

Whither Teacher Education and Training?

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About the author

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He was a Director of the Higher Education Careers Service from 1994 to 2013 and was Chair of Liverpool: City of Learning from 2003 to 2005. He chaired the Standing Conference of Principals from 2001 to 2003, having been Vice-Chair from 1997-2001. He was a Director of the Teacher Training Agency and its successor body, the Training and Development Agency for Schools, from 1999 to 2006 and chaired both the Accreditation and the Audit Committees. He is also the Chair of UUK's Teacher Education Advisory Group.

Preface

Schools face increasing challenges of teacher shortages, particularly within certain subjects and regions. The Government is aware of these issues, yet needs to identify a strategic long-term plan to effectively address them. The Government has missed recruitment targets for the last five years, and in 2016/17 the number of graduates starting initial teacher training fell.

Rising pupil numbers and changes to school accountability, including the Government's focus on subjects within the EBacc, will exacerbate existing problems, increasing demand for teachers in subjects experiencing shortages. The failure of the National Teaching Service leaves a gap in the Government's plans to tackle regional shortages.

The number of different routes into teaching are not always well understood by applicants and can be confusing.

House of Commons Education Committee, *Recruitment and retention of teachers: Fifth Report of Session 2016-17*, HC199, 2017

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Introduction

It seemed simple then. Almost every local authority, supplemented by the faith providers, operated its own teacher training college – Lancashire had four, Liverpool had seven – each largely supplying its own schools. To teach was a profession people aspired to, with considerable status.

Teacher training was also a craft, but it took place in what were widely perceived to be second or third-tier higher education institutions, producing skilled practitioners with a thorough understanding of pedagogy, though often divorced from the advancement of academic knowledge that was percolating through the universities and polytechnics. All too often, it was a second-choice option, attracting to its teaching certificate courses those unable to gain a place on a degree programme alongside those committed to the profession. It was an inefficient system: some 200 providers, often small, suffering from under-investment and housed in buildings that had lost much of their original functionality.

The education and training of teachers has been contested space for almost five decades. The Committee of Enquiry, commissioned by Margaret Thatcher in 1970 and published as the James Report (1972), was the catalyst for change. Teacher education was to be planned regionally and nationally, leading to a Diploma of Higher Education and, in due course, degree qualifications. But most teacher training colleges were ill-equipped to provide sufficient subject knowledge or to obtain degree-awarding powers. Aided by the largesse of the state under the Crombie Code, which provided generous retraining and redundancy terms for displaced staff, a considerable

majority of colleges either ceased to exist or sought sanctuary and absorption into the polytechnic and university sectors.

For the remainder of the 1970s, dealing with the pains of restructuring was intervention enough for the state. Individual providers were allowed to deliver their own, sometimes widely divergent, curricula. Interpretations of this freedom resonate today; when politicians such as Michael Gove refer to 'the Blob', they are alluding to a curriculum and a control structure dating back four decades.

The re-election of the Conservative Government in June 1983 removed that autonomy. In the eyes of the state, teacher education had been subjected to 'producer capture', a system working better for the providers of training than purchasers and consumers. Circular 3/84 sought to redress this by introducing statutory controls over the structure and content of initial teacher training. While the Department of Education and Science (DES) held the technical responsibility for awarding Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) under the 1944 Education Act, in practice it had simply acted automatically on a provider's recommendation. From 1984, QTS would only be awarded to trainees graduating from courses that met the Circular's criteria. A new Government body, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE), was established to inspect every provider.

Reflecting the political dynamic, many of CATE's early reports were critical of the quality of initial teacher training, and particularly the limited development of some trainees' classroom skills. These criticisms were often reflected in newly-qualified teachers' own assessments of their training, and

resulted in teacher trainers working in higher education being required to obtain 'recent and relevant' experience in schools and in schools being involved in the selection process of trainees. For many providers these changes were not particularly onerous and merely reinforced existing good practice; the radical departure was the emergence of state control.

Debates around the sufficiency of Circular 3/84 continued throughout the decade, and its basic tenets were reinforced for Secondary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in the Department's Circular 9/92 and for Primary the following year (DES 14/93). These gave schools enhanced responsibilities for the planning and management of teacher education and for the selection, training and assessment of future teachers. Perhaps regrettably, they also damaged the symbiotic relationship between the contribution schools made to training prospective teachers and the benefits they accrued from having trainees in the classroom, supporting or releasing qualified staff. Rather, in an early example of the marketisation of higher education, the partnership was placed on a contractual footing, with the higher education provider expected to transfer sufficient funding to the school to secure its leading role in ITE. The substance, depth and security of these relationships then became an integral part of the inspection process for ITE, under the scrutiny of Ofsted and the oversight of a new appointee to the post of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England (HMCI), Chris Woodhead, who took up post in 1994.

Paralleling this in the early 1990s were new developments in how teachers could choose to train, known as the Articled and Licensed Teacher schemes. The former was accredited by

higher education institutions, but trainees spent four-fifths of their time in schools; in the latter case, trainees were recruited directly into vacancies in schools and given 'licences' to teach, supported (to differing degrees) with on-the-job training. In varying forms and with varying numbers of trainees, alternative routes such as these have played a part in the teacher training landscape to the present day.

The Teacher Training Agency (1994-2005) and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (2005-2011)

The emerging complexity was instrumental in the establishment of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) in 1994, under the leadership of a former senior HMI, Anthea Millett. The TTA was founded in part to facilitate the development of school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT), allowing schools direct access to state funding, to government-facilitated capacity-building and to academic and professional support enabling them to act as independent delivery agencies. But the limited extent to which potential trainees saw schools as the 'providers of choice' for initial teacher training, and the capacity of schools to meet the training need for over 35,000 new teachers each year, meant school-centred provision rarely accounted for more than one-sixth of supply. Furthermore, Ofsted inspection outcomes, while often praising the practice-based skills acquired by school-centred trainees, emphasised the narrow focus of much training, the lack of sufficient resources and the absence of university and peer-based support systems.

