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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11 FEBRUARY 2016

TEACHER SUPPLY IN OXFORDSHIRE: IS THERE AN ISSUE?

Report by Councillor John Howson, Member of the Education Scrutiny Committee, Oxfordshire County Council

'Head stay put as jobs dry up and pay climbs' Oxford times 15th January 1993

'Heads reject jobs in Oxford as cash crisis grows' Oxford Times 26th April 1996

'Scrutiny Committee Review of recruitment & retention of teachers ...' Oxfordshire County Council August 2003

Introduction

Issues around teacher supply in Oxfordshire schools are not a new problem as the headlines at the top of this report identify. There have been periods when there have been a surplus of teachers and periods when there have been shortages, either in general or for specific posts. In the late 1990s and early 2000s around the time of the 2003 Scrutiny Review by the Council there had been a dedicated team of officers responsible for teacher recruitment into the county.

Much has changed in the education landscape since then.

Schools are funded directly and the role of the local authority has been reduced.

Most secondary schools are academies as are a growing number of primary schools. The local authority has limited data on such schools. Many of the remaining primary schools are voluntary schools associated with either the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church.

The methods of preparing teachers has changed, with the government now preferring schools to take the lead in managing teacher preparation rather than universities. In Oxfordshire, there is a teacher preparation course for both secondary and primary trainees run by the River Learning Trust MAT. The University of Oxford has long operated a successful PGCE programme in a range of subjects. Brookes University now only provides training for potential primary school teachers, with both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Trainee teachers enrolled on programmes are generally free to apply for vacancies anywhere in the country and may decide to work in either the maintained sector or in private schools. Sixth Form Colleges also often employ qualified teachers and, increasingly, there are teaching opportunities overseas.

ESC8

The number of trainees recruited each year is governed by the Teacher Supply Model (TSM) that is operated by the DfE. In 2015 places were allocated to providers by the DfE (through the National College for Teaching and Leadership) for courses starting in the autumn of 2016. These trainees will enter the labour market in 2017 if they are on one-year graduate courses or 2019 if on three-year primary undergraduate courses.

Thus, the new entrants to the labour market in 2016 were the recruits of 2015.

Using the TSM as a benchmark, there were sufficient trainees nationally in 2015 – the DfE doesn't release regional figures- to meet the TSM number in:

The primary phase 116% of TSM – whether there are sufficient with either early years' skills or expertise in particular subjects isn't known.

English 103% of TSM

History 111%

Physical Education 100%

TSM number was not met in 2015 in the following secondary subjects; (% of TSM number recruited is shown alongside each subject)

Mathematics 93%

Biology 89%

Chemistry 95%

Physics 71%

Computing 70%

Classics 79%

Design & Technology 41%

Drama 88%

Languages 87%

Geography 83%

Art 63%

Music 74%

Religious education 63%

Business Studies 64%

Other 39%

All secondary 82% of TSM

In total there were 13,034 postgraduate primary trainees and 15,114 secondary trainees in 2015. This was an increase of 2,143 secondary trainees over 2014 and 252 extra postgraduate primary trainees compared with 2014. However, there were fewer trainees in 2015 than in 2014 in computing, music and business studies. In Languages and geography there were fewer trainees once Teach First numbers were excluded (Teach First numbers were not counted in 2014). In all other subjects there were more trainees than last year.

Vacancies do not need to be filled by trainees. The two other key sources of teachers are either 'returners' to the profession or teachers moving between schools – commonly referred to a 'churn'. In its evidence to the Teacher's Pay Review Body (STRB) some years ago, the DfE noted that they expected around 50% of classroom teacher vacancies to be taken by new entrants with the remainder being taken from other sources.

Academies of all descriptions have the ability to recruit as teachers those that have not been through a preparation programme, although few seem to do so. Indeed, this power has always existed where schools are unable to recruit a qualified teacher. Historically, these staff were known as 'instructors' and were expected to be replaced by a qualified teacher when one became available. They are now known as 'unqualified teachers and are counted by the DfE in their data alongside trainees on classroom-based preparation programmes. They do not need to be replaced by a qualified teacher.

In the primary sector, there is also the use of teaching assistants of different grades. Assistants have different levels of responsibility but can be used by schools to mask classroom teacher recruitment issues. There are now new methods of using classrooms assistants in some classrooms that produce a more flexible teaching model than the traditional 1:30 teaching approach. There are also schemes to convert classroom assistants into qualified teachers while they are working in schools.

