

## Migration Advisory Committee

### Partial Review Shortage Occupation List - Teachers

#### Response of the Association of School and College Leaders

##### **A Introduction**

- 1 The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents more than 18,500 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of state-funded and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL members are responsible for the education of more than four million young people in more than 90 per cent of the secondary and tertiary phases, and in an increasing proportion of the primary phase. This places the association in a strong position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of schools and colleges of all types.
- 2 ASCL strongly welcomes this review by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) of the place of teachers on the Shortage Occupation List. Indeed, Malcolm Trobe, ASCL Interim General Secretary, called for just such a review in a letter of May 2016 to Theresa May, then Home Secretary. ASCL is grateful for the opportunity to give evidence to the review.
- 3 At present secondary school teachers of mathematics, physics and chemistry are on the list. Our contention is that there is now such a shortage of teachers that the teaching profession as a whole should be placed on the shortage occupation list.
- 4 Our remarks are organised in sections as follows:
  - A Introduction**
  - B Skilled**
  - C Shortage**
  - D Sensible**
  - E Conclusion and recommendations**
  - F Appendix – ASCL survey of school leaders**

##### **B Skilled**

- 5 As noted in the call for evidence, there is no doubt that school teaching meets the definition of an occupation sufficiently skilled to potentially be included in the shortage occupations list. There is therefore no need to produce further evidence related to this criterion.

##### **C Shortage**

- 6 ASCL has for some years been warning of an impending crisis in teacher recruitment and retention, a crisis which has now arrived. Recent ASCL documents that make this case include an ASCL survey of school leaders (January 2015)<sup>1</sup>, a ten-point plan to

---

<sup>1</sup> See [www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/news\\_news-detail.ascl-survey-reveals-scale-of-growing-teacher-recruitment-crisis.html](http://www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/news_news-detail.ascl-survey-reveals-scale-of-growing-teacher-recruitment-crisis.html)

tackle the problem (April 2015)<sup>2</sup>, our submission to the Education Select Committee Inquiry into the Supply of Teachers (November 2015)<sup>3</sup>, an ASCL survey of school leaders (January 2016)<sup>4</sup>, and our submission to the Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into the Training of New Teachers (February 2016)<sup>5</sup>.

- 7 This remains one of the two most significant challenges facing the school system, the other being a severe reduction in funding which makes addressing this problem all the harder. It is therefore one of the two key issues for ASCL, as evidenced by a recent blog by Leora Cruddas, ASCL Director of Policy (June 2016)<sup>6</sup> and Malcolm Trobe's letter to Justine Greening on her appointment as Secretary of State for Education (July 2016)<sup>7</sup>.
- 8 The ASCL position is borne out by reports of the National Audit Office (NAO) (February 2016)<sup>8</sup> and the Public Accounts Committee (June 2016)<sup>9</sup>, which essentially agree that there is a problem of recruitment of teachers (and to the extent examined, a problem of retention too). The Education Select Committee Inquiry has not yet concluded.
- 9 The Department for Education has been slow to accept that there is an issue of teacher supply and retention. This is in part due to a weakness of its methodology. The Teacher Supply Model (TSM) used by the DfE depends on uncertain and lagged data, is highly aggregated, is based on questionable assumptions, and is rebased each year. This final point means that it effectively assumes that there is currently an adequate supply of teachers when determining training needs, which is not the case, and that it takes no account of not hitting targets for teacher recruitment one year when assessing needs for the next. As noted in the NAO report, most targets for secondary teacher recruitment have been missed for a number of years, so that the TSM has become increasingly out of step with the reality of teacher recruitment in schools.
- 10 The TSM also makes what have proved to be optimistic assumptions about teacher retention, and in any case is calculated on the basis of worsening the ratio between the number of teachers and the number of pupils in the system. In other words, even if it were accurate, and all its targets were met, there would be a detrimental impact on the school system and what would be experienced by school leaders as a shortage of teachers.
- 11 In short, the methodology used by the DfE to set targets for the training of new teachers is severely flawed and has failed to produce a plan that would ensure an adequate supply of new teachers.
- 12 The January 2016 ASCL survey of school leaders is set out in the appendix. It does include some responses from outside the sector relevant to the current remit, but the great majority (95%) of respondents were leaders of secondary schools. These 838 respondents work in a significant proportion of the approximately 3000 state-funded secondary schools in England and Wales.

