



School Teachers'  
Review Body

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THIRTY-SIXTH REPORT - 2026

*Chair:* Dr Mike Aldred



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Thirty-Sixth Report - 2026

*Chair:* Dr Mike Aldred

**Presented to Parliament by the  
Prime Minister and the Secretary of State  
for Education by Command of His Majesty**

**July 2026**



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## Our report at a glance

Pay competitiveness

Taxpayer value for money

Multi-year stability

### Recommended pay awards

**September 2026: 3.5%**

**September 2027: 3.0%**

**September 2028: 3.0%  
(indicative)**

Our pay recommendations equate to 9.8% over three years.

### Other matters

**Salary safeguarding:** Period to be reduced to at least one full academic year.

**Recognition schemes:** Allowing schools the flexibility to offer modest awards to recognise excellence alongside pay.

**Working time:** Immediate measures to improve clarity; consideration of reform in our next remit.

**Unqualified teachers' pay:** A 5% increase to the minimum point outside London and the Fringe in September 2026; a fuller review in a future remit.

## Navigating our report

[Our approach](#) and consultee evidence.

Our [pay recommendations](#) supported by our analysis and commentary.

Our recommendations on [salary safeguarding](#) and [recognition schemes](#), supported by our analysis and commentary.

Our assessment and views in relation to [working time arrangements](#).

Evidence from consultees on working time arrangements:

[Appendix A](#)

Our detailed labour market analysis: [Appendix B](#)

Proposed revised pay ranges: [Appendix F](#)

# Executive summary

## Context

We recognise some progress in recent years to improve teacher pay and conditions. Recent awards have improved competitiveness, with some indicators showing progress in recruitment and retention, though pressures remain.

We fully acknowledge the challenging fiscal context and pressures on school budgets. For this reason, it will be important that the implementation of any pay award is accompanied by appropriate financial support. While it is right to seek efficiency savings, STRB judges it a practical reality that some additional funding will be necessary to avoid material adverse impacts on educational delivery.

## Pay recommendations

STRB recommends headline increases of 3.5% in September 2026; 3.0% in September 2027; and an indicative 3.0% in September 2028 (subject to a future remit). These increases should apply uniformly to all teachers and leaders, except for the Unqualified Teacher range minimum (Rest of England), where a 5% uplift is recommended in September 2026 to mitigate the risk of falling below the National Living Wage.

**These recommendations maintain competitiveness, provide certainty, and align with forecast earnings growth and the wider economic outlook.**

STRB considered a review mechanism for 2027, which could mitigate economic shocks, but may create uncertainty for financial and workforce planning. On balance, we do not recommend one. If economic or labour market conditions diverge significantly from forecasts, this should be reflected explicitly in the 2028 remit.

## Other matters

**Salary safeguarding:** The current three-year period can constrain flexibility for schools. STRB recommends reducing the safeguarding period to at least one full academic year. If a change which gives rise to salary safeguarding is implemented after the commencement of an academic year, salary safeguarding should apply for the remainder of the academic year in which the change is implemented, plus the following full academic year. This means that the safeguarding period will be at least one full academic year, and in some cases longer. This balances protection for teachers with a more responsive framework. This change should be applied prospectively.

**Recognition schemes:** STRB supports schools having freedom to operate modest, well-governed recognition arrangements. Governing bodies should oversee these, supported by national guidelines. They should ensure costs are controlled, processes are fair and transparent, and recognition complements, rather than substitutes for, salary.

**Working time arrangements:** Current arrangements offer flexibility, but some areas lack clarity and consistency. STRB judges that the priority is clearer articulation and stronger governance rather than immediate structural change. Further modernisation of professional terms and conditions, including working time, would benefit from a future dedicated remit.

**Unqualified teachers and the National Living Wage:** Beyond the recommended increase, we also recommend a fuller review in our next remit.

# CHAPTER 1

## The Review Process

### *Introduction*

- 1.1 This chapter sets out the context to our consideration of the remit, explains our approach to conducting the review and outlines the structure of this report.
- 1.2 The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is an independent body, established in 1991, that provides advice on the pay and conditions of school teachers in England to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Education. As specified in the Education Act 2002, the role of the STRB is to consider matters referred to it by the Secretary of State and provide recommendations.
- 1.3 Our current membership is:
  - Dr Mike Aldred (Chair)
  - Mark Cornelius
  - Lauren Costello OBE
  - Dr Tim Gilson
  - Josephine Grunwell
  - Lena Levy
  - Alison Macleod
  - Claire Tunbridge

### ***STRB's 35th report***

- 1.4 Our 35th report was delivered to the Government in March 2025 in response to its request for pay recommendations effective from September 2025.
- 1.5 We recommended an increase of 4% to the pay and allowance ranges of all grades. We also recommended changes to the flexibility around TLR payments to reflect the proportion of the responsibility being carried out. The recommendations were accepted in full by the Government.
- 1.6 We also reviewed broader issues that can contribute to improving the supply of teachers and school leaders, and suggested actions in a range of areas to improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession and ensure taxpayer value for money. These were in relation to equality and inclusion, flexible working, targeting remuneration, supply teachers, modernising employment terms and conditions, performance-related pay progression and pensions flexibility.

## ***The remit for the STRB's 36th report***

1.7 We received our remit letter from the Secretary of State on 22 July 2025.<sup>1</sup> It set out the following matters for recommendation:

- An assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in the academic years 2026/27 and 2027/28;
- An indicative assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in the 2028/29 academic year, to be confirmed or reconsidered in a subsequent remit;
- An assessment of whether the current salary safeguarding period should be reduced to enable employers to deploy their workforce and resources most effectively, whilst maintaining core teacher protections;
- Whether to introduce the option for maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses), for those who want to use them, separate to and above any pay progression arrangements and the annual STRB recommended pay uplift.

1.8 The letter also sought our views on:

- Current working hours arrangements in the STPCD for teachers;
- Current working hours arrangements for leaders.

1.9 In making its recommendations, the remit letter set out a range of factors that the STRB should have regard to. These can be found in the full letter reproduced in [Appendix C](#).

## ***The pay review process***

1.10 Following receipt of the remit letter in July 2025, we invited our consultees to submit initial written representations and evidence by 20 October 2025. We are grateful for these timely submissions. The Department's written evidence was received on 30 October.

1.11 After initial written evidence was received, links to the submissions were shared with all consultees who were invited to make a supplementary submission commenting on other parties' representations by 20 November 2025. The STRB then conducted oral evidence sessions with eight consultees in December 2025.

1.12 We would like to thank all those who provided evidence. Full versions of the submissions we received can be found at the links below.

- [AOC](#)
- [ASCL \(Annex 1, Annex 2\)](#)

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<sup>1</sup> GOV.UK (2025) *School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) remit letter for 2026 and 2027* – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-review-body-remit-letter-for-2026-and-2027>

- [ASCL supplementary evidence](#)
- [BATOD](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Community supplementary evidence](#)
- [The Department for Education](#) and [HM Treasury](#)
- [Joint union statement](#)
- [NAHT](#)
- [NAHT supplementary evidence](#)
- [NASUWT](#)
- [NASUWT supplementary evidence](#)
- [NEOST](#)
- [NEU](#)
- [NEU supplementary evidence](#)
- [NGA](#)
- [SFCA](#)
- [UCU](#)

- 1.13 In addition to considering consultees' evidence, we commissioned from our secretariat analyses of the teaching workforce, based on a range of statistics and research that are cited in this report and presented more fully in [Appendix B](#) (Teacher labour market analysis). As in previous years, we have carefully examined data on the recruitment and retention of teachers, the wider labour market for graduates and on teachers' pay. Given our submission date, the report has drawn on data published up to 18 February 2026.
- 1.14 As part of our regular annual programme of visits, we convened discussion groups in the summer and autumn of 2025 with teachers and school leaders. We heard views on a range of matters including pay, recruitment and retention, and school finances. The discussions have complemented the formal evidence and strengthened our understanding of the concerns of the workforce. We would like to thank all the participants and those who facilitated the visits. A summary of the key points we heard is provided in [Appendix E](#).

## CHAPTER 2

### Our recommendations on the pay award

#### Introduction

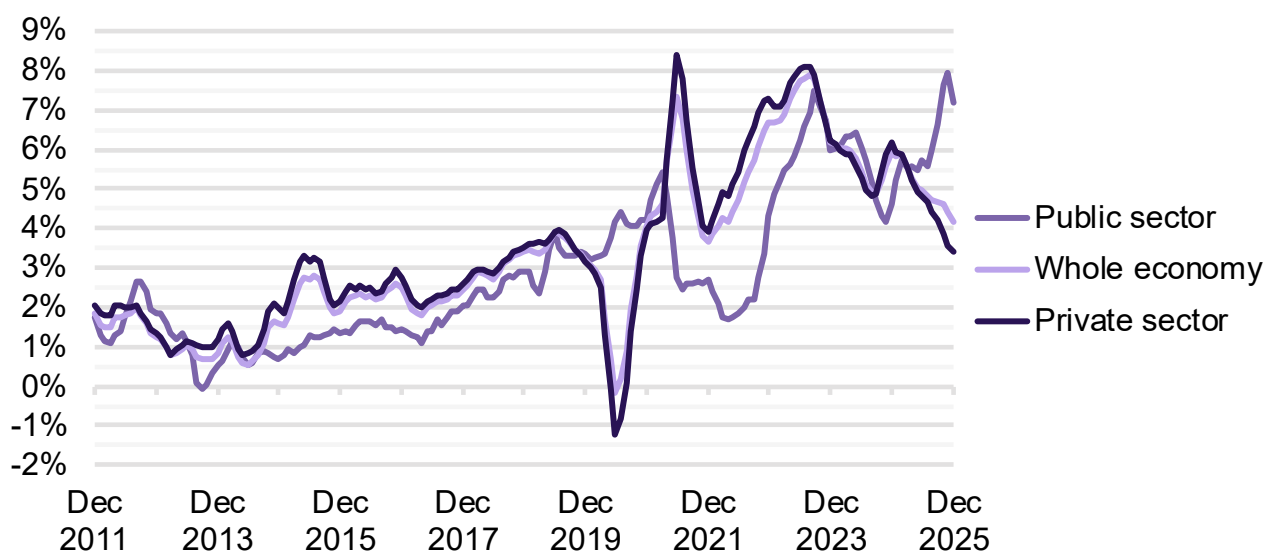
- 2.1 This chapter provides the recommendations of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State on changes to the teacher pay and allowance framework effective from September 2026 and September 2027. It also provides our indicative view on changes effective from September 2028, which may be subject to a future remit. Details of the remit and the factors we were asked to consider are set out in [Chapter 1](#) and [Appendix C](#).
- 2.2 Links to consultee evidence are provided in [Chapter 1](#). [Appendix B](#) sets out our Teacher labour market analysis. We have carefully considered the full range of evidence available to us.

#### Key metrics

- 2.3 We set out below the main analytical themes that informed our decisions. For each theme, we present key metrics, a brief factual commentary and our conclusion. We signpost where greater detail can be found in [Appendix B](#).

#### Earnings growth<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 2.1: Average Weekly Earnings, annual growth rates (3-month average), regular pay, Great Britain<sup>3</sup>**



- 2.4 Earnings growth in the rest of the economy is an important factor affecting the ability to recruit and retain teachers because it impacts what level of pay is competitive.

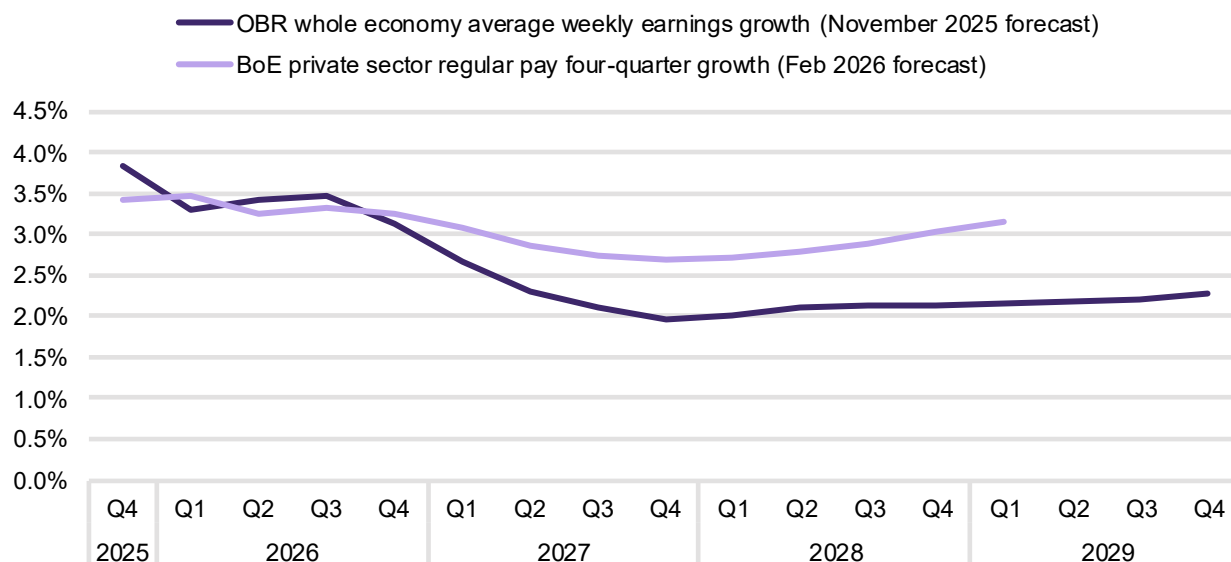
<sup>2</sup> For more detailed analysis of Earnings Growth, see paragraph 8-13 of Appendix B.

<sup>3</sup> ONS (2026) *EARN01: Average weekly earnings, released 17 February 2026* - [EARN01: Average weekly earnings - Office for National Statistics](#). Estimates of regular pay exclude bonuses and arrears of pay. The three-month average figures are the changes in the average seasonally adjusted values for the three months ending with the relevant month compared with the same period a year earlier.

2.5 In the three months to December 2025, annual growth in regular pay across the economy was 4.2%.<sup>4</sup>

### Earnings forecasts<sup>5</sup>

Figure 2.2: Average Weekly Earnings growth forecasts, UK, 2025 to 2029<sup>6,7</sup>



- 2.6 Forecasts of future earnings growth in the wider economy are relevant to our decision because our recommendations are for settlements that will take effect in the future. Given our recommendations in this remit are for multiple years, the importance of forecasts (and understanding their limitations) is heightened.
- 2.7 We recognise the inherent uncertainty around any economic and fiscal forecast and that this can be increased by external economic and political developments.
- 2.8 In its November 2025 forecast, the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) projected whole-economy annual earnings growth of around 5% in 2025 as a whole before falling to around 3.5% in Q3 2026, and 2.1% in both Q3 2027 and Q3 2028.
- 2.9 In its February 2026 Monetary Policy Report, the Bank of England forecast private sector wage growth of 3.3% for the year to Q3 2026, 2.7% to Q3 2027 and 2.9% to Q3 2028.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ONS (2026) *Average weekly earnings in Great Britain: February 2026* - [Average weekly earnings in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>5</sup> For commentary on Earnings Forecasts, see paragraph 12 of Appendix B.

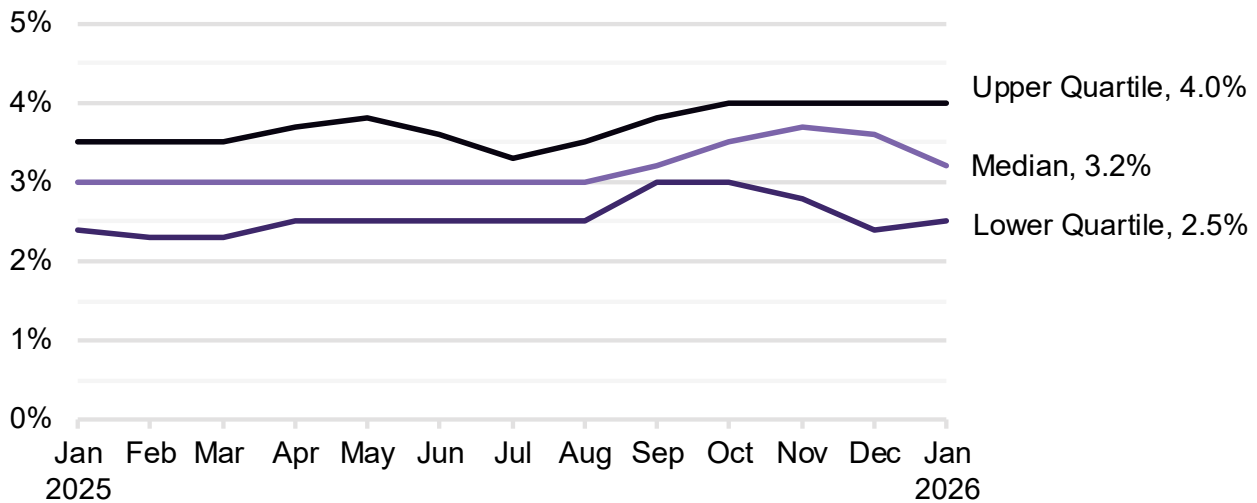
<sup>6</sup> Average weekly earnings growth. OBR (2025) *Economic and fiscal outlook - November 2025* - [Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2025](#)

<sup>7</sup> Average weekly earnings (private sector regular pay) four-quarter growth. BoE (2026) Monetary Policy Report - February 2026 - <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy-report/2026/february-2026>

<sup>8</sup> BoE (2026) *Monetary Policy Report - February 2026* - <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy-report/2026/february-2026>

## Pay settlements<sup>9</sup>

Figure 2.3: Economy-wide annual pay settlements, rolling three months, January 2025 to January 2026, percentage increase in basic pay<sup>10</sup>



2.10 Pay settlements are another indicator of pay trends across the wider economy. While earnings growth reflects both past increases in pay and compositional changes in the labour market, settlements in other organisations provide a useful comparison point for our pay award recommendation.

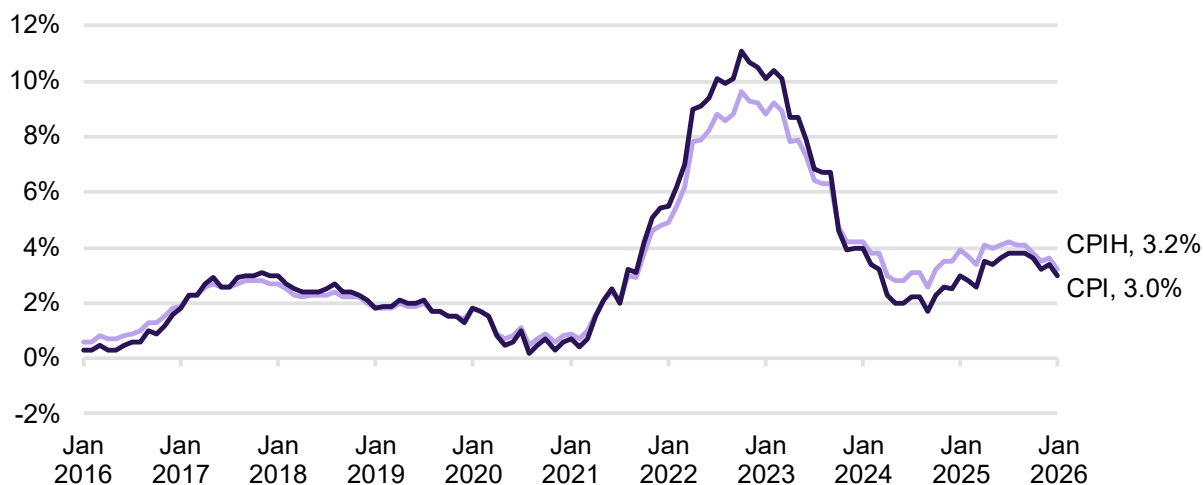
2.11 The median basic pay settlement in the 12 months to the end of January 2026 was 3.0%. For the 3 months to the end of January 2026, the median increase was 3.2%; a quarter of awards were below 2.5% and a further quarter were above 4.0%.

<sup>9</sup> For more detailed analysis of Pay Settlements, see paragraphs 14-17 of Appendix B.

<sup>10</sup> OPRB analysis of Brightmine (formerly XpertHR) data. Available to Brightmine subscribers.

## Price inflation<sup>11</sup>

Figure 2.4: Annual CPI and CPIH inflation rates, UK, January 2016 to 2026<sup>12</sup>

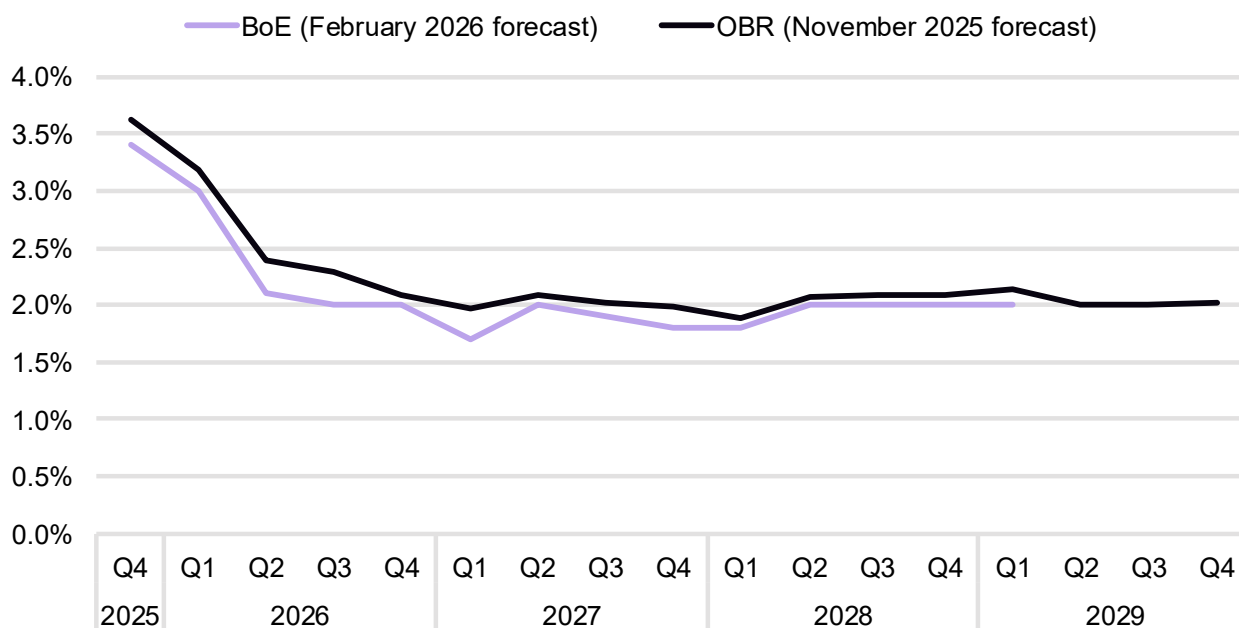


- 2.12 Price inflation determines the real value of teachers' pay and affects school spending against budgets.
- 2.13 During 2025, the 12-month inflation rate as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) has fluctuated within a range of 2.6% to 3.8%. The rate was 3.0% in January 2026.
- 2.14 Price inflation can result in higher general earnings growth, and if this is not reflected in teachers' pay, it will reduce the competitiveness of teachers' pay and weaken the ability to attract and retain teachers.

<sup>11</sup> For more detailed analysis of Price Inflation, see paragraphs 4-7 of Appendix B.

<sup>12</sup> OPRB analysis of ONS (2026) *Consumer price inflation, UK: January 2026* - [Consumer price inflation, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

**Figure 2.5: CPI forecasts, UK, 2025 to 2029<sup>13,14</sup>**



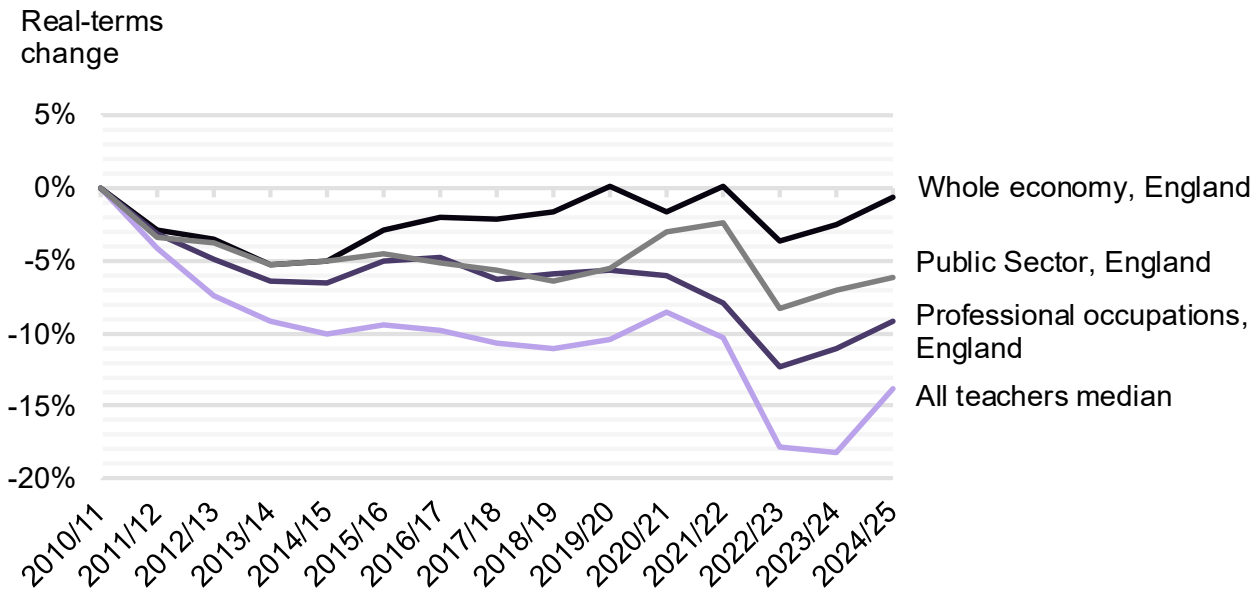
2.15 Looking ahead, the OBR forecasts CPI to be 2.3% in Q3 2026, 2.0% in Q3 2027 and 2.1% in Q3 2028. The Bank of England forecasts are for CPI at 2.0% in Q3 2026, 1.9% in Q3 2027 and 2.0% in Q3 2028.

<sup>13</sup> BoE (2026) *Monetary Policy Report - February 2026* - <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy-report/2026/february-2026>

<sup>14</sup> OBR (2025) *Economic and fiscal outlook - November 2025* - [Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2025](#)

## Teachers' relative pay<sup>15</sup>

Figure 2.6: Real-terms change in median gross earnings for teachers in state-funded schools, the whole economy (England), public sector (England) and other professional occupations (England), compared to level in 2010/11<sup>16,17,18</sup>



2.16 Teachers' relative pay indicates how the financial attractiveness of teaching has changed compared to other occupations.

2.17 The value of teachers' earnings has reduced since 2010 relative to average earnings across the whole economy, the public sector and other professional occupations. Actions taken over recent years have begun to reverse this trend.

<sup>15</sup> For more detailed analysis of Teachers' Pay, see paragraphs 29-39 of Appendix B.

<sup>16</sup> Nominal earnings have been adjusted using annual CPI figures (financial year). ONS (2026) *Consumer price inflation tables* -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceinflation>

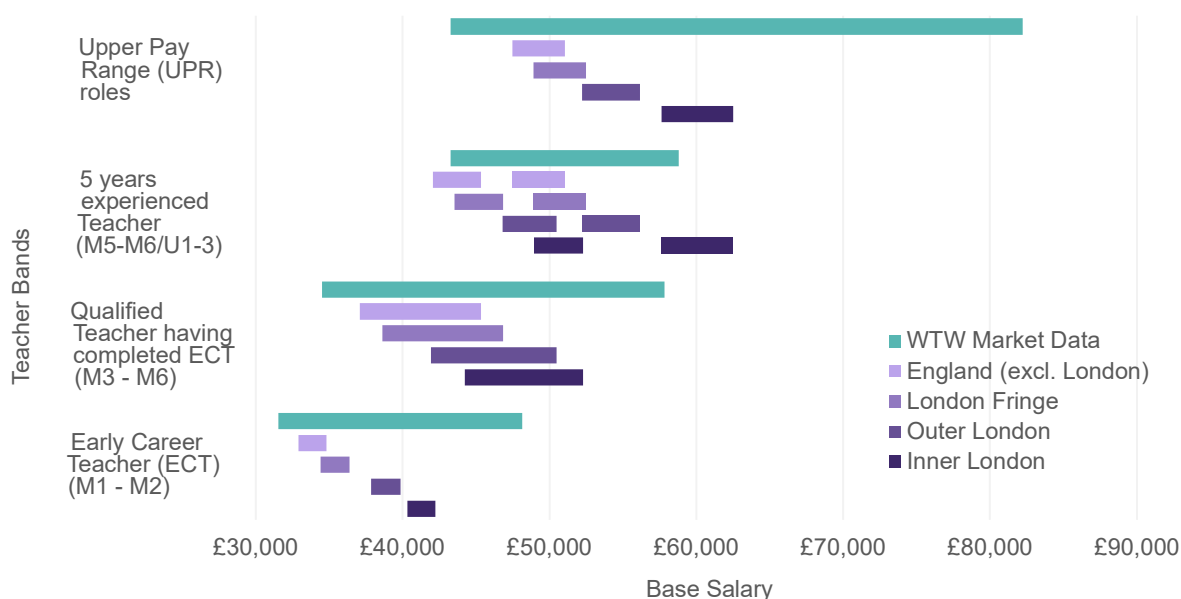
<sup>17</sup> Data for the whole economy and for professional occupations represent full-time median gross annual earnings in England. OPRB analysis of unpublished ASHE microdata. ASHE data is presented on a financial year basis. 2024/25 figures are provisional.

<sup>18</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School Workforce in England: Reporting year 2024 -* <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>. Note that the 2024/25 SWC data does not fully reflect the 2024/25 pay award.