For the first five years, the Teacher Training Agency had a fractious relationship with the higher education sector. Throughout this time, perceptions of the teaching profession suffered. In small part, this may have been a consequence of persistent attempts to cut the links between higher education institutions and initial teacher training. But reward structures, workloads and working conditions, as well as the greater perceived salaries and opportunities in other professions (such as accountancy and law) were also influential. While SCITTs,

as small local postgraduate training providers, were often attractive to specific segments of the market – less mobile individuals, returners to the workforce and career changers – the bulk of potential trainees were either in the final year of an undergraduate degree or had graduated within the previous two years – making universities and colleges, which had retained their undergraduate initial teacher training (ITT) monopoly, the obvious locus for postgraduate trainee teacher recruitment and, arguably, delivery.

The Labour Government in office from 1997 retained the previous administration's approach to the training of teachers until the end of the decade. Yet a Government built around the mantra of 'education, education, education' could never deliver on that agenda with a failing supply system and a profession increasingly diminished in status. The Secretary of State for Education, Estelle Morris, now Baroness Morris of Yardley, took what she subsequently described as one of the hardest personal decisions of her career in not renewing the contract of the then Chief Executive of the Agency, Anthea Millett. In doing so, she signalled a more inclusive, less confrontational relationship with all parties engaged in ITT, and a strategy driven more by pragmatism than ideology.

A new Chief Executive was appointed, Ralph Tabberer; the Board Chair, Professor Sir Clive Booth – and his successor, Professor Sir Brian Follett – were drawn from higher education, both having been Vice-Chancellors; and, an empathetic senior civil servant (and future Chief Executive Officer), Graham Holley, appointed as the link between the Agency and the Department for Education and Science. A major and significant

new advertising initiative was launched, the iconic 'No one forgets a good teacher' campaign, featuring, among others, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair. A major consultation on teacher workloads was also instigated.

This consultation and the subsequent legislation (the Education Act 2002) introduced mandatory non-contact time for teachers during the school day and the addition of a raft of support workers, teaching assistants and higher-level teaching assistants, into the classroom. Resources were also pumped into teachers' professional development. This process of change was overseen by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG), with representation from the state, employers, the teaching workforce and the teaching unions.

While there were challenges with the implementation of the Act and questions over its effectiveness and longer-term consequences, there was a significant improvement in teacher recruitment in the ensuing five years. There was steady supply, with higher education providers responsible for five-sixths of trainees and school-based providers – including a small number of not-for-profit agencies – accounting for the remainder.

In 2005, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) was rebadged as the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), reflecting a change in focus, a broadening of its remit and an increased responsibility for teachers' professional development.

Despite this, towards the end of the decade enduring questions concerning the status of teaching as a profession, workloads, class sizes and the deployment of teaching assistants began to re-emerge. This was coupled with pressure from bodies

such as the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), who argued that teaching should be a Master's level profession. In response, and after considerable lobbying, in 2008 the Secretary of State, Ed Balls, agreed to a £25 million pilot programme in a single region, the north-west, for a Master's degree in Teaching and Learning. This represented a significant shift from prior practice, as the key aim of teachers' professional development had rarely been a recognised academic outcome. However, a few months later the banking crisis curtailed enthusiasm for the pilot and the idea was quietly shelved in the years that followed.

The Coalition Government, 2010 - 2015

Two hundred metres is a long distance in politics. The creation of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills in June 2007, a stone's throw from the Department for Children, Schools and Families in Great Smith Street, was welcomed by many vice-chancellors. Universities were referred to on the entrance plaque and there was a strengthened link to innovation, research and knowledge transfer and a recognition of higher education's importance to the wider economy. No longer were universities bit players in a broad department.

But, in time, the relocation became less productive for those higher education providers engaged in teacher education and training. In the aftermath of the banking crisis, as funding was threatened and statutory services demanded protection and shelter, the budget for universities was trimmed, with growth targets curtailed and over-recruitment punished. Aspirations to reinvigorate the status of teaching via a major investment in professional development through to Master's level withered. But distraction and antipathy did not degenerate into overt hostility until the Coalition years.

One of the reasons for this was the protective barrier offered by the Training and Development Agency for Schools. This was a non-departmental public body, relocated from London to Manchester, reporting directly to Parliament and not the Secretary of State, with independent Board members and an independent Chair. It received steers from the state but relatively few directives. After the 2010 election, it soon became clear, however, that the new Secretary of State for

Education, Michael Gove, and the Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb, regarded the Agency as too close to higher education providers and insufficiently enthusiastic in its desire to push a changed agenda. A merger with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), regarded as rather better aligned to the Department and to schools (and rather more successful in asserting influence in the first months of the new Parliament), was proposed. More significantly, the new body was to report to the Secretary of State rather than to be directly accountable to Parliament. The Chief Executive retired early, the independent Chair came to the end of his term of office, the Board was dissolved and the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) was born.

The rhetoric of the next five years confirmed this was not simply a structural change. The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister's 'Foreword' to the Department for Education's 2010 schools white paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, claimed, 'There is no question that teaching standards have increased in this country in recent decades and that the current cohort of trainees is one of our best ever.'¹ They went on to praise the 'fantastic' Teach First programme and stated a perceived need to give 'outstanding schools a much greater role in teacher training.'² Published alongside the white paper, *The Case for Change*, noted that 'in England only 2% of first class honours graduates from Russell Group universities went on to train to teach' and that '6% of trainee teachers had degrees below a 2:2', presumably citing academic attainment as a precise surrogate for teacher capacity.³

In its 2011 Improvement Strategy, *Training our next generation of outstanding teachers*, the Department set out to reform initial teacher training. Ministers claimed that in many cases trainees felt ‘that the training they receive directly from the university leading their course is not properly joined up with the school placements’, and ‘that university-based trainees see their training as too theoretical’, leading the Government to conclude that schools ‘should take on greater responsibility for managing the system.’⁴

In many ways, this was a re-articulation of a debate and a set of policy initiatives that had characterised the ‘contested space’ of teacher education and training since the early 1980s; the difference on this occasion was that the Government, and in particular key Ministers, were ideologically committed to pushing the changes through. The Consultation Document, with very little amendment, became the *Implementation Plan*. In the Foreword, the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, promised to reform training ‘so that more ITT is led by schools.’⁵

To ‘strengthen’ the quality of initial teacher training, the Government proposed four measures:

- i. expanding Teach First, which is designed to encourage ‘top graduates’ to enter teaching;
- ii. encouraging Service Leavers to become teachers through a new ‘Troops to Teachers’ programme;
- iii. placing more emphasis on selection processes and trainee quality when judging an ITT provider’s quality; and,
- iv. setting a higher bar for entry into ITT by making the QTS

skills tests an entry (rather than exit) qualification and limiting candidates to two re-sits.