---

<sup>2</sup> See [www.ascl.org.uk/help-and-advice/help-and-advice.10-point-plan-to-tackle-recruitment-crisis.html](http://www.ascl.org.uk/help-and-advice/help-and-advice.10-point-plan-to-tackle-recruitment-crisis.html)

<sup>3</sup> See [www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=45DC7F27-65AB-4188-81AACE71A59B5A6F](http://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=45DC7F27-65AB-4188-81AACE71A59B5A6F)

<sup>4</sup> See [www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/news\\_news-detail.survey-shows-damage-of-teacher-shortages.html](http://www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/news_news-detail.survey-shows-damage-of-teacher-shortages.html) and the appendix.

<sup>5</sup> See [www.ascl.org.uk/policy/consultation-responses\\_news-detail.training-new-teachers.html](http://www.ascl.org.uk/policy/consultation-responses_news-detail.training-new-teachers.html)

<sup>6</sup> See [www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/blogs\\_detail.html?shorturl=teacher-recruitment-cannot-be-left-to-chance](http://www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/blogs_detail.html?shorturl=teacher-recruitment-cannot-be-left-to-chance)

<sup>7</sup> See [www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=54E1D641-DE66-4977-AD11217BF74CA432](http://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=54E1D641-DE66-4977-AD11217BF74CA432)

<sup>8</sup> See [www.nao.org.uk/report/training-new-teachers/](http://www.nao.org.uk/report/training-new-teachers/)

<sup>9</sup> See [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubacc/73/73.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubacc/73/73.pdf)

- 13 The results are clear: the overwhelming majority of schools are having difficulty recruiting teachers and report that the situation is worse than last year. The equivalent survey of last year (see footnote 1 above) also described a worsening over the year before. It is clear that the situation has changed markedly since the last MAC review of teachers in 2013.
- 14 The shortage of secondary teachers is likely to worsen in the near future due to demographic changes. A significant increase in secondary school population is expected over the next few years as larger age-cohorts now in the primary phase move through. The most recent figures available from the DfE (January 2016)<sup>10</sup> show the number of children of compulsory school age enrolled in state-funded schools of all types to be as follows:

Age as at 31 August 2015	Number
Primary age	
5	654,201
6	643,270
7	645,670
8	620,966
9	600,071
10	587,734
Secondary age	
11	571,173
12	554,826
13	534,856
14	537,665
15	541,379

- 15 Projecting the numbers forward it is clear that for the next six years at least the number of children arriving at secondary age will exceed the number reaching 16, and the simple calculation shows the secondary population growing each year to a total in 2022 12% higher than at present. To maintain standards the number of secondary teachers also needs to grow by approximately 12% over that period.
- 16 There is movement between the state and independent sectors that complicates the picture above, but a similar calculation based on the numbers enrolled in all types of school would suggest an even greater growth in secondary numbers.
- 17 It is clearly much harder to predict the number of primary places needed. ASCL does not have figures for numbers of children aged less than five, who are mainly not in school and who were born after the last national census. But the age cohorts above show a rising trend, with an increase in eight of the last ten years. There is no reason to suppose that the growth in primary numbers and consequent extra demand for primary teachers has ended.
- 18 Likewise, the numbers in post-16 education in schools is harder to predict accurately, as approximately half of the age-16 cohort leave school for education or training in

<sup>10</sup> See [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/532038/SFR20\\_2016\\_National\\_Tables.xlsx](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/532038/SFR20_2016_National_Tables.xlsx)

colleges or apprenticeships. However, according to the Office for National Statistics<sup>11</sup> the proportion of 16 and 17 year-olds who were not in education, employment with training or training (NEET) has fallen from 8.9% in April to June 2006 to 4.3% in the same quarter of 2016. This is a good thing, but the difference of 4.6% of the age-group represents approximately 67 thousand young people in the education and training system, who might earlier have been out of it. Many will be in training or in colleges, but this is clearly another upward pressure on the requirement for teachers.