## Pay benchmarking<sup>19</sup>

- 2.18 The analysis in the preceding sections provides comparative information on the rate of change of earnings, pay settlements, price inflation and teachers' pay relative to an historic point in time. Whilst these are useful inputs, they do not directly respond to a central important question: how competitive is teacher pay currently?
- 2.19 To assist the STRB in considering this question, we commissioned in 2023 a leading pay benchmarking firm to undertake work in this area.<sup>20</sup> We have refreshed the headline findings in this report using updated data from July 2025 (the most recent available data at the time of our analysis). More information about this analysis can be found in [Appendix B](#).
- 2.20 Benchmarking teacher and leadership roles against remuneration data for jobs of comparable size, scope and complexity provides an insight into the relative competitiveness of pay in the profession.
- 2.21 The top row in each teacher band below shows a competitive range of salaries for roles identified as broadly comparable in size and scope at various career stages. The other rows indicate the current levels of teacher and leadership salaries across regions of the UK, as specified in the key. The market data is not geographically specific.

**Figure 2.7: Benchmarking classroom teachers' salaries against the wider market, 2025<sup>21</sup>**

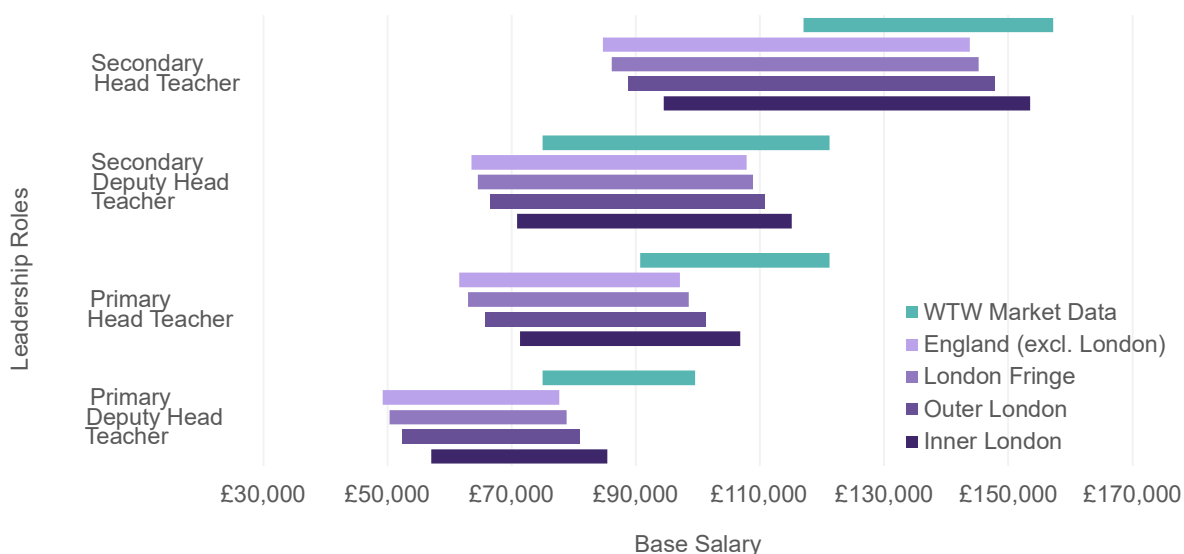


<sup>19</sup> For more detailed analysis of Pay Benchmarking, see paragraphs 40-49 of Appendix B.

<sup>20</sup> WTW (2024) *Teacher Job Levelling - School Teachers' Review Body 34th Report: 2024*

<sup>21</sup> OPRB analysis of WTW benchmark data, effective date 1 July 2025. Teacher salaries presented are for the September 2025 STPCD national pay scale. 'WTW Market Data' is the difference between the 25th and 75th percentile of the benchmark data. In some cases, groups of teacher or leadership roles were matched to more than one comparator job level (e.g. 'leadership roles', 'Upper Pay Range teachers'). In these cases, the displayed range for comparator roles is based on the 25th percentile of the lower comparator salary range and the 75th percentile of the higher comparator salary range.

**Figure 2.8: Benchmarking leadership salaries against the wider market, 2025<sup>22,23</sup>**



2.22 The overall picture is similar to last year, albeit with some improvement in the relative pay position of classroom teachers and some leadership roles against the benchmark data. It appears that the actions taken over recent years have made improvements in the competitiveness of teacher pay, but progress has been modest and there is more to be done before one could reasonably conclude that overall, teachers are paid competitively compared to other graduate level professions. The multi-year remit this year provides an opportunity to make further progress in this area in a controlled manner that represents value for money for taxpayers.

2.23 The comparative salary position of teachers on the Main Pay Range becomes less competitive as they gain experience and progress up the Main Pay Range. Whilst the pay for Early Career Teachers (ECT) (M1-M2) and Qualified Teachers having completed ECT (M3-M6) are both above the bottom of their respective comparator market ranges, the bottom level of pay for 5 years' experienced teachers (M5-M6) falls below the comparator range.

2.24 Teachers on the Upper Pay Range hold a better basic comparative position, with pay falling closer to the middle of the range for comparable roles.

2.25 The comparative salary position of leadership roles in primary schools falls below the market salary data in all regions, whilst leadership roles in secondary schools are better aligned to the market salary data.

2.26 Benchmarking is a useful way to provide insights to the important central question of how competitive current pay is. It involves making a number of assumptions and judgements, which is why we have sought expert professional input. Benchmarking relies on finding an objective way to compare roles which, whilst different, share important characteristics in terms of size and scope. Whilst the outputs should be treated with care, and are based on a sample, it does provide a useful alternative

<sup>22</sup> OPRB analysis of WTW benchmark data, effective date 1 July 2025. Leadership salaries presented are for the September 2025 STPCD national pay scale.

<sup>23</sup> For the purposes of these comparisons, primary head pay was based on STPCD head teacher groups 2-4 and secondary heads on head teacher groups 6-8. Estimated pay levels for Deputy Heads are based on OPRB analysis of School Workforce data.

lens to examine the competitiveness of pay. This type of exercise is standard practice in the private sector. We plan to continue with this work in future reports.

## ***The graduate labour market***<sup>24</sup>

**Table 2.1: Graduate and teacher starting salaries, 2018/19 to 2025/26**<sup>25</sup>

Source	18/19 (£)	19/20 (£)	20/21 (£)	21/22 (£)	22/23 (£)	23/24 (£)	24/25 (£)	25/26 (£)
ISE (organisational median)	29,000	29,667	30,500	31,000	32,000	32,500	33,000	-
High Fliers	30,000	30,000	30,000	32,000	33,500	34,000	35,000	35,000
Teachers (England)	23,720	24,373	25,714	25,714	28,000	30,000	31,650	32,916
Teachers (Inner London)	29,664	30,480	32,157	32,157	34,502	36,745	38,766	40,317
Teachers (Outer London)	27,596	28,355	29,915	29,915	32,407	34,514	36,413	37,870
Teachers (Fringe)	24,859	25,543	26,948	26,948	29,344	31,350	33,075	34,398

2.27 Teaching is a graduate profession. The ability to attract well-qualified graduates is critical.

2.28 Data continue to show a competitive salary environment for graduate occupations. The latest data on starting pay across the graduate labour market show that some professions are offering significantly higher starting salaries than teaching, although recent increases have made teacher starting salaries more competitive.

2.29 Research shows that graduate recruitment at leading UK employers has dropped sharply - down a quarter since 2022 and set to fall again in 2026 to the lowest level since 2012 - while competition has increased markedly, with applications now double 2023 levels and rising faster than at any point in the past two decades.<sup>26</sup> We expect that this will improve the relative attractiveness of teaching as a profession.

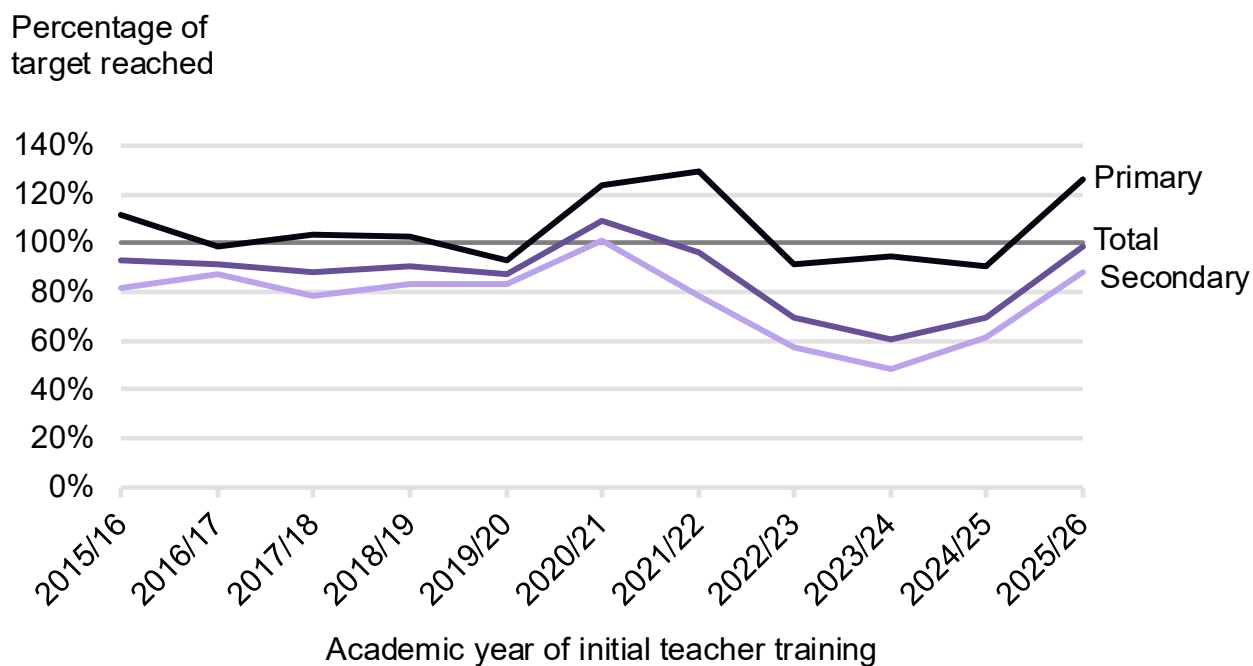
<sup>24</sup> For more detailed analysis of The Graduate Labour Market, see paragraphs 18-25 of Appendix B.

<sup>25</sup> Institute of Student Employers (2025) *Student recruitment survey 2025* - <https://ise.org.uk/page/ISEPublications>. Available to ISE members. High Fliers (2026) *The Graduate Market in 2026* - <https://www.highfliers.co.uk/>. We note that some caution is required as the data is not representative of graduate earnings in all areas of the country.

<sup>26</sup> High Fliers (2026) *The Graduate Market in 2026* - <https://www.highfliers.co.uk/>

## Recruitment<sup>27</sup>

**Figure 2.9: Percentage of postgraduate ITT recruitment target reached, for primary, secondary and total, 2015/16 to 2025/26<sup>28</sup>**



2.30 Newly qualified teachers are a key component of the totality of entrants to teaching each year.

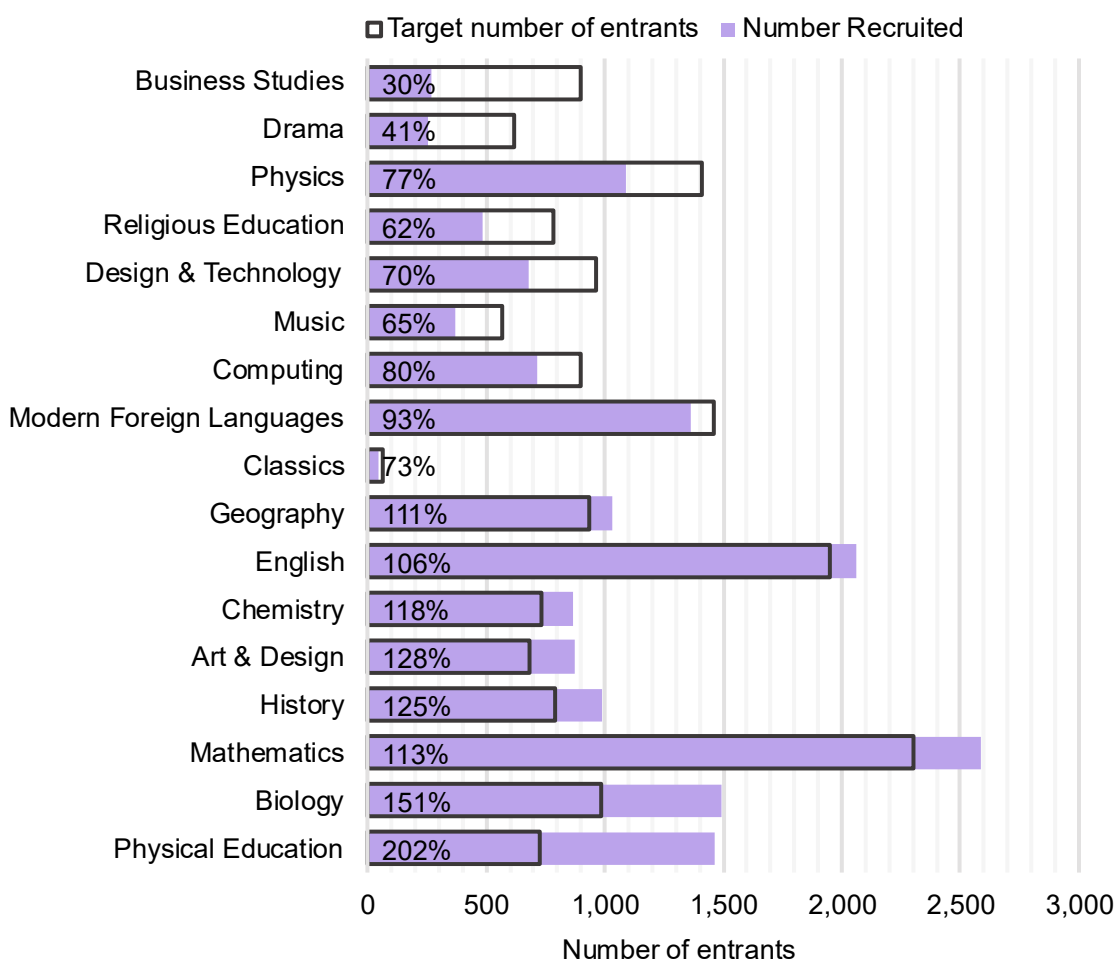
2.31 Performance against Initial Teacher Training (ITT) targets tells us whether enough suitable students to meet schools' needs have applied to teacher training courses. It is a key indicator of the adequacy of the future supply to the teaching profession as well as a lead indicator of the attractiveness of the profession.

2.32 We welcome some improvements in recruitment according to the latest data, although note this was partly attributable to reductions in targets. We remain concerned that the overall secondary target has only been achieved in one of the last ten years.

<sup>27</sup> For more detailed analysis of Recruitment, see paragraphs 92-109 of Appendix B.

<sup>28</sup> Figures for 2025/26 are provisional and are subject to change. 2024/25 figures have been revised. OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *Initial Teacher Training Census Academic year 2025/26* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census>

**Figure 2.10: Secondary subject entrants to postgraduate ITT compared to targets, 2025/26<sup>29</sup>**



2.33 Nine out of seventeen secondary subjects did not achieve their target number of recruits in 2025/26. Six fell short by more than 25%.<sup>30</sup>

2.34 The persistent problem of under-recruitment in certain secondary subjects is troubling. This needs to continue to be a focus of initiatives on a multi-year basis.

2.35 Vacancy levels can also indicate how far recruitment and retention are sufficient to meet needs. SchoolDash data, based on teacher vacancy adverts, provides a more recent picture than the School Workforce Census. It shows that the rate at which secondary schools in England have been advertising teacher vacancies has fallen sharply over the last year. The number of advertised vacancies was down over 39% for the 2024/25 academic year compared to 2023/24. This decrease follows a previous reduction in the number of advertised vacancies of 11% in 2023/24

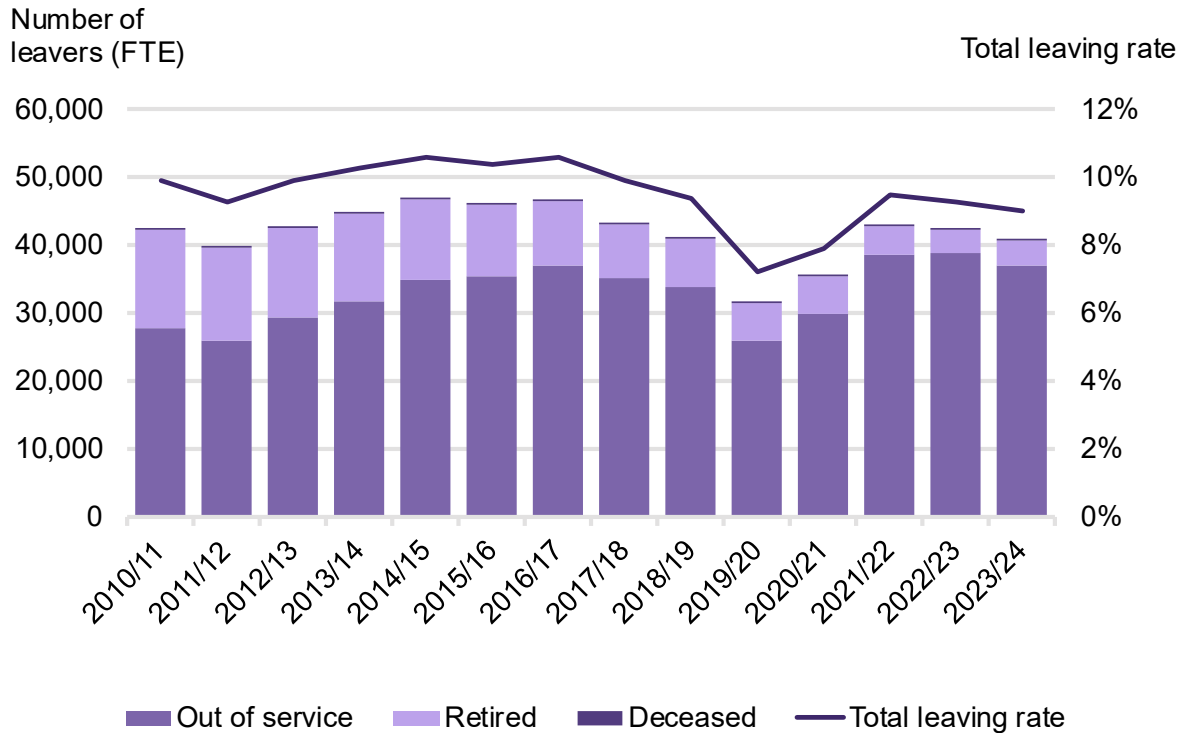
<sup>29</sup> Figures for 2025/26 are provisional and are subject to change. OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *Initial Teacher Training Census Academic year 2025/26* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census>

<sup>30</sup> Teaching Regulation Agency (2025) *Annual reports and accounts, 2024 to 2025* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-regulation-agency-annual-report-and-accounts-2024-to-2025>. Note that reporting years used here are financial years ending in March, not academic years.

compared to 2022/23. The rate of advertised vacancies is now below pre-pandemic levels.<sup>31</sup>

## Leaving rates<sup>32</sup>

**Figure 2.11: Overall leaving rate and numbers for qualified teachers in state-funded schools, by type of leaver, 2010/11 to 2023/24<sup>33</sup>**



2.36 Alongside recruitment, leaving rates are key in determining whether schools have enough teachers.

2.37 The higher leaving rates following the pandemic have reduced since 2021 with the headline rate recorded as 9% in 2023/24. This marks a return to pre-pandemic levels. The number of teachers leaving for non-retirement reasons fell in the latest data but continues to be a large number at just over 37,000. The number of these leavers continues to be a concern. There is an opportunity to materially improve the teacher supply (and the average years of experience) in a highly cost-effective manner by reducing the rate of these leavers.

2.38 Leaving rates vary across school subjects. They are typically higher in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects compared to non-STEM subjects.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> OPRB analysis of SchoolDash Insights data. Available to SchoolDash subscribers.

<sup>32</sup> Leaving rate is the percentage of all those teachers recorded as working in state-funded schools in a given year who are not recorded as working in state-funded schools in the following year. For more detailed analysis of Leaving Rates, see paragraphs 63-73 of Appendix B.

<sup>33</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School workforce in England: Reporting year 2024 - School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

<sup>34</sup> Source: The Department's written evidence.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-to-the-strb-2025-pay-award-for-teachers-and-leaders>

2.39 According to the Department’s Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Survey (WLTL), conducted in early 2025, 29% of teachers and leaders reported that they were considering leaving the state school sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement. This was a 5-percentage point decrease from the 2024 survey and a 7-percentage point decrease from 2023, but still up from 25% in 2022.<sup>35</sup>

## **School finances**

**Table 2.2: Core Schools Budget in England (£ billion), 2026-27 to 2028-29<sup>36</sup>**

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>£ billion</b>	<b>Change (£ billion)</b>	<b>Change (%)</b>
2026-27	67.0	-	-
2027-28	68.4	1.4	2.1
2028-29	69.5	1.1	1.6

2.40 Core schools’ funding settlements have been confirmed for the period up to, and including, financial year 2028-29. Costs arising from this year’s full and indicative pay recommendations will impact on the financial years from 2026-27 to 2029-30.

2.41 Schools’ budgets will increase by different amounts each year depending on pupil numbers and characteristics. What individual schools can afford may vary significantly from the average position.

2.42 There was a strong consensus on school finances from consultees. They stressed that cost pressures continued to squeeze budgets, especially for smaller schools. All non-government consultees called for the pay award to be fully funded by government. At the time of giving evidence, the Secretary of State and the Department were clear that there would be no additional funding from outside of the Department.

### ***STRB consideration of a review mechanism relating to the multi-year pay award***

2.43 The Secretary of State asked the STRB to make recommendations for a multi-year pay award covering 2026/27 and 2027/28, and to indicate an approach for 2028/29. In forming our recommendations, we considered whether a formal review mechanism should be attached to the 2027/28 element to safeguard against material unexpected changes in the teacher or wider labour market during the rest of 2026 and early 2027. Most consultees saw such a mechanism as an important part of a multi-year award.

2.44 We recognise the tension inherent in multi-year settlements between certainty, which schools value for budgeting and workforce planning, and flexibility which some consultees value to ensure pay remains appropriate if conditions diverge from expectations. We set out below why, after careful examination of alternatives, we decided not to include a review mechanism for the September 2027 award.

<sup>35</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 4* - [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 4 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>36</sup> Figures for 2026-27 to 2028-29 sourced from the Core Schools Budget announced the 2025 Spending Review - [Spending Review 2025 \(HTML\) - GOV.UK](#).

## **Why we considered a review mechanism**

2.45 We explored whether a review mechanism would be appropriate because recent years have seen volatile earnings growth and inflation, highlighting the risk that outturns can diverge from initial expectations. In this context, a mechanism can provide an opportunity to adjust decisions in the light of new significant evidence.

## **Review mechanism models**

2.46 We considered a range of factors in relation to a possible review mechanism. These included:

- The scope of the review mechanism;
- The 'rules' of any mechanism (e.g. How is it initiated or 'triggered'? Who makes the judgement on whether to initiate a review? Is the review mechanism subjective or dependent upon a specific variable?);
- Options for metrics to form part of a review mechanism;
- The timing of the reference and review periods;
- The nature and format of the review process.

2.47 As part of this consideration, we examined a number of potential trigger mechanisms. These included: a review triggered by parties or groups of parties; triggered solely at the discretion of the STRB; triggered by one or more published metrics; the revision of the pay recommendation automatically linked to the outcome for a particular metric; and permutations of the above.

2.48 Having considered these options, STRB's view was that full discretion to determine whether a review was appropriate had the benefit of flexibility and objectivity but resulted in unhelpful opacity. It was also close to being akin to two single-year settlements. It thus lost the advantage of certainty over a two-year period. Numerical triggers of whatever kind could introduce complexity, which make planning on a multi-year basis impractical. Less complicated mechanisms had the disadvantage of being more likely not to trigger a review when one was clearly needed.

## **Our conclusion on a review mechanism**

2.49 We assessed the possible review mechanisms and the option of introducing no mechanism. On balance, our view was that for 2027/28 the absence of a mechanism best supports the key advantages of a multi-year award, in particular the increased certainty for schools' budgets and workforce planning.

2.50 Consequently, we have decided not to attach a review mechanism to the multi-year award. This is not a judgment that conditions will certainly evolve as expected. We recognise that an award without a review mechanism creates some risk about the level of competitiveness of teacher pay in 2027/28. We have taken this into account; the profile and quantum of our pay recommendations for 2026/27 and 2027/28 therefore consciously reflect the absence of a review mechanism.

2.51 We will nonetheless closely monitor the range of indicators set out in this chapter and we will write to the Secretary of State, in an advisory capacity, expressing a view should a clear and material shock arise during the remainder of 2026. While this is

not a review mechanism, it is a transparency commitment about what we track and how we will react.

- 2.52 We also request in this report that, should a clear and material shock arise, this be reflected explicitly in our remit for 2028/29, ensuring that remit provides us with a further opportunity to assess whether there has been a substantial divergence in the competitive position of teachers' pay.
- 2.53 Furthermore, in the event that the STRB's pay recommendation for 2026/27 and 2027/28 is not accepted in full, then the Body would suggest a full pay review for 2027/28, including taking evidence from statutory consultees, is carried out in the usual manner.

### ***Our conclusions and recommendations for the 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 pay awards***

- 2.54 The STRB's objective is to recommend a pay award that ensures schools can recruit and retain enough high-quality teachers. This should be achieved in a manner that represents taxpayer value for money.
- 2.55 Following recent improvements in the competitiveness of pay, there has been a modest improvement in recruitment and retention. This progress is encouraging, but not yet complete. It is the STRB's view that further improvements in recruitment and retention should remain a key focus over the next three years in order to achieve the required workforce across regions, school phases, and subject specialisms. We therefore welcome the opportunity that a multi-year remit offers to reduce the current gap between teacher supply and need.
- 2.56 A range of factors affect the profession's ability to attract and retain teachers; however, it would be unrealistic to overlook the central role of pay. Salaries must be competitive to attract strong graduates and mid-career professionals, and to retain experienced teachers.
- 2.57 Given the current competitive positioning and expected future earnings growth in the labour market, the Government's proposal of a 6.5% award over three years will not, in our view, be consistent with an adequate supply of high-quality teachers. It is our judgement that pay awards at this level will reduce competitiveness of teacher pay and we would expect the likely consequences of that to be a problematic deterioration in teacher supply. This could have a very negative impact on the student learning experience, make teaching a less attractive profession (further compounding the supply problem) and require very costly long-term remediation actions. It is also, in our view, inconsistent with meeting the Government's commitment to recruit an additional 6,500 teachers.
- 2.58 As well as considering the overall quantum of a multi-year award, we have given close attention to how this is applied in each year.
- 2.59 The Government's proposal is to 'backload' the award. This appears to be driven primarily by short-term affordability constraints. These are very real and understandable. However, it is our conclusion that this approach is inconsistent with the evidence on what will be needed to be competitive in the labour market.
- 2.60 We believe that prospective levels of earnings and settlements data require a higher nearer-term award in September 2026 than the Government proposes. This is

important to address the risk of reversing recent progress in strengthening the position of teachers' pay. Our proposal is for lower awards in the subsequent years. This is consistent with expected changes in the key economic and labour market metrics.

- 2.61 In forming our recommendations, we considered whether to differentiate the award across different points of the pay framework. Overall, we concluded all groups of teachers and leaders require a meaningful uplift this year and next to ensure that pay remains competitive and supports retention.
- 2.62 Differentiation of pay increases is not supported by either the Government or consultees and in the current situation the technical case for refining proposals to address particular areas of supply challenge does not, in general, have sufficient support to be practical.
- 2.63 However, there was one area where we concluded a differentiated approach was appropriate in September 2026. This relates to the minimum level of pay for Unqualified Teachers (UQT1) in the Rest of England. We are clear that no national pay point should risk falling below the statutory minimum when assessed against reasonable assumptions about hours and working patterns. Having looked at this point in some detail, we have concluded that to help ensure compliance, an adjustment at the UQT minimum is appropriate. This is discussed further in [Chapter 3](#).
- 2.64 We recognise that decisions on budgets rest with government. Our role is to provide independent, evidence-based advice drawing on the full range of data available. We fully acknowledge the challenging fiscal context and pressures on school budgets. For this reason, it will be important that the implementation of any pay award is accompanied by appropriate financial support. We understand the scale of the challenge for both the Department and schools, but in STRB's judgement, insufficient action on pay risks exacerbating workforce pressures. Having considered the evidence from both Government and consultees, STRB judges it a practical reality that some additional funding will be necessary to avoid material adverse impacts on educational delivery.
- 2.65 In its evidence, the Government emphasised the need for pay awards to balance the value of public sector workers with the need for fiscal responsibility and safeguarding taxpayers' interests. We agree and have again assessed value for money with care. A multi-year settlement has the potential to support planning and stability if the award levels align with labour market realities and the need to support competitiveness. A multi-year award that is set too low risks making existing problems worse and increasing long-term costs.
- 2.66 Our recommendations aim to ensure good value for money while supporting the recruitment and retention of a high-quality teaching workforce. Overspending is not a responsible use of public funds, but neither is underspending in this area. Workforce shortages can quickly translate into higher future costs and diminished educational outcomes, ultimately representing poor value for the taxpayer. We believe our recommendations offer a balanced, proportionate response to the evidence.

## **Recommendations**

2.67 With effect from September 2026, we recommend:

- a 3.5% increase to all pay ranges and advisory points for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers and school leaders, other than the unqualified teachers minimum point (Rest of England range).
- a 5% increase to the minimum of the Unqualified Teachers (Rest of England) pay range (UQT1).

2.68 Given that the various allowances form part of teachers' total pay, we concluded it is appropriate to increase their values by the same headline rate, ensuring that the headline award rate is reflected across all elements of a teacher's pay.