Is there a teacher supply crisis?

With no central data collection it is difficult to be certain of the exact position. However, for the data on training it is clear that national targets for trainee numbers are not always being met and the fact alone could mean there are shortages. There are suggestions that departures from the profession are also on the increase, but this is difficult to track. The House of Commons Education Select Committee started an inquiry into the issue of teacher supply before Christmas 2015 and a report is expected shortly. The DfE has regularly expressed the view that there is no teacher shortage and that there are record numbers working in the profession.

There are a number of issues that have caused the present supply situation.

After a period when school rolls fell, schools are now in a period where rolls will rise. By the early 2020s there will be more than 750,000 additional pupils in schools across England compared with the number in 2010.

As noted earlier, in some subjects, the DfE has not recruited sufficient trainees to meet the anticipated needs. This has created a shortage.

The basic teaching salary has not kept pace with graduate salaries in some parts of the country and in some subject areas and the need to take out an additional £9,000 in student loans to train as a teacher may be off-putting.

The government's support for the EBacc subjects has put extra pressure on recruitment in these subjects and especially in English and mathematics where the expectation that 16-18 year old students without GCSE grade A-C in these subjects

will continue to study them post sixteen has increased the demand for teachers and lecturers in these subjects.

Teaching has become a global career and teacher qualified in England are in demand internationally. In addition, UK boarding schools have become an export industry offering an education to pupils from across the world.

Teacher workload may be affecting retention and the DfE consulted on this issue, but no significant changes have been introduced.

Demand for classroom teachers in Oxfordshire during 2015

The following information has been taken from TeachVac www.teachvac.com a free job site that in addition to vacancies directly entered by schools, also monitors more than 3,600 secondary school web sites on a daily basis for new classroom teacher vacancies. The schools included are maintained schools, academies of all descriptions and independent schools, but not sixth form colleges or the further education sector.

Oxfordshire adverts for main scale teachers tracked by
TeachVac 1/1/15 to 31/12/15

Subject	STATE	PRIVATE
Art	12	4
Business & Economics	10	9
Dance & drama	3	3
Design & Technology	12	2
English	54	19
Geography	14	3
History	6	5
Humanities	7	0
IT	19	5
Languages	15	6
Mathematics	46	28
Music	6	5
PE	8	4
RE	15	1
Science	51	24
SEN	3	3
Social Sciences	8	7
	289	128

In some cases adverts may be for more than one vacancy. Additionally, some adverts tracked may be re-advertisements because a previous advert did not secure an appointment. Some schools may not advertise vacancies but may either use recruitment agencies or appoint trainees working in the schools. As a result, this is not a definitive list, but rather a snapshot.

The greatest demand appears to have been for English, mathematics and science teachers; the three subjects that account for the largest percentage of curriculum time. These subjects are also key components of the government’s EBacc qualification.

The demand for IT/computing teachers is significant because of the lack of any preparation for such teachers within the county, despite the importance the subject to the local economy.

TeachVac did not monitor the primary phase during 2015.

Satisfying demand locally

The two key providers of new entrants into secondary school teaching are the University of Oxford and the School Direct partnership managed by the Cherwell School. Figures obtained from both providers and aggregated suggest that their contribution to the demand for main scale secondary school teacher by Oxfordshire schools was as follows.

	TOTAL TRAINING working in Oxfordshire Schools
Art	2
Business & Economics	0
Dance & drama	3
Design & Technology	3
English	7
Geography	6
History	3
Humanities	0
IT	0
Languages	4
Mathematics	14
Music	0
PE	4
RE	1
Science	12
SEN	0
Social Sciences	0
	59

There are several subjects where there is no teacher preparation programme currently in operation in Oxfordshire. In these subjects, schools will need to be able to attract trainees from providers elsewhere in the country. Alternatively, schools can seek 'returners' or attract teachers from other schools.

Cost effective recruitment

At the time of the 2003 Scrutiny report the county had a recruitment and retention steering group and employed a recruitment strategy manager. For a period of time in the early 2000s there had been national funding for recruitment strategy managers. Under the present delegated budget arrangements schools would have to purchase such a service. The alternative is for each school to develop its own strategy. This can be wasteful of resources.

What strategies can be adopted?

Academies are able to pay whatever salary they wish and along with all maintained schools may offer recruitment and retention payments. However, the ability of schools to pay 'above scale' may be inhibited by the overall level of demands on their budgets. Committing Oxfordshire schools to a higher pay scale, such as the London fringe scale would only be effective if government increased funding to Oxfordshire schools as a result. It seems unlikely that the DfE would agree to such a move ahead of a consultation on the re-shaping of school funding nationally that is expected this year.