In addition, a greater range of financial incentives were made available to encourage high-performing graduates into teaching through training bursaries, with payments of up to £20,000 to attract Chemistry and Physics graduates with 'good' degrees.

Allocations were also to vary, with a doubling of Teach First places and the Government setting an aim of having over half of all trainees qualifying through the new School Direct route by 2015. In addition, there would be a shift of resources away from generalist primary ITT programmes towards those developing subject specialisms in Mathematics, Science or a language at Key Stage 2.

The intention of Ministers to switch over half of all supply to a new and untested training route was instrumental in the decision of the Education Select Committee to hold an Inquiry in 2012. In *Attracting, Training and Retaining the Best Teachers*, the Committee welcomed the policy to encourage school-centred and employment-based providers, but they emphasised that any such expansion should be demand-led. They also stated that partnerships between schools and universities were most likely to provide the highest-quality initial teacher education. Whether many higher education providers believed that a school-led system, with a significant reduction in allocations and funding, constituted partnership is a moot point.

The Changing Pattern of Teacher Training

The ITT figures for 2011/12 provide a useful baseline for comparing prior policy with the current position.⁶ In that year, there were:

- 73 universities;
- one further education provider;
- 56 free-standing school-centred organisations (SCITTs) and;
- 104 organisations delivering employment-based initial teacher training (EBITTs).

Collectively they were responsible for 36,820 final-year trainees, of whom 89 per cent (32,900) achieved Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and 27,520 (75 per cent or 84 per cent of those attaining QTS) were employed as teachers six months after graduating, with 5 per cent 'still seeking', 3 per cent 'not seeking' and 8 per cent providing no data.

However, notwithstanding the fact that there were 234 providers and three major routes to qualification, the system was less diverse than it appears, with universities having recruited over three-quarters of all new entrants, EBITTs approximately one-sixth and SCITTs one-in-twenty. It was, and remains, a well-qualified population, with just over two-thirds of those on postgraduate programmes holding First or Upper Second class honours degrees. For those entering undergraduate programmes in 2011, average entry scores could be classified as 'lower mid-range' at 318 UCAS points (roughly the equivalent of ABB if calculated across just three A-Levels or two distinctions

and a merit in a Level 3 BTEC award).

For the first two years, following the introduction of School Direct, higher education institutions rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted had their allocations protected. 'Good' providers typically had secondary ITT numbers cut by over one-third to fuel the expansion of alternative routes. Bids for School Direct numbers were substantial – secondary head teachers, in particular, were courted by Ministers and by Number 10, and persuasion and ambition proved a heady mix. For accreditation, many School Direct providers partnered not with those universities judged 'Outstanding' but with those institutions most at risk of losing places and therefore most exercised at sustaining a foothold as their direct allocations diminished.

In the first year at least, there seemed to be strong demand for this new route. But, in practice, enquiries and interest did not always translate into applications and recruitment. The introduction of the £9,000 tuition fee acted as a significant dampener, particularly amongst mature candidates more likely to be attracted to a local work-based route. The entry bar – at least a 2:2 degree (and preferably better) in a qualifying subject, pre-entry skills tests in literacy, numeracy and information technology and an interview process – also dampened demand. At the same time, the increasing dislocation of training from universities had an impact on the natural progression of many undergraduates, particularly in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) disciplines, from first degree to PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate of Education).

For each of the four years from 2013 to 2016, teacher recruitment missed its targets, and the Permanent Secretary

and the Chief Operating Officer for the National College for School Leadership were lambasted for this, perhaps unfairly, by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee.⁷ However, while fourteen of seventeen secondary subjects did not hit published targets in 2015, this simple statistic disguises the fact that overall numbers entering training held up respectably well in a recovering economy, and that targets often had an aspirational character, with over-allocation being used to offset the likelihood of under-recruitment by many providers.

The trend line during the last Parliament was not, however, helpful; the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report detailed a shortfall of 1 per cent in 2012/13, 5 per cent in 2013/14 and 9 per cent (3,201 recruits) in 2014/15. A change in reporting mechanisms meant there was no directly comparable figure for 2015/16, but it was 'a very tough year' for recruiting graduates.⁸ There were also significant regional differences, with the number of training places per 100,000 pupils ranging from 547 in the north-west down to 294 in the east of England, and, despite lower teacher employment rates in the former, diminishing evidence of teacher mobility. This, in turn, manifested itself in the considerable concerns expressed by schools in high-cost regions, including the outer south-east, and remote and peripheral regions, such as several coastal towns, about their capacity to recruit.

The number of teachers leaving the profession increased by 11 per cent between 2011 and 2014, with three-quarters departing for reasons other than retirement. Furthermore, the reported vacancy rate more than doubled to 1.2 per cent, though this is widely regarded as a significant underestimate of a school's (in)ability to place an appropriately-qualified teacher in front

of a class. With secondary pupil numbers due to rise by 276,000 by 2019/20 (and to continue on that upward curve until the middle of the next decade), this challenge will only intensify.

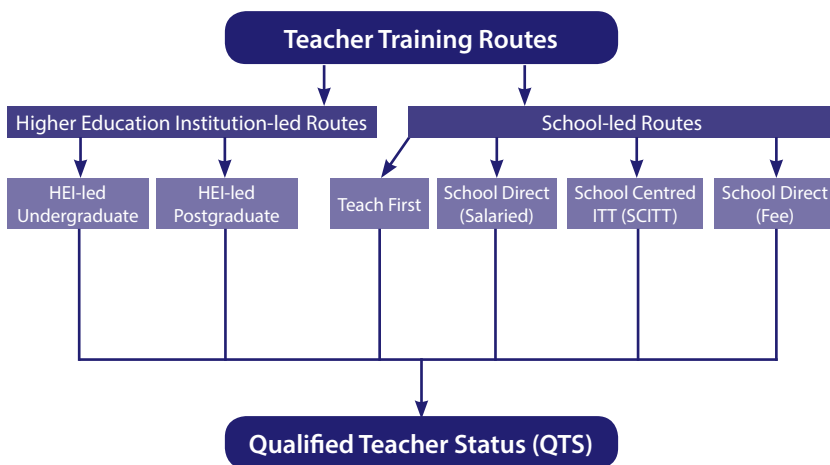
But, as is intimated above, the bigger concern for secondary education is the proportion of lessons taught by staff who themselves have not been educated in the discipline beyond Level Three (A-Level or equivalent). In the state sector for Computer Science, this figure is 44 per cent; for Spanish, it is 43 per cent; in Religious Education, it is 30 per cent; and for Physics, it is 28 per cent.⁹