2.69 With effect from September 2027, we recommend:

- a 3.0% increase to all pay ranges and advisory points for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers and school leaders.

2.70 Given that the various allowances form part of teachers' total pay, we concluded it is appropriate to increase their values by the same rate (3.0%), ensuring that the headline award rate is reflected across all elements of a teacher's pay.

2.71 The proposed pay and allowance ranges, and advisory pay points, are set out in full in [Appendix F](#).

2.72 The Secretary of State also requested an indicative assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in the 2028/29 academic year. Our indicative proposal is for an award of 3.0% from September 2028.

2.73 Given the considerable time between this report and the September 2028 increase, we anticipate our indicative assessment of this increase to be subject to a future remit.

2.74 If implemented as we recommend (or indicate) then the total compounded increase in teacher pay would be 9.8% over the three-year period.

## CHAPTER 3

### Other recommendations

#### **Introduction**

3.1 The purpose of this chapter is to set out the STRB's recommendations and views on the additional issues included in our remit letter. These are:

- Recommendation on salary safeguarding (from paragraph 3.4).
- Recommendation on non-consolidated payments (from paragraph 3.21).
- Views on working time arrangements (from paragraph 3.38).

3.2 The chapter also addresses:

- Recommendation on Unqualified Teachers' pay (from paragraph 3.65).
- The impact of our pay recommendations on the Further Education workforce (from paragraph 3.79).
- Our views on the broader pay framework (from paragraph 3.85).

#### ***Why looking at broader issues impacting teachers' terms and conditions is important***

3.3 While most attention is focused on STRB pay recommendations, pay is only one element in securing adequate teacher supply. Maintaining teaching as an attractive profession requires salaries at competitive levels, underpinned by terms and conditions that reflect modern professional practice. Achieving this means balancing protections for teachers with sufficient cost flexibility for schools as employers. While these aims are sometimes viewed as being in tension, the STRB considers them mutually supportive: responsibly managed cost flexibility enables schools to sustain professional-level pay. Without some modernisation of terms and conditions, enhancing the competitiveness of teaching as a career of choice will be slow, and to the detriment of both teachers and taxpayers.

#### ***Recommendation on salary safeguarding***

3.4 This year's remit from the Secretary of State seeks our recommendation on whether the current three-year salary safeguarding period should be reduced. The remit letter states: *I would value your expert advice on some initial changes, namely to salary safeguarding and the facility to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses). Firstly, on salary safeguarding, we understand that the existing salary safeguarding period of 3 years can be a barrier to schools making workforce changes. I invite you to provide recommendations on whether the salary safeguarding period should be reduced to enable employers to deploy their workforce most effectively, whilst ensuring that teachers are still protected from sudden drops in their salary.*

3.5 This section sets out the current position, summarises the evidence and views of consultees, and presents the STRB's considerations and recommendations.

## Current arrangements as set out in the STPCD

3.6 Part 5 of the STPCD sets out the technically complex salary safeguarding provisions. These ensure that teachers who lose posts or face pay reductions due to school reorganisations or changes in responsibilities receive compensation to protect their earnings for a defined period, currently a maximum of three years.

3.7 The STPCD addresses when and how these arrangements come into effect, including scenarios involving leadership group members transitioning to classroom teacher roles, reorganisation of educational establishments, and changes in teacher duties. It emphasises the need for schools to seek independent legal advice in complex situations. Key points in this section are:

- **Circumstances triggering safeguarding:** Safeguarding applies when a teacher loses a post due to school or educational establishment closure or reorganisation, changes to pay policy or staffing structure affecting allowances, or reductions in leadership group size or leadership pay ranges. [See STPCD paragraphs 29.1-29.2]
- **Entitlement to safeguarded sums:** Teachers are entitled to payments equal to the difference between the pre and post safeguarding salaries. This includes changes to basic salary and reductions resulting in changes to Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR 1 and 2) allowances, Special Educational Needs (SEN) allowances, and unqualified teachers' allowances. [See STPCD paragraphs 30.1 - 30.4]
- **Notification requirements:** Where a safeguarded sum is payable as a result of a qualifying circumstance, relevant bodies must notify affected teachers in writing within one month of decisions causing safeguarded sums to be payable, detailing reasons, effective dates, salary comparisons, safeguarded sum amounts, and duration of safeguarding. [See STPCD paragraphs 31.1]
- **Duration of safeguarding:** Safeguarded sums are paid until the earlier of the third anniversary of the relevant event, expiry of fixed-term contracts or allowances, changes in pay range (excluding teachers moving from the main to upper pay range), other specified conditions such as acceptance of a separate allowance equalling or exceeding the safeguarded sum, or cessation of teaching roles. [See STPCD paragraphs 32.1]
- **Adjustments and suspension:** Safeguarded sums are reduced or suspended if the teacher receives new or increased allowances of the same kind, or if they move to occupy leadership group posts. [See STPCD paragraphs 34.1 - 34.3]
- **Additional duties linked to safeguarded sums:** If total safeguarded sums exceed £500, the teacher's duties must be reviewed and additional appropriate duties assigned; refusal to perform these duties can lead to cessation of safeguarded payments after one month's notice. [See STPCD paragraphs 35.1 - 35.2]

## Consultees' views

3.8 The teacher and leadership unions' evidence opposed a reduction in safeguarding. They argued that safeguarding is a valued part of the terms and conditions package, providing income security during organisational change. They said it supported

retention, particularly for experienced staff whose roles risked being reconfigured. Unions warned that reducing the safeguarding period risked perceptions of erosion of protections, jeopardised industrial relations, and would disincentivise staff to take on additional responsibilities.

- 3.9 NEOST reported considerable support among employers for reducing the period, suggesting a reduction to one year was most commonly proposed (over 40% of its survey respondents<sup>37</sup>), with a strong preference for making the arrangements simpler and clearer. This, they believed, would improve schools' operational flexibility.
- 3.10 Teacher unions and NEOST highlighted the complexity of the rules and called for clarification to reduce inconsistency of application and disputes.
- 3.11 NGA said it has no appetite to change the existing arrangements, although recognised employers' perspective.
- 3.12 The Department's evidence framed safeguarding as part of its efforts to modernise the pay and conditions framework and to enable greater flexibility in school staffing. It suggested that a shorter period (e.g. two years) could facilitate faster restructuring and address concerns about two teachers doing the same role being paid differently, while keeping any changes manageable if handled with care. It also noted the small numbers of staff affected at any given time. It acknowledged the need for an equality impact assessment, clear communication, and proportionate change if any reduction was pursued.

### **Our considerations**

- 3.13 In assessing the case for reform, we have considered the following factors, taking account of the impact change would have on individuals, schools and the wider public:
- **Protection for teachers:** Protecting against sudden loss of income.
  - **Flexibility for schools to restructure:** Removal of barriers to better enable timely reorganisation in response to falling rolls and curriculum change.
  - **Pay equity within schools:** Limiting long-running pay differentials for identical duties.
  - **Clarity and simplicity:** Resolving points of confusion and consolidating complex provisions.
  - **Administrative burden and ease of change:** Minimising administration associated with current complexity and in relation to potential tapering or other mechanisms that increase payroll complexity.
  - **Quantum affected:** Acknowledging that safeguarding is relevant to a small minority of teachers. The Department's latest indicative figures suggest that

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<sup>37</sup> [NEOST written evidence for STRB October 2025 | Local Government Association](#)

safeguarding applies to a minority at any time (e.g. 2.1% of teachers held a safeguarded TLR and 2.6% a safeguarded SEN allowance in 2024).<sup>38</sup>

- **Best use of public money:** Reducing medium-term costs where staff are paid above current duties for extended periods.

### Our conclusions on salary safeguarding

- 3.14 We have carefully examined and balanced these considerations. We concluded that the safeguarding period should apply for at least one full academic year. If a change which gives rise to salary safeguarding is implemented after the commencement of an academic year, salary safeguarding will apply for the remainder of the academic year in which the change is implemented, plus the following full academic year. We believe this will enable teachers to benefit from a clear, predictable window of protection and have sufficient time or notice to make decisions about their future. At the same time, we believe it will improve restructuring flexibility for schools and reduce pay inequalities.
- 3.15 The evidence we received highlighted the complexity of the current arrangements with consequential inconsistency on how payments are applied, frequently resulting in disputes. We believe that complexity can hinder correct use and application. It can also create implementation problems at stressful moments (e.g. restructuring). Clearer, simplified rules would reduce conflict. We are therefore also recommending that the revised provisions should be re-written in plain language, removing avoidable ambiguity with clear guidance to schools.
- 3.16 We believe no tapering mechanism is required. For our proposed model, tapering risks adding unnecessary complexity without material benefit.
- 3.17 We considered transitional options but do not recommend them. Aligning to the academic year already provides a predictable and sufficient period; additional transitional constructs would reintroduce complexity and prolong inequity.
- 3.18 Our decisions reflect in particular the following judgements:
- **Balancing protection for teachers whilst facilitating change:** A period of at least one full academic year provides real protection while reducing multi-year budget lock-in and allowing quicker alignment of pay with current responsibilities. It also makes the benefits of restructuring more accessible to employers. A more flexible safeguarding system could also increase development opportunities because schools may be less risk-averse about creating new roles.
  - **Equity and coherence:** Pay differentials for equivalent duties undermine workforce equality. Shortening the period limits these inequities while preserving a meaningful protection period for affected staff. We recognise concerns that reduced safeguarding could differentially affect some groups and address this as part of our proposed implementation measures below.
  - **Proportionality:** Safeguarded cases are relatively rare, applying to a small proportion of teachers and most commonly linked to changes in allowances rather than core salary.

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<sup>38</sup> Department for Education (2024), [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](#)

- **Simplification and clarity:** The current legal document and associated guidance are widely misunderstood and inconsistently applied. Re-articulation of both in plainer English would improve understanding and trust.

### **Our recommendation on salary safeguarding**

3.19 We recommend that the Secretary of State:

- Reduce the safeguarding period to at least one full academic year; if a change which gives rise to salary safeguarding is implemented after the commencement of an academic year, salary safeguarding should apply for the remainder of the academic year in which the change is implemented, plus the following full academic year.
- Simplify and consolidate STPCD safeguarding regulations and guidance into a single, plain language section.

3.20 Our recommendation should be supported by the following implementation measures:

- **Effective date and staging.** Implementation from September 2026. Application to new safeguarding events only; prior rights apply to existing cases. This approach limits industrial relations and payroll re-work risks.
- **Timing of decisions.** The standard notice period within the teacher's contract will apply. For a change to be implemented at the beginning of the next full academic year, notice of the change must be given by 31 May.
- **Definition of safeguarding period.** At least one full academic year. If a change which gives rise to salary safeguarding is implemented after the commencement of an academic year, salary safeguarding should apply for the remainder of the academic year in which the change is implemented, plus the following full academic year.
- **Illustrative scenarios:**
  - Changes of role effective after 1 September 2026 within academic year 2026/27 would give safeguarding until 31 August 2028, for example:
    - Change of role 1 January 2027: safeguarding to 31 August 2028.
    - Change of role 1 April 2027: safeguarding to 31 August 2028.
  - Change of role effective from 1 September 2027 (for which notification must be by 31 May 2027): safeguarding to 31 August 2028.
- **Clarification and simplification of the safeguarding arrangements in the STPCD regulations and in guidance,** including in relation to:
  - Triggers, calculation, notification, and cessation.
  - Interactions with allowances, pay progression and annual STRB uplifts.
  - Interaction with pay changes resulting from movement from MPR to UPR.
  - Schools having the flexibility on any ongoing expectation of 'additional duties' as a condition for safeguarding.
  - The rules relating to pre-31 December 2005 contracts and arrangements for Advanced Skills Teachers or Excellent Teachers whose remuneration was subject to safeguarding under the 2012 or 2013 Documents.

- **Supporting guidance tools.** Alongside the STPCD regulations and guidance, the Department should issue a plain language explainer, FAQs, and worked examples (including part-time scenarios, common allowance interactions, specifics on acceptable ‘additional duties’), plus templates to support consistent application by schools and payroll providers.
- **Equality impact and monitoring.** The Department should conduct a formal equality impact assessment prior to enactment and establish light-touch monitoring (e.g. by phase, role, allowance type, protected characteristics) to ensure that the change does not produce adverse distributional effects and to inform any future refinements.

### ***Recommendation on non-consolidated payments***

- 3.21 In her remit letter to us, the Secretary of State included as a matter for recommendation: *whether to introduce the option for maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses), for those who want to use them, separate to and above any pay progression arrangements and the annual STRB recommended pay uplift.*
- 3.22 Her letter noted that: *Maintained schools cannot currently make non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to their teachers, whilst academy schools can use them to recruit, retain or reward their staff. In line with my commitment to ensure all schools have the ability to innovate to attract and retain the best teachers, I am seeking your recommendations on whether to introduce the option for maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to reward teachers, separate to and above any pay progression arrangements and the annual STRB recommended pay uplift.*
- 3.23 This section sets out the current position, summarises the views of consultees, and presents the STRB’s considerations and recommendations.

### **Current STPCD provision for flexible payments**

- 3.24 The School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) currently allows maintained schools to make a range of defined additional payments, including:
- TLR3 payments for short-term responsibilities;
  - Recruitment and retention incentives and benefits, with review and duration set out in writing;
  - Acting allowances for teachers temporarily undertaking leadership roles;
  - Payments for residential duties;
  - Performance payments for seconded head teachers in schools causing concern.
- 3.25 However, the STPCD does not permit one-off non-consolidated payments or equivalent rewards to recognise contributions outside these specific circumstances. These are not available as a general tool for recognising exceptional contribution or performance outside the formal management structure.

3.26 Academies, in contrast, have greater flexibility. Some Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) use recruitment or performance bonuses and local allowances and have recognition schemes that allow payments. While evidence suggests that overall usage of non-consolidated payments in academies is not widespread (survey evidence suggests 10% of MATs have introduced additional non-consolidated payments<sup>39</sup>), the additional flexibility nonetheless means there is an inequity within the sector.

### **Consultees' views**

3.27 The teacher unions were overwhelmingly opposed to the introduction of non-consolidated payments including bonuses. Their concerns included:

- Fairness and transparency: Fears that bonuses would undermine fairness, create a lack of transparency, result in perceived inequities and risk a return to performance-related pay progression (PRPP) which they saw as divisive and ineffective.
- Displacement of consolidated pay: Concerns that non-consolidated payments could displace consolidated pay, undermining the core pay structure.
- Collegiality and morale: Worries that bonuses would be divisive, damage collegiality, and have a detrimental effect on collaboration within schools.

3.28 Employers presented mixed views:

- Many did not prioritise introducing bonuses, citing funding constraints and a preference for clarity on existing remuneration.
- Where support existed, it was contingent on strict limits: safeguards, caps, criteria, and transparency.

3.29 The DfE and Secretary of State supported the principle of levelling the playing field between maintained schools and academies, but emphasised:

- Recognition, not bonuses: The intent is to enable recognition of exceptional contribution, not to introduce material levels of variable pay or general bonuses.
- Modest values and guardrails: Any non-consolidated payments should be modest in value and subject to robust safeguards to ensure fairness and prevent misuse.
- Optionality for schools: The flexibility should not compel schools to introduce recognition schemes but address the inequality of opportunity that currently exists.

### **Our considerations**

3.30 We note that while there are existing STPCD flexibilities, including for recruitment and retention, there is no mechanism for recognising teachers' contributions outside of management-type allowances in maintained schools. This, in our view, creates an imbalance between maintained schools and academies, with the former lacking mechanisms for recognition.

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<sup>39</sup> [NEOST written evidence for STRB October 2025 | Local Government Association](#)

- 3.31 We support the principle of additional flexibility in the system, including equal access to flexibilities across maintained and academy sectors. Our view is that there is a place for modest non-consolidated reward in recognition for exceptional contribution, provided it complements core pay.
- 3.32 Wider experience shows that recognition is positively correlated to improved employee engagement with work and organisation. It can increase employee engagement and have a positive impact on improving job performance.
- 3.33 We are cognisant of the risks and concerns, including those raised by consultees. We are also conscious of the experience with performance-related pay progression, which shows poor implementation can be counterproductive. Any new flexibility must therefore be carefully governed and risks should be mitigated by robust guardrails to address fairness. For recognition schemes to be introduced, the STRB considers that:
- The scheme should be optional for schools.
  - The scheme must be modest in scale and value.
  - Reward should be for genuine additional contribution (not for exceptional performance in the core role).
  - Recognition schemes should be locally governed (e.g. by the school's governing body). There must be clear criteria, robust oversight, and transparency.
  - There should be brief national guidance for such arrangements to comply with, in order to ensure consistency and fairness.
- 3.34 Our balanced view is to support enabling modest 'recognition schemes', not general 'bonuses'. These should sit alongside consolidated pay rather than replace it.
- 3.35 We suggest guidance for recognition arrangements to include:
- **Clear criteria:** For example, a genuine additional contribution, i.e. exceptional performance not a part of the teacher's core role, something that was one-off and was not specified as a required deliverable.
  - **A modest cap:** For example, £100 or equivalent value; schools to have discretion as to the amount and method of payment (cash, vouchers, non-monetary reward); any cap being periodically reviewed.
  - **Publication/transparency** in aggregate: to both give confidence on consistency, but also to share and celebrate examples of great performance.
  - **Governing body oversight:** to ensure senior accountability, including equalities oversight.
  - **A DfE template:** to enable schools to quickly implement without great effort and ensure a baseline of consistency. These supporting mechanisms should enable proportionate flexibility without importing the risks of a 'bonus culture'.

- **Timing:** It is not necessary for recognition arrangements to operate on the same annual process as pay progression. Recognition arrangements often work best when recognition for exceptional contribution is done in a timely manner.

3.36 We view our recommendation as a measured, proportionate approach: enabling optional, modest recognition schemes with robust safeguards, rather than introducing general bonuses or material levels of variable pay. We believe this approach balances the need for flexibility and fairness, while protecting the integrity of the core pay structure.

### **Our recommendation on a recognition scheme**

3.37 With effect from September 2026, we recommend:

- Enabling maintained schools to optionally operate a modest, locally governed 'recognition scheme' via STPCD amendment, distinct from pay progression and annual uplifts.
- The introduction of such schemes should be supported with national guidelines.

### **Views on working time arrangements**

3.38 As part of this year's remit, the Secretary of State has requested our views on working time arrangements. Specifically, the letter states:

*I refer to the STRB the following matters for views:*

- *Views on current working hours arrangements in the STPCD for teachers;*
- *Views on current working hours arrangements for leaders.*

*Teachers and leaders are at the heart of delivering our reforms to the school system. I know that workload is a commonly cited reason for teachers leaving the profession and our evidence tells us that teachers and leaders often work long hours. I appreciate that directed time is also an unusual contractual provision, potentially creating a constraint on schools' deployment of teachers, other than what is best for pupils and staff. However, I also recognise that a change to the current system of directed and non-directed time could bring substantial complexities and unintended consequences to the system, and any such change would need careful consideration. I would welcome the STRB's views of the benefits and drawbacks of the current working hours arrangement within the STPCD, considering both directed and non-directed time for teachers, and working hours for leaders.*

*I look forward to hearing your views on this important topic and will reflect before deciding whether to formally remit the STRB on this matter in future remits.*

### **Scope of the STRB's input this year**

3.39 We have been asked for views on the articulation and operation of *working time arrangements*. We see this as distinct from, but not unrelated to, workload reduction solutions. We nonetheless recognise the interaction between the codification of working time and workload, retention and well-being. This point was also emphasised by consultees and the Department.

3.40 The Secretary of State has requested our views on these issues, framing this work as the start of a discussion prior to a possible formal remit for recommendations in the future.

3.41 This section of our report describes the current arrangements, summarises consultees' views, sets out our views of the benefits and drawbacks, and presents the actions we believe have the potential to make the arrangements more effective. A fuller account of consultees' views on these issues can be found in [Appendix A](#).

### **Current arrangements in the STPCD**

3.42 The working time arrangements for teachers are most directly addressed in sections 51 and 52 of the STPCD.

3.43 The STPCD distinguishes directed time and non-directed ('reasonable additional') time for teachers. Head teachers may direct up to 1,265 hours over 195 days (typically 32.5 hours per week across 39 weeks), with 10% of teaching time as PPA time guaranteed as part of those hours. Employers must not determine the amount, timing, or location of additional hours beyond the 1,265; these are self-managed by teachers. This 'non-directed' time is described as 'reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties'. This covers planning, preparation, assessing, monitoring, recording and reporting on the learning needs, progress and achievements of assigned pupils. There is no cap on these hours; the number of hours and where they are discharged cannot be determined by the head teacher.

3.44 The STPCD explicitly sets out part-time protections, weekend and public holiday restrictions, daily break entitlements, and limits on cover and routine administration.

3.45 For *school leaders*, there is no equivalent codification of working hours; the STPCD makes clear that the detailed working time provisions apply to teachers, not to leaders. In addition to the Working Time Directive, governing bodies and head teachers are required to have regard to work-life balance for all staff, including leaders. Specifically, they '*must have regard to the need for the head teacher and teachers at the school to be able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge their professional duties and the time required to pursue their personal interests outside work*'.

### **Evidence from consultees**

3.46 There was a clear divergence between teacher unions, who seek stronger constraints on working hours, and employer bodies, who prioritise flexibility and caution against drastic change.

3.47 All the unions expressed concern that the current arrangements enable or even encourage excessive working hours. There was a very strong consensus among the unions on what needs to change, including:

- A cap on total working hours.
- Removal or redefinition of the open-ended 'reasonable additional hours' clause.
- Strengthening protections for 'off-duty' time and work-life balance (including evenings, weekends and holidays) - for both teachers and leaders.
- Improvements to flexible working provision, for example, by making flexible working requests a right that schools must accommodate (an issue where some unions suggest progress has been too slow and patchy).

- An urgent need for workload reduction. All agree that simply amending the guidance is insufficient without workload also being addressed. Some called for complementary measures, including increasing PPA time, and more rigorous implementation of the DfE's Workload Reduction Toolkit.
- Several highlighted that long hours have equality impacts, for example, disproportionately deterring those with caring responsibilities (often women) from advancing into leadership.
- In summary, the unions collectively urged a significant rebalancing in favour of teacher time protection. Some also cautioned strongly against any changes that would increase head teachers' control over teachers' time.

3.48 Employer bodies (NEOST and NGA) made the following points:

- Working time arrangements themselves are not the key issue; workload and wellbeing are the major problems.
- Caution on the potential risks to school operating models that might result from radical changes.
- NEOST suggested most employers support keeping the current 1,265 hours and 195 days model in place, and simplification of the related guidance, to reduce disputes and inconsistent local practice.
- NEOST noted most academies, who do have greater flexibility, have continued to use the existing arrangements as set out in the STPCD.
- NGA saw the teacher working hours arrangements, including the peaks of term time and the quieter period of school holidays, as a unique selling point, which will be appealing to some.

3.49 Apart from a call for more effective action on workload drivers (which they view as much needed), employers saw room for some improvements in the specifics of the working time arrangements, including:

- Greater flexibility in how the five INSET/training days can be used (e.g. allowing twilight sessions instead of rigid whole days).
- Exploring alternative calendar arrangements on a modest trial basis, while exercising caution about any major changes.

3.50 In oral evidence, the Secretary of State said she was seeking views on the existing arrangements and would also welcome views on possible reforms; these should balance protection for teachers with schools' flexibility, and support workload reduction and well-being. She saw the inclusion of this issue in this year's remit as the 'start of a journey'.

3.51 DfE officials said the existing system was unique and antiquated but that this did not necessarily mean it required major reform. They raised the question of whether there is a better alternative to the directed/non-directed hours approach, noting the current articulation could lead to difficulties (e.g. perceptions of unlimited hours) and no

explicit protections for leaders. They confirmed the Secretary of State would welcome ideas that might be part of a future remit.

### **Benefits and drawbacks of the current framework**

3.52 The Secretary of State sought our views on the benefits and drawbacks of the existing arrangements. Our views on this question, informed by our own analysis and consultees' evidence, are set out briefly below. There are tensions between some of the factors and the views below do not constitute a settled overall position on this subject.

#### **Benefits**

- National guidelines set out in the STPCD are helpful in providing clarity for schools and protection for teachers. They can address the challenge of unreasonable demands, including through PPA, cover rules and daily breaks.
- The 1,265 hour cap protects against unlimited directed hours under supervision and supports work-life balance in principle.
- Clear contractual rights (e.g. weekend/public holiday restrictions) and part-time protections reduce inequity.
- Non-contact/cover/administrative limits protect core teaching time.

#### **Drawbacks**

- The 'reasonable additional hours' clause is vague, fostering inconsistency, perceptions of excessive demands and an 'always on' culture. Enforcement is inconsistent and ad hoc.
- The lack of safeguards on school leaders' working time creates uncertainty and risks of excessive demands. This, in turn, creates a barrier to progression into leadership.
- Ongoing inequities faced by part-time teachers and the importance of enforcing STPCD's part-time provisions to prevent discrimination.
- Articulation of the arrangements is complex resulting in persistent misunderstandings by both leaders and teachers. This leads to uneven practice. A plain language clarification is required.

### **Our views on working time arrangements**

3.53 We recognise that working time is a complex, substantive issue. We also acknowledge that decisions taken and culture set at school and trust level can materially influence working time requirements. Any reform must therefore strike the right balance: preserving the flexibility schools need to meet pupils' needs while ensuring appropriate protections for a professional workforce and guarding against overwork.

3.54 We believe adjustments to working time arrangements will only achieve their intended impact if accompanied by sustained, meaningful action on workload. We also judge that some modernisation of the existing arrangements is warranted to reflect contemporary practice and expectations.

- 3.55 The current framework has strengths as well as weaknesses. In principle it provides a national standard; in practice, there are areas of ambiguity - some outlined earlier in this section - that contribute to misunderstanding, inconsistent application and a sense of unfairness. One area that commonly requires clarification is the relationship between 'directed hours' and additional duties: teachers should not expect their work to be confined solely to directed hours, but the boundaries and expectations around reasonable additional duties require clearer articulation.
- 3.56 Consultees also raised concerns about the perceived 'unlimited hours' clause and the lack of explicit reference to protections for school leaders. We agree these points merit early attention. Clearer expectations around non-directed time, and explicit acknowledgement of leaders' protections, would promote consistency, transparency and confidence across the system.
- 3.57 Our judgement this year is that the present framework can be made more effective through immediate clarity measures that sharpen governance, strengthen transparency and correct common misunderstandings. These steps can be taken without contractual change and with low operational risk. Examples include a plain language summary of working time provisions and reinforced governing body oversight of directed time (e.g. greater visibility of directed time calendars and ensuring directed time budgets are understood and monitored).
- 3.58 Looking ahead, we see a credible case for a structured future remit to test reform options through a consultative, evidence-based approach that secures confidence across the sector. This should include examining the merits, feasibility and unintended consequences of alternative approaches, including learning from others' experience where alternative mechanisms have been adopted. A future remit could also consider setting clearer limits on non-directed time and explicit protections for school leaders, alongside the imperative to maintain the flexibility needed to serve pupils effectively.
- 3.59 Accordingly, we propose a twin-track approach:

#### **Immediate clarity and governance measures within the current framework**

- 3.60 We propose the following measures for immediate implementation through guidance and school governance assurance. These measures can reduce misunderstanding, improve consistency and sharpen governance. They are low risk and low cost, and do not impede a fuller review.
- **Plain language summary:** Publish a short (one/two page) 'What your contract does and doesn't say' guide, covering paid hours/directed time/reasonable additional hours; PPA, breaks, part-time expectations; weekends/public holidays; leaders' status and work-life balance duties. Disseminate centrally and locally; embed in teacher induction and governor training.
  - **Directed time calendar publication and monitoring:** Require schools to share an annual directed time plan (including meetings, parents' evenings and training). Governing bodies should monitor and report annually.
  - **Guidance on 'reasonable additional hours':** Issue practical examples of typical non-directed activities and clearly articulate the boundaries and expectations around reasonable additional duties; restate that additional hours are self-

managed, and that Working Time Regulations must be adhered to. This working time cannot be set by employers.

- **Stronger part-time protections:** Add worked examples on proportional expectations (e.g. meetings, non-contact duties) and model timetables demonstrating fair treatment for part-time staff.
- **INSET/training day flexibility:** Codify accepted local practices (e.g. twilight sessions, split-day training) within the 195/1,265 model with transparency and equal treatment for part-time staff.
- **Leaders' working time:** Reinforce the existing work-life balance clause, including the right to uninterrupted breaks; clarify that requirements for weekend work should be by exception and limited to emergencies; publish holiday cover rotas with governing body oversight to ensure reasonable uninterrupted breaks.

### **A future remit providing for a longer term, structured exploration of alternative models, assessing a spectrum of options**

- 3.61 Consideration of more fundamental change merits a fuller, evidenced review providing further opportunity for consultees to provide detailed input.
- 3.62 Any future options should be co-designed with the sector and accommodate the diversity of school contexts. The goal would be to reduce existing ambiguity and incentivise good practice, but not impose overly rigid controls. Reform should be proportionate, practicable and command broad confidence. It should also aim to support workload reduction and wellbeing.
- 3.63 Our view is that such a review could consider the spectrum of possible measures. This might include, but not be confined to, the following models:
- Retaining the current framework with reinforced guidance. Achieving clarity on non-directed time; enhancing governance and assurance; developing model policies for flexible working.
  - Targeted changes to current framework. For example, tightening definitions (e.g. illustrative ceilings or safeguards around non-directed time) and further strengthening of leaders' protections.
  - Fixed hours models (annualised or weekly). Evaluating annualised caps as potentially more practical than weekly caps; considering international comparators; assessing costs and benefits.
  - 'Professional standards' model. Minimal codification beyond Working Time Regulations, relying on professional expectations and sensible governance.
- 3.64 We look forward to the Secretary of State's consideration of our views in this report and to working with the sector as part of a potential fuller remit on working time arrangements.

