

Some further thoughts on the National Audit Office report into the training of teachers

It was nice to be asked to record an interview for BBC Radio Manchester with Sam Walker this afternoon. She asked questions about the NAO report, [part of which I wrote about in respect of Teach First earlier today](#).

The broader messages of the report are that the DfE has **missed its recruitment targets for the last 4 years** and that there are signs that teacher shortages are growing. Specifically, the DfE missed its overall targets by an increasing margin between 2012/13 (1%) and 2014/15 (9%).

Between 2011 and 2014:

- The number of teachers leaving rose by 11%, with schools recruiting more teachers as a result;
- Recorded rate of vacancies and temporarily filled positions in state-funded schools has doubled;
- More classes are now taught by teachers without a relevant post-A-level qualification in their subject. For example, the proportion of physics classes taught by a teacher without such qualifications rose from 21% to 28%;
- In secondary schools, the proportion of lessons taught by teachers without a relevant post-A-level qualification has grown. For English Baccalaureate subjects (English, maths, sciences, languages, history and geography) the proportion rose from 14% in 2010 to 18% in 2014. In some subjects, teaching by non-specialists is prevalent: computer science (44%), Spanish (43%), religious education (30%), physics (28%) and German (25%). In English and maths one-fifth of

lessons are taught by teachers without relevant post-A-level qualifications.

Looking forwards, primary schools have also had to recruit more teachers to keep up with rising pupil numbers; secondary schools may now have to do likewise as pupil numbers start to increase. There is an estimated 9% increase in pupils predicted in the next 3 years.

A significant part of the report comments on the inadequacy of the DfE's teacher supply model which seems incapable of accurately predicting schools' need for teachers. It is particularly worrisome that the DfE has no understanding of local demand. Specifically, the report comments that the DfE **does not use its teacher supply model to estimate how many teachers are required locally or regionally**; rather, it largely relies on the school system to resolve problems. Clearly, this is not working at all.

All at a time when school funding is decreasing in real terms by 7% over the next 5 years.

If I might add a personal note, I can't help thinking that this is what happens when you abolish a Government department (the TDA) and absorb its duties into the DfE whose staff are almost solely preoccupied with implement a ridiculous free school and academy programme.

More generally, as a parent, surely I have a right for my child to be educated by a qualified teacher.

At secondary school, surely they should be a subject specialist, with a graduate level knowledge?

Neither of these things can be taken for granted any more.

Broader Government education policies have disrupted and diminished the support that local authorities and other locally accountable organisations can give to schools. The

result is a chaotic and fragmentary education system.

Michael Gove has initiated a set of reforms in our schools that has done immense harm. Nicky Morgan shows no sign of reversing these. Headteachers are beginning to complain vociferously about this. Parents should start doing the same.