

TEACHER LABOUR MARKET IN ENGLAND ANNUAL REPORT 2023: A SUMMARY FOR SCHOOL LEADERS



Welcome and introduction

As school leaders, you will be more than aware that challenges around teacher recruitment and retention have significantly intensified following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The aim of NFER's annual series of Teacher Labour Market reports is to monitor the progress of meeting these challenges, as well as pointing towards actions that are likely to have the greatest impact in addressing them. This year's report reflects the very real issues that you are experiencing and sets out the drivers behind them.

The research evidence makes it clear that tackling teacher supply issues continues to require significant policy action to improve both the financial and non-financial attractiveness of teaching. On this basis, we are making a set of specific recommendations to the Government as part of NFER's wider commitment to supporting positive change across education systems.

While there is no doubt that action at policy level will be crucial in easing both immediate and longer-term challenges, our insights also highlight areas of focus that school leaders may wish to consider as you take your own actions to relieve workforce pressures.

This short guide sets out those focus areas, alongside an overview of key findings from this year's report and the recommendations we will be making to the Government as a result.

I hope that you find this summary a useful overview. You can find the **full report and recommendations** on our website.

Jack Worth
Lead Economist, NFER



Key findings

- Recruitment:**

Recruitment to ITT is likely to be significantly below target in 2023/24 (Chart 1), after historically low recruitment in 2022/23.

- Teacher turnover:**

Schools in England have posted 93 per cent more vacancies so far in 2022/23, compared to the year before the pandemic (Chart 2).

- Pay:**

Teachers' pay is lower in real terms than it was in 2010 and has lost competitiveness compared to other occupations.

- Workload:**

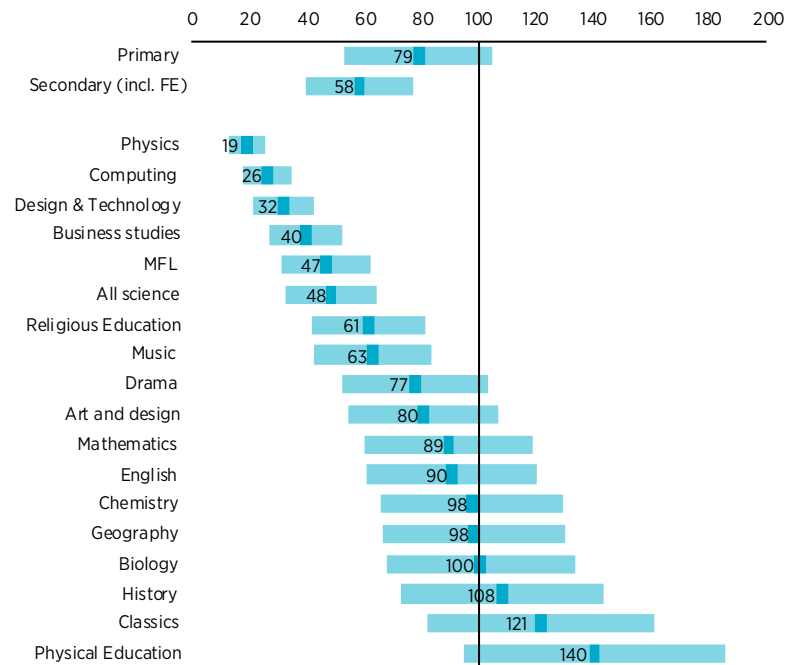
Teachers' working hours and perceived workload have fallen since 2015/16, but remain higher than for similar graduates.

- Flexible working:**

The pandemic has led to a widespread adoption of remote working in the graduate workforce, but teachers' opportunities to work from home remain very limited.



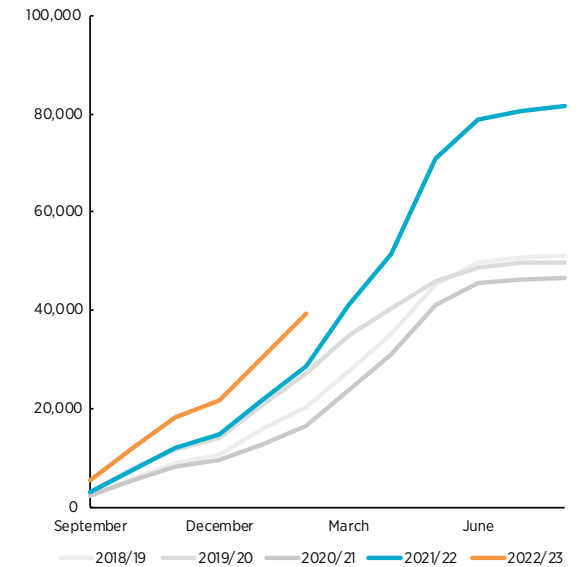
Chart 1: NFER forecast of 2023/24 ITT Census recruitment vs target (% , based on placed applicants up to Feb 2023)



Note: Based on targets for 2022/23. Forecasts represent the central estimate, with the shaded bands showing the 95 per cent confidence interval on the prediction.