- 19 A recent change of government policy has been to require all 16 and 17 year old students in schools and colleges who have not obtained a grade C in English or maths to resit the relevant subject. This has created a further demand for teachers of these subjects felt most strongly in colleges but also in school sixth forms. And, as noted below (paragraph 35), the labour market for teachers covers schools of all types and colleges so that the extra demand in colleges is putting further pressure on schools. One effect has been a further increase in the number of non-specialist teachers teaching these subjects. This is not ideal in itself, and of course only increases the shortage of teachers in the subjects for which these teachers have trained.
- 20 It is clear from the ASCL surveys that the shortage of teachers is national, not limited to certain regions. As would be expected the situation is worse in some areas than others but the ASCL regional conferences in autumn 2015 made it clear that there is a problem in all regions of England and Wales<sup>12</sup>.
- 21 The shortage of teachers is not limited to a few subject-specialisms as in the past. The ASCL survey of January 2016<sup>13</sup> asked about the subjects found to be difficult. As might be expected the existing shortage subjects of maths and science head the list, but they are now joined by significant numbers of schools having problems recruiting teachers of English, modern foreign languages (MFL), geography, history and other subjects. A frequently heard response to this question when asked of school leaders directly is "it is easier to list subjects that are not difficult to recruit".
- 22 In 2015/16 the DfE failed to meet 14 of the 17 targets it set for enrolment to training for teaching of various subjects<sup>14</sup>. As noted above these targets are in any case likely to be too low to maintain the required numbers of teachers. But of the three that were met two (English and history) are amongst those our survey reported as already suffering from particular shortages. This would suggest that only PE is likely to have sufficient numbers even to meet the level set by the DfE.
- 23 The decision that the UK should leave the EU is likely to worsen the teacher shortage, as a number of teachers in British schools are nationals of other EU countries. Some of these teachers will leave Britain, and it will be harder to recruit replacements from the same sources.
- 24 This issue will have an effect on all subjects, but will probably be most noted in MFL. The languages taught most widely in our schools are French, German and Spanish, and a significant proportion of their teachers are native-speakers recruited from the relevant EU nations. In the ASCL survey MFL is already the fourth most mentioned

---

<sup>11</sup> See

[www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/unemployment/datasets/youngpeoplenotineducationemployementortrainingneetable1](http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/unemployment/datasets/youngpeoplenotineducationemployementortrainingneetable1)

<sup>12</sup> Each autumn, ASCL holds regional information conferences throughout England, and a national conference in Wales, these are well attended by school leaders. In 2015 each was asked a number of questions about teacher recruitment via an electronic scoring system. Though there were variations, there was consistent report of difficult and worsening recruitment. ASCL can supply exact figures if they would be helpful.

<sup>13</sup> See [www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/news\\_news-detail\\_survey-shows-damage-of-teacher-shortages.html](http://www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/news_news-detail_survey-shows-damage-of-teacher-shortages.html) and the appendix.

<sup>14</sup> See the National Audit Office report cited at footnote 8, page 29.

subject area for difficulty of recruitment, and there is an urgent need to increase the number of children studying foreign languages. This is recognised by the government and there is a drive to increase the learning of Mandarin Chinese in particular, for which it is particularly hard to recruit teachers already resident in Britain.

- 25 A further problem for future supply of teachers of MFL is that there has been a marked decline in the number of young people taking languages at A level<sup>15</sup>. This is likely to lead to fewer students taking language degrees and hence fewer training to be teachers.