Headline data, often quoted by the Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb, suggests quality, if measured by degree qualification, did not deteriorate and may have even marginally improved, at least matching average graduate outcomes across the university sector – with some three-quarters of those entering training having Upper Second class honours degrees or better. This did not pacify the Public Accounts Committee (2016), who regarded the fact that the proportion of trainees with good degrees had risen as ‘a poor guide to overall teacher quality’, preferring to rely on anecdotal evidence from ‘training providers (who) report that the quality of applicants in some areas has gone down.’¹⁰

What cannot be doubted, however, is the complexity of current provision. While only a handful of higher education providers (such as the University of Bath) have stepped away from teacher training, many remain exercised by the challenge of having responsibility for the quality assurance of an arm’s length ‘school-led’ School Direct partnership, and having this responsibility reflected in the university’s Ofsted grade.

Notwithstanding this, over 800 schools now have a School Direct allocation and an accrediting partner university. To the 800 schools and the 70 universities can be added what is now the most rapidly growing group of all, the 174 SCITT providers established by 2015/16, a tripling of the number from only four years previously. Of these, about one-third had not been subject to any form of inspection by the end of the last academic year. Added together, this all means there are well over a thousand places where an individual can train to teach, five times the number of five years ago, with a wide variety of routes and a variation in qualifications – as shown below.

Routes to Qualified Teacher Status, 2016/17



House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, *Recruitment and retention of teachers: Fifth Report of Session 2016/17*, 21 February 2017, p.9

Local training may aid supply, although, with 83 per cent of school leaders reporting ‘unprecedented challenges in

recruiting teachers; the evidence is far from conclusive.¹¹ The complexity of the offer may detract as many applicants as it attracts, and – with many providers making very poor (and usually decidedly over-optimistic) – assessments of their capacity to recruit, national workforce planning of teacher training numbers has become more challenging.

The Funding of Teacher Training

In the period from 2012 to 2016, the Department for Education (DfE) benefited enormously from the introduction of the £9,000 tuition fee and the fact of its application to the fourth year of higher education, the PGCE year. This switched much of the financial burden of training from the Department to the student loan book. Previously, the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) had been purchasing training places for postgraduate subjects and, in several instances, at a figure in excess of the new fee. However, rather than adopt the (factually accurate) mantra articulated by the Department responsible for higher education policy, Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), that income-contingent student loans should not be seen as conventional debt and should not act as a barrier to study, the DfE utilised this enhanced financial capacity to reinvigorate recruitment through a more extensive bursary support system for some students on selected programmes of study.

Initially, the Coalition Government sought to prioritise a very limited range of STEM subjects at PGCE level with training bursaries of £9,000 for Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry trainees and a lower figure of £6,000 for Biologists, Combined Science graduates and Modern Language specialists. From 2012, this was ratcheted up, and degree classification became an important arbiter of the level of bursary support as the NCTL and the DfE saw it as a proxy for potential teacher quality. A First class honours graduate was determined to be a future teacher of 'outstanding potential' and, in a high-priority specialism (Mathematics, Physics or Chemistry), would attract a bursary of £20,000, which was broadly equivalent to the pre-tax, pre-pension, pre-national insurance, pre-loan repayment

salary of a probationary teacher outside London. Those with 'good potential' (an Upper Second class honours degree) in the same three subjects were awarded £15,000, while those with 'satisfactory potential' (a Lower Second degree) received £11,000. For medium-priority specialisms in Modern Languages, Information Technology and Design Technology, the figures were £13,000, £10,000 and £9,000 respectively, with smaller awards for other secondary and primary trainees. Any candidate with a qualification below a Lower Second class honours degree was deemed not worthy of bursary support.

Over the five years of the last Parliament, the Government spent £620 million on these incentives, awarding some 16,400 bursaries in 2014/15.¹² The National Audit Office (2016) identified both qualitative and quantitative assessments by the Department for Education which indicated that there was a link between availability of the bursary and the number of applications to train, but this work did not extend to consider conversion rates from applicant to trainee and from trainee to practising teacher. In addition to the above sum, the Department also committed £67 million to a north-west pilot of a National Teacher Service, encouraging mobility amongst qualifying trainees, and a set of measures to encourage more trainees in the STEM disciplines (which was quietly shelved within its first year of implementation, having recruited just 54 teachers and relocated and placed only 24). In addition, the Department is piloting a programme that includes bursaries of up to £5,000 for 'future teaching scholars', encouraging A-Level pupils to commit to teaching.

Even this does not reveal the full extent of bursary support. The NCTL's *Training bursary guide: academic year 2017 to 2018* now offers bursaries of up to £30,000 to trainee Physics teachers,

while trainees in thirteen subjects or age phases also receive substantial support, including Geography (up to £27,500), History (up to £9,000) and Primary PGCE (up to £6,000).¹³ A full list of the incentives is provided in the tables below.

ITT Subjects

Highest Qualification	Physics	Secondary Mathematics	Computing	Modern Foreign Languages	Geography	Chemistry
Scholarship	£30,000	£27,500	£27,500	£27,500	£27,500	£27,500
Trainee with first class or doctoral degree	£30,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000
2:1 or master's degree	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£20,000
2:2	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£20,000
Other degree award	-	-	-	-	-	-

ITT Subjects

Highest Qualification	Classics	Biology	Design and technology	English	History, RE or Music	Primary Mathematics	Primary
Scholarship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trainee with first class or doctoral degree	£25,000	£15,000	£12,000	£9,000	£9,000	£6,000	£3,000
2:1 or master's degree	£25,000	£12,000	£9,000	£9,000	£4,000	£6,000	-
2:2	£25,000	£10,000	-	-	-	£6,000	-
Other degree award	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Recruitment and Retention in the Profession

Under an income-contingent loan system, is this scale and type of financial investment worthwhile? For the Public Accounts Committee, a major concern was the limited or lack of evidence in support of a return on investment, with regular – often annual – changes in incentives and a plethora of new schemes. But there is a more fundamental question: has the widespread use of incentives made teaching a more attractive career option?