## **Recommendation on Unqualified Teachers' pay**

- 3.65 We have this year considered the position of the Unqualified Teacher (UQT) pay range in light of recent National Living Wage (NLW) uplifts and wider developments in teacher entry routes.
- 3.66 This section examines any legal and reputational risks arising from proximity of the UQT minimum to the NLW, the April–September timing mismatch between NLW uprates and teachers' pay awards, and options to ensure compliance and credibility of the national pay framework. It also considers how any immediate, proportionate adjustments should be paired with a fuller review. While numbers of UQTs remain modest and there is no recent data on the pay distribution of UQTs, the UQT range remains important, including in relation to teaching trainees and apprentices.

### **Our concern about this issue**

- 3.67 While UQTs are a small share of the workforce (some 16,000 in 2024<sup>40</sup>), they form an integral part of the teacher supply pipeline. Persistently close proximity to the NLW - and an overlap with support staff salaries - risks deterring entrants, increasing churn, and undermining the credibility of the UQT scale as a legitimate entry pathway. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill (if enacted) would require all academy teachers to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or be working towards it from September 2026, possibly reducing UQT usage over time; nevertheless, a lawful and credible UQT floor is still required, including in relation to teaching trainees and apprentices.
- 3.68 The matter is made more complex as evidence on working hours is unclear. A directed time ceiling (1,265 hours over 195 days ≈ 32.5 hours/week) yields limited headroom above NLW; however, reported weekly hours for UQTs make equivalent hourly comparisons at the bottom of the range much closer to, and potentially below, the NLW. This uncertainty argues for proportionate corrective action now, accompanied by a fuller review to refine the evidence base and test structural options. That review should seek to better understand the division of UQTs' working hours between directed, non-directed and other discretionary time.
- 3.69 Our immediate concern is that there is a possible immediate compliance risk at the bottom of the UQT pay range if the NLW continues to rise faster than UQT minima. Under plausible working time assumptions, the lowest UQT pay point for the Rest of England sits very close to NLW equivalence.
- 3.70 This risk is compounded by timing. The NLW uprates take effect each 1 April, while teachers' pay awards take effect each 1 September. Even if September rates are initially compliant, the mid-year period (April-August) introduces risk of a NLW breach if NLW increases outpace UQT minima, exposing employers (and the national framework) to legal and reputational risks. A September 2026 adjustment therefore needs to be future-proofed against the April 2027 NLW level.

### **Our considerations**

- 3.71 While we understand that ensuring teachers are paid above the NLW is a matter for individual employers, we are concerned that the national pay framework should not contain a pay point that could fall below the statutory minimum under reasonable

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<sup>40</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School Workforce in England: Reporting year 2024 - School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

assumptions about weekly hours and weeks worked. Equally, wholesale redesign in the absence of clearer evidence would, in our view, be premature. Our key considerations have been:

- **The integrity of the framework:** proximity of the UQT minimum to the NLW is non-trivial and should be mitigated.
- **Proportionate action:** a targeted adjustment at the minimum can reduce risk without turbulence across the scale.
- **Timing and future-proofing:** any September 2026 correction must anticipate the April 2027 NLW.
- **Evidence-based review:** a deeper review requires fuller evidence and should form part of our next remit.
- **Policy horizon:** likely changes in academy staffing rules and the maturation of apprenticeship routes require a sustainable continuum from UQT entry to QTS transition, best examined via a formal remit.
- **Stakeholder evidence:** consultees highlighted compliance, fairness, and pipeline implications; DfE officials explicitly raised the risk around UQT pay and the NLW in oral evidence.

### **Our conclusions on Unqualified Teachers' pay**

3.72 We have carefully examined the issues. We considered solely flagging our concern in this report or solely 'deferring' the issue for a fuller remit. We concluded that the risks are sufficient that either of these approaches in isolation would be inappropriate.

3.73 While we therefore believe some action now is merited to highlight the issue and to help immediately mitigate the risk of non-compliance, we believe any short-term action should not impede a fully evidenced review.

3.74 We have concluded that a small adjustment at the UQT minimum (in the Rest of England pay range) is warranted this year, and that this should be paired with a request for a formal remit in 2026/27 to review the UQT pay structure comprehensively.

3.75 Our key rationales were as follows:

- **Legal and reputational integrity:** No national pay point should be set so close to the statutory minimum that reasonable hour assumptions imply a breach. A modest, targeted uplift at the minimum materially reduces the risk envelope and addresses the April–September timing mismatch.
- **Proportionate response for a small cohort:** Given UQT numbers, a targeted correction is low cost and high-assurance, avoiding unnecessary ripple effects across higher points.
- **Evidence uncertainty argues for staging action:** We will address compliance now and fully examine the structure (e.g. scale shape, progression steps,

London/fringe interactions, relativities with Teaching Assistants, Apprenticeship pathways) via a remit when stronger evidence can be assembled.

### **Our recommendations on Unqualified Teachers' pay**

3.76 With effect from September 2026, we recommend:

- an increase of 5.0% to the minimum of the Rest of England UQT pay range.

3.77 We also recommend that the Secretary of State remits STRB in 2026/27 to review the UQT pay structure holistically. This could cover the range, shape and progression intervals; London/fringe differentials; integration with apprenticeship and QTS transition routes; relativities with Teaching Assistants; and an improved evidence base on typical UQT working patterns.

3.78 Our initial recommendation above should be supported by the following implementation measures:

- DfE to issue plain language employer guidance (pre-April 2026). This should:
  - Restate employer's legal obligations not to pay below the NLW;
  - Show how to check compliance under differing working time assumptions;
  - Provide worked examples;
  - Set out actions where risk is identified (move to higher point; adjust duties/hours; local supplementation);
  - Clarify rules for apprentices and trainees (e.g. where age-related NLW rates may apply).

### ***The impact of our pay recommendations on the Further Education workforce***

3.79 We were asked by the Secretary of State to consider, as part of our pay recommendations: *Evidence of the wider state of the labour market, including the impact of recommendations on the further education teaching workforce in England.*

3.80 We thank our consultees for the information they have provided, including that from the Association of Colleges (AoC), the Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA) and University and College Union (UCU). We have reviewed the submissions alongside our wider evidence base.

3.81 Key points we have noted from the evidence included:

- The approach to pay determination varies considerably between sixth form schools, sixth form colleges and Further Education (FE) colleges operating in closely connected labour markets, meaning that school teacher pay decisions have direct spillover effects on FE recruitment and retention.
- Pay differentials between schools and FE have widened over time and are now a central factor driving higher vacancy rates, weaker retention and difficulties recruiting in shortage and technical subjects in the FE sector.

- Workload pressures and the absence of national frameworks on working time and duties compound pay pressures and contribute to attrition in the FE sector.
- Colleges are increasingly reliant on local recruitment and retention incentives, which consultees viewed as costly, uneven and unsustainable substitutes for competitive baseline pay.
- Misaligned funding arrangements, particularly where additional funding is provided to schools following STRB recommendations but not consistently to FE providers, constrain colleges' ability to keep pace with school pay awards.
- While multi-year pay recommendations could offer greater predictability, consultees emphasised that these would only be viable for FE providers if accompanied by clear and sustained funding commitments.

3.82 As we stated last year, we see the labour market for teachers in FE as somewhat analogous to that for school teachers. Some of the competitive factors apply to both sectors, including recruitment and retention challenges and pay competitiveness. As highlighted by our consultees, the evidence suggests that some of these challenges are more acute than for schools.

3.83 We recognise there is a likely overlap between the labour market for teachers in secondary schools and Sixth Form Colleges. Where teachers can work in either sector, pay relativities matter and may impact recruitment and retention.

3.84 However, this overlap is not the key competitiveness question. It is most important that the broader competitive position of all teachers' pay is supported. Holding back school teachers' pay is unlikely in our view to make a helpful contribution to the ability to retain either teachers in FE or in schools.

### ***Views on the broader pay framework***

3.85 In recent reports, we have highlighted emerging and persistent shortages in key subjects and phases, the sensitivity of teacher supply to relative pay competitiveness, and the increasing reliance on short-term or localised measures to address workforce pressures. We have suggested that such incremental adjustments within the existing framework may be insufficient to address these structural challenges.

3.86 In STRB's view, the pay framework, as it has evolved over time, is no longer fully fit for purpose. The accumulation of ad hoc reforms and the increasing use of discretionary elements has reduced coherence, while weakening the link between pay progression, labour market trends and workforce objectives. We consider that the current arrangements risk limiting the sector's ability to respond effectively to recruitment and retention pressures in a sustainable and equitable way.

3.87 We therefore consider that there is a strong case for a holistic review of the teacher pay framework. Such a review would represent a significant piece of work, requiring appropriate time, robust evidence and careful consideration of affordability and workforce impacts. STRB believes that it is well placed to lead this work, in collaboration with consultees and other stakeholders, to develop a clearer, more coherent and more resilient framework capable of supporting teacher supply over the longer term.

## APPENDIX A

### Consultees' evidence on working time arrangements

#### *Introduction and purpose*

As noted in [Chapter 3](#), this appendix provides a detailed summary of consultees' views on working time arrangements. This is in response to the Secretary of State's request for views on the benefits and drawbacks of the current working time arrangements within the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), considering both directed and non-directed time for teachers, and working hours for leaders.

We would like to make clear that the STRB has not, at this stage, formed proposals or recommendations in this area, other than that set out in section 3.4. This appendix solely reflects the views of consultees, i.e. unions, employers and the Department for Education (Department).

We are providing this detailed summary for the Department to see the range of consultees' views, including their suggestions for potential reforms. We believe that this provides important context and evidence to inform a possible future remit.

#### *Methodology*

The consultees which provided views on the working time arrangements are teacher unions (BATOD, Community, NASUWT, NEU), school leader unions (ASCL, NAHT), employers (NEOST, NGA) and the Department for Education. This appendix reflects the views expressed in written and oral evidence.

We have identified the key themes raised by these consultees. These themes and what they cover are:

1. **Legal framework** – on the statutory working time arrangements set out in the STPCD.
2. **Flexibility, leave and inclusion** – on how the working time arrangements allow for flexible working patterns and leave, and how inclusive these arrangements are for staff with diverse needs.
3. **Enforcement, governance and transparency** – on how the working time arrangements are enforced and overseen.
4. **Culture and 'always on' norms** – on the prevailing culture and how the working time arrangements contribute to an 'always on' expectation.
5. **Recruitment and retention** – on how the working time arrangements affect the ability to attract new teachers and school leaders and retain them.
6. **Affordability, capacity and pupil impact constraints** – on the practical limitations, such as funding, that constrain changes to working time arrangements.
7. **International and devolved comparators** – comparing England's working time arrangements to approaches in other countries, including the UK's Devolved Nations.

For each of these themes we set out a detailed summary of what consultees:

- view positively about the current arrangements (strengths).
- view as weaknesses of the current arrangements (weaknesses).
- suggest as reforms to the arrangements (suggested improvements).

Following this detailed summary, we have provided a [High-level summary of consultees' views on Working Time Arrangements](#) summarising the strengths, weaknesses and improvement suggestions expressed by consultees, for these seven themes.

## ***Detailed summary of consultees' views***

### **1. Legal framework**

In this theme we summarise consultees' views on the national codified framework of the STPCD and its key provisions, such as the structure of directed time and non-directed time, and guaranteed Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time. This includes its application to teachers and school leaders. This is important because it sets the national standards and protections for teachers and school leaders.

#### **Strengths**

- 1.1 **Teacher unions** value the existence of a national codified framework for working time, particularly the concept of directed time, which they see as a vital protective boundary that helps define expectations and limit excessive workload. They consider the 1,265 hours directed time ceiling to be the only meaningful safeguard currently in place, offering a baseline level of protection. The inclusion of guaranteed PPA time within this framework is viewed as essential for maintaining teaching quality and managing workload.
- 1.2 **School leader unions** report limited strengths, noting that while the national framework provides structure for teachers, it does not provide any statutory protections for leaders, including the absence of protected rest periods, limits on contact, or guaranteed downtime during weekends and school holidays.
- 1.3 **Employers** view the national working time framework as a useful and necessary organisational tool. They believe that directed time provides a stable structure that supports planning, timetabling and consistency across schools. The codified parameters in the STPCD help ensure a shared understanding of expectations and enable proportionate local judgement. While they acknowledge that the framework may benefit from simplification, employers generally support retaining its core elements, seeing it as a practical foundation for managing staff time effectively.
- 1.4 The **Department** notes the current statutory arrangements for working time, including the requirement for full-time teachers to be available for 195 days and up to 1,265 hours of directed time. It also notes that the 1,265 hours equate to roughly 6.5 hours per working day and allow limited flexibility for schools to direct staff to specific activities such as parents' evenings or meetings.

#### **Weaknesses**

- 1.5 **Teacher unions** argue that the current framework fails to protect teachers in practice, particularly due to the 'reasonable additional hours' clause, which they view as enabling excessive, unpaid work beyond the directed time limit. They highlight blurred boundaries between directed and non-directed time, high contact hours, and insufficient PPA, all of which push essential tasks into personal time and fuel an 'always on' culture. Some unions raise concerns about the enforcement of directed time rules, such as the failure to follow consultation requirements on working time calendars, with no mechanism to monitor or address breaches. Teacher unions also stress that the framework fails to account for specialist and SEND roles, where inconsistent application of directed time, heavy administrative burdens, and rising caseloads contribute to unsustainable workloads.

- 1.6 **School leader unions** highlight that leaders are effectively expected to work unlimited hours, with constant out-of-hours contact, including evenings, weekends and holiday periods. They note that the framework provides no limits for leaders and no protected leave, contributing to unsustainable workloads. They emphasise that leadership workload 'peaks' are systemic, unregulated and uncompensated, contributing to significant health risks, burnout and a deterrent effect on progression into leadership roles. They stress that the current framework offers no statutory maximum weekly hours, no guaranteed protected rest periods, and no mechanisms for compensating exceptional additional hours.
- 1.7 **Employers** acknowledge that definitions within the current framework can be inconsistent, which undermines clarity and makes implementation difficult. They also note the main constraint is that the STPCD requirements are tightly linked to statutory minimums, limiting scope for innovation without additional resourcing (staffing and budgetary).
- 1.8 The **Department** recognises that distinguishing between directed and non-directed time can create an administrative burden for schools, and that workload, working hours and school culture are significant factors affecting teachers and leaders.

### **Suggested improvements**

- 1.9 **Teacher unions** call for tightening and modernising the framework to ensure it offers meaningful protection, though caution that these reforms should not grant head teachers greater control over teachers' working hours. They propose removing or strictly limiting the 'reasonable additional hours' clause, which they argue undermines the enforceability of the 1,265 hours' cap. Their calls include clearer definitions of directed and non-directed time, increasing PPA (e.g. from 10% to 20%) and reducing contact hours to allow for adequate planning and assessment. Several unions also called for enforceable limits on weekly working hours, noting that open-ended expectations are incompatible with sustainable workloads. Teacher unions also want mandatory publication of directed time calendars and stronger enforcement mechanisms. For specialist and peripatetic teachers (e.g. SEND roles), they advocate clarifying how directed time applies, with sufficient funding to make reforms deliverable.
- 1.10 **School leader unions** propose introducing statutory protections for leaders, including a clear maximum weekly working time limit (aligned with or below the 48-hour Working Time Regulations), guaranteed protected leave, and formally codified no contact periods during weekends and holiday periods. They also propose strengthening STPCD provisions to explicitly reference leaders and allow formal delegation of out-of-term operational responsibilities. They call for clearer role boundaries and mechanisms to compensate exceptional additional hours, to create a sustainable leadership workload.
- 1.11 **Employers** support maintaining the core structure of the current framework but favour simplifying definitions and guidance to reduce ambiguity and administrative burden. They advocate for incremental, feasible reforms rather than wholesale change, with a focus on improving flexibility around INSET days, PPA use and cover duties. While some employers are open to exploring alternative models, such as annualised hours or blended approaches that combine fixed and flexible working time elements, they emphasise the need to balance any reforms with affordability, staffing capacity, and pupil impact. They prioritise simplification of STPCD guidance,

particularly clearer definitions around directed time, while continuing to value local flexibility within a national framework.

## 2. Flexibility, leave and inclusion

In this theme we summarise consultees' views on how the working time arrangements allow for flexible working patterns, rest (e.g. lunch breaks) and leave. This includes how inclusive these arrangements are for staff with diverse needs. This is important because consultees believe these aspects impact on wellbeing, retention and workforce participation.

### Strengths

- 2.1 **Teacher unions** emphasise that flexible working arrangements, when implemented effectively, have a positive impact on teacher wellbeing, retention and workforce participation. They note that models such as job-share arrangements, staggered hours or remote PPA can be highly effective in supporting teachers with caring responsibilities, part-time staff and those requiring reasonable adjustments. Teacher unions also highlight that well-designed flexible working options contribute to a more diverse and inclusive workforce, enabling teachers to remain in the profession through different life stages. They point to examples from schools where flexible arrangements are part of a positive culture, giving benefits for staff morale, recruitment and sustainable workloads.
- 2.2 **Employers** identify flexibility in organising INSET/CPD as an area where many schools are already innovating. They report that twilight sessions, staggered professional development and alternative scheduling arrangements are widely used and can maintain or improve CPD quality while offering staff greater autonomy over time. Employers highlight the positive examples where flexible arrangements have improved staff satisfaction without compromising educational delivery. They note that, when designed carefully, flexibility can support school operations as well as staff wellbeing, and can aid recruitment by offering more attractive working patterns.

### Weaknesses

- 2.3 **Teacher unions** report that access to flexible working remains inconsistent across the sector and is often dependent on individual school culture rather than any clear entitlement. They highlight that carers, part-time teachers and staff needing adjustments are disproportionately affected when flexible options are unavailable or discouraged. Teacher unions note that despite the benefits of flexible arrangements, uptake remains limited in many schools, with staff encountering barriers related to managerial attitudes, timetabling pressures and entrenched expectations of full availability. They express concern that equality monitoring of flexible working is patchy, making it harder to identify and address disparities.
- 2.4 **School leader unions** note that while flexible working arrangements exist in principle, leaders rarely benefit. They face prolonged, irregular hours, including out-of-hours contact and insufficient protected time. This disproportionately affects leaders with caring responsibilities or additional needs. It also adversely affects the leadership pipeline, particularly in relation to certain groups, such as those with caring responsibilities.

2.5 **Employers** acknowledge that despite the advantages of flexible models, schools face significant affordability, timetabling and staffing constraints that limit wider adoption. While many schools have already introduced elements, such as staggered CPD or twilight sessions, broader flexibility is often constrained by the need to maintain educational continuity, manage contact ratios and ensure adequate supervision. Employers stress that staffing shortages, financial pressures and the demands of the school timetable mean that flexible arrangements cannot always be implemented without compromising operational requirements.

### **Suggested improvements**

2.6 **Teacher unions** call for flexible working to be normalised across the sector and made a meaningful contractual right rather than an optional extra. They urge a strengthened 'right to disconnect', with guidance to curb routine out-of-hours contact and protect lunchtimes, evenings and holiday periods from work intrusions. They also recommend enhanced safeguards for teachers with caring responsibilities or other additional needs.

2.7 **School leader unions** call for flexible working to be extended explicitly to leaders, such as part-time leadership roles and phased retirement options. They emphasise the need for protected leave, reduced out-of-hours expectations, and the systematic application of an equality impact lens, particularly for carers and those with additional needs. They also propose that leaders should have access to structured flexible working routes, including part-time leadership pathways and predictable protected professional time, supported by national guidance.

2.8 **Employers** express support for practical, locally workable flexible arrangements, emphasising the need for reforms that are feasible within current constraints. Employers advocate for increased flexibility around INSET/CPD delivery, but emphasise that such flexibility must not compromise CPD quality, noting concerns raised about twilight fatigue and training sufficiency. Employers stress the importance of solutions that improve staff wellbeing without generating undue complexity or requiring significant additional resource.

### **3. Enforcement, governance and transparency**

In this theme we summarise consultees' views on how well the working time rules are implemented in practice and enforced. This includes the transparency of working time practices, in particular, tracking and reporting working hours. This is important because consultees stress that the framework must be enforced effectively to ensure national application of the standards and protections.

#### **Strengths**

3.1 **Teacher unions** report that national rules provide essential protections by setting clear expectations and boundaries around teachers' working hours. They view the statutory framework as a necessary safeguard that helps ensure fairness across the system and gives teachers a degree of security, especially where local practices might otherwise vary. Unions emphasise that a national set of rules offers a coherent basis for schools to plan working time, while also offering a reference point for identifying or challenging poor practice.

- 3.2 **School leader unions** acknowledge that national rules provide an important overarching framework, but note that this benefit applies far more to teachers than leaders, who lack corresponding protections.
- 3.3 **Employers** highlight that the existing national working time rules provide stability and a shared foundation for school operations. They note that a uniform set of expectations supports organisational planning, timetabling and workforce management. Employers value the clarity that national provisions can bring, helping to maintain consistency across different settings and supporting a systemwide understanding of expectations.

### **Weaknesses**

- 3.4 **Teacher unions** argue that enforcement of the current working time rules is generally weak and inconsistent, with breaches going unchallenged. They highlight that teachers often face excessive workloads without effective mechanisms to ensure compliance with directed time limits and other protections. Teacher unions note that inconsistent monitoring makes it difficult to identify systemic problems, creating an environment in which excessive hours and poor practice can persist.
- 3.5 **School leader unions** stress that leaders are responsible for enforcing systems they themselves are not protected by. They also highlight the absence of consistent enforcement mechanisms and the lack of universal trade union recognition across employers.
- 3.6 **Employers** express concern that the current STPCD guidance itself is overly complex and requires simplification, particularly around roles and responsibilities. They warn that without careful design, additional compliance expectations may place further demands on schools already facing resource constraints. Employers also highlight that enforcement challenges may stem from broader workload and staffing pressures, which limit capacity to manage compliance effectively.

### **Suggested improvements**

- 3.7 **Teacher unions** call for mandatory publication of directed time calendars in every school to improve transparency and accountability. They also propose clearer governance responsibility to ensure that working time protections are consistently applied. Teacher unions argue that these reforms would help embed a more reliable and enforceable system, enabling staff to challenge excessive workloads and ensure consistent application of protections. They also urged the Department to enforce its Workload Reduction Toolkit more rigorously, to ensure workload is addressed alongside any changes to working time.
- 3.8 **School leader unions** call for clearer governance responsibilities, including stronger recognition of trade unions by all state-funded education employers. They also stress the need to ensure enforcement of any new working time protections for leaders.

## **4. Culture and ‘always on’ norms**

In this theme we summarise consultees’ views on the prevailing culture and norms that the working time arrangements create, in particular, the provisions on ‘reasonable additional hours’. This is important because consultees view this as having a detrimental effect on teachers and leaders, and undermining protections in the framework.

## Strengths

- 4.1 **Teacher unions** highlight that while an entrenched 'always on' culture persists across much of the sector, some schools have implemented clear communication boundaries that show a healthier work-life balance is possible. They note examples where expectations around emails, meetings and out-of-hours contact are more tightly controlled, helping to create space for staff to rest and reducing intrusions into personal time. These localised approaches demonstrate that cultural change is possible where school leaders prioritise staff wellbeing and set explicit norms around work-life balance.
- 4.2 **School leader unions** note that some schools have implemented positive boundaries (e.g. controlled communication windows), but these are isolated pockets rather than systemic practice.
- 4.3 **Employers** note existing pockets of activity where practices such as twilight CPD models are aimed to create space for staff to rest and manage their time more effectively. They also note that schools adopting these approaches report improvements in staff satisfaction and reduced out-of-hours demands. Employers regard these examples as demonstrating that relatively small adjustments to routines, such as streamlining communication channels or clustering professional development activities, can have beneficial effects on wellbeing without undermining operational delivery.

## Weaknesses

- 4.4 **Teacher unions** report that an 'always on' culture remains deeply entrenched across the sector, with teachers routinely expected to work during evenings and weekends. They highlight that excessive contact hours, insufficient PPA, and blurred boundaries between directed and non-directed time fuel the expectation of constant availability. Teacher unions warn that sustained out-of-hours demands contribute to burnout, undermine work-life balance, and erode the protections intended by the working time arrangements.
- 4.5 **School leader unions** report that leadership roles have become associated with near-constant availability, including late evening communications, urgent weekend responsibilities, and pressure to work through holiday periods. They emphasise that this creates unpredictable and unsustainable working patterns, with documented health risks associated with prolonged working hours.
- 4.6 **Employers** acknowledge that certain pressures, such as safeguarding requirements, behaviour management responsibilities and urgent operational issues, can undermine efforts to establish clearer boundaries, and emphasise that workload and wellbeing - not the structure of working time - are the core drivers of concern. They note that these pressures, such as urgent safeguarding concerns or last-minute operational issues, can make it difficult to uphold consistent communication norms, contributing to the perception that teachers and leaders must remain contactable at all times. Employers recognise that, without addressing these systemic drivers, cultural change will remain challenging.
- 4.7 The **Department** recognises that entrenched expectations around extended availability remain widespread, contributing to excessive working hours. It identifies workload and working culture as significant drivers of poor wellbeing.

## Suggested improvements

- 4.8 **Teacher unions** argue that a nationally recognised ‘right to disconnect’ is needed to counter the expectation of constant availability and to support healthier working time boundaries. They propose codifying clear no contact expectations, including boundaries around evening and weekend communication and daily limits. They suggest that national guidance should specify when teachers are not expected to respond to emails or attend meetings, to counteract the ‘always on’ norm.
- 4.9 **School leader unions** advocate for nationally codified non-contact periods, including explicit restrictions on evening and weekend communication, and guaranteed protected rest periods during school holidays. They call for clear, enforceable role boundaries and codified expectations that set clear expectations for when leaders should not be approached for work matters, to prevent the escalation of out-of-hours demands and ensure leaders can disconnect.
- 4.10 **Employers** favour locally determined approaches that allow schools to tailor cultural expectations to their context while maintaining operational flexibility. They propose that schools consider local protocols on communication norms and staff availability, rather than imposing rigid national requirements. Employers argue that this approach enables schools to balance workload management with the practicalities of safeguarding, behaviour and parental engagement.

## 5. Recruitment and retention impacts

In this theme we summarise consultees’ views on the impact of the working time arrangements on recruitment and retention of teachers and school leaders. This is important because recruitment and retention of teachers and leaders, including the pipeline into leadership roles, are significant issues for the sector.

### Strengths

- 5.1 **Teacher unions** note that the inherent structure of the school year can be an important asset for recruitment, but only if workloads are reasonable. They report that the predictable pattern of term time work, combined with school holiday periods, can be attractive to prospective entrants, particularly those with family responsibilities. Teacher unions highlight that when working time expectations are clearly defined and kept reasonable, the profession’s calendar supports a sustainable balance between work and personal life, thereby aiding retention.
- 5.2 **Employers** emphasise that the structure of the school year can make teaching an attractive career, supporting recruitment and retention. The supportive working cultures, where workload is proactively managed and flexible arrangements are offered, can significantly aid recruitment. They point to examples where schools with strong wellbeing-focused cultures have been more successful in attracting applicants, particularly in competitive local labour markets. Employers note that positive organisational climate, professional trust and investment in staff development are key factors influencing retention.

### Weaknesses

- 5.3 **Teacher unions** argue that excessive workload and long working hours remain major deterrents to entering and staying in the profession. Teacher unions warn that unless working time protections are strengthened, the profession will continue to

struggle to attract new entrants or retain experienced teachers. They also report that Early Career Teachers face acute pressures and early attrition.

- 5.4 **School leader unions** report that unlimited expectations around leaders' working hours are a major deterrent to entering or progressing into leadership roles. They highlight a sharp decline in leadership aspiration and progression, with many potential leaders deterred by unsustainable workloads and wellbeing concerns. Retention rates for leaders have fallen faster than for teachers, creating risks to leadership supply.
- 5.5 **Employers** observe that wider system pressure, including staffing shortages, increased accountability demands and behavioural or safeguarding-related workloads, are harming retention and note that staffing reductions driven by affordability pressures additionally threaten workforce stability. They report that these pressures often exacerbate the demands placed on teachers and leaders, reducing the attractiveness of the profession relative to other graduate careers. Employers caution that retention challenges cannot be addressed solely through reform of working time arrangements without tackling broader workload drivers.
- 5.6 The **Department** acknowledges that excessive workload remains the main driver of teachers leaving the profession. It recognises that long working hours, with the intensity of in school demands, deters leadership progression and limits the ability of the system to retain experienced staff.

### **Suggested improvements**

- 5.7 **Teacher unions** propose reducing excessive working hours and increasing PPA time as key measures to support recruitment and retention. On PPA, some unions call for this to be increased to 20% on a phased basis. Teacher unions call for a greater emphasis on flexibility in working patterns, arguing that more predictable and sustainable workloads would help attract new entrants and retain experienced staff. Unions suggest that reforms should embed flexibility as a core component of the working time framework rather than an optional practice.
- 5.8 **School leader unions** call for statutory protections for leaders' working hours, including guaranteed protected rest periods and clearer delegation arrangements, to stabilise the leadership pipeline and ensure sustainability of leadership roles.
- 5.9 **Employers** call for improvements in school culture, workload management and flexibility as practical measures to boost retention. They favour locally workable approaches that balance staff wellbeing with operational constraints, emphasising that small but targeted changes, such as improved CPD scheduling, streamlined administrative processes and more flexible use of non-teaching days, can help alleviate pressure points.

## **6. Affordability, capacity and pupil impact constraints**

In this theme we summarise consultees' views on the links between working time arrangements and school budgets, staffing capacity and on pupil impacts. This is important because consultees stress that any future reforms will need to consider these aspects in order to be successful.

## Weaknesses

- 6.1 **Teacher unions** highlight that many workload reduction solutions require additional investment and that insufficient funding significantly restricts the ability of schools to implement reforms. They argue that without appropriate resourcing - whether for additional staff, protected time or administrative support - efforts to reduce excessive workload are unlikely to be effective. Unions also note that financial pressures may exacerbate inequalities across schools, with those in more challenging circumstances less able to adopt positive practices.
- 6.2 **School leader unions** stress that many reforms require additional staffing capacity, not just funding. Ongoing underfunding has led to leaders absorbing responsibilities from eliminated support roles, such as HR, site management, and safeguarding escalation, significantly increasing their workload.
- 6.3 **Employers** emphasise that affordability, staffing levels and potential impacts on pupils are major limiting factors for reform, with many reporting that any unfunded pay or working time changes would likely require workforce reductions. They note that even small adjustments to working time structures may require additional staffing or funding, both of which are constrained in the current environment. Employers highlight concerns that some reforms could reduce contact time or increase the need for cover, potentially affecting educational continuity and pupil outcomes.