## **D Sensible**

- 26 The shortage of teachers is having an effect on the quality of the education that our young people receive. The ASCL survey of January 2016 indicates this clearly, with a large majority of respondents indicating that recruitment difficulties are having a detrimental effect<sup>16</sup>.
- 27 The ASCL survey also indicates that significant numbers of schools are taking less than desirable actions to cover classes<sup>17</sup>, the most common being the use of non-specialist teachers. Indeed, you have already noted that more than 20% of maths and science teachers do not have a subject relevant qualification<sup>18</sup>. While good teachers can teach subjects that are not their specialism, it is clearly better for their students if they are teaching the subject that they are enthusiastic about and have chosen to study in depth.
- 28 The difficulty experienced by many schools in recruiting suitable teachers to permanent posts has led to an increase in the use of agency staff, and this is again reported by a large proportion of our respondents<sup>19</sup>. There are three major concerns about this approach: it is more expensive than appointing permanent staff, quality control is not as stringent, and there is a tendency for a lack of the continuity and stability that children need to study most effectively.
- 29 These and other measures largely hide the problem from the DfE, as its survey simply asks for vacancies on a date in November, by which time arrangements (whether satisfactory or not) will have been made. But even these figures are rising, as you have noted, as vacancy rates in England across most subjects have increased<sup>20</sup>. This has also been reflected in increased numbers of Tier 2 applications, as noted in the consultation document.
- 30 The shortage is not only having an immediate effect on quality, it is also increasing the workload and stress levels of those in the profession<sup>21</sup>; this risks worsening the retention of teachers and a further exacerbation of the problem.
- 31 It is a matter of great importance to the nation that it should have an education system of the highest quality. That is not disputed and it is the stated aim of government. But that cannot be achieved without a sufficient number of well-trained and dedicated teachers. The problem needs to be addressed.

---

<sup>15</sup> See The British Council publication *Language Trends 2016/16* pages 32-43

[www.britishcouncil.org/education/schools/support-for-languages/thought-leadership/research-report/language-trends-2015-16](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/schools/support-for-languages/thought-leadership/research-report/language-trends-2015-16)

<sup>16</sup> See the appendix, question 4.

<sup>17</sup> See the appendix, question 4.

<sup>18</sup> Presentation at MAC briefing, 1 July 2016.

<sup>19</sup> See the appendix, question 4.

<sup>20</sup> Presentation at MAC briefing, 1 July 2016.

<sup>21</sup> See the appendix, question 5.

- 32 ASCL documents such as those cited in footnotes 2, 3, 5 and 6 above attempt to do just that, but progress has been slow. The DfE needs to accept that there is a major problem and take decisive action to address it. So far it has been reluctant to accept that there is a need, and what steps it has taken have been largely ineffective, as borne out by the reports of both the National Audit Office<sup>22</sup> and the Public Accounts Committee<sup>23</sup>.
- 33 But even if the profession, and the DfE and its agencies were to take up and vigorously pursue all of the initiatives proposed by ASCL and others there would still be a lag of several years before much effect could be expected. Training a new teacher typically takes five years post A level (three years to degree level, a year taking a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) or equivalent, and a year as a newly-qualified teacher (NQT) before a full workload can be expected). And certainly the ameliorative schemes so far adopted are unlikely to have any significant effect for many years.
- 34 More immediate steps that might be applicable in other sectors, recruiting from cognate sectors and increasing pay, are not available to the leaders of state-funded schools:
- 35 Our surveys show that teacher recruitment has become more difficult in independent schools and colleges too. Indeed the latter sector currently has an acute shortage of maths and English teachers because of changes in government policy requiring 16-19 year olds to study these subjects alongside any other education or training they have chosen. The former sector has less of a recruitment problem than the state sector because of generally better terms and conditions, but also reports increased difficulty in recruitment most noticeable in essentially the same subject areas found most difficult in the state sector<sup>24</sup>. These sectors are outside your current remit, but the point is that there is little scope for state schools to recruit from them.
- 36 Increasing the pay of teachers is also largely impossible to school leaders. First, the pay of teachers in maintained schools is determined by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) issued by government after an annual review by the School Teachers Review Body (STRB). Government policy has been to limit systematic pay-rises to 1% and that is the figure that will be applicable to the new STPCD. Although most secondary schools and many primary schools are now academies, and technically able to depart from the STPCD, most do not do so to any significant extent.
- 37 Even were they willing to do so they would be strongly constrained by the stringent financial situation. Real terms funding per student has declined significantly in recent years and is projected to continue to do so. This already means that there are fewer teachers, leaders, support staff and administrators in schools with an expectation of further falls. Any attempt to attract new teachers by paying more would inevitably mean exacerbating that situation, worsening the education offered to young people, and increasing workloads and hence potentially creating further problems of retention.