The interactions of individuals with the labour market differ from a generation ago, partly through choice and partly because of the nature and pace of market changes. Portfolio careers, a range of fractional jobs held simultaneously and broken career patterns all influence the nature and shape of the teaching workforce. Press headlines such as ‘Third of new teachers quit within 5 years’ probably tell us as much about the operation of the contemporary labour market as they do about the profession.¹⁴ More concerning are figures indicating one-quarter of trainees do not join the profession on qualification and that one-in-eight of the remainder leave after just a year.

The current model of funding support, with incentives that exceed teachers’ starting salaries for good honours graduates in certain disciplines, rewards training rather than teaching, and there is anecdotal evidence of individuals undertaking a postgraduate certificate course as a fallback if other employment opportunities do not materialise or as a ‘try before you buy’ experience, knowing that they will be feasibly rewarded while training and acquire a well-recognised qualification on completion. One could argue that the very

basis of the Teach First programme has similar traits; it is marketed as an opportunity to do something worthwhile, and gain a valued addition to one's curriculum vitae, before moving on, as six-out-of-ten Teach First graduates do within five years.

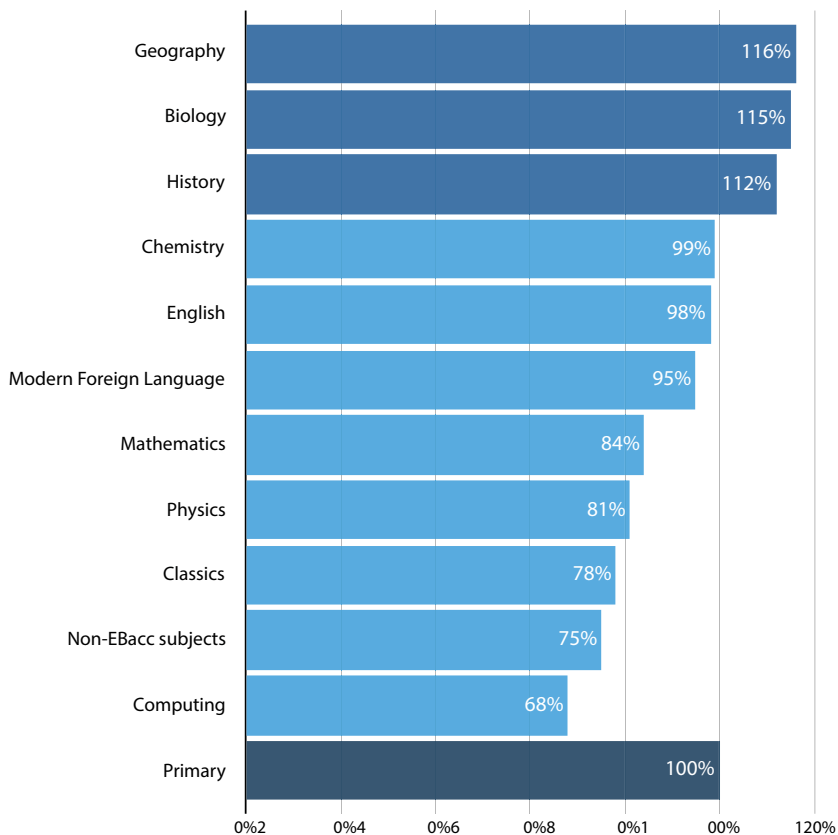
Without published evidence from NCTL, we do not know how many people would have chosen to train to teach without the financial incentives, but we do know that the number of postgraduate trainees has remained broadly static – and below targets in the Department for Education's Teacher Supply Model – in each of the past five years. From being within a hundred of a target in excess of 28,000 in 2012/13, the gap grew to 2,441, 9 per cent of a near-identical target, two years later. With the exception of 2014/15, primary trainee numbers have been close to or above target, aided by the decision of the NCTL to reduce allocations by a fifth from 2015/16 in line with revisions in the Supply Model. But secondary numbers are more problematic, with recruitment falling from 103 per cent of target in 2012/13 to 82 per cent of (an increased) target three years later. Published estimates for recruitment to PGCE or equivalent courses in 2016/17 suggest that primary numbers have broadly been met, but that there was an overall shortfall of some 3,000 trainees in secondary subjects.

The secondary figures disguise an even more worrying trend. Under the Coalition and Conservative Governments, the Department for Education has championed a more traditional discipline-based curriculum, but teacher supply in a number of shortage subjects – Computer Science, Design Technology, Modern Foreign Languages, the Physical Sciences – is not coming close to matching demand. Only 430 candidates

applied to teach Physics, or Physics with Mathematics, in 2016, a drop of 23 per cent on the preceding year, while candidates for Design and Technology fell from 700 to 490 in 12 months. There is also evidence that the number of shortage subjects is on the increase, with 1,120 fewer applications to teach English in 2016 than in the previous year.¹⁵ The table below shows recruitment by subject and age phase in 2016/17, with:

- Geography, Biology and History exceeding the target set by the Department's Teacher Supply Model;
- Chemistry, English, and Modern Foreign Languages marginally below; and
- Mathematics, Physics, Classics, Computing and the range of non-EBacc subjects showing a significant shortfall.

Recruitment against Teacher Supply Model targets for 2016/17, by subject and age phase



Department for Education, *Initial Teacher Training census for the academic year 2016 to 2017, England*, 24 November 2016

This position is likely to become worse during 2017/18. Each week in the applications cycle, UCAS produces a set of operational statistics, UCAS Teacher Training, detailing changes in applications and applicants. They are less helpful than they

might be, lacking comparative data for more than one prior year. But they offer evidence of a continuing and increasing cause for concern. In late March 2017, applicant numbers were down by eight per cent compared to the equivalent date last year, with a slightly higher figure for England and, worryingly, particularly in those regions already experiencing significant recruitment challenges – such as the east of England (-13.6 per cent) and London (-10.7 per cent). Primary postgraduate applicant numbers in England are also down (-4.9 per cent), but by less than the decline for secondary (-7.7 per cent or 3,380 fewer candidates). Nor will candidates from overseas bridge the gap, with numbers of applicants from the EU falling by 13.0 per cent and from non-EU countries by 9.4 per cent. The figures also demonstrate a diminishing flow-through from undergraduate degree programmes, with applicants aged 22 or younger down by 13.7 per cent in one year.

