



School Teachers'  
Review Body

# School Teachers' Review Body

THIRTY-FIRST REPORT – 2021  
Executive Summary

*Chair:* Dr Patricia Rice OBE

## The School Teachers' Review Body

The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) was established in 1991 as an independent body to examine and report on such matters relating to the statutory conditions of employment of school teachers as may from time to time be referred to it by the Secretary of State for Education. The STRB reports to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State and provides advice on the pay and conditions of teachers in England. The current legal foundation for the function and work of the STRB is Part Eight of the Education Act 2002. The secretariat for the STRB is provided by the Office of Manpower Economics (OME).

The members of the STRB are:

Dr Patricia Rice (Chair) OBE

Sir Robert Burgess

Ken Clark

Harriet Kemp

John Lakin

Lynn Lawrence

Martin Post

Dr Andrew Waller

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *Context to our consideration of the remit*

The last 12 months have been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic which has had major social and economic consequences for the UK, with severe restrictions placed on individuals and businesses. These restrictions have had a serious impact on the economy, reflected in the deterioration seen across a range of economic indicators.

Teachers and school leaders have faced unprecedented challenges including remaining open throughout this period to key groups of pupils, managing the balance between face-to-face teaching and virtual delivery of lessons for different groups of pupils, and adapting their infrastructure to ensure that schools are 'Covid-compliant'. In many schools this has coincided with serious staffing issues caused by illness or self-isolation.

These challenges were recognised in all the submissions we received from our consultees and we join them in applauding the extraordinary efforts of teachers and school leaders this year.

## *Our remit for 2021/22*

We received our remit letter from the Secretary of State on 15th December 2020. The letter referred to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's announcement at the Spending Review in November 2020 that pay rises in the public sector 'will be restrained and targeted in 2021/22'. The Government said its policy aimed to protect jobs and investment in public services. In this context, the Secretary of State said he was not seeking a recommendation for pay uplifts in 2021/22 for the majority of teachers. The letter invited the STRB's recommendations on increases for those earning less than £24,000 per annum (or part-time equivalent), stating that the Government proposed to continue pay uplifts for these teachers at a value of £250 or the National Living Wage increase, whichever was higher.

## *Our assessment of the labour market for teachers*

While our remit letter did not seek pay recommendations for the vast majority of teachers, it did ask us to have regard to the national state of teacher and school leader supply and of the wider labour market. We have therefore undertaken a full assessment of the evidence relating to these matters and this is set out in Chapter 3 of our report.

In 2020/21 overall recruitment to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) increased by 23% on 2019/20. This should help to address some pressures on teacher supply. However, the headline figures included significant over-recruitment of both primary trainees and trainees for some secondary subjects. Despite the more favourable recruitment

conditions, several key subjects continued to recruit substantially below the required number of trainees (Chemistry, Design and Technology, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages, and Physics).

The overall leaving rate across the profession improved from 9.6% in 2018 to 9.2% in 2019. The latest data showed a slight improvement in the retention rate of teachers in their initial years of service, following several years of marked increases in the leaving rates among these teachers. We hope the latest figures signal a reversal of this trend. The number of resignations across the profession remains high, and particularly so among those early in their careers where some 27% of joiners leave within three years. As such, teacher retention remains a pressing concern.

The experience of the 2008 recession suggests that improved recruitment numbers may be relatively short-lived as the wider economy recovers. The profession's ability to recruit new teachers is inextricably linked to the wider graduate labour market. As such, the sustainability of the improvement in ITT recruitment, and the extent to which shortages in specific subjects are addressed, will depend on how competitive teaching as a career is in relation to the wider market, where the speed of recovery remains uncertain.

Recent awards have made some progress towards making teacher pay more competitive in the wider graduate labour market, particularly starting pay. The latest economic data suggest earnings and pay settlements in the wider economy are showing signs of recovery. If this is indicative of an upturn in the wider graduate labour market at a time when pay uplifts for teachers are paused, then recent progress in strengthening the competitiveness of teachers' pay will be lost. This poses significant risks to teacher recruitment and retention.

We recognise the exceptional pressures placed on the economy and on public sector finances by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we are firmly of the view that a pay pause for teachers of more than one year risks a severe negative impact on the competitive position of the teaching profession, jeopardising efforts to attract and retain the high-quality graduates necessary to deliver improved pupil outcomes. The Review Body urges that we be allowed to fully exercise our role in making recommendations on pay uplifts for all teachers and school leaders for 2022/23, based on the evidence, including conditions in the wider economy.

## ***Our recommendations on the pay of teachers earning less than £24,000***

Our remit letter asked us for recommendations only on the pay uplifts for those whose full-time equivalent basic earnings are less than £24,000. It is estimated that this applies to around 6,000 teachers paid on the unqualified teacher pay range. We recommend for 2021/22:

- A consolidated award of £250 to all teachers whose full-time equivalent basic earnings are less than:
  - £24,000 in the Rest of England
  - £25,194 in the Fringe
  - £27,419 in Outer London
  - £28,681 in Inner London
- Any part-time teacher whose full-time equivalent basic earnings meet the eligibility criteria receive the award on a pro-rata basis according to their working hours.
- The award be paid to all eligible teachers, whether located on a published pay point or not.
- This award be independent of any progression considerations.
- The treatment of teachers between existing published pay points, including the management of possible leapfrogging, be at the discretion of employers who should ensure no teachers located just above the pay thresholds for eligibility are significantly disadvantaged relative to other teachers.
- That employers ensure that implementation of the pay award complies with the National Living Wage policy.

We also recommend that advisory pay points be reintroduced on the unqualified teachers' pay range for 2021/22. The proposed values are set out in Appendix E of the report.

### ***Looking ahead***

We have commented this year on two issues related to our remit.

First, as in previous reports, we have again noted the concerns expressed by a number of our consultees about the equalities impacts of the pay system. It is a serious matter for us that these questions continue to be raised. Both our consultees' evidence and wider independent research have suggested there are questions that, as a minimum, require further exploration. We are pleased that the Department is planning a study covering issues of equality and diversity. As this will take some time to deliver its findings, we encourage the Department, in parallel, to make use of the detailed census data it collects annually on the teaching workforce.

Second, teachers' wellbeing is an important issue and is likely to remain a significant concern, even after the additional pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic recede. It is important that teacher wellbeing is both recognised and addressed, not least because this will positively affect recruitment and retention. In this context, the Secretary of State told us that schools could direct some of this year's funding increase towards better support for teachers. We encourage the Department to continue to work with the sector in reducing workload and promoting more flexible working arrangements for teachers.

Finally, our report last year highlighted two matters we considered that future remits should address. We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on both the Department's priorities and wider Government pay policy. We continue to seek an opportunity to review aspects of the pay framework for classroom teachers to ensure it recognises high performance and increases in teaching excellence and capability, while also rewarding teachers for taking on management and leadership responsibilities. We would also support a review of the existing leadership pay framework, including the factors determining pay for school leaders, the issue of pay differentials between the teacher and leadership pay ranges, and the leadership roles covered by the pay structure.