## Suggested improvements

- 6.4 **Teacher unions** propose that workload reduction measures should be appropriately funded to enable schools to implement reforms effectively. They argue that without additional investment - whether to increase staffing, enhance PPA, or ensure adequate support structures - changes to working time arrangements will not address the underlying pressures contributing to excessive workload. Teacher unions stress that funding is essential to ensure that workload reforms are not only viable but equitable across different types of schools.
- 6.5 **School leader unions** propose feasible, cost-aware adjustments, such as extending the ability to take PPA off-site to leadership and management time for leaders, but emphasise that without adequate staffing capacity and resourcing, leadership workload cannot be meaningfully reduced. They call for reforms that explicitly consider the disproportionate workload effect on leaders, not just systemwide impacts.
- 6.6 **Employers** advocate targeted, feasible adjustments that do not increase cost pressures, warning that many proposed reforms require staffing capacity that schools currently lack.

## 7. International and devolved comparators

In this theme we summarise consultees' views on how other education systems manage teachers' working time, compared to the arrangements in England. This is important because insights and lessons from other models can be valuable when considering future reforms.

## Strengths

- 7.1 **Teacher unions** highlight that a number of international and devolved systems provide useful examples of approaches that offer clearer or stronger working time protections than those in England. They point to models in Scotland, Portugal, Iceland and the Crown Dependencies as demonstrating how limits on working hours, structured contact time expectations and more formalised protections can support teacher wellbeing and improve recruitment and retention. Teacher unions view these comparators as evidence that contractual limits can be applied successfully and may offer lessons for enhancing the sustainability of the profession.
- 7.2 **School leader unions** value international and devolved models that provide clearer working time protections, such as Scotland's 35-hour week and structured contact time limits.
- 7.3 **Employers** value the insights offered by international and devolved systems, noting that comparative evidence can inform improvements to working time arrangements and help identify practical reforms. They recognise that while not all features of other systems may be transferable to England, examples of more structured working time approaches or flexible scheduling models may offer ideas for incremental, feasible changes. Employers regard international comparisons as a potential source of learning rather than as templates for wholesale system change.
- 7.4 The **Department** notes that while England operates a 1,265 hours directed time framework with non-directed time beyond this, the Welsh Department mirrors the same expectations. and the Scottish Department applies a 35-hour week with a fixed contact time limit.

## Weaknesses

- 7.5 **Teacher unions** argue that England's current protections for teachers are weaker than those found in several comparator nations. They note that many international systems offer clearer safeguards, stronger limits on working hours or more predictable expectations around workload. They suggest that the relative weakness of England's framework contributes to excessive and unsustainable working hours and limits the profession's ability to compete for entrants internationally.
- 7.6 **School leader unions** stress that England is an outlier in terms of leadership working hours and advocate learning from international models, such as Scotland's 35-hour week, to improve sustainability.
- 7.7 **Employers** warn that directly adopting international models, such as fixed weekly hour caps, can present challenges if transferred too directly. They note that some systems adopting fixed weekly hours or rigid contact time caps have faced industrial relations difficulties, suggesting that such approaches may not align easily with England's school structures, workforce patterns or accountability systems. Employers emphasise that any attempt to draw lessons from elsewhere must take account of feasibility, workforce capacity and system compatibility.
- 7.8 The **Department** acknowledges that teachers and leaders in the UK, including those in Wales and Scotland, report among the highest working hours internationally. This suggests that working time structures alone may not sufficiently influence overall working patterns.

## Suggested improvements

- 7.9 Most **teacher unions** propose adopting clearer contractual limits aligned with successful international models, to help reduce excessive working hours and offer teachers in England protections comparable to those enjoyed in other jurisdictions. They recommend that England consider the application of more explicit caps, such as those in Scotland, Portugal, Iceland, Isle of Man, Guernsey or Jersey, and adapt these approaches to strengthen the national working time framework.
- 7.10 **School leader unions** advocate for exploring annualised or hybrid working time models for leaders, which may offer structured expectations while maintaining flexibility. They suggest adapting successful international protections, including clear caps and predictable downtime, to improve sustainability and competitiveness of leadership roles. Northern Ireland's approach, where a specific governor is accountable for working time, was highlighted by some school leader unions.
- 7.11 **Employers** express a preference for annualised or hybrid models, which allow hours to be distributed more flexibly across the year.

## High-level summary of consultees' views on Working Time Arrangements

Below is a high-level summary table, setting out the key strengths, concerns and suggested improvements expressed by consultees. These do not reflect the STRB's views.

Theme	Consultees' views on strengths of current arrangements	Consultees' concerns with current arrangements	Consultees' suggestions for changes to the arrangements
<b>1. Legal framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directed time and national parameters provide structure and baseline protection, to define expectations and limit excessive workloads.</li> <li>• Codified limits support consistency and planning across schools.</li> <li>• Employers value local judgement within national parameters.</li> <li>• Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA) is essential for teaching quality and workload management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of clarity and blurred boundaries between directed and non-directed time; 'reasonable additional hours' drives unpaid overtime.</li> <li>• Leaders' hours effectively unlimited, with an absence of meaningful daily breaks (including uninterrupted lunchtimes); weekend and holiday working common.</li> <li>• High contact hours and insufficient PPA push work into personal time; cultural expectations reinforce excessive workload.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify or remove 'reasonable additional hours' clause.</li> <li>• Publish directed time calendars.</li> <li>• Strengthen protections / expectations for leaders (e.g. clearer workload boundaries; explore limits, including statutory weekly hour caps, protected leave during school holidays, and codified non-contact periods) and consider provisions allowing formal delegation of out-of-term time responsibilities.</li> <li>• Increase PPA and reduce contact time where feasible.</li> <li>• Clarify application for specialist/SEND roles and align workload policies with outreach work.</li> <li>• Improve enforcement and monitoring; pilot blended models (e.g. nine-day fortnight, job-sharing).</li> </ul>

Theme	Consultees' views on strengths of current arrangements	Consultees' concerns with current arrangements	Consultees' suggestions for changes to the arrangements
<b>2. Flexibility, leave and inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where adopted, flexible working models (job-share, staggered hours, remote PPA) support wellbeing, recruitment and retention, and workforce diversity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access is inconsistent and culture-dependent; carers, part-time staff and those needing adjustments are disproportionately affected.</li> <li>Leaders rarely benefit in practice; long, unpredictable hours and out-of-hours contact persist; equality monitoring is inconsistent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normalise flexibility and pilot models (nine-day fortnight, remote PPA, phased retirement).</li> <li>Strengthen protections against out-of-hours contact, including guidance on a right to disconnect.</li> <li>Strengthen process (right of appeal; annual reporting on requests) and protections for carers/adjustments; apply equality impact lens.</li> <li>Extend flexibility explicitly to leaders (structured part-time pathways; protected professional time; predictable protected downtime).</li> </ul>
<b>3. Enforcement and governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National rules provide a stable baseline and reference point for planning and challenging poor practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforcement inconsistent; leaders often bear responsibility for enforcing systems that do not provide similar protections for them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandate publication of directed time calendars; define clearer governance responsibilities; strengthen recognition of trade unions; proportionate compliance tools.</li> <li>Ensure compliance tools explicitly apply to leader-specific protections, including no contact periods and protected leave.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Culture / always on</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pockets of good practice on communications boundaries and protected rest demonstrate change is possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entrenched overwork and out-of-hours expectations for teachers and leaders; prolonged evening/weekend/holiday contact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Codify no contact expectations, including a right to disconnect and protections for lunchtimes, weekends and holidays.</li> <li>Employers favour locally determined protocols</li> </ul>

Theme	Consultees' views on strengths of current arrangements	Consultees' concerns with current arrangements	Consultees' suggestions for changes to the arrangements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systemic drivers (safeguarding, behaviour) affecting boundaries.</li> </ul>	<p>(context-specific communications norms) rather than rigid national rules.</p>
<b>5. Recruitment and retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear structure and expectations, and the term-time pattern, can support attraction and retention when workload is manageable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excessive workload and unlimited expectations deter entrants and harm retention, including reduced leadership aspiration.</li> <li>Early Career Teachers face acute pressures and early attrition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce excessive hours and increase PPA (on phased basis); and embed flexibility as a core component.</li> <li>Stabilise leadership expectations with predictable rest periods, codified no contact times and clearer delegation arrangements.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Affordability and capacity</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability and staffing pressures constrain reform; some changes may reduce contact time or increase cover needs.</li> <li>Unfunded changes may require workforce reductions and risk pupil outcomes.</li> <li>Leaders absorbing responsibilities from reduced/cut support staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise incremental, feasible adjustments that do not exacerbate cost pressures; ensure funding aligns with workload reduction measures.</li> </ul>
<b>7. International and devolved comparators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International or devolved systems offer learning on clearer protections and structured contact time limits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct transferability is challenging; risk of industrial relations issues if imported without adaptation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot and adapt best practice cautiously.</li> <li>Consider annualised or hybrid models, especially for leaders, including predictable downtime.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX B

### Teacher labour market analysis

#### Introduction

1. This appendix presents a summary of the evidence used to inform our assessment of the teacher labour market. We discuss the wider economic context and the graduate labour market. We also present a range of information relating to the school workforce, examining recruitment and retention trends. Given our submission date, we have been able to draw on data published up to 18 February 2026.
2. The key source relating to the teacher workforce is the 2024 School Workforce Census (SWC) data.<sup>41</sup> This census took place in November 2024 and the data were published by the Department for Education in June 2025.

#### Summary

- Inflation has fallen from its recent peak in October 2022. In the 12 months to January 2026, the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 3.0%, the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers housing costs (CPIH) rose by 3.2% and the Retail Prices Index (RPI) rose by 3.8%.
- According to pay settlements data from Brightmine, in the three months to the end of January 2026, the median pay award was 3.2% for the whole economy. Expectations are for the median settlement to fall over the coming year.
- Annual growth in Average Weekly Earnings for October 2025 to December 2025 was 4.2% (regular pay).
- The median graduate starting salary reported by the Institute of Student Employers (ISE), from its survey that ran in summer 2025, was £33,000 in 2024/25. Median graduate starting salaries varied significantly by region with the London graduate salary being the highest at £35,200.
- In 2024/25, male teachers had higher earnings overall than female teachers across all school types. Median earnings were higher in secondary schools than in primary and nursery schools.
- When comparing teachers' pay to that of other professional occupations by age and region using data from the SWC and the ONS, teachers fell below the comparators in all groups. The gaps between median teacher pay and that of other professionals was greatest in London.
- The real-terms value of median teacher earnings has fallen since the early 2010s. The fall in real teacher pay has been greater than that for other professional occupations.
- Based on proprietary benchmarking data, starting pay for teachers is between the lowest quartile and median for roles of comparable size and scope. The position is less competitive for teachers with more experience on the Main Pay

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<sup>41</sup> Department for Education (2025) *School workforce in England: Reporting year 2024* - [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Range (MPR) but improves for teachers on the Upper Pay Range (UPR). The comparative basic salary position of leadership roles in primary schools is generally below the market base salary data, whilst roles in secondary schools are better aligned to the market base salary data.

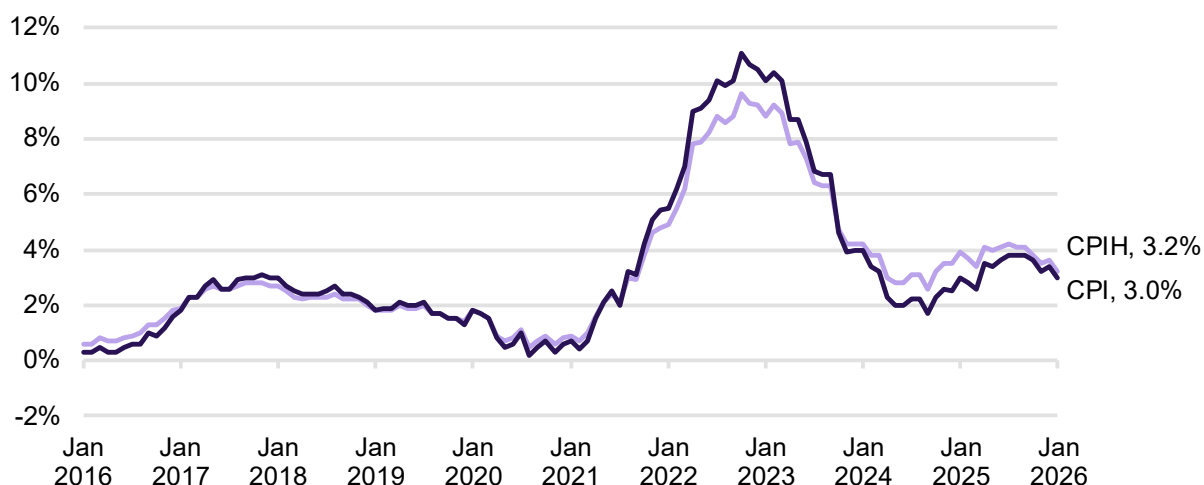
- The full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher workforce decreased by 0.1% or 432 between 2023 and 2024. Secondary schools once again saw the largest absolute increase in teacher numbers.
- The proportion of teachers from an ethnic minority background remained stable, with 89% of teachers across state-funded schools being white. The proportion of white teachers is higher in nursery and primary schools than in secondary schools and increases with seniority in leadership roles.
- The pupil population attending nursery and primary schools peaked in 2019, with numbers having since decreased. The secondary school pupil population is currently at its peak and projected to decline in 2028.
- Pupil to teacher ratios (PTRs) and pupil to adult ratios (PARs) across state-funded schools were largely again unchanged in 2024/25.
- In 2024/25, there were 41,736 FTE qualified entrants to teaching in state-funded schools, a 5% decrease from 2023/24.
- Between 2023 and 2024 there were 40,813 FTE qualified teachers who left teaching in state-funded schools, 6.2% lower than between 2022 and 2023.
- The overall leaving rate was 9.0%, down from 9.3% between 2022 and 2023.
- The teacher vacancy rate was 0.5%, lower than the previous year (0.6%). In absolute terms, vacancies in schools decreased by 629 on the previous year, reaching 2,173.
- According to the Department for Education's Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Survey, carried out in early 2025, 29% of teachers and leaders reported that they were considering leaving the state school sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement (down from 34% in 2024).
- For 2025/26, headline postgraduate ITT (PGITT) targets for new entrants were met for primary (126% of target reached) but not met for secondary (88% of target reached). The total number of entrants to ITT in 2025/26 was 11% above the number in 2024/25.
- The number of postgraduate entrants was below target for nine out of seventeen secondary subjects.
- There were 5,453 Overseas Trained Teachers awarded QTS in the year to March 2024, a 44% increase on the previous year and well below preceding years.

## Economic context

### Economic activity and Inflation

3. UK real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated by the ONS to have grown by 0.1% in the fourth quarter of 2025, following a 0.1% increase in the previous quarter.<sup>42</sup>
4. Inflation, as measured by the CPI, was 3.0% in the 12 months to January 2026, at the same level as January 2025. Inflation peaked at a 40-year high of 11.1% in October 2022. The CPIH rose by 3.2% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 3.9% in January 2025 (see Figure B.1).<sup>43</sup> The Retail Prices Index (RPI) rose by 3.8% in the 12 months to January 2026. The Bank of England indicated in its February 2026 Monetary Policy Report that CPI inflation is forecast to decline further into 2026, falling to 2.0% in Q4.<sup>44</sup>

**Figure B.1: CPIH and CPI annual inflation rates, UK, January 2016 to 2026<sup>45</sup>**



5. The ONS has developed an alternative measure, Household Costs Indices (HCIs), to show how different households have experienced inflation.<sup>46,47</sup> Unlike the CPI, the HCIs include mortgage interest rates, stamp duty and other costs related to the purchase of a dwelling.<sup>48</sup> This measure shows an overall annual inflation rate of 4.1% in September 2025, an increase from 2.1% in September 2024 and slightly higher than the annual CPI rate to September 2025 of 3.8%.

<sup>42</sup> ONS (2026) *GDP first quarterly estimate, UK: October to December 2025* - [GDP first quarterly estimate, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>43</sup> ONS (2026) *Consumer price inflation, UK: January 2026* - [Consumer price inflation, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>44</sup> Bank of England (2026) *Monetary Policy Report - February 2026* - [Monetary Policy Report - February 2026 | Bank of England](#)

<sup>45</sup> OPRB analysis of ONS (2026) *Consumer price inflation, UK: January 2026* - [Consumer price inflation, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

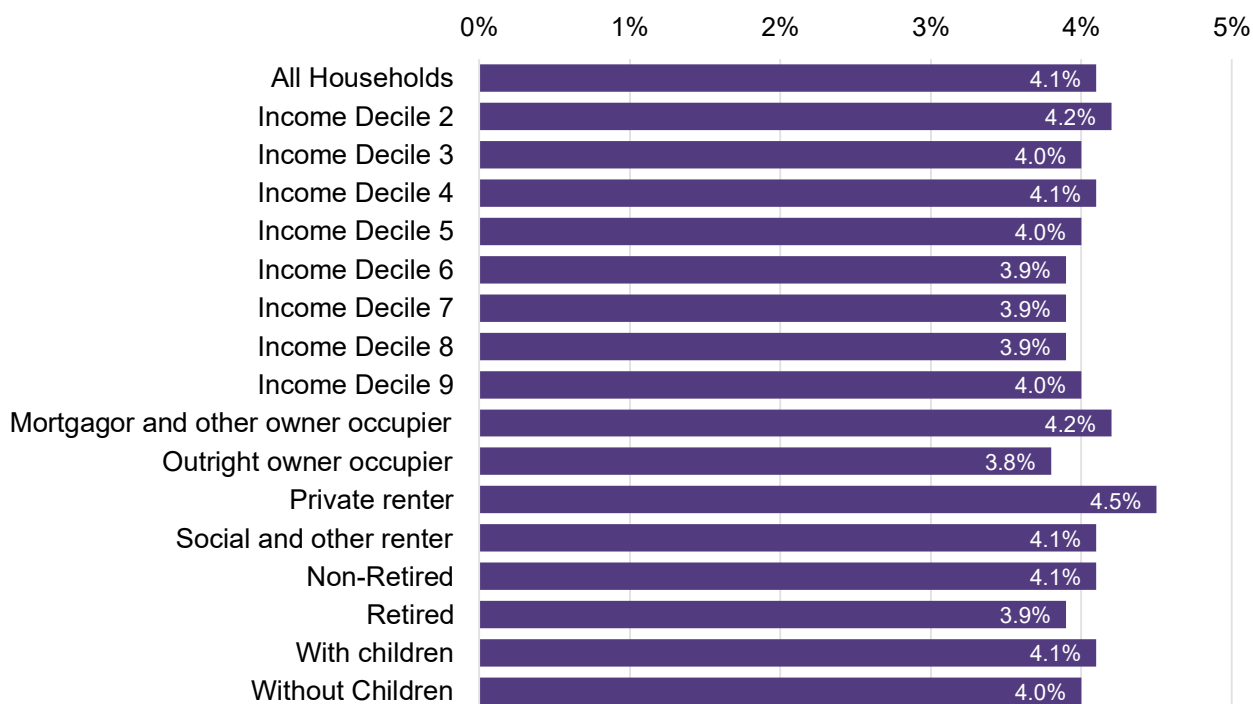
<sup>46</sup> These are official statistics in development, and the ONS advises caution when using these data, as estimates may be revised because of methodological improvements.

<sup>47</sup> ONS (2025) *Household Costs Indices for UK household groups: July to September 2025* - [Household Costs Indices for UK household groups - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>48</sup> Indices like the HCI measure the change in price of a 'fixed basket' of goods and services. For the HCIs, the weight of each component in a household group's 'fixed basket' is based on the average household's share of expenditure (so-called 'democratic' weights). By contrast, the CPIH and CPI baskets reflect the total share of expenditure across all households in the UK (so-called 'plutocratic' weights).

6. The HCI indices in Figure B.2 show that by tenure type, private renter households had the highest annual inflation rate of 4.5% in the year to September 2025, reflecting rising private rental payments; followed by mortgagor households, with a 4.2% inflation rate. Outright owner occupiers experienced the lowest annual inflation rate of all tenure types, at 3.8% in the year to September 2025; whilst social and other renters had the next lowest (4.1%).

**Figure B.2: Household Costs Indices annual inflation rates, September 2025<sup>49,50</sup>**

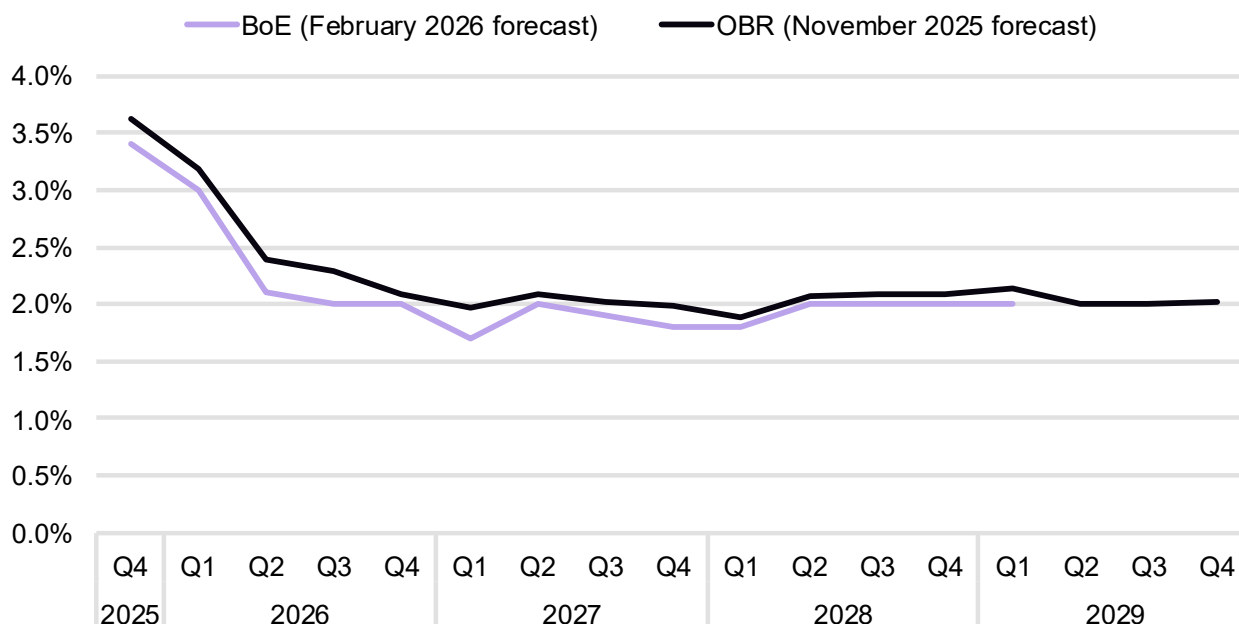


7. Inflation forecasts in Figure B.3 from the Bank of England and the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) suggest that inflation rates are set to fall significantly throughout 2026. OBR forecasts suggest that the CPI inflation rate will fall to 2.0% by the first quarter in 2027. The Bank of England forecasts that CPI inflation will reach its lowest point of 1.7% in the first quarter of 2027. Both the BoE and OBR forecast that CPI inflation will stabilise at close to 2.0% from 2027 onwards.

<sup>49</sup> ONS (2025) *Household Costs Indices for UK household groups: July to September 2025* - [Household Costs Indices for UK household groups - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>50</sup> The first- and tenth-income deciles are not included here as the composition of these groups can be unusual and may therefore be influenced by unrepresentative expenditures.

**Figure B.3: Bank of England and OBR CPI forecasts, Q4 2025 to Q4 2029<sup>51,52</sup>**



### Employment and earnings

8. The UK unemployment rate was estimated at 5.2% from October to December 2025, 0.8 percentage points above estimates a year earlier and 1.3 percentage points above pre-pandemic levels (December 2019 to February 2020).<sup>53</sup>
9. The economic inactivity rate had been on a downward trend since 2010 but increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. The rate was estimated at 20.8% in October to December 2025, 0.7 percentage points lower than a year earlier and 0.5 percentage points higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic (December 2019 to February 2020).<sup>54</sup>
10. The estimated number of vacancies in the UK was 726,000 in November 2025 to January 2026, a small increase of 2,000 (0.3%) compared with August to October 2025. Total estimated vacancies were down by 73,000 (9.2%) over this period compared to a year ago and were 93,000 (11.4%) below their pre-pandemic December 2019 to February 2020 levels.<sup>55</sup>
11. The 12-month growth of regular pay for October to December 2025 was 4.2% across the whole economy, with public sector growth 3.8 percentage points higher than the private sector (see Table B.1). However, we note that the public sector annual growth rate is affected by some public sector pay rises being paid earlier in 2025 than in 2024, causing a base effect which has now reached its peak and will phase out over

<sup>51</sup> Bank of England (2026) *Monetary Policy Report - February 2026* - [Monetary Policy Report - February 2026 | Bank of England](#)

<sup>52</sup> OBR (2025) *Economic and fiscal outlook - November 2025* - [Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2025](#)

<sup>53</sup> ONS (2026) *Employment in the UK: February 2026* - [Unemployment rate \(aged 16 and over, seasonally adjusted\): % - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>54</sup> ONS (2026) *Labour Market Overview: February 2026* - [Labour market overview, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>55</sup> ONS (2026) *Vacancies and jobs in the UK: February 2026* - [Vacancies and jobs in the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

the next few months. Whole-economy average earnings increased over the same period when adjusted for inflation.<sup>56</sup>

**Table B.1: Average Weekly Earnings annual growth rates in Great Britain, seasonally adjusted, October 2025 to December 2025<sup>57,58</sup>**

Average Weekly Earnings	Whole Economy (%)	Private Sector (%)	Public Sector (%)
Total pay (including bonuses)	4.2	3.5	7.0
Regular pay (excluding bonuses)	4.2	3.4	7.2
Real total pay (including bonuses)	0.7	-	-
Real regular pay (excluding bonuses)	0.8	-	-

12. There is a consensus among economic forecasters that earnings growth is set to fall further in 2026. Average weekly earnings growth forecasts in Figure B.4 from the Bank of England and OBR predict a slowdown in wage growth. In its November 2025 forecast, OBR expected whole-economy nominal earnings growth to slow to around 2% during the next two years and then tick up slightly. The Bank of England expects a more gradual fall in private sector regular earnings growth, reaching a low of 2.7% in Q3 2027, before rising again.

<sup>56</sup> ONS (2026) *Average weekly earnings in Great Britain: February 2026* - [Average weekly earnings in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>57</sup> ONS (2026) *Average weekly earnings in Great Britain: February 2026* - [Average weekly earnings in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>58</sup> ONS (2026) *Real average weekly earnings using CPI (seasonally adjusted)* - [Real average weekly earnings using CPI - Office for National Statistics](#)

**Figure B.4: Bank of England and OBR Average Weekly Earnings growth forecasts, Q4 2025 to Q4 2029<sup>59,60</sup>**



13. Early estimates for January 2026 of real time Pay As You Earn data from HMRC, indicate that median monthly pay increased by 4.6% compared with January 2025.<sup>61</sup>
14. According to HR Consultancy Brightmine, which collates data on pay settlements in the public and private sectors, the median increase in basic pay by number of pay reviews in the 12 months to the end of January 2026 was 3.0%, a quarter of awards were below 2.5% and a further quarter in excess of 3.8%. In the 12 months to the end of January 2026, the private sector recorded a median settlement of 3.0%, lower than the public sector at 3.8% (see Table B.2). For the 3 months to the end of January 2026, the median increase in basic pay by number of pay reviews was 3.2%. This is 0.2 percentage points higher than a year earlier.
15. Incomes Data Research’s (IDR) initial analysis of already-decided pay outcomes reveals a median of 3.4% across the whole economy for 2026. This is higher than the median of 3.3% observed in 2025 and predominantly reflects the picture in the private sector as most public sector awards are yet to be decided. Whilst indications for the median pay award are higher in 2026 than 2025, the mean pay award is expected to be lower. This is due to a smaller proportion of higher-end outcomes worth 5% or more for the coming year, with just 5% of pay rises at 5% or more in 2026, down from 16% in 2025.<sup>62</sup>
16. Brightmine are predicting that the median pay award for 2026 is 3.3% based on the deals collected in January 2026 so far. The most common award given is 3%, offered in around a quarter of deals, with the same proportion between 3% and 4%;

<sup>59</sup> Average weekly earnings (private sector regular pay) four-quarter growth. Bank of England (2026) *Monetary Policy Report - February 2026* - [Monetary Policy Report - February 2026 | Bank of England](#)

<sup>60</sup> Average weekly earnings growth. OBR (2025) *Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2025* - [Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2025](#)

<sup>61</sup> ONS and HMRC (2026) *Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK: February 2026* - [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>62</sup> IDR (2026) *Median pay award up a little to 3.4% in 2026* - <https://www.incomesdataresearch.co.uk/resources/viewpoint/median-pay-award-up-a-little-to-34-in-2026> Available to IDR subscribers.

highlighting the close bunching of January awards. We note that January and April are the busiest periods for pay awards.<sup>63</sup>

17. The Bank of England’s Agents reported in February 2026 that the average expected pay settlement from the Agents’ pay survey for 2026 is 3.4%, down from the average of 4.0% that respondents say they made in 2025, and lower than the 3.6% figure based on the full set of settlements in the Bank’s private sector settlements database.<sup>64</sup>

**Table B.2: Percentage increase in basic pay (pay settlements) for the 12 months, and 3 months to end of November 2025 to January 2026<sup>65</sup>**

	12 months to end		
	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026
Median (by organisation)	3.0	3.0	3.0
Lower quartile	2.5	2.5	2.5
Upper quartile	3.6	3.6	3.8
Private median (by organisation)	3.0	3.0	3.0
Public median (by organisation)	3.8	3.8	3.8

	3 months to end		
	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026
Median (by organisation)	3.7	3.6	3.2
Lower quartile	2.8	2.4	2.5
Upper quartile	4.0	4.0	4.0

### ***The graduate labour market***

18. This section provides a summary of information for the wider graduate labour market in the UK. We also include graduate pay comparisons. Information has predominantly been sourced from three reports on the graduate labour market: Institute of Student Employers’ (ISE) Student Recruitment Survey 2025; Prospect Luminate’s What do graduates do? 2025/26; and High Fliers The Graduate Market in 2025 and The Graduate Market in 2026.