Perhaps the greatest concern for the Training and Development Agency is the waning interest in its flagship core route, School Direct, where applications are almost 15 per cent adrift and heavily focused on non-shortage subjects. Despite rough parity in the number of places allocated, applications to higher education providers in England are over 7,000 greater than those to School Direct providers, though these too have declined, albeit by less than one per cent. The one note of encouragement is an increase of 240 candidates applying through School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITTs), but they constitute less than 10 per cent of the applicant market, are small suppliers and, with more providers but fewer applications per supplier, are seen as administratively burdensome, particularly with regard to quality assurance processes.

The White Paper and the Green Paper

The white paper of Nicky Morgan, the Secretary of State for Education (2015-16), *Educational Excellence Everywhere*, did not survive the cutting-room floor following Theresa May's rise to become Prime Minister, and two of its three key strands (the requirement for all schools to become academies and the removal of the right of parents to sit as parents on school governing bodies) fell even prior to the formal decision not to proceed with legislation.¹⁶ One proposal, a radical reform to the nature of the professional qualification required to teach, was left in abeyance.

This proposed reform argued that the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), granted on course completion, should be abolished and replaced by the award of accredited teacher status, which should not be granted until after a period of two to three years in the classroom. Answering a Parliamentary question for the Government, Lord Nash, stated that 'we intend to replace the existing qualified teacher status with a new, more challenging accreditation that will be based on the demonstration of effective teaching in the classroom', and, that 'there is currently no requirement for qualified teacher status to be accompanied by an additional academic award such as a PGCE'.¹⁷

This would therefore be an employment-based and employer-facilitated qualification, with, typically, a teaching school acting as the moderator for the award. This reform would represent a further shift in the power base from universities to individual schools and, indirectly, the state, and the Department initially intimated that they wished to introduce this change as a

matter of priority. Following representations, the possibility of a 2016 introduction – and the probability of breach of contract claims from those who had already accepted offers for entry in that year – was pushed back to 2017 and, although a formal statement is still awaited, it appears likely that recruitment for 2018 entry will proceed on the basis of the status quo and that those currently on courses will be allowed to progress to their programme's award or a negotiated and agreed alternative.

The reasons for this delay may be four-fold:

- i. the 20-month recruitment cycle between prospectus production and course commencement and the possibility of interest from the Competition and Markets Authority if an 'offer for sale' is not fulfilled;
- ii. an opportunity for the Secretary of State, Justine Greening, widely described as an evidence-based decision-maker, to determine how she would wish to proceed;
- iii. a fear of the level of disruption such a change could inject into an already fragile supply chain; and
- iv. an opportunity for the newly-constituted Chartered College of Teaching to become established.

The last of these reasons is potentially the most interesting. Attempts by the state, directly or at arm's length, to set up professional bodies have a chequered history in both teaching and, more recently, social work. In particular, the response from well-recognised, well-established and powerful trade unions has been, at best, lukewarm. So, while the Chartered College of Teaching, under its newly-appointed Chief Executive, Professor

Dame Alison Peacock, has commenced its first call for voluntary membership ('from just £39 per annum'), its long-term survival and success, as pump-priming funds dry up, is likely to come from developing and strengthening its powers as a regulatory and awarding body.

Using freedoms around the extension of degree-awarding powers proposed in the Higher Education and Research Bill, it would be no great surprise to see the College – and possibly private providers – apply for the power to grant awards at Levels 6 and 7, the proposed qualification level of an accredited teacher, and to develop a professional framework, perhaps in partnership with higher education (and much more broadly than with Faculties of Education, involving Business Schools and working alongside private sector professionals), before the end of the decade.

But this is a deferral, not a decision-change. In response to a question at Public Accounts Committee in January 2017, Jonathan Slater, Permanent Secretary in the Department for Education, confirmed that a Teaching Apprenticeship Scheme would be in place by September 2018. This has been described as 'the new School Direct (Salaried)', thereby allowing schools to reclaim the cost of training apprentice teachers from the Government's new Apprenticeship Levy.¹⁸ This accords with a prevailing view that 'Ministers are anxious to continue boosting the number of teachers training in schools, rather than through higher education institutions.'¹⁹ There is also emerging evidence of schools developing qualification pathways from Level 2 through to accredited teacher status. A framework drawn up by eleven schools in the West Midlands and in Buckinghamshire

plans to allow apprentice teaching assistants to gain Level 3 awards, with a full teaching apprenticeship, which is now being designed in partnership with the Teaching Schools Council, [that] will allow learners to train up to level 7, equivalent to a postgraduate degree, and achieve QTS [qualified teacher status] without having to go to university – all while being paid.²⁰

There is also a financial incentive for schools to push a work-based accredited teacher qualification. As indicated above, from April 2017, all medium and large-scale employers, including almost all secondary schools, will be liable to pay the Apprenticeship Levy, calculated as a proportion of their pay bill. This 0.5 per cent charge can only be recovered if the school operates an apprenticeship scheme, and an accredited teacher programme would provide an obvious opportunity to do so. This is the case even in small primary schools still operating under local authority control, given that the authority is required to pay the Levy. Such a policy would no doubt herald the demise of the School Direct (Salaried) route to Qualified Teacher Status.

The discredited white paper was supplanted by a Department for Education green paper, *Schools that Work for Everyone*, under the new Secretary of State, Justine Greening, in the autumn of 2016, consultation on which ended in December and on which further Government proposals are awaited.²¹ For the higher education sector the principal issue was the stark and seemingly non-negotiable proposal that universities should own and operate one or more schools. While only a handful of higher education institutions have established schools, over 60 universities have some degree of engagement in the

academies and free schools programme, though the nature of this engagement varies enormously depending on local will and local circumstance. Nor is that engagement an unmitigated success; rather, the best that can be said is that, on average, universities 'do no harm'. Many universities are, understandably, also concerned about dilution of mission, the reputational risk of taking on – and failing to improve – an under-performing school, and the direct relevance of their knowledge, skills and experience and a school's needs.