## **E Conclusion and recommendation**

- 38 Teaching is a skilled profession. There is a marked and growing shortage of suitable applicants for teaching posts, not limited to particular regions or any longer to

---

<sup>22</sup> See [www.nao.org.uk/report/training-new-teachers](http://www.nao.org.uk/report/training-new-teachers)

<sup>23</sup> See [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpublic/73/73.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpublic/73/73.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> If further details are required please refer to the Independent Schools Council [www.isc.co.uk](http://www.isc.co.uk)

particular specialisms. This is having a detrimental effect on the education service, which will make government education policy hard to achieve and will ultimately damage the national economy. Proper solutions to the problem are not in hand and would take several years at best to address it. Short term solutions aimed at improving domestic recruitment are not available.

- 39 ASCL would therefore recommend that teaching be placed on the shortage occupation list.
- 40 I hope that this is of value to your review, ASCL is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way that it can.

Martin Ward  
Public Affairs Director  
Association of School and College Leaders  
12 September 2016

## Appendix

ASCL survey of school leaders – January 2016

### **Q1 Are you experiencing any difficulties in recruiting teachers?**

Yes: 89.25% (789 responses)

No: 10.75% (95)

Total responses: 884

### **Q2 How does the recruitment situation compare to 12 months ago?**

Much worse: 23.92% (211)

Worse: 48.98% (432)

About the same: 26.53% (234)

Better: 0.45% (4)

Much better: 0.11% (1)

Total responses: 882

### **Q3 If you are struggling to recruit teachers, which are the problem areas?**

Leadership posts: 12.50% (103)

Maths: 78.16% (644)

Science: 74.51% (614)

English: 56.92% (469)

Languages: 32.65% (269)

Geography: 25.12% (207)

History: 13.83% (114)

Other: 25.24% (208)

Total responses: 824

### **Q4 If you are struggling to recruit, what action have you had to take?**

More supply agency staff: 70.13% (573)

Subjects taught by non-specialists: 72.83% (595)

Merging classes: 24.60% (201)

More lessons taught by headteacher/ deputy headteacher 41.74% (341)

Working with group of schools to recruit/ share teachers 21.42% (175)

Other action: 15.18% (124)

Total responses: 817

### **Q5 Is the recruitment situation creating additional workload and stress among staff?**

Yes: 87.12% (751)

No: 12.88% (111)

Total responses: 862



**Q6 Is the recruitment situation having a detrimental impact on the education you are able to provide?**

Yes: 84.11% (725)

No: 15.89% (137)

Total responses: 862

**Q7 What is your type of school/ college?**

Maintained: 37.29% (330)

Academy: 57.40% (508)

College: 1.24% (11)

Other: 4.07% (36)

Total responses: 885

**Q8 What is your job title?**

Head or principal: 47.57% (421)

Deputy head/ principal: 18.19% (161)

Assistant head/ principal: 12.43% (110)

Business leader/ manager: 18.53% (164)

Other: 3.28% (29)

Total responses: 885