- The ISE recruitment survey concentrates on the immediate graduate recruitment market, i.e. the graduate jobs individuals would apply for in a given academic year.
- The Prospects Luminate report discusses the employment outcomes of graduates 15 months after graduating. Its 2025/26 report focuses on the 2022/23 academic year graduate cohort.
- The High Fliers report has a different sample than the most immediately comparable report produced by the ISE, focusing solely on the organisations named in the Times Top 100 Graduate Employers.

<sup>63</sup> OPRB analysis of Brightmine (formerly XpertHR) data. Available to Brightmine subscribers.

<sup>64</sup> Bank of England (2026) *Agents’ summary of business conditions - February 2026* - [Agents’ summary of business conditions - February 2026 | Bank of England](#)

<sup>65</sup> Brightmine (formerly XpertHR) data. Available to Brightmine subscribers.

19. The **ISE** survey ran during July 2025.<sup>66</sup> It received 155 responses from employers, covering over 31,000 student hires in 2024/25. The majority of respondents were large employers, with limited representation from small and medium-sized enterprises (2%). 47% of hires were graduates, 16% were school and college leavers and 22% were interns and placement students. Key points from the surveys conducted between 2021/22 and 2024/25 are provided in Table B.3, with predictions for the growth in hires for 2025/26.

**Table B.3: Key results from the ISE survey on immediate graduate recruitment, 2021/22 to 2024/25, with projection for 2025/26<sup>67,68</sup>**

Survey area	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 (projected)
Recruitment of graduate hires (change on previous year)	+17%	+6%	+4%	-8%	-7%
Mean number of applications per vacancy	62	86	123	140	-
Change in mean number of applications per vacancy	-5%	+23%	+59%	+14%	-
Median number of applications per vacancy	36	61	91	97	-
Change in median number of applications per vacancy	-60%	+32%	+26%	+35%	-
Graduate positions filled	91%	95%	97%	97%	-
Median reported graduate salary	£31,000	£32,000	£32,500	£33,000	-

20. Application volumes remained at an historic high, affected by several connected factors. Competition is a likely factor driving students to make more applications for fewer available roles, and the significant reduction in minimum academic requirements over time means more students are eligible to apply to more roles. Online technology and AI may also make it easier for students to make an initial application.
21. The median graduate salary varied significantly by region, with the London graduate salary the highest at £35,200, followed by the North West at £32,028. The lowest median graduate salary was in Northern Ireland at £30,000, followed by Wales at £30,500. Within England, the lowest median graduate salary was the East Midlands at £30,725. Remote workers and workers not based in a specific region had a graduate median starting salary of £35,000.
22. The **What do graduates do?** report uses data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Graduate Outcomes survey and is produced by Prospects Luminate (part of Jisc), in collaboration with the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS).<sup>69</sup> The survey covers first degree graduates from UK higher

<sup>66</sup> Institute of Student Employers (2025) *Student recruitment survey 2025* - <https://ise.org.uk/page/ISEPublications>. Available to ISE members.

<sup>67</sup> Institute of Student Employers (2025) *Student recruitment survey 2025* - <https://ise.org.uk/page/ISEPublications>. Available to ISE members.

<sup>68</sup> Percentage change figures are from a matched sample of employers who supplied year-on-year data.

<sup>69</sup> Prospects Luminate (2025) *What do graduates do? 2025/26* - <https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

education providers (HEPs) and further education colleges (FECs) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

23. The latest survey collected 179,675 responses from UK-domiciled first-degree graduates who completed their studies in 2022/23; graduates were surveyed (in late 2024) around 15 months after graduating. Key points are provided in Table B.4.

**Table B.4: Key outcomes from the Prospects Luminate survey on employment outcomes of graduates 15 months after graduating**

<b>Outcome (15 months after graduation)</b>	<b>2021</b> (2018/19 graduates)	<b>2022</b> (2019/20 graduates)	<b>2023</b> (2020/21 graduates)	<b>2024</b> (2021/22 graduates)	<b>2025</b> (2022/23 graduates)
In full-time employment	57%	57%	60%	59%	56%
In employment and further study	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%
In part-time employment	11%	12%	10%	11%	12%
In full-time further study	9%	9%	8%	7%	7%
Unemployed (including those due to start work)	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%
In professional-level employment	75%	76%	76%	75%	72%
'Primary education teaching' ranking amongst professional jobs held by first-degree graduates	5th	4th	4th	5th	4th
'Secondary education teaching' ranking amongst professional jobs held by first-degree graduates	6th	5th	5th	6th	6th
Working as education professionals (of employed)	8%	8%	8%	7%	7%
In £24,000-£26,999 salary band (of full-time employed) <sup>70</sup>	21%	22%	21%	16%	15%
In £27,000-£29,999 salary band (of full-time employed)	11%	12%	14%	17%	15%
In £30,000-£32,999 salary band (of full-time employed)	11%	11%	12%	14%	17%
In £33,000-£35,999 salary band (of full-time employed)	6%	6%	7%	9%	10%
In £36,000-£38,999 salary band (of full-time employed)	4%	4%	4%	6%	7%

24. The latest available **High Fliers research** was conducted in December 2025 (The Graduate Market in 2026), following earlier research conducted in July 2025 (The Graduate Market in 2025).<sup>71</sup> The reports provide an assessment of the graduate recruitment cycles in 2024 and 2025 and examine expected graduate vacancies in 2026. Key points from the research were:

- Graduate recruitment at the UK's one hundred leading graduate employers slumped dramatically in 2024 due to the growing economic uncertainty before and after the General Election and was cut for the third year running in 2025.

<sup>70</sup> HESA (2025) *Graduate Outcomes 2022/23: Summary Statistics - Summary* - [Graduate Outcomes 2022/23: Summary Statistics - Graduate salaries and work locations | HESA](#)

<sup>71</sup> High Fliers (2026) *The Graduate Market in 2026 and The Graduate Market in 2025* - <https://www.highfliers.co.uk/>

Two-fifths of the country's top employers recruited fewer graduates in 2025 than in 2024 and recruitment fell in ten out of fifteen key industries & business sectors.

- Employers' latest recruitment targets show that there are likely to be even fewer graduate jobs available in 2026, a further decrease of 0.5% compared with last year, taking graduate recruitment to its lowest level since 2012. The country's top graduate employers recruited 6,000 fewer graduates than planned in 2025, equating to a 14.6% year-on-year drop in recruitment, the largest annual fall since the recession of 2009 and an even bigger reduction than in the worst of the pandemic years.
- For the third consecutive year there has been another steep rise in the number of applications to graduate employers, with two-thirds of recruiters reporting an increase in applicants compared with the early stages of the 2024/25 recruitment season. On average, applications for graduate vacancies have increased by 23% year-on-year, with more applicants in fourteen out of fifteen key industries and business sectors. Applications to the UK's leading graduate employers have now doubled since 2023, an unprecedented increase in the number of job applications made by students and recent graduates.
- Graduate starting salaries at the UK's leading graduate employers increased for the fourth consecutive year in 2025 to a new median starting salary of £35,000. The median graduate salary for 2026 is expected to remain at £35,000, an increase of 16.7% since 2021 when the median starting salary was £30,000.
- The most generous graduate starting salaries in 2025/26 were those on offer from the investment banks (median of £60,000), law firms (median of £56,000) and consulting firms (median of £50,000).

25. Table B.5 presents median graduate starting salaries, as recorded by ISE and High Fliers. We note High Fliers and ISE samples are heavily weighted towards graduate jobs in London and the South East, mostly at large firms, so may not be representative of earnings across the whole economy and all regions of the country. The table shows that graduate starting salaries, as recorded by High Fliers, have continued to increase after many years of stability. The teacher starting salary in Inner London has been above the ISE and High Fliers medians since 2019/20. Teacher starting pay in Outer London has been above ISE's and High Fliers' medians from 2023/24.

**Table B.5: Graduate and teacher starting salaries, 2018/19 to 2025/26**

Source	18/19 (£)	19/20 (£)	20/21 (£)	21/22 (£)	22/23 (£)	23/24 (£)	24/25 (£)	25/26 (£)
ISE (organisational median)	29,000	29,667	30,500	31,000	32,000	32,500	33,000	-
High Fliers	30,000	30,000	30,000	32,000	33,500	34,000	35,000	35,000
Teachers (England)	23,720	24,373	25,714	25,714	28,000	30,000	31,650	32,916
Teachers (Inner London)	29,664	30,480	32,157	32,157	34,502	36,745	38,766	40,317
Teachers (Outer London)	27,596	28,355	29,915	29,915	32,407	34,514	36,413	37,870
Teachers (Fringe)	24,859	25,543	26,948	26,948	29,344	31,350	33,075	34,398

## Pay in the UK nations

26. We note that starting pay for teachers, and indeed pay structures, vary by country within the UK. Table A.6 shows classroom teacher salaries for teachers in England compared to those in Wales and Scotland. Although pay points are not directly comparable between regions due to differences in leadership structures, the table provides a good indication of comparative pay levels.
27. Teacher starting salaries are higher in Wales (+2.5%) compared to England (M2 is the minimum pay point for teachers in Wales).
28. In Scotland, salaries are significantly higher compared to England for all pay scale points. As of 1 August 2025, starting salaries for teachers in Scotland are £34,938 for probationers or £41,916 for M1.<sup>72</sup>

**Table B.6: Classroom teacher salaries in the UK<sup>73,74,75</sup>**

Pay point	England (from 1 September 2025)	Wales (from 1 September 2025)	Scotland (from 1 August 2025)
MPR			
Probationer	N/A	N/A	£34,938
M1	£32,916	N/A	£41,916
M2	£34,823	£33,731	£44,295
M3	£37,101	£36,441	£46,866
M4	£39,556	£39,249	£49,839
M5	£42,057	£42,339	£52,614
M6	£45,352	£46,595	N/A
UPR			
U1	£49,232	£48,304	N/A
U2	£47,338	£50,095	N/A
U3	£51,048	£51,942	N/A

## Teachers' pay

29. This section provides various metrics on teachers' pay, split by school type, grade, and gender, using published FTE pay data from the SWC. In 2024/25, gross median earnings for all classroom and leadership teachers across state-funded schools were £47,185, a 7.7% increase from 2023/24.<sup>76</sup> Figure B.5 shows median earnings for all teachers, by school type and gender. In 2024/25, male teachers had higher earnings

<sup>72</sup> EIS (2025) *Current Salary Scales* - <https://www.eis.org.uk/pay-and-conditions-of-service/salary-scales>

<sup>73</sup> Department for Education (2025) *School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2025 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions (valid from 1 September 2025)* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>

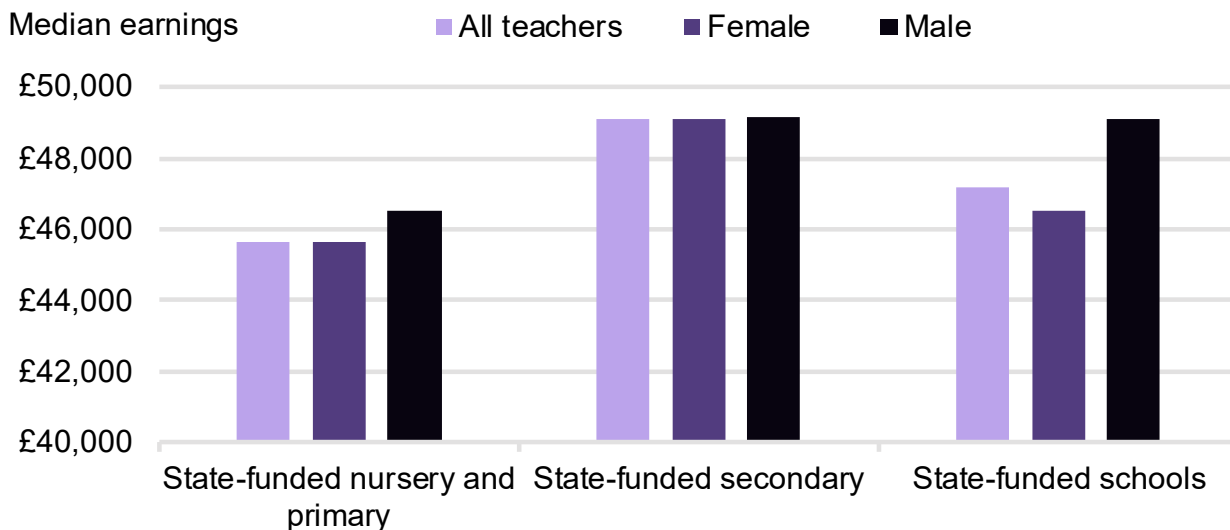
<sup>74</sup> Welsh Government (2025) *School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document 2025* - [School teachers' pay and conditions \(Wales\) document 2025 | GOV.WALES](https://www.gov.wales/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions)

<sup>75</sup> EIS (2025) *Current salary scales* - <https://www.eis.org.uk/pay-and-conditions-of-service/salary-scales>

<sup>76</sup> Additional allowances have been included in gross salary calculations. This figure takes account of the 2024 pay award. However, the effect of that pay award may not accurately be reflected due to the lag in the award being applied at school level and potentially due to compositional changes.

overall than female teachers across all school types, although the gender difference in median earnings is much wider in nursery and primary compared to secondary. Median earnings overall were higher in secondary schools than in primary and nursery schools.

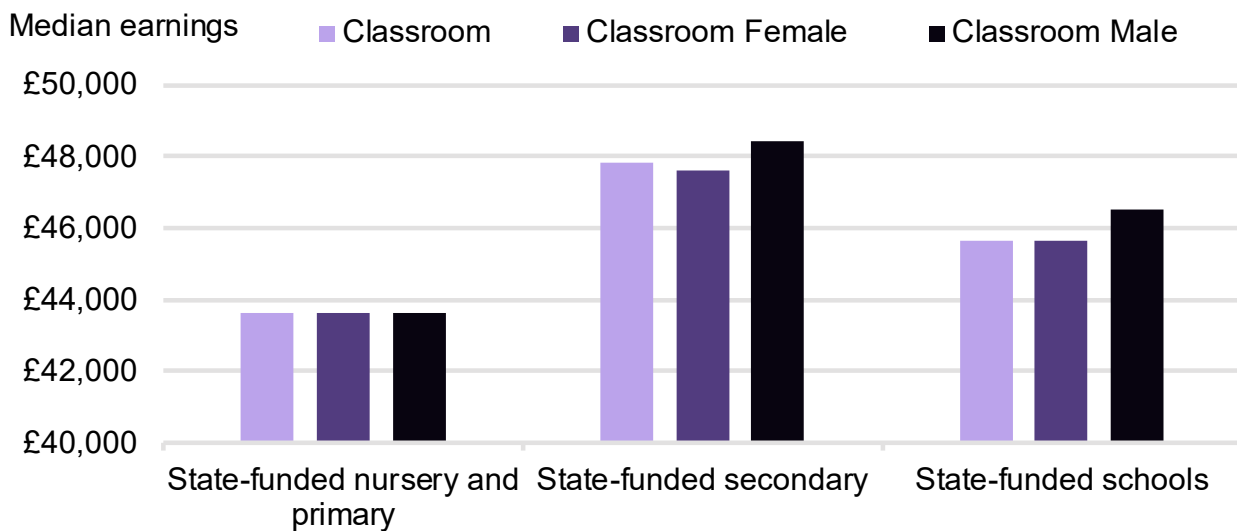
**Figure B.5: Median earnings for all teachers, by school type and gender, 2024/25<sup>77</sup>**



30. We can make a further cut of the data to look at the pay of classroom teachers and school leaders. Figure B.6 shows how median earnings varied for classroom teachers in 2024/25. Male and female classroom teachers had the same median earnings in nursery and primary schools. In contrast, male classroom teachers' earnings were slightly higher in secondary schools (+1.8%). Across all state-funded schools, median earnings for male classroom teachers were higher than female teachers (+1.9%); this may reflect the distribution of male teachers, whereby there are proportionally more male teachers in secondary (80,392) than nursery and primary schools (32,364).

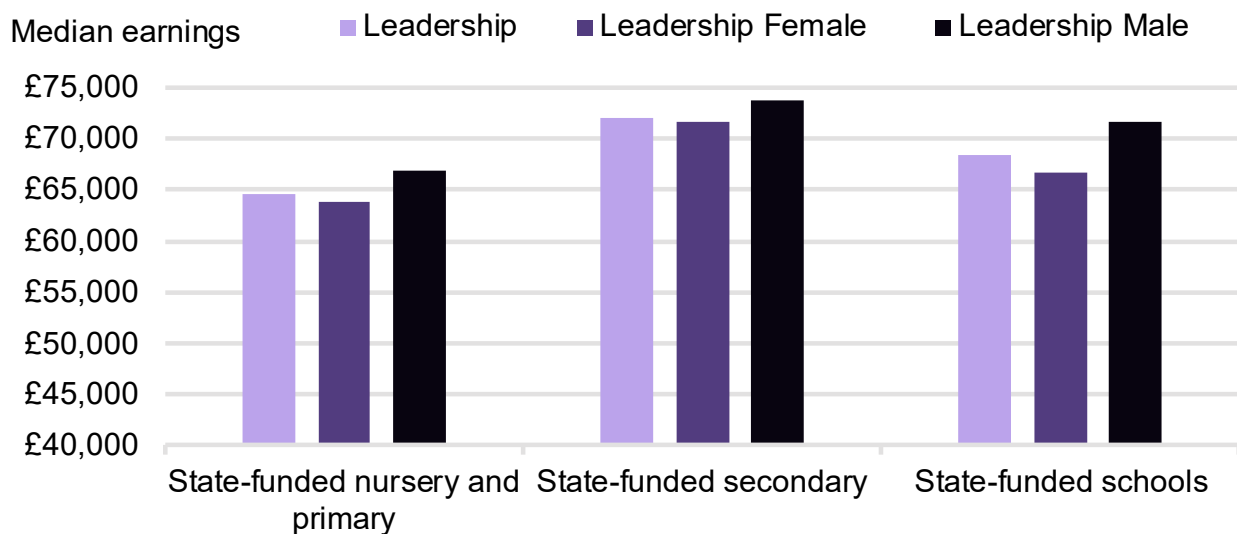
<sup>77</sup> Note y-axis does not start at zero. OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School Workforce in England: Reporting year 2024* - [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

**Figure B.6: Median earnings for classroom teachers, by school type and gender, 2024/25<sup>78</sup>**



31. Figure B.7 compares median earnings for all leadership teachers. Male leadership teachers have higher median earnings across both phases: +4.9% for nursery and primary and +3.0% for secondary, which are both slight decreases in the pay gap from 2023/24 (+5.3% and +4.2%).

**Figure B.7: Median earnings for all leadership teachers, by school type and gender, 2024/25<sup>79</sup>**



### ***Teachers' pay compared to earnings in other professional occupations***

32. We have examined the relative position of the teachers' pay framework by tracking the position of school teachers' pay ranges against the wider distribution of earnings, in terms of annual gross pay.<sup>80</sup> The analysis was produced using the data from the Office of National Statistics' (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). The latest ASHE data cover the financial year 2024-25, therefore the 2024 STPCD

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Gross annual pay includes all elements of income before tax (e.g. including bonuses).

pay range values have been used.<sup>81</sup> We have specifically compared teachers' pay against the earnings of other 'professional occupations' as this is the occupational group which teachers fall into within the ONS's occupational coding system.<sup>82</sup>

33. We note that interpreting ASHE earnings data for 2020 and 2021 is difficult due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Growth rates were affected by the pandemic's impacts on wages, hours worked and the collection of data. We also note that furloughed workers are present in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 data. There has also been a change to the ONS's occupational coding system from Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2010 to SOC 2020; earnings estimates from 2020-21 onwards are affected and represent a break in the ASHE time series, therefore previous estimates will not be directly comparable and the ONS recommends looking at longer-term trends.<sup>83</sup>
34. Contextually, in England median gross annual earnings for full-time employees in 'Professional occupations' was £48,867 in 2024-25, a 4.5% increase from 2023-24. Across all occupations in England, median gross annual earnings for full-time employees was £39,298 in 2024-25, a 4.4% increase from 2023-24.<sup>84</sup> The 'Professional occupations' category can be further broken down into specific occupations within the ASHE data.
35. Figure B.8 shows how the MPR, UPR and Leadership Group Pay Range (LPR) compared to the distribution of earnings for those in professional occupations. Between 2010-11 and 2019-20, where SOC 2010 is used:
  - The relative position of all pay scale minima decreased. The position of the LPR minimum decreased the most, by four percentiles.
  - The relative position of the maxima for the MPR and LPR increased slightly by one percentile. However, the position of the UPR maximum decreased by three percentiles.
  - The gap between the MPR maximum and the UPR minimum has been decreasing both in percentile and cash terms.
36. Figure B.8 shows that between 2020-21 and 2024-25, the relative position of all pay scale minima and maxima have either decreased or stayed the same. Part of this relative deterioration is likely attributable to the pause in pay uplifts; teachers' pay scales were not updated from 1 September 2021, whereas the earnings for professional occupations did increase between 2020-21 and 2021-22. There was some improvement in the relative positions from 2021-22 to 2022-23, following the resuming of teacher pay increases from 1 September 2022. In the latest year's data,

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<sup>81</sup> The latest ASHE data is provisional and is subject to change. In 2024 the ONS introduced improvements to the methods for processing returns to their survey which resulted in more high earners in each profession being counted in the final data. This increased the achieved sample size and improved the quality of ASHE estimates, however the ONS advises caution against comparing 2023 and 2024 with 2022 and earlier years.

<sup>82</sup> According to the SOC 2020, 'occupations at this level normally require a degree or equivalent period of relevant work experience'. ONS (2023) SOC 2020 -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/standardoccupationalclassificationsoc/soc2020/soc2020volume1structureanddescriptionsofunitgroups>

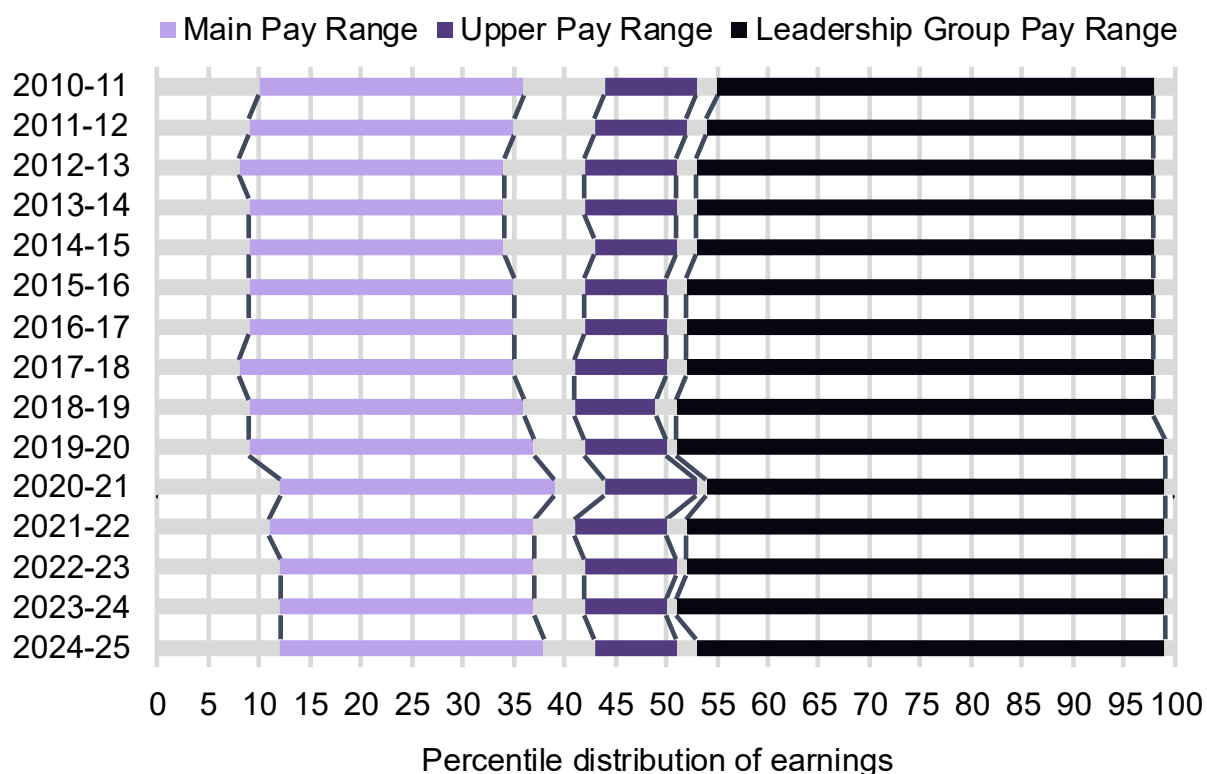
<sup>83</sup> ONS (2025) *Employee earnings in the UK: 2025* -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2025>

<sup>84</sup> OPRB analysis of unpublished ASHE data.

between 2023-24 and 2024-25, the relative percentile positions have increased for all pay range minima and maxima, apart from the MPR minimum and LPR maximum points which stayed at the same relative percentile level.

**Figure B.8: Position of the MPR, UPR and LPR in the percentile distribution of economy-wide annual gross earnings, professional occupations only, England, 2010-11 to 2024-25<sup>85</sup>**



37. Figure B.9 compares the estimated earnings of teachers with those working in other professional occupations (excluding teachers) by broad age bands. The teacher sample covers all qualified, full-time teachers, including leaders; the teacher data are drawn from the SWC. To maintain sufficient sample sizes, this analysis is conducted only for London and the Rest of England. Figure B.9 presents the pay comparisons in the form of the percentage differentials between estimated teachers' median earnings and those of the comparator group (a negative value indicates that teachers' earnings fall below those of the comparator). The figure shows:

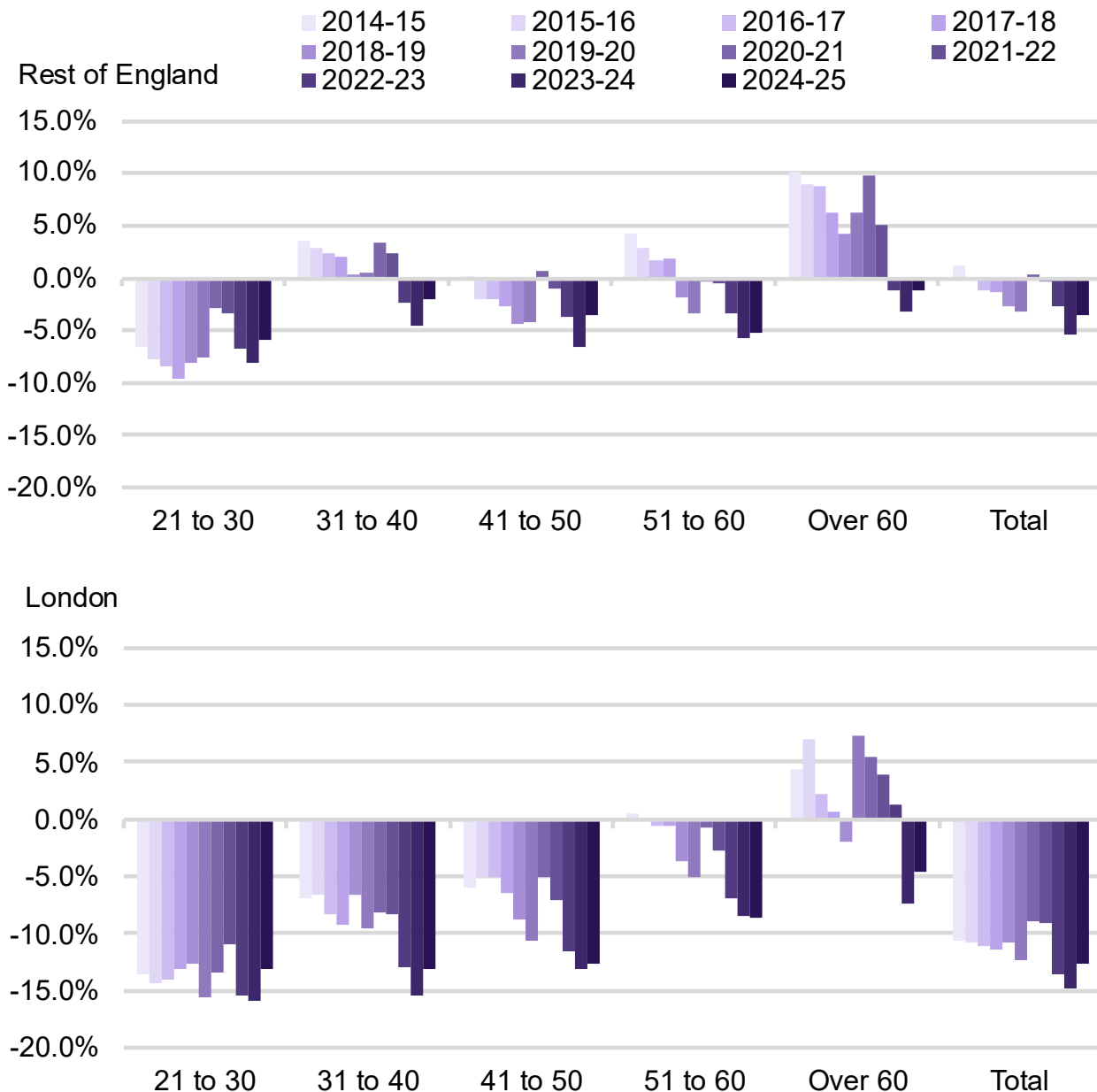
- In 2024-25, for the Rest of England and London, teachers' median earnings were below those of the comparator groups for all age bands. The gaps between teachers' earnings and those of the comparator group were greatest in London.
- Across most age categories, the relative earnings of teachers deteriorated from 2014-15 to 2019-20, both in the Rest of England and London. After a slight improvement in 2020-21 during the COVID-19 pandemic, this downward trend for relative earnings continued across all age categories to 2023-24. Over the latest period, between 2023-24 and 2024-25, the relative earnings of teachers

<sup>85</sup> OPRB analysis of unpublished ASHE data. Data for 2024-25 are provisional and are subject to change. The dashed line represents a discontinuity from 2020-21 due to a change in ONS's occupational coding from SOC 2010 to SOC 2020.

have slightly improved, although their median earnings remain below other professional occupation counterparts.