For teacher educators, the proposal creates a particular challenge. Most large providers of Initial Teacher Training work with many hundreds, and often thousands, of schools, typically on an equal footing or with a small number of categories of engagement. The proposal in the green paper creates an instant hierarchy, and a competitor rather than a partner. This, in turn, could have a destructive effect on the availability of placement partners, who are already in short supply across the sector, and further disrupt the current model of teacher training, which depends on placement settings for up to around two-thirds of delivery on a PGCE programme.

Yet few universities are likely to disagree with proposals to prioritise supporting their supply chain when dispersing their investment under the Agreements they are required to make with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and, in future, with the Office for Students. There is a strong argument for a much less prescriptive approach than insisting on the takeover or creation of a single school. Rather, universities should be required to articulate and specify, with clear and measurable objectives, how they will invest money in supporting schools in improving attainment, progression and widening participation.

As at present, they would be accountable for doing so. OFFA's guidance for the next round of Access Agreements, issued in February 2017, strongly emphasises the importance of universities' work with schools but, by implication, can be read to imply that a formal 'take-over' is less high on the agenda.²² This appears to be confirmed by leaks in advance of the new education white paper, which is likely to be published in the spring.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Revisited

In introducing the green paper on school choice in September 2016, the Prime Minister said nothing in respect of teacher recruitment and retention. For those who remember the headlines around four-day schooling and other short-term closures almost two decades ago, this was an unwelcome oversight.

Since the beginning of the millennium, advertisements cajoling people to consider teaching as a career have been a regular feature in the media. At the turn of the century, the 'No one forgets a good teacher' campaign was widely regarded as a success, though it was more successful in generating enquiries than well-qualified applicants.

Later advertising campaigns tended to focus on the financial rewards, with the message 'earn up to £65,000 as a classroom teacher' being widely ridiculed, not least by the 99.9 per cent of classroom teachers to whom this did not apply. So it is encouraging to see the current campaign focusing on the ways in which teachers 'make a difference'. Universities have the potential to play a particular role in this. For example, only 8 per cent of trainees following school-based routes are drawn from ethnic minority origin households, compared to 19 per cent of the university-trained population.

Nonetheless, as reported above, applicant numbers continue to fall for a profession that requires more entrants while needing to continue to sustain the high calibre of most trainees, although the introduction of tuition fees and maintenance loans for Nursing and Allied Health programmes in 2017/18

appears to have helped stabilise undergraduate demand for initial teacher training. Such undergraduate programmes are, however, predominantly aimed at the primary and early years of schooling, and will not contribute to the teacher workforce until at least three or four years hence.

There is a frustrating reluctance to take lessons from past policy, and particularly where that policy emanated from a government of a different political colour, but there is a real sense that 2017 is not entirely dissimilar to the late 1990s, when five years of government policy, favouring one type of provision (school-led) over another, led to a reduction in applicants and damage to the supply chain. By seeking to cut the cord between universities and teacher training, the status of the profession was damaged and staff shortages led to temporary school closures. The official prediction is that the number of pupils in secondary schools will rise by 20 per cent, from 2.7 million to 3.3 million by 2024. So, there is a very real prospect that this will happen once again.

In addition to a well-targeted and well-focused recruitment campaign, the Labour Government sought to rebuild relationships with higher education and, more importantly, with the profession itself. In the early years of the millennium, there was significant investment in reducing teacher workloads, overseen by a workforce advisory monitoring group drawn from all interested parties, and the creation of a (not entirely successful) career-based support structure of teaching assistants and other professional staff. The Department for Education also briefly flirted with investment to make teaching a Master's level profession. It is encouraging, after a high degree of dissonance during the Coalition years, that such

dialogue has started to recommence, and that the need to strengthen professional development and clarify routes to career progression are increasingly acknowledged, including by the Select Committee, even though the state coffers are, and will remain, much less generously filled.²³

But the damage to supply will not be reversed overnight, and there are still conflicting messages being disseminated by Ministers. In February 2017, an accusation that ‘teacher colleges (are) guilty of myths and nonsense’ followed a seemingly positive statement two days earlier from the Secretary of State on the retention of the nomenclature of Qualified Teacher Status.²⁴ Then, a subsequent press headline stated the ‘DfE declares ceasefire in war on university teacher-training departments.’²⁵

The damage to supply cannot be reversed overnight. Markets dislike uncertainty, and graduate unemployment rates are falling. When potential trainees, most of whom already have substantial tuition fee loans, are faced with a range of alternative job opportunities and a plethora of ways and places in which they may train to teach, with uncertainties over the perceived status of differing routes – and of the profession itself – they often vote with their feet. Moreover, the focus on bursary support for trainees damages rather than enhances the status of the profession: if one has to be ‘bribed’ to the tune of up to £30,000 simply to train, just how demanding is the role seen to be and, with press stories of teachers wearing body cameras, how unsatisfactory are the working conditions?

Alternative Approaches

As indicated above, a considerable majority of all postgraduate trainee teachers are receiving a financial incentive, though at least a proportion of that benefit is offset by the fourth year of student loan debt incurred. The total cost to the state of these bursary payments, and their marketing and administration, depends on the numbers in training and their chosen discipline and route, but is unlikely to be much less than £250 million a year spread across perhaps 20,000 trainees. Yet recruitment remains static and is falling in certain key subjects. As indicated above, there is also the suspicion that a minority of trainees are attracted by the bursary but do not intend to teach or to stay in the profession for more than a year or two, and the non-progression (and end) of the year one withdrawal rate do not reduce this concern.

We should consider forgivable fees as an alternative to bursaries.²⁶ Such a policy would reward teaching and retention in the profession, not training. It would reflect the reality that the vast majority of teachers, and particularly the majority who have taken a student loan for a fourth year, will never repay this sum. It would also mean that a teacher who had commenced employment in their early twenties and then worked in the profession for, say, seven years, could be tuition debt free by the age of 30, as is commonplace in the Australian system, while releasing a quarter of a billion pounds per annum of bursary spend forthwith. The arguments against such a policy are powerful: for example, it may be interpreted as the state recognising deficiencies in its tuition fee policy; and it is difficult to draw the line between eligible and ineligible professions (nursing, social work, the voluntary sector). But the counter-

arguments are strong too and relate to teacher supply and retention; the release of resources to invest; and the fact that the tuition debt is unlikely to be repaid in full anyway. There is also the likelihood that increasing debt and increasing taxation (at an additional 9 per cent) could feed through into industrial unrest, pay demands and pay inflation.