Source: NFER analysis of DfE Apply and UCAS data

Chart 2: Cumulative number of classroom teacher vacancies in state-sector schools in England, 2018/19 - 2022/23



Source: TeachVac

How we source data for our Teacher Labour Market reports

We use Department for Education (DfE) data on teacher training applications and registrations to show how last year's ITT recruitment compared to target and what recruitment is likely to look like this year. We also explore trends in teacher retention, using data from the DfE's School Workforce Census (SWC) and TeachVac teacher vacancies data.

Trends in recruitment and retention are primarily driven by the financial and non-financial attractiveness of teaching compared to alternative jobs and careers. We therefore analyse trends in

teacher pay, working hours, autonomy and well-being using data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) and Annual Population Survey (APS). Crucially, using these household surveys enables us to compare teachers and graduates in other occupations who are similar in age, gender and region.

Further details about the data sources used and definitions are in a methodology appendix separate to the main report.

Focus areas for school leaders

When you're considering actions that will support improving recruitment and retention within your own schools, our findings point to the following two areas as having the potential for greatest impact. We have set out actions that you may wish to consider as you develop and implement your own plans.

Explore options around flexible working

Flexible working can be challenging for schools due to the needs of the job. However, it has the potential to offer many benefits, including improving staff retention and wellbeing, and attractiveness to new recruits. Flexibility can encompass many things, including job-sharing, ad-hoc early or late starts and options to do activities such as preparation and marking off-site.

Things to consider:

- Consult with teachers in your school about what options might be attractive to them and make your approach to flexible working as positive and proactive as possible.
- Ensure that timetabling systems can accommodate part-time and flexible working patterns.
- Develop and implement processes that allow for negotiation and flexibility on both sides.
- You can find more practical recommendations in our research on **Part-time Teaching and Flexible Working in Secondary Schools**.

Maintain progress on workload reduction

The reduction in teachers' working hours and perceived workloads reflects the positive progress already made by schools and the importance of continuing work in this area.

Things to consider:

- Explore or continue using the **DfE School Workload Reduction Toolkit** to regularly review working practices. Stop or adapt activities that have high impact on workloads but low impact on teaching and learning.
- Focus on making improvements in areas where research shows teachers feel they spend too much time; administration, data input, marking and lesson planning.
- Explore ways to give teachers more autonomy over the management of their day-to-day tasks and professional development goal-setting. As well as influencing how manageable workload feels, research highlights that teacher autonomy is strongly associated with job satisfaction and retention.
- You can find more practical recommendations in our research on **Teacher Autonomy**.

Our recommendations for policy makers

As a result of our findings, we are making four key recommendations to the Government:



For full findings and recommendations, you can read this year's **Teacher Labour Market in England – Annual Report 2023** on our website.

1

2023 pay award

Narrowing the gap between teacher pay and the wider labour market is key to supporting recruitment and retention. The 2023 pay award should therefore exceed the 4.1 per cent forecasted rise in earnings in the wider labour market.

2

A long-term strategy on teacher pay

The Government should develop a long-term strategy for improving the competitiveness of teacher pay relative to other occupations, while ensuring that schools have sufficient funding to enact these pay increases without making cuts elsewhere.

3

Reducing teacher workload

The Government should continue to remain focussed on reducing teacher workload by supporting schools in implementing the recommendations of the Teacher Workload Advisory Groups.

4

Understanding flexible working preferences

The Government should conduct further research to better understand teachers' flexible working preferences and use the findings to revisit the 2019 Teacher Recruitment and Retention strategy, ensuring it reflects the new post-pandemic world.



To receive future Research Bites from NFER Classroom, sign up to our newsletter www.nfer.ac.uk/ndfs and follow [@NFERClassroom](https://twitter.com/NFERClassroom) on Twitter.

We rely on the input of teachers and leaders to gather robust evidence that is a true reflection of school life. Join our Teacher Voice Survey Panel to add your voice to current debates on educational issues: www.nfer.ac.uk/jointteachervoices