wanted to ask whether you have considered not imposing limits on the numbers of students that the universities could recruit or could allow to train as teachers. Professor Howson said earlier that the big argument against this would be the impact on public spending, but there would be no requirement to increase the number of bursaries even if you did lift the cap and allow universities to recruit more students. Why do you not let the market decide?

Mr Gibb: We are doing that to an extent in that we have lifted the cap, but that is within the overall targets. Although we lifted the caps on institutions, we have to keep those overall caps in terms of the overall subject numbers.

Q77 Ian Austin: But just because there is a target does not mean there should be limit. The numbers of students who want to go and study law are not limited, and then it is up to them if they can get a job afterwards.

Mr Gibb: Yes.

Ian Austin: Why should the number of students who want to train to be teachers be limited by the universities?

Mr Gibb: There is a cost to the taxpayer, which are the fees that are usually paid for by a student loan. That involves an up-front cost for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and for the Treasury. So you do have to take that into account, and it is not a good use of the UK PLC's resources to be training a huge number of teachers in a

particular subject if there are no jobs for them at the end of the day. We have a duty, first to steward carefully taxpayers' money, but also to make sure that graduates going into teaching are incentivised to go into those subjects where we need those teachers. If we did not have any kind of control over these issues it may be that even fewer would go into maths and physics and more would go into those subjects that already have sufficient numbers.

Q78 Ian Austin: Why would fewer go into maths and physics?

Mr Gibb: You do need these bursaries to encourage—and they have proven very successful. If you took away all the bursaries and just allowed a free-for-all—

Q79 Ian Austin: No, no, I am not suggesting that at all. I am not suggesting taking away the bursaries; I am just suggesting allowing more people—allowing universities to recruit more people if they are able to.

Mr Gibb: Again I would reiterate the point that this does bring with it a cost. It brings with it a cost for the student loans, and there is an issue about making sure there are jobs for people. It would not be a good use of the undergraduate's time to encourage them to be taking a teacher-training course in a subject for which there were no jobs at the end of that period.

Q80 Michelle Donelan: Is that not an argument then, building on what Ian was saying, to apply that to other fields? Because I think what Ian is also saying is it is not fair that you could do one degree course and not be limited, but do this and be limited.

Ian Austin: It is the only subject that is—

Michelle Donelan: I would argue the opposite from Ian: does that not say we should do that in other courses as well, if we are saying that it is a cost to the taxpayer? The others are equally a cost to the taxpayer, so should we not have one law for all?

Ian Austin: I think the point I am making is that teaching and nursing are the only areas—

Mr Gibb: The vast majority of employers in the education sector are state sector and state funded— 93% of pupils in this country attend maintained or state-funded schools. It is different from the law, which is 99% private sector. There is a difference, and I think it is right that we have system that, broadly speaking, is working.

Q81 Chair: On a related matter, you heard the discussion about the idea of student loan forgiveness earlier. Do you think that has some advantages, potentially?

Mr Gibb: Again, it does bring with it a cost. We have looked very carefully at that proposition, and our view is that the bursary system is the most effective. With the bursary, you get a £25,000 bursary, of which £9,000 will be used to pay the fee, and that then leaves £16,000 as the incentive.

Q82 Ian Mearns: The ITT, in the last Parliament we saw a rapid and huge growth in the number of places being offered through school-based initial teacher training. It has been said that this has led to a fragmentation in provision. Do you agree that is a concern?

Mr Gibb: No. We are at a position now where 51% of graduates coming into teaching are trained through the school-based system, but that does not mean to say they do not use the universities. They do use universities, both for training and/or for the issue of the PGCE. I would encourage universities that are not involved with the School Direct system to do so, but I certainly do not think it is a fragmentation of the system, and the outcomes of teachers going through this School Direct system are as successful, if not more successful, as the outcomes of students or graduates going through the university route.

Q83 Ian Mearns: Have you had any discussions with the higher education providers about their role in this system and the viability of their courses?

Mr Gibb: Yes, we have continual discussions with James Noble-Rogers of UCET, and others. Of course we want to make sure that the university sector remains viable.

Q84 Ian Mearns: Concerns have been expressed to us about the viability of courses in the higher education sector. Can you give us some reassurances that that dialogue will be ongoing to make sure that those places are secure?