Schools may enter the labour market for September 2016 ahead of time. Nationally vacancies recorded in the first weeks of January 2016 were some 40% above figures for 2015. The biggest increases were in English, mathematics and the sciences where most schools can reasonably expect to have vacancy each year. Schools may be 'banking' teachers to fill expected vacancies.

Help with housing is often considered as a solution. HMRC allows some discretion on relocation payments. This can help attract qualified and experienced teachers into Oxfordshire from other high cost housing areas, but may not be enough to attract teachers from areas with lower housing costs where teaching salaries can purchase a better standard of living. District councils can be asked to consider schemes offering housing for teachers as key workers. Multi-Academy Trusts can offer housing if permitted in their funding agreement with the DfE.

The DfE is consulting on allowing schools to offer loans for deposits on rental properties along the lines of season ticket loans that are recovered from future salary payments. A recruitment bonus might be a more attractive proposition to recruit staff and is already permissible where schools can demonstrate that there are recruitment challenges.

The government has funded pilot courses to encourage returners to teaching. Oxfordshire schools might consider funding both returner courses through the teaching schools and local universities and 'keep in touch' courses for teachers on career breaks, where they can be kept up to date with curriculum and other changes during their time away from the classroom.

One way of reducing recruitment needs is to ensure as many high quality teachers are retained in Oxfordshire schools. Schools should be aware of why teachers leave. One means of retaining teachers is through offering both career opportunities and professional development. With two universities in the county, both involved in teacher education, Oxfordshire is well placed to offer high quality career development to teachers. However, funding support is likely to have to come from school budgets unless there is a change of mind on the part of government.

In the past teachers have been recruited from overseas to help overcome shortages. Even though Mr Gove granted Qualified Teacher Status to teachers trained in certain commonwealth countries and the USA, tier 2 visa limits may be restricting the use of such teachers at the present time. However, EU trained teachers can be recruited without limits and Ireland has proved a source of new teachers at the present time.

Promoted posts and leadership vacancies

This report has dealt with the recruitment challenge in filling secondary school classroom teacher posts. There are other challenges in attracting teachers to both promoted posts and to leadership positions, especially head teacher vacancies in some primary schools. These posts are difficult to fill both because of many of the reasons cited in this report but also for other reasons specific to the additional level of responsibility associated with the grade. At senior levels, the issue of accountability, and especially the implications of Ofsted judgements and school performance may be a significant factor in recruitment.

Conclusion

There was a significant demand for classroom teachers in 2015 from all secondary schools in the county. At present, there are insufficient training places locally to meet the demand from Oxfordshire secondary schools for staff. In some subjects, notably computing, there is no local provision for training new teachers at this time.

If demand from schools in 2016 remains at the levels seen in 2015, the increased recruitment nationally in some secondary subjects may not be sufficient to meet the demand. In subjects where the TSM total was not reached, recruitment problems may become worse than in 2015.

The rapid increase in pupil numbers over the next decade will lead to a demand for more teachers unless either subjects are dropped from the curriculum or classes become larger than at present. The other alternative is to employ staff not qualified in the subjects that they are teaching with the associated threat to standards and school performance.

Where schools are free to determine their own salary scales there is a risk of completion for staff unless schools are prepared to cooperate. Some salary initiatives may be set by headquarters of multi-academy trusts located outside Oxfordshire.

In the past, economies of scale were provided by county-wide recruitment initiatives. Such arrangements may be more challenging to create in an era of delegated

budgets and multi-academy trusts with staffing needs that extend beyond Oxfordshire schools.

Although this report has concentrated upon secondary school classroom teacher vacancies, there are issues in promoted and leadership posts and in the primary and special school sectors in Oxfordshire.

Recommendations

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- (a) note the content of this report.
- (b) ask the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families to report back to this Committee on any actions that have been taken by the various Boards established in Oxfordshire to address recruitment challenges.
- (c) refer the issue of recruitment to the Teachers Joint Committee for discussion at their next meeting.

This report was prepared by Councillor John Howson. Cllr Howson is a director of TeachVac, part of the Oxfordshire Teacher Services Group and is also a Norham Fellow at the Department of Education, University of Oxford and a visiting professor at Oxford Brookes University. He is also a former government adviser on teacher supply matters.