There is not yet a fully-blown workforce supply crisis, but there are pockets of considerable concern: by discipline (shortage subjects); by age phase (particularly secondary); and by location (expensive commuter towns and villages, peripheral regions and seaside resorts). There is no evidence of concerted action to tackle the problems. With a progressive and substantial increase in the size of the school age cohort over the next decade and the demands of a new curriculum generating a growing need for specialist teachers in a range of poorly-recruiting subjects, these concerns are on the increase. In recent years, the teaching workforce has also depended increasingly on international recruitment, initially from the Antipodes and other English-speaking nations, more recently from eastern and southern Europe. As current application figures demonstrate, these sources are under threat as policies limiting immigration and freedom of movement evolve and as Brexit becomes real.

At the turn of the millennium, the state had, and was prepared to invest, significant resources in the profession via:

- an effective marketing campaign;
- golden hellos;
- revisions to teachers' workloads;

- the employment of a cadre of support workers;
- a strengthened career structure for 'expert teachers'; and
- salary increases.

The fall in the birthrate in the late 1990s and early noughties also meant a more manageable school population for the first decade of the twenty-first century. It is unrealistic to expect generous investment today, and there is the likelihood of further public sector pay restraint, already in place for much of the past decade, through to 2020. But the school age population is now increasing rapidly.

There is a clear need for incremental changes to make both training and teaching a more secure, reliable and attractive profession. Some possible actions include:

- 1. Launching a new media campaign, including better use of social media, focusing on the way in which teachers change life chances** and building on the positive steps taken in the 2017/18 recruitment cycle, but with enhanced news coverage, particularly locally and regionally, including case studies and 'advertorial' where necessary.
- 2. Improving links to the 'supply chain'**, with a small outreach team establishing secure relationships with, in particular, individual universities, their careers services, academic staff and students, speaking to undergraduates, disseminating materials and providing contact points.
- 3. Treating all routes to qualified or accredited teacher status on an equal and fair basis**, subject to each provider

meeting a quality threshold, and, while there must be some scope for rationalisation from over a 1000 providers, allowing potential trainees to determine the appropriate route for their discipline, age phase, location and circumstance.

- 4. Granting all providers three to five-year allocations,** within a range limited to +/-10 per cent each year, unless varied by mutual agreement or consequent on the failure to meet a quality standard. This would encourage providers to invest in Initial Teacher Training staff, facilities and partnerships.
- 5. Placing an expectation on all schools that they will play a role in the renewal of the profession** by, as a minimum, providing placement opportunities for trainees, with a statement on the school's commitment to this renewal process being reported (but not graded) as part of the Ofsted inspection cycle.
- 6. Investing in better physical working conditions in schools,** which no longer come close to matching those in other professions.
- 7. Refining, clarifying and simplifying a career progression ladder** to recognise outstanding teachers and to support retention.
- 8. Providing ready access, with funding, to a greater range of personal development opportunities** for teachers accredited at Master's level and extending beyond pedagogy, in line with the Select Committee's recommendation that 'all teachers should have the entitlement and opportunity to undertake high-quality, continuing professional

development'. Such provision could be part of a university's offer under its Access and Participation Plan and, for some, an alternative to sponsoring a school.

9. Agreeing and implementing a curriculum and assessment structure designed to remain in place for at least a decade, following a broadly-based review of the success or otherwise of recent changes.

10. Considering the phased and monitored withdrawal of the current bursary system and the possible introduction of 'forgivable fees' for those who remain in teaching for a number of years and perform to a high standard.

The alternative is more risky and more radical, and that would involve following through the sole substantive proposal that sits in abeyance from the discarded *Educational Excellence Everywhere* white paper, that the award of professional status rests with the employer and within the school system and occurs two or more years after graduation and initial unqualified or, with some form of 'certificate of initial training' part-qualified, employment.

The first concern is a market concern. Demand for places to train to teach is already weak, and in some subjects worryingly so. It is highly likely that recruitment to courses where the prospect of a full professional qualification is five or six years away (undergraduate ITT), or where one is following a postgraduate course (PGCE) which will then be followed by two further qualifying years, may be further diminished. While this has not been the case for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes leading to professions such as Law and Accountancy, in both instances the perception of high longer-

term earnings acts as a counterweight to training contracts and low salaries on entry.

Given the above, a higher proportion of candidates may choose to enter the profession directly from a non-ITT degree or programme. This potentially changes the nature of education and training in the profession from being knowledge and skills-based (acquired in a higher education institution and a range of schools) to mainly skills-based (and acquired predominantly in a single school setting of particular character). It would remove access to independent advice and study support, and to a range of learning resources across the range of disciplines available in higher education settings. Perhaps most importantly of all, it removes the opportunity to be part of a mutually-supportive peer group. Rather, one's immediate reference point would become the employer and one's line manager would be the person who signs off one's probationary report. In such circumstances, open conversations about issues and challenges, key to a trainee's development, may well be constrained.

Separation from higher education may also have a further impact on perceptions of the profession. Current data on application and recruitment levels to school-based programmes show Teach First and School Direct are the least well-received experiences.²⁷ Particularly in rapidly-developing disciplines, it may also adversely affect the subject knowledge of new teachers.

There are counter-arguments to this approach. Now that higher education sits within the Department for Education and policy appears to be less ideologically-driven, the battle

for control of teacher training may be less important than in the past. If responsibility rests squarely with schools, they can recover the costs of training from the new Apprenticeship Levy. Moreover, with schools in the lead, there is a supply of well-educated graduates in the classroom (with a potential knock-on effect for the employment of teaching assistants). For trainees, it means salaried roles rather than extra debt. Yet, if the terms and conditions are at a level close to those for a newly-qualified teacher, schools would be paying the same cost for less experienced people.

What is not in doubt is that the state and the sector are on the cusp of a considerable challenge. There is no profession more important than teaching. Life chances are created and futures mapped, particularly for those from less-advantaged backgrounds. Economic success, particularly post-referendum, as the country strikes out alone, depends on a highly-motivated and well-educated workforce. Similarly, the future of the higher education sector depends on a supply of well-educated pupils across the full range of academic disciplines, which too few universities have engaged with sufficiently in the past. The challenges are manifest and growing, and require all parties to work together constructively to secure teacher supply, teacher retention and teacher development as demands on the profession increase further. There are some encouraging signs, but – to date – the evidence of this happening is far from compelling.

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