Mr Gibb: Yes, we will continue to have a dialogue. What we want to do is to move the power, the decision making and the discretion to schools. We want schools to have the ability to recruit directly the graduates that they seek, and we want schools to have a greater say in the composition of the training, because there were concerns that some teachers were leaving the universities without training in things such as behaviour management that the schools wanted. So now the position is that, whether it is School Direct or the School Centre for Initial Teacher Training, there is more control given to the schools, and they can then work with the universities to ensure that the training and the courses at university are geared to what the schools actually need in the classroom.

Q85 Ian Mearns: Have you any thoughts on where confusion exists about the routes into teaching? Have you any thoughts about looking at that in terms of trying to alleviate that confusion where it exists?

Mr Gibb: Yes. I think that is an important point to make, and we are looking at what more we can do. There is a centralised application system through UCAS, so to that extent it is relatively simple. We do want schools to have discretion about whom they recruit, which is why we would not want necessarily to go down the Teach First route. But I am very concerned that we might be losing people who are rejected from one institution or one route, and we want to make sure that every single person who has not found a place at a university or a particular school is still within the system so we do not lose those potential applicants, particularly if they are well qualified to become teachers.

Q86 Lucy Frazer: Can I start by picking up the point that Ian and Michelle raised about the Government's role in making sure that our workforce comes out skilled in the right areas in which we have jobs? You mentioned law. I know, having gone through a law degree and Bar school, that a large number of people took those courses not in the knowledge that

we were producing more barristers than we needed. Bar school is incredibly expensive, it was £5,000 when I did it, and it is significantly more now. Do you not think there is some role for the Government to help in that process, even if it is just providing information so that people do the courses that jobs are available for?

Mr Gibb: Do you mean in law?

Lucy Frazer: In every profession. I have specific knowledge about law because that is the course I took, but I am sure it must be similar in other areas as well.

Mr Gibb: You are going slightly beyond my brief here.

Lucy Frazer: I know.

Mr Gibb: Generally my view is that if it is in the private sector, the Government are best advised to steer clear and let the market decide. But in terms of teaching and education, this is a largely state sector operation and, therefore, Ministers do need to be quite closely involved.

Ian Mearns: Is that why the Government are reducing the training levy for employers?

Q87 Lucy Frazer: Shall I come back to your sector? I wanted to ask you about the recruitment drives that you have done. You said that in relation to bursaries, they proved very successful. What evidence do you have in relation to the bursaries proving successful?

Mr Gibb: That they do result in increased applications into courses. I can send the Committee more details about the data that we have that show that we are successful.

Lucy Frazer: I think Neil would like that.

Mr Gibb: But they have proven successful and, therefore, when we come to look at it every year, it is always a great risk in reducing a bursary level. You have to do that if you want to increase it somewhere else. We take these decisions after a great deal of deliberation, because we do know that if you reduce the bursary level that can result in a reduction in the number of applicants.

Q88 Lucy Frazer: In terms of retention, do you have any evidence that people who took the bursaries are still in the profession, or are you tracking how your bursary recruits are doing?

Mr Gibb: Certainly retention generally is in a good place. 90% of all trainees are still in the profession a year later, and 72% are still in teaching after five years. In terms of the tracking of bursary graduates—I am just looking around—we will again let you have that data.

Lucy Frazer: That would be really helpful, thank you.

Q89 Michelle Donelan: Have you considered what we discussed before about making people pay it back if they have not been in the profession for four years or a proportion per year that they are eligible for? What about keeping the bursary, not moving to

the forgiveness loan, but making sure that they have to work in the sector, which a lot of private companies do if they are paying for training and development?

Mr Gibb: We have very high retention rates in the profession, and the key to us is to encourage people to come into teacher training. This can involve a risk for people, because they have already paid the fees for an undergraduate degree and we are asking them to pay another £9,000, to go into further debt for another £9,000, for this post-graduate qualification. Therefore, the bursaries are designed to incentivise that, to help young people overcome that hurdle. We are confident that the retention rates generally will apply to that cohort equally, as it does to the rest of the profession.

Q90 Chair: Nick, do you ever get the feeling that the routes to becoming a teacher are a bit confusing and that it might be a good idea to clear up some of those confusions?

Mr Gibb: I do take that point, and it is something that I am concerned about. We are looking at how we can clarify the information to people who are thinking about coming to teaching, and how to make it clear what the different routes are, and how to simplify the system of applying to individual schools. We do not want to lose anybody who is capable of becoming a teacher, who is well qualified to become a teacher, and who is interested in becoming a teacher, simply because the system is over complex. I do take that point, and it is something we are looking at very seriously.

Q91 Ian Austin: I want to ask about raising the status of the teaching profession, because I think if you look at places that consistently outperform Britain, like South Korea or Shanghai, teaching is a high-status, high-value profession, recognised as such in the country and community. What plans have you got to drive up the status of the teaching profession?

Mr Gibb: One of our overriding objectives is to raise the status of the teaching profession, which is why we raised the bar for entry into teaching, the skills test that teachers take. We have limited the number of retakes that can be taken, and we are seeing a higher proportion of graduates with top degrees coming into teaching than previously. Addressing issues like workload and pupil behaviour are all part of that issue as well. On the College of Teachers, again, that proposition is also about delivering for teachers what other professions have, whether it is the Royal College of Surgeons and the Law Society and so on, and we want to make sure that we have the same approach to the teaching profession as those other professions.

Q92 Ian Austin: What more can you do to address low levels of morale in the profession and the long-standing issues around pay, and workload, and conditions, and all that?

Mr Gibb: One of the things we can do is not continue to talk down the profession. I think it is an exciting profession to be in. There has never been a better time to join the profession. The opportunities in teaching are now huge. The idea you can set up your own practice, your own Free School, has never been the case in the past. You can see a very rapid rise now in leadership. We are now looking at ways of encouraging high flyers to become head teachers in a much shorter space of time. It has always surprised me that you can become a partner in a city law firm in your early to mid 30s and yet the expectation is that you cannot expect to take a headship until you are in your mid 40s. We are moving towards swifter promotion. There are opportunities now for teachers beyond head

teachers, to become chief executives in multi-academy trusts, and so on. It is an exciting time to go into the teaching profession. That is the message that I hope your Committee and the rest of us can send out.

Q93 Ian Austin: I do not disagree with any of that, but why do you think under successive Governments, not just yours, but when we were in power as well, the relationship between the Government and the representatives of the teaching profession seems to be so dysfunctional? Annual rows at the conference, and all this sort of stuff, why do you think that is?

Mr Gibb: I do not think that some of the things that have happened in the past at some of the teaching conferences have helped the profession. There is a genuine issue when you have policy makers like ourselves, like me, who see problems with our education system, who look at the international league tables, who look at some of these other surveys about the quality of languages in this country and so on, and who want to introduce policies to put those issues right. Therefore, when you highlight the problem it can sound like you are criticising every single member of the teaching profession working in this country, and it is not designed to do that.

If you are trying to reform the curriculum, that is about the curriculum. Even if you are trying to reform an issue like teaching methods and pedagogy, again, that is not a criticism of the teaching profession, it is a self-criticism of what we are doing as a country and the way we approach certain issues. I think we perhaps need to be more careful in the language that we use when we are explaining why we are introducing policies, just as it would be better if the teaching unions did not continually talk down the profession in order to make the points that they are making. So together I think we can do more to improve our language.

Q94 Chair: Do you share the widespread agreement on the last panel about the College of Teachers and the value that that might bring to the professionalism of teaching?

Mr Gibb: Sorry, do I share—

Chair: The previous panel all basically agreed with the idea that the College of Teachers was a good one and would contribute to professional development. Do you share that?

Mr Gibb: Yes. It is important to have a similar professional body that reflects the type of qualities and institutions they have in other professions. It is important that it is a profession-led organisation and not a Government-led organisation. We had the problem with the GTCE previously, and the reason why that did not succeed in the end was that it was simply part of the Government's machinery. All the other professions have these royal colleges which were established centuries ago. That is what makes them successful; they have come from within the profession. That is what I hope will happen with the College of Teachers.

Q95 Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, Nick, for coming along today. As I said before, we appreciated the fact that you listened to the earlier evidence. Thank you.

Mr Gibb: Thank you very much.