- Overall, teachers aged 21 to 30 compared least favourably against the other professional occupations, both in the Rest of England and in London. Those in the oldest age group (over 60) compared most favourably, although are still behind relative earnings of those in other professional occupations.

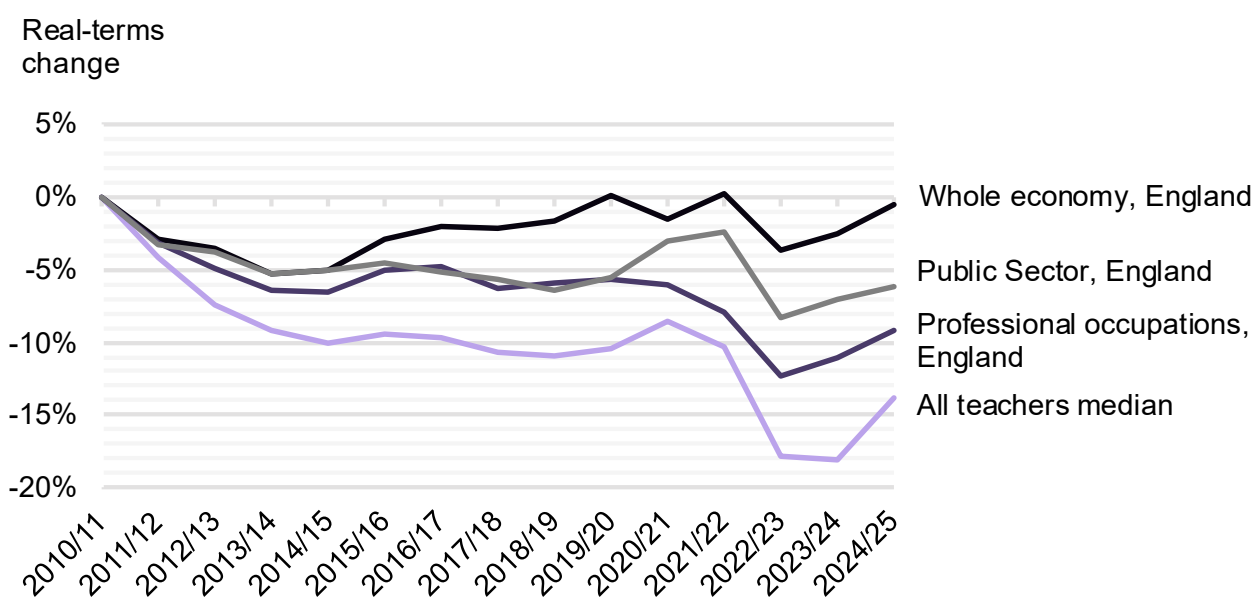
**Figure B.9: Percentage difference between median full-time qualified teachers' earnings and those in other professional occupations (excluding teachers), by age band, the Rest of England and London, 2014-15 to 2024-25<sup>86</sup>**



<sup>86</sup> OPRB analysis of unpublished SWC and ASHE data (2024-25 data are provisional and are subject to change). To make the SWC data more directly comparable to the ASHE we have converted the SWC data into financial years. There is a break in the ASHE series from 2020-21 due to a change in ONS's occupational coding from SOC 2010 to SOC 2020. Note that the 2024/25 SWC data does not fully reflect the 2024/25 pay award.

38. Our analysis of real-terms pay changes over time suggests that the competitiveness of teachers' earnings compared to the whole economy, wider public sector and to professional occupations, was lower in 2024/25 compared to 2010/11. Figure B.10 shows how the real-terms value of teachers' median earnings fell throughout the early 2010s. The chart shows there was some improvement for teachers between 2018/19 and 2020/21, prior to the pay pause in 2021/22, and a period of decline to 2023/24. There was some improvement in 2024/25, however we estimate that teachers' median gross earnings in 2024/25 were 13.9% below their level in 2010/11 in real terms. Median gross earnings for the whole economy were 0.6% below their 2010/11 level, whilst median gross earnings for professional occupations were 9.2% below their 2010/11 level, in real terms.

**Figure B.10: Real-terms change in median gross earnings for teachers in state-funded schools, the whole economy (England), public sector (England) and professional occupations (England), compared to levels in 2010/11<sup>87,88,89</sup>**



39. We have also estimated the real-terms change to teachers' pay scales/ranges, as specified in the STPCD, for which 2025/26 salary data are available. Between 2010/11 and 2025/26, whilst all pay points and ranges have declined in real terms, M1 declined the least (by 1.0%) whilst the leadership maxima declined the most (by 11.2%). Real-terms changes to STPCD pay values are summarised in Table B.7.

<sup>87</sup> Nominal earnings have been adjusted using annual CPI figures (financial year). ONS (2026) *Consumer price inflation tables* -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceinflation>

<sup>88</sup> Data for the whole economy, public sector and for professional occupations represent full-time median gross annual earnings in England. OPRB analysis of unpublished ASHE data. 2023-24 figures are provisional and are subject to change. There is a break in the ASHE series from 2020-21 due to a change in ONS's occupational coding from SOC 2010 to SOC 2020.

<sup>89</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School Workforce in England: Reporting year 2024* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>. Note that the 2024/25 SWC data does not fully reflect the 2024/25 pay award.

**Table B.7: Real-terms change in teachers' salaries from 2010/11 to 2025/26, based on the STPCD<sup>90</sup>**

STPCD spine point	Real-terms change from 2010/11 to 2025/26
M1	-1.0%
M6	-6.7%
UPR1/UP3	-9.9%
Leadership min	-10.3%
Leadership max	-11.2%

### ***Benchmarking against market data***

40. Benchmarking teacher and leadership roles against remuneration data for jobs of comparable size, scope and complexity provides an insight into the relative competitiveness of pay in the profession.
41. Research commissioned for STRB in 2023/24 analysed the job levels of teaching and leadership roles and compared these roles with jobs of a similar size, scope and complexity. External salary survey data was used to provide a comparison of pay levels for these roles to different teacher bands.<sup>91</sup> We have refreshed the headline findings again in this report using updated benchmark data from July 2025 (the most recent available data at the time of our analysis) and pay ranges from the 2025 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.<sup>92</sup>
42. The level of pay and percentage change from last year for updated market data for comparable market roles is presented below in Table B.8. The market data showed that the median base salary for the comparison roles increased between 1.9% and 4.2%, with only the CEO/Executive Head comparator roles (WTW Global Grade 17) exceeding the pay award of 4.0% received by schoolteachers in 2025.
43. The headline analysis is presented below in Figure B.11 and Figure B.12. The top row in each teacher band shows a competitive range of salaries for roles identified as broadly comparable in size and scope at various career stages.<sup>93</sup> The other rows indicate the current levels of teacher and leadership salaries across regions of the UK (see Table B.9), as specified in the key. The market data is not geographically specific.
44. The overall picture is similar to last year, albeit with some improvement in the relative pay position of classroom teachers and leadership roles against the benchmark data. It appears that the actions taken over recent years have made improvements in the competitiveness of teacher pay, but progress has been modest and there is more to

<sup>90</sup> Nominal earnings have been adjusted using annual CPI figures (financial year). ONS (2026) *Consumer price inflation tables* -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceinflation>

<sup>91</sup> WTW (2024) *Teacher Job Levelling - School Teachers' Review Body 34th Report: 2024*

<sup>92</sup> DfE (2025) *School teachers' pay and conditions - School teachers' pay and conditions document 2025 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions (valid from 1 September 2025)*

<sup>93</sup> In some cases, groups of teacher or leadership roles were matched to more than one comparator job level (e.g. 'leadership roles', 'Upper Pay Range teachers'). In these cases, the displayed range for comparator roles is based on the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of the lower comparator salary range and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the higher comparator salary range.

be done before one could reasonably conclude that overall, teachers are paid competitively compared to other graduate level professions.

45. The comparative salary position of teachers on the Main Pay Range becomes less competitive as they gain experience and progress up the Main Pay Range. Whilst the comparative pay for Early Career Teachers (ECT) (M1-M2) and Qualified Teachers having completed ECT (M3-M6) are both above the bottom end of the constructed market salary range of their respective comparable roles, the bottom level of pay for 5 years experienced teachers (M5-M6) falls below the constructed salary range of their comparable roles.
46. At the national level, M1 minimum pay was £103 above the 25th percentile of the comparable WTW Global Grade 9 roles last year, with this figure now sitting at £703 above the 25th percentile.
47. Salaries for teachers at M5-M6 remain less competitive with their pay being below the lower quartile of the comparable WTW Global Grade 11 roles, although this gap has reduced over the last year. At the national level, M5 minimum pay was £2,816 below the 25th percentile of the WTW Global Grade 11 roles last year, with this figure now sitting at £1,580 below.
48. Teachers on the Upper Pay Range hold a better basic comparative position, with pay falling closer to the middle of the constructed salary range for comparable roles. At the national level, Upper Pay Range 1 pay was £2,391 above the 25th percentile of the comparable WTW Global Grade 11 roles last year, with this figure now sitting at £3,835 above.
49. The comparative basic salary position of leadership roles in primary schools falls below the market base salary data in all regions, whilst leadership roles in secondary schools are better aligned to the market salary data.<sup>94</sup>

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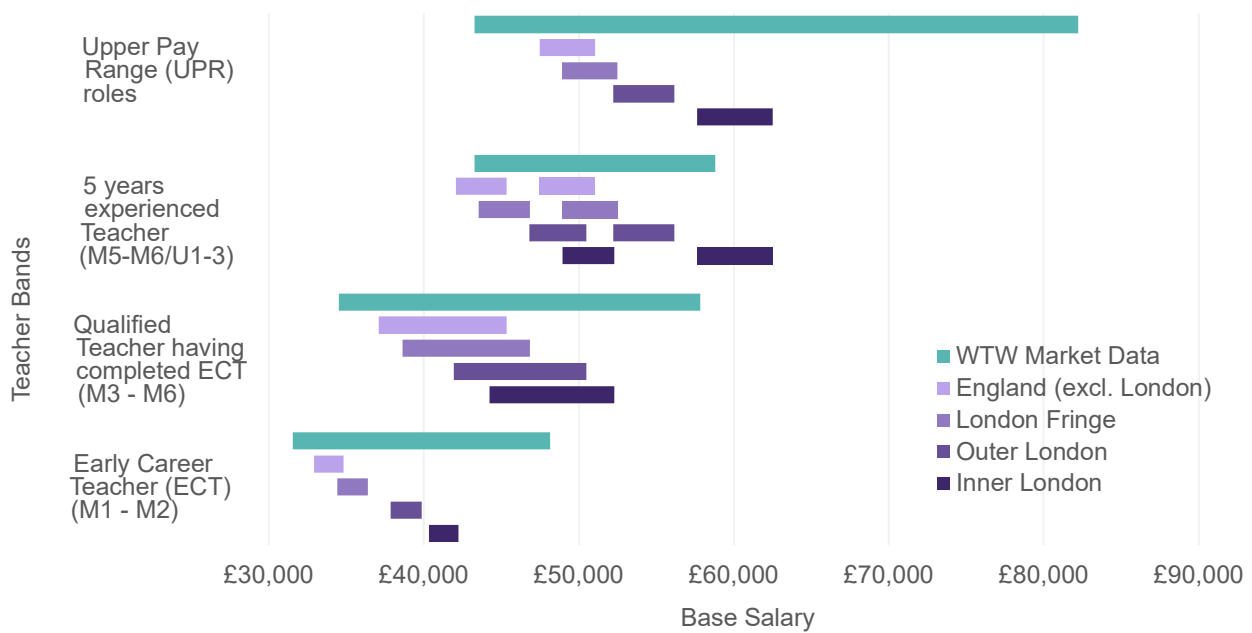
<sup>94</sup> For the purposes of these comparisons, primary head pay was based on STPCD head teacher groups 2-4 and secondary heads on head teacher groups 6-8. Estimated pay levels for Deputy Heads are based on OPRB analysis of School Workforce data.

**Table B.8: Market data base salary for comparable roles against teacher bands, as at 1 July 2025. Percentage change of market data positions included between 2024 and 2025<sup>95</sup>**

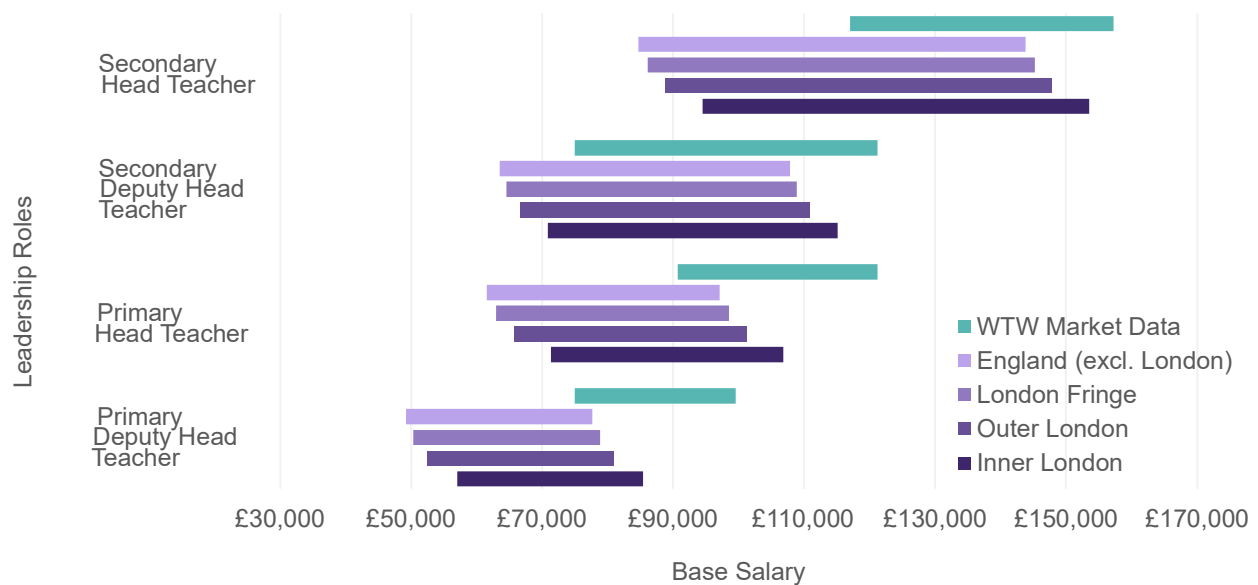
Teacher Band		WTW Global Grade	P25		P50		P75	
			£	% change	£	% change	£	% change
Leadership	CEO/Executive Head	17	£147,746	+5.1%	£175,000	+4.2%	£206,003	+3.0%
	Head	16	£117,033	+4.8%	£135,200	+3.6%	£157,264	+2.6%
		15	£90,701	+3.3%	£103,951	+3.8%	£121,189	+3.3%
	Deputy	14	£75,000	+3.1%	£86,000	+3.0%	£99,527	+2.8%
Upper Pay Range roles		13	£63,000	+4.2%	£72,050	+3.1%	£82,600	+2.5%
	UPR1 - UPR3	12	£52,500	+3.6%	£60,388	+3.1%	£70,000	+2.8%
		5 years experienced Teacher	M5 - 6 / UPR1 - 3	11	£43,637	+0.9%	£50,950	+1.9%
Qualified Teacher having completed ECT	M3 - M6	10	£35,875	+4.0%	£41,872	+3.8%	£48,825	+3.7%
		Early Career Teacher (ECT)	M1 - M2	9	£32,213	+2.1%	£37,410	+2.2%

<sup>95</sup> OPRB analysis of WTW benchmark data, effective dates of 1 July 2024 and 1 July 2025. The P25, P50 and P75 values represent the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles of the respective base salaries for each WTW Global Grade.

**Figure B.11: Benchmarking classroom teachers' salaries against the wider market, 2025<sup>96</sup>**



**Figure B.12: Benchmarking leadership salaries against the wider market, 2025<sup>97,98,99</sup>**



<sup>96</sup> OPRB analysis of WTW benchmark data, effective date 1 July 2025. Teacher salaries presented are for the September 2025 STPCD pay scale.

<sup>97</sup> OPRB analysis of WTW benchmark data, effective date 1 July 2025. Leadership salaries presented are for the September 2025 STPCD pay scale.

<sup>98</sup> In some cases, groups of teacher or leadership roles were matched to more than one comparator job level (e.g. 'leadership roles', 'Upper Pay Range teachers'). In these cases, the displayed range for comparator roles is based on the 25th percentile of the lower comparator salary range and the 75th percentile of the higher comparator salary range.

<sup>99</sup> For the purposes of these comparisons, primary head pay was based on STPCD head teacher groups 2-4 and secondary heads on head teacher groups 6-8. Estimated pay levels for Deputy Heads are based on OPRB analysis of School Workforce data.

**Table B.9: STPCD pay points used for benchmark comparisons in Figure B.11 and Figure B.12 (from 1 September 2025)<sup>100</sup>**

Teacher Band		England (excl. London)	London Fringe	Outer London	Inner London
Secondary Head		£143,796	£145,218	£147,866	£153,490
		£84,699	£86,138	£88,812	£94,491
Secondary Deputy		£107,847	£108,914	£110,900	£115,118
		£63,524	£64,604	£66,609	£70,868
Primary Head		£97,136	£98,549	£101,200	£106,823
		£61,534	£62,962	£65,642	£71,327
Primary Deputy		£77,709	£78,839	£80,960	£85,458
		£49,227	£50,370	£52,514	£57,062
Upper Pay Range roles	UPR1 - UPR3	£51,048	£52,490	£56,154	£62,496
		£47,472	£48,913	£52,219	£57,632
5 years experienced Teacher	UPR1 - UPR3	£51,048	£52,490	£56,154	£62,496
		£47,472	£48,913	£52,219	£57,632
	M5 - M6	£45,352	£46,839	£50,474	£52,300
		£42,057	£43,545	£46,800	£48,952
Qualified Teacher having completed ECT	M3 - M6	£45,352	£46,839	£50,474	£52,300
		£37,101	£38,627	£41,935	£44,238
Early Career Teacher (ECT)	M1 - M2	£34,823	£36,373	£39,851	£42,234
		£32,916	£34,398	£37,870	£40,317

### ***Teacher numbers and characteristics***

50. This section presents statistics on teacher numbers and their characteristics, such as age and gender. Ethnicity data are also presented for teachers and pupils.
51. There were 468,258 FTE teachers working in state-funded schools in England in November 2024, an overall decrease of 0.1% (432 staff) from 2023. Between November 2023 and 2024:
- FTE nursery and primary teachers decreased by 1.3% (2,902 staff)
  - FTE secondary teachers increased by 0.7% (1,435 staff)
  - FTE special school or pupil referral unit (PRU) teachers increased by 3.2% (911 staff)
  - FTE centrally employed teachers increased by 2.8% (124 staff)
52. Of the 468,258 teachers, around 38% work for Local Authority (LA) maintained schools and therefore fall within the STRB's remit group. The remaining 62% work in the academy sector. By school type, 54% of primary and nursery teachers fall within

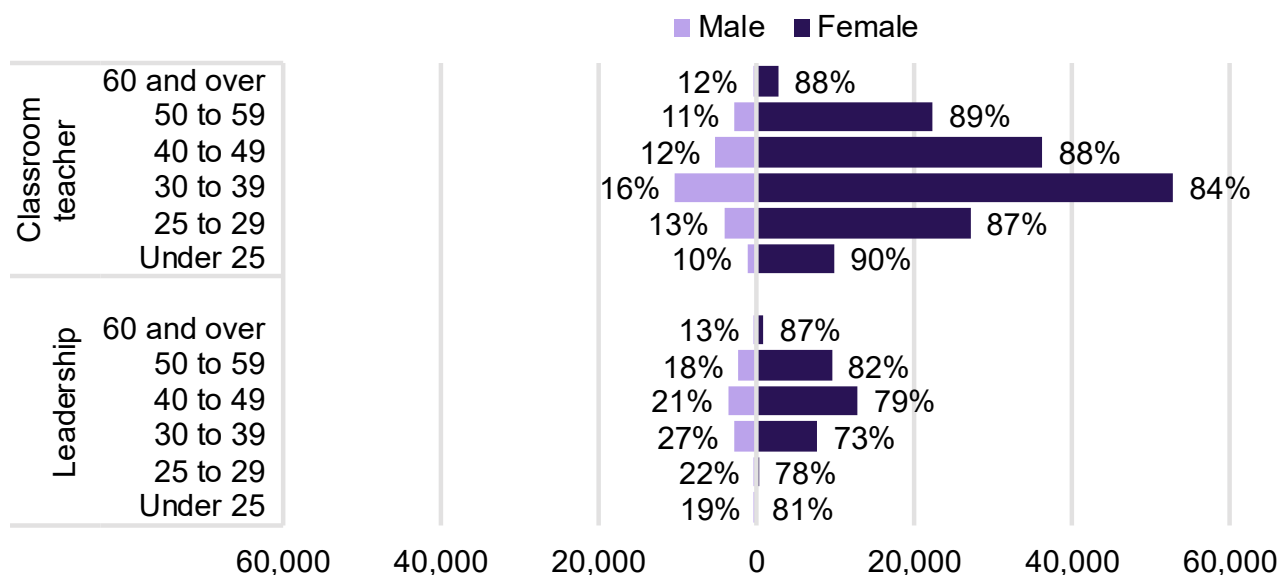
<sup>100</sup> For the purposes of these comparisons, primary head pay was based on STPCD head teacher groups 2-4 and secondary heads on head teacher groups 6-8. Estimated pay levels for Deputy Heads are based on OPRB analysis of School Workforce data.

the STRB’s remit, whereas only 18% of secondary teachers do. In November 2024 the total state-funded primary and nursery teacher workforce (215,632) was smaller than the secondary teacher workforce (219,001) for the first time since November 2013.

53. Figure B.13 and Figure B.14 show the numbers of teachers by grade, age and gender across state-funded nursery and primary, and secondary schools. Key points from the figures and underlying data are:

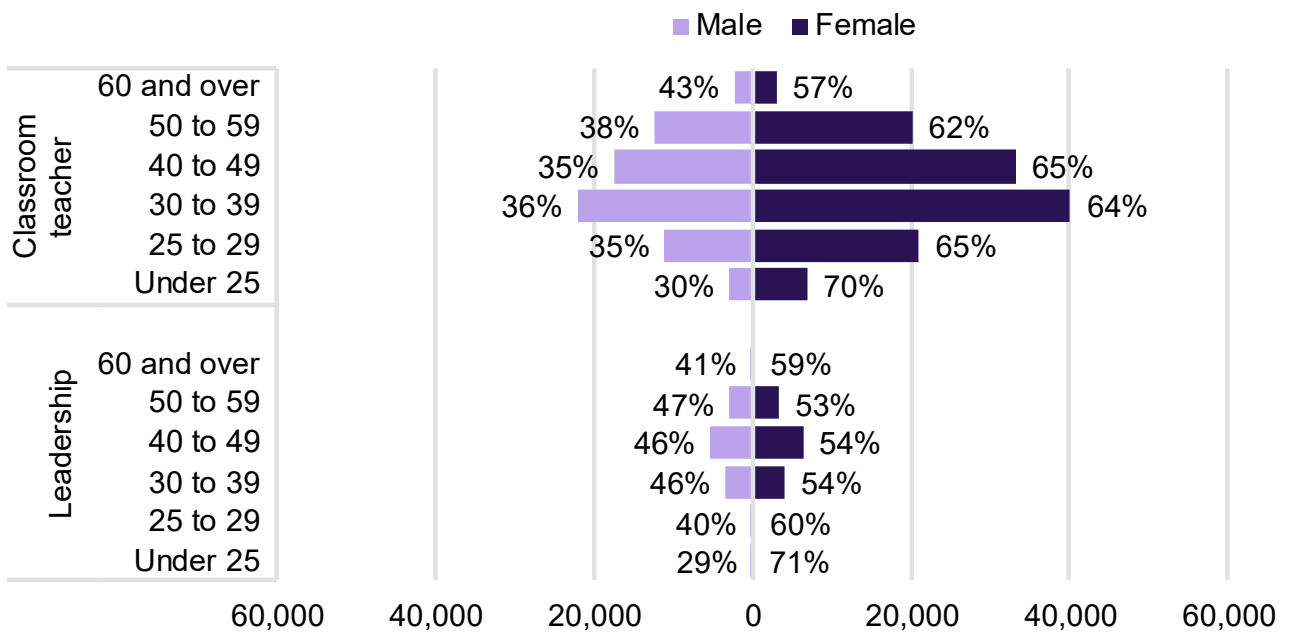
- 30 to 39-year-olds made up the largest proportion of the total workforce across state-funded schools.
- A higher proportion of classroom teachers was female in both primary (87%) and secondary (65%) schools. Across all state-funded schools 75% of classroom teachers were female. These proportions have remained stable since 2020/21.
- Whilst 15% of the total primary workforce was male, males accounted for 22% of primary leadership roles (assistant heads, deputy heads and heads). Likewise in secondary schools, males made up 37% of the total workforce, but they accounted for 46% of leadership roles. This has all remained in line with last year.
- The majority of the proportions in Figure B.13 and Figure B.14 were similar to last year.

**Figure B.13: Numbers of FTE teachers, split by age and gender, across state-funded nursery and primary schools, England, November 2024<sup>101</sup>**



<sup>101</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School Workforce in England: Reporting year 2024 - School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

**Figure B.14: Numbers of FTE teachers, split by age and gender, across state-funded secondary schools, England, November 2024<sup>102</sup>**



<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

54. Table B.10 to Table B.12 show the ethnicity of all teachers and pupils of all ages. Ethnicity information was available for 90% of teachers and 98% of pupils. We have also included estimates of ethnicity for the total population in England. The tables show, in 2024/25:

- 89% of all teachers across state-funded schools were White; this compares to 69% of school pupils. According to the ONS's population estimates for October 2023 to September 2024, 82% of the population in England was White.<sup>103</sup>
- The proportion of teachers who were White increases with seniority. For example, whilst 88% of classroom teachers were White, 95% of heads were.
- A larger proportion of teachers in nursery and primary schools were White (91%) compared to secondary schools (86%).
- The pupil population is much more diverse than the teacher population, across school types.

**Table B.10: Ethnicity of teachers by grade and pupils in state-funded schools (headcount), England, 2024/25 and ethnicity of the population in England<sup>104,105,106,107</sup>**

	White	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups	Any other ethnic group
Head teacher	95%	2%	1%	1%	<1%
Deputy head teacher	94%	3%	2%	1%	<1%
Assistant head teacher	91%	4%	2%	2%	<1%
Classroom teacher	88%	6%	3%	2%	1%
Total teachers	89%	6%	3%	2%	<1%
Total pupils	69%	14%	7%	7%	3%
Total population England	82%	9%	5%	3%	2%

<sup>103</sup> ONS (2025) *Annual Population Survey, October 2023-September 2024 ethnicity estimates for England*

<sup>104</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: Academic year 2024/25 - Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

<sup>105</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School workforce in England: Reporting year 2024 - School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

<sup>106</sup> ONS (2025) *Annual Population Survey, October 2023-September 2024 ethnicity estimates for England*

<sup>107</sup> Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table B.11: Ethnicity of teachers by grade and pupils in state-funded secondary schools (headcount), England, 2024/25 and ethnicity of the population in England<sup>108</sup>**

	White	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups	Any other ethnic group
Head teacher	94%	3%	1%	2%	<1%
Deputy head teacher	92%	3%	2%	2%	<1%
Assistant head teacher	91%	5%	3%	2%	<1%
Classroom teacher	85%	8%	4%	2%	1%
Total teachers	86%	7%	4%	2%	1%
Total pupils	69%	14%	7%	7%	3%
Total population England	82%	9%	5%	3%	2%

**Table B.12: Ethnicity of teachers by grade and pupils in state-funded nursery and primary schools (headcount), England, 2024/25 and ethnicity of the population in England<sup>109</sup>**

	White	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups	Any other ethnic group
Head teacher	96%	2%	1%	1%	<1%
Deputy head teacher	95%	2%	1%	1%	<1%
Assistant head teacher	91%	4%	2%	2%	<1%
Classroom teacher	90%	5%	2%	2%	<1%
Total teachers	91%	5%	2%	2%	<1%
Total pupils	69%	14%	7%	7%	3%
Total population England	82%	9%	5%	3%	2%

## ***Pupil numbers***

55. Pupil numbers do not translate directly into the required number of teachers; however, they do provide some measure of demand. Figure B.15 shows actual pupil numbers from 2012 to 2025, as well as a projection to 2030. The data show:

- The total pupil population in state-funded schools was 7.90 million in 2025, just below its peak of 7.95 million in 2024 and with the pupil population projected to decrease to 7.50 million by 2030.
- The nursery and primary pupil population peaked in 2019 at 4.7 million. Since this point, numbers have decreased. This is mainly due to continued reductions

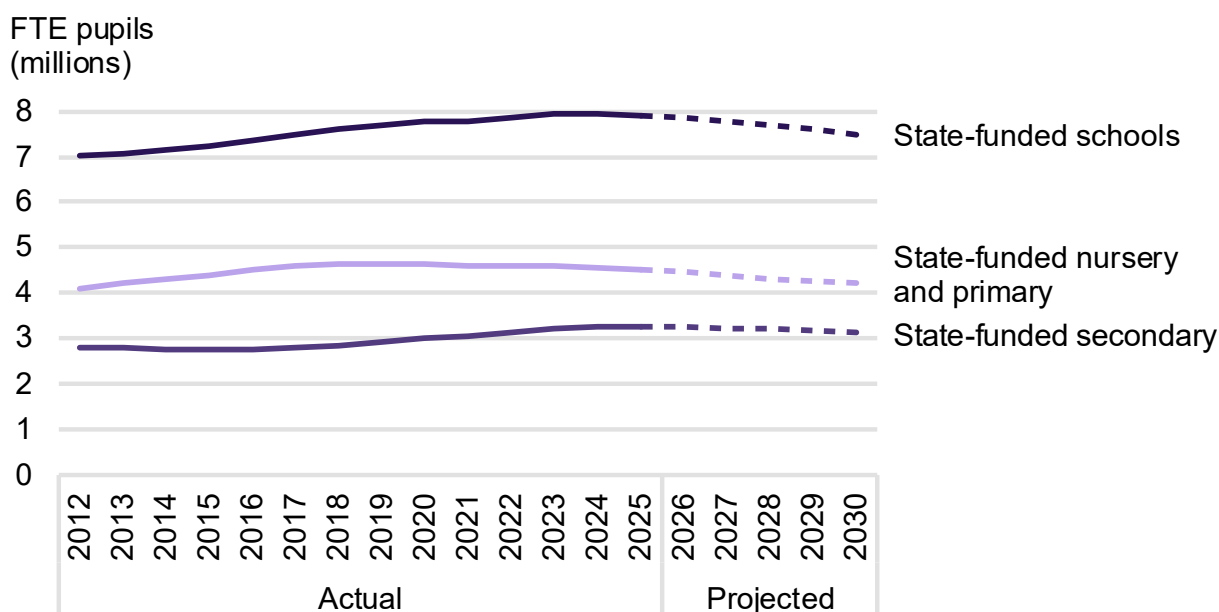
<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

in the number of births since 2013; the drop in 2021 may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with parents choosing to home school.

- The secondary school population was steady at 3.2 million in 2025 and is projected to remain around this level until 2027 before gradually declining through to 2030, the end of the forecast period.

**Figure B.15: FTE pupil numbers up to and including age 15, in state-funded schools, England, 2012 to 2030 (projection from 2025)<sup>110</sup>**



### ***Pupil to teacher ratios***

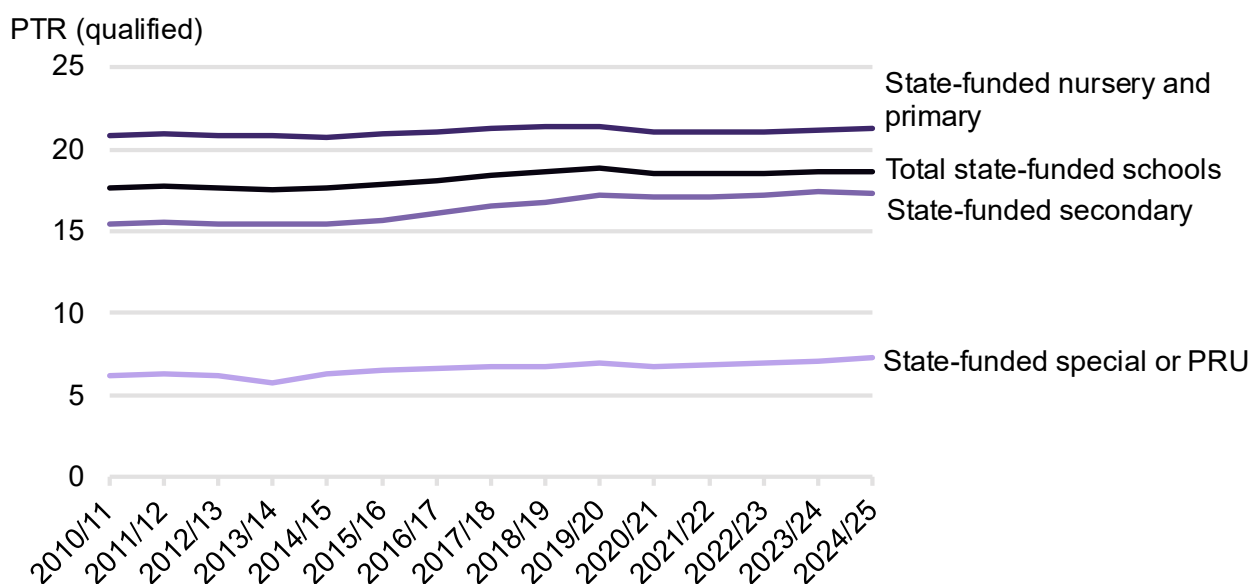
56. Figure B.16 shows the PTR for qualified teachers within schools by school type from 2010/11 to 2024/25. PTRs show the size of the qualified FTE teacher workforce in relation to the size of the FTE pupil population; a decrease in the PTR means there are fewer pupils per teacher.
57. The overall PTR peaked in 2019/20 but remains high relative to pre-2018, underpinned by increasing secondary school pupil numbers which are projected to rise until 2026. This increase in pupils has been offset by an increase in teachers in recent years, with the total FTE teacher workforce now slightly below the record high level in 2022/23.
58. For secondary schools, the PTR for qualified teachers was 17.3 in 2024/25, a slight decrease from 2023/24 and relatively stable over recent years. The average secondary class size was 22.5 in 2024/25 and has been relatively stable over the

<sup>110</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *National pupil projections: Reporting year 2025 - National pupil projections in England, Reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

past five years. There have been small incremental rises in the average secondary class size since 2015/16, when the average class size was 20.4.<sup>111</sup>

59. For nursery and primary schools, the PTR for qualified teachers was 21.3 in 2024/25, a slight increase from 2023/24 (21.2). The PTR previously increased between 2014/15 and 2018/19 to 21.4, but has decreased since, driven by decreasing pupil numbers, with the nursery and primary population projected to decrease through to 2030. The average primary class size was 26.4 in 2024/25 and has been decreasing gradually since 2015/16, when it stood at 27.1.
60. The PTR has been consistently higher for academies than for LA maintained schools over recent years for both primary (21.7 vs 20.9 in 2024/25) and secondary (17.6 vs 16.4). The figure also shows how the PTR is considerably lower across state-funded special schools or PRUs.

**Figure B.16: Pupil to teacher ratios for qualified teachers in state-funded schools, England, 2010/11 to 2024/25<sup>112</sup>**



61. Pupil to Adult Ratios (PAR) give the number of FTE pupils per adult (FTE teachers and support staff) employed in schools (excluding administrative and clerical staff). Data on PARs show:
  - The PAR for all state-funded secondary schools was 11.8 in 2024/25, a slight decrease from 12.0 in 2023/24.
  - The PAR for all state-funded nursery and primary schools was 10.8 in 2024/25, a slight decrease from 10.9 in 2023/24.
  - The PAR for academies is higher than for LA maintained schools.

<sup>111</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: Academic year 2024/25 - Schools, pupils and their characteristics in England, Reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

<sup>112</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School workforce in England: Reporting year 2024 - School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

## **Teacher flows: entrants and leavers**

62. The following section focuses on entrants to, and leavers from, the teacher workforce.<sup>113</sup> In 2024/25 there were 41,736 FTE qualified entrants to teaching in state-funded schools, a 3.2% decrease from 2023/24. The overall entrants' rate was 9.2%, slightly lower than in 2023/24 (9.5%). Of the qualified new entrants there were:

- 16,999 newly qualified entrants, 41% of all entrants.
- 17,274 entrants returning to teaching after a break, 41% of all entrants.
- 2,710 deferred newly qualified entrants, 6% of all entrants.
- 4,753 entrants new to the state-funded sector, 11% of all entrants.

Newly qualified entrants and deferred newly qualified entrants are down 3% (518) and 24% (854) respectively from 2023/24.

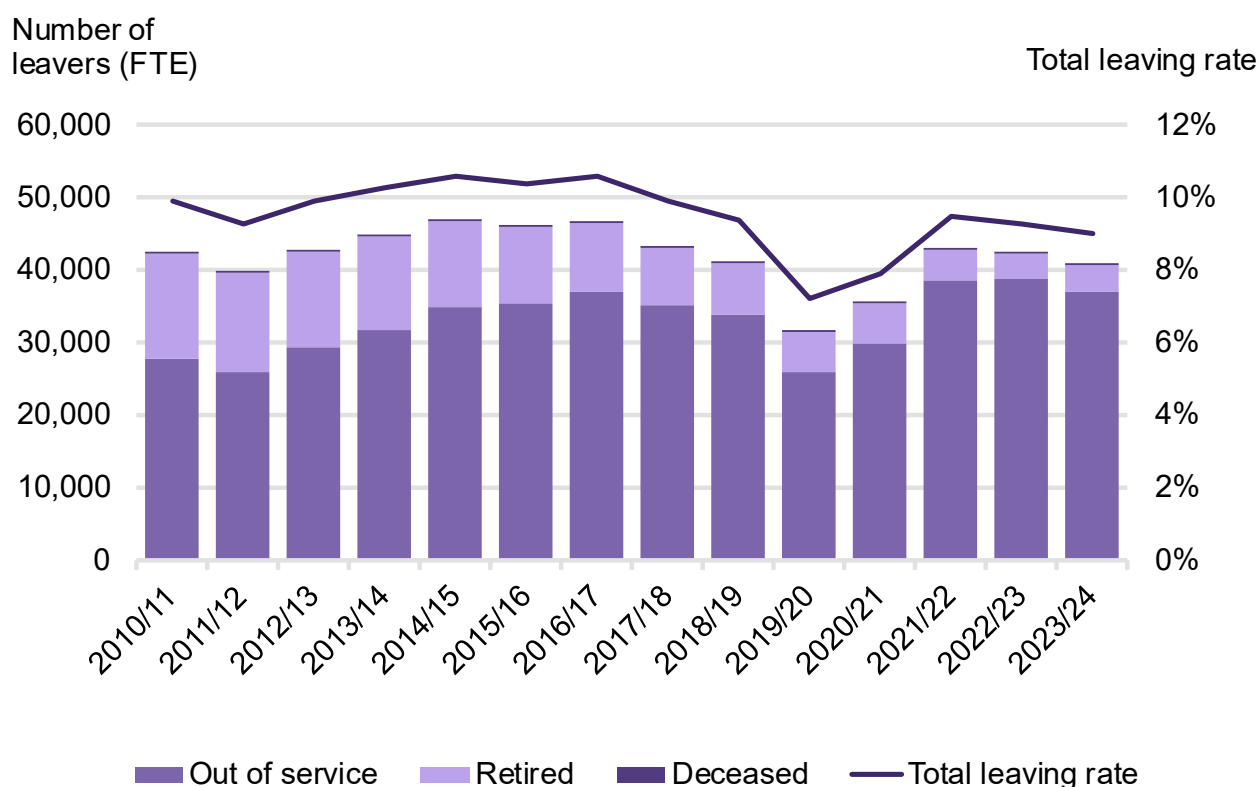
63. Between November 2023 and November 2024 there were 40,813 FTE qualified teachers who left teaching in state-funded schools (see Figure B.17). The overall leaving rate was 9.0%, a slight decrease from 2022/23 (9.3%). Of the teachers who left in 2023/24 there were:

- 37,021 teachers out of service, 91% of all leavers.
- 3,648 teachers who retired, 9% of all leavers.

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<sup>113</sup> Note that entrants values refer to the year 2024/25, whilst leavers refer to the year 2023/24, as the latest data are from November 2024. Leaving rates and leaver numbers are constructed by comparing the school workforce in one year compared with the previous one. Hence the latest data uses the differences between the November 2024 and November 2023 censuses to give the number of teachers who have left during 2023/24.

**Figure B.17: Qualified teachers leaving state-funded schools 2010/11 to 2023/24<sup>114</sup>**



64. The proportion of leavers who retired has fallen over time, from 34% of leavers in 2010/11 to 9% of leavers in 2023/24. This is consistent with a reduction in the proportion of teachers who were aged 50 or over from 24% in 2010/11 to 20% in 2024/25.
65. Within the overall leaving rate, there has been variation by school type. The leaving rate for primary schools was lower than for secondary schools between 2010/11 and 2019/20, however the gap has reduced over time and leaving rates have been almost equal over the last five years. The primary school leaving rate was 8.9% in 2023/24, a slight decrease from 9.4% in 2022/23. The secondary school leaving rate was 8.7% in 2023/24, a slight decrease from 9.1% in 2022/23.
66. LA maintained schools have tended to have lower leaving rates than academies, for both the primary and secondary phases. For example, the LA maintained secondary school leaving rate was 8.5% in 2023/24 whereas the secondary academy leaving rate was 8.8%.
67. In addition to entrants and leavers, changes to working patterns also affect the number of FTE teachers. In 2024/25, 4.4% of qualified teachers increased their working hours and 6.0% decreased theirs. These changes in working pattern produced a net decrease equivalent to 2,530 FTE qualified teachers since last year. In 2023/24, these percentages were 4.8% and 5.7% respectively, equating to a net decrease of 2,050 FTE.

<sup>114</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School workforce in England: Reporting year 2024 - School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

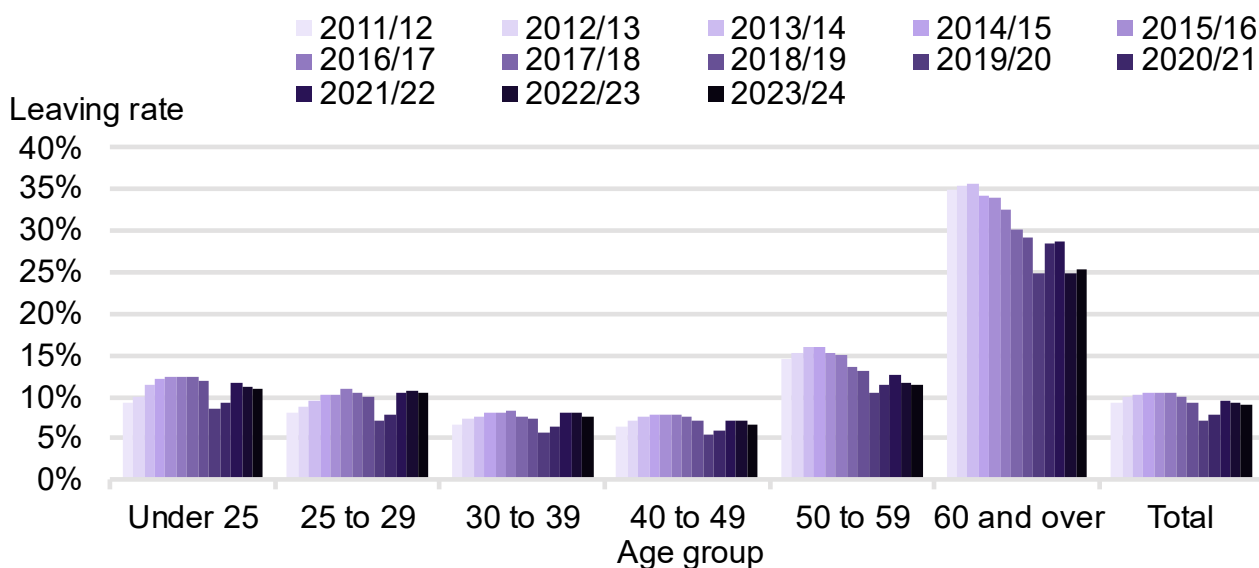
68. Overall, there were 432 fewer FTE teachers across state-funded schools in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24. Despite the FTE number of teachers decreasing marginally over the last year, there has been an overall increase of 26,900 (+6%) in the total FTE teacher workforce from 2010/11.

### Leaving and wastage rates by age

69. Figure B.18 presents leaving rates by age per year from 2011/12 to 2023/24. During this period, the leaving rates for those aged 50 to 59 and 60 and over have steadily decreased. Over the same period, the leaving rates for all age groups under 50 increased until around 2016/17 before decreasing to historically low rates in 2019/20. Since then, leaving rates increased for all age categories before stabilising more recently, with a very slight reduction in leaving rates in the most recent year.

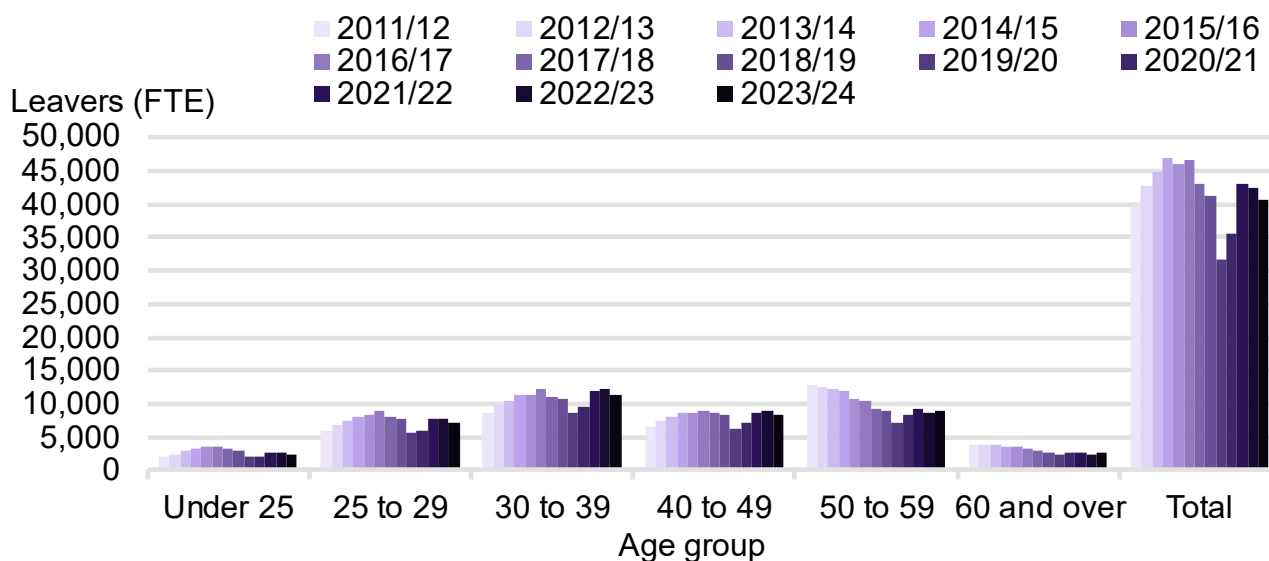
70. In absolute terms, the largest number of qualified teacher leavers in 2023/24 was from the 30 to 39 and 50 to 59 age categories, with 11,379 and 8,932 leavers respectively. Absolute numbers of leavers by age are shown in Figure B.19. The figures highlight that, whilst leaving rates are high for teachers in the 'Under 25' and '60 and over' categories, the absolute numbers of leavers are relatively low in comparison to other age categories.

**Figure B.18: Leaving rates of FTE qualified teachers by age on leaving, across all state-funded schools, England, 2011/12 to 2023/24<sup>115</sup>**



<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

**Figure B.19: Numbers of FTE qualified teacher leavers by age on leaving, across all state-funded schools, England, 2011/12 to 2023/24<sup>116</sup>**

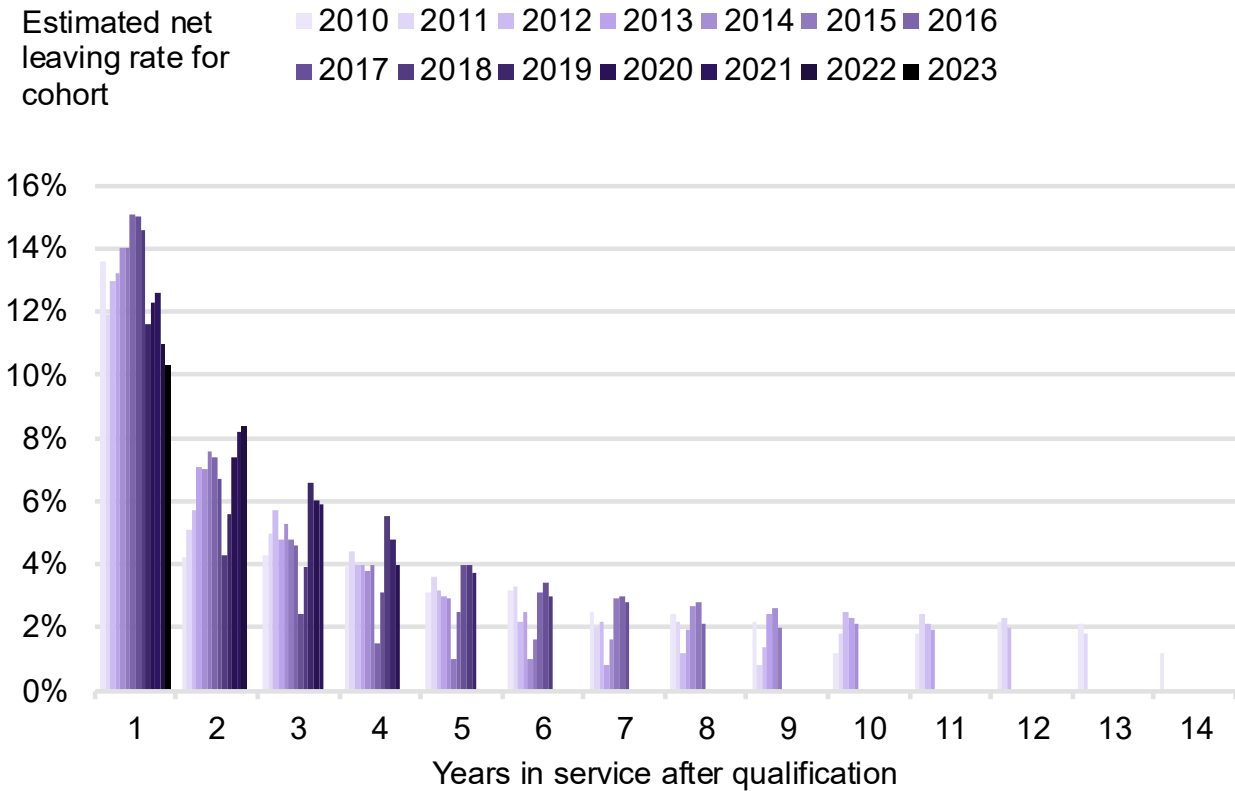


### Leaving rates by length of service

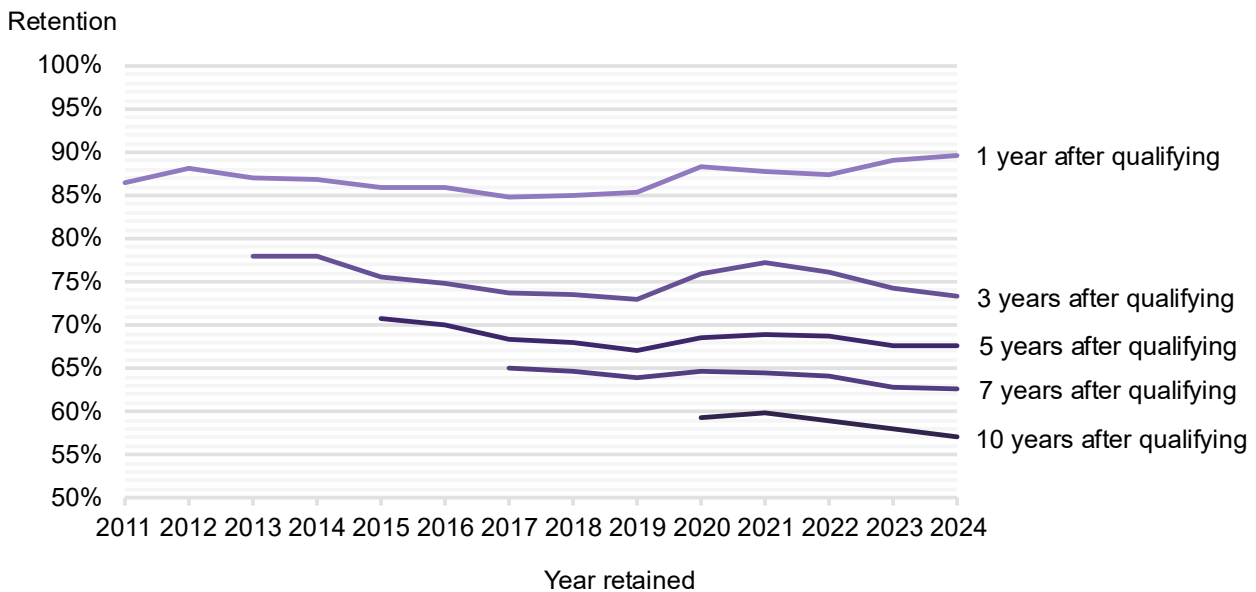
71. Figure B.20 estimates, for each cohort of new entrants, the percentage of that cohort leaving after each year of service. For example, for the 2010 entry cohort (who also qualified in 2010), it shows the percentage of teachers in that cohort who left after one year of service, two years of service, and so forth. In some cases, a teacher from a given cohort may leave and subsequently return to service; in such cases, they cease being treated as a leaver from the year they are recorded as having returned. In this sense, we are measuring 'net leaving rates'.
72. Figure B.20 shows a very clear pattern where leaving rates for each year of qualification dipped in 2019/20 and then picked up again. This is likely a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, given that teacher retention tends to improve during recessions as the options outside teaching carry more uncertainty. Lockdown restrictions may have also made it harder for teachers to move jobs.
73. Figure B.21 draws upon the underlying data from Figure B.20 and shows how retention rates have changed for selected cohorts. Overall, teachers who joined the school workforce in recent years have been more willing to remain for one-year than previous cohorts. But after a one-year stay they have then left the school workforce in greater numbers than in earlier cohorts.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

**Figure B.20: Estimated net leaving rates of newly qualified teachers at each year of service (full-time and part-time qualified teachers), for teachers qualified in 2010 to 2023, England<sup>117</sup>**



**Figure B.21: Percentage of newly qualified teachers still in service 1 to 10 years after qualifying, 2011 to 2024 England<sup>118</sup>**



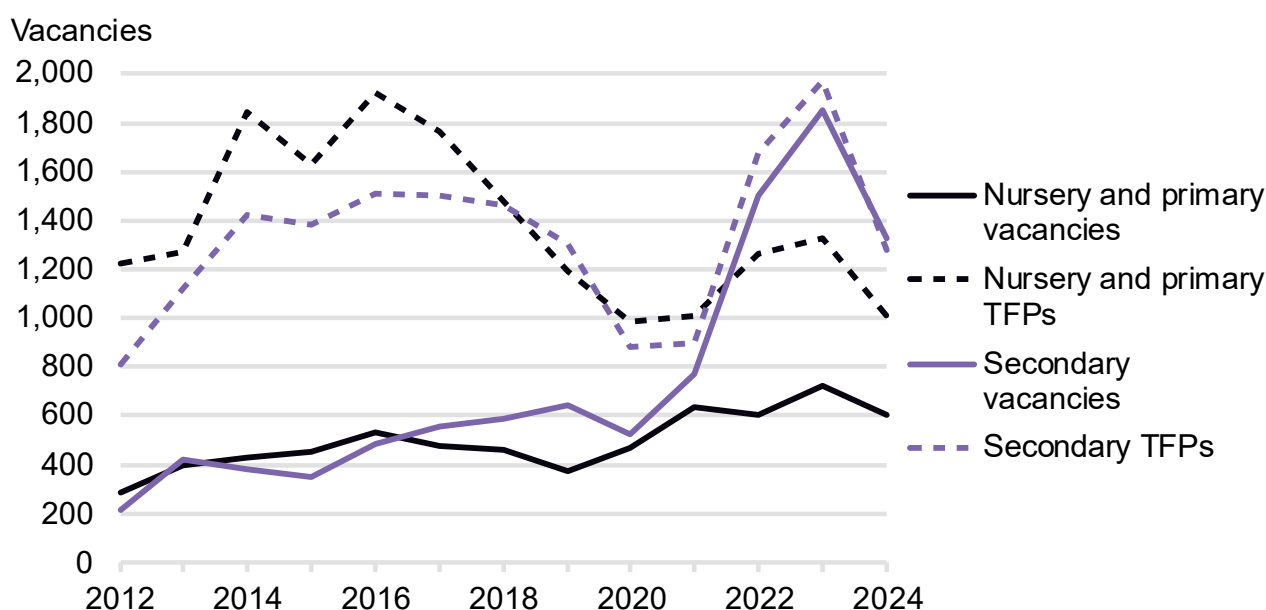
<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Note y-axis does not start at zero. OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School workforce in England: Reporting year 2024* - [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

## Teacher vacancies

74. In November 2024, according to the SWC data, the teacher vacancy rate (including full-time and part-time teachers) across all state-funded schools was 0.5%, lower than the previous year (0.6%).<sup>119</sup> The vacancy rate for classroom teachers was 0.5%, whilst that for all leadership was 0.2%.
75. In absolute terms, the number of vacancies across state-funded schools decreased by 629 compared to the previous year, standing at 2,173. The decrease in the headline total is split across primary and secondary schools (see Figure B.22).
76. Temporarily filled posts (TFPs) are those where a vacancy exists which is being filled by a teacher on a contract of at least one term but less than a year. The vacancy rate for TFPs across all state-funded schools was 0.6% in 2024, down from 0.8% in 2023. In absolute terms, there were 2,653 TFPs in 2024, down from 3,655 in 2023.

**Figure B.22: Teacher vacancies (both full-time and part-time) and temporarily filled posts (TFPs) in state-funded schools, England, November 2011 to 2024<sup>120,121</sup>**



77. Subject-level vacancy rate data for secondary schools are shown in Figure B.23. Three of the Design and Technology (D&T) subjects had some of the highest vacancy rates, although in absolute terms, the numbers were relatively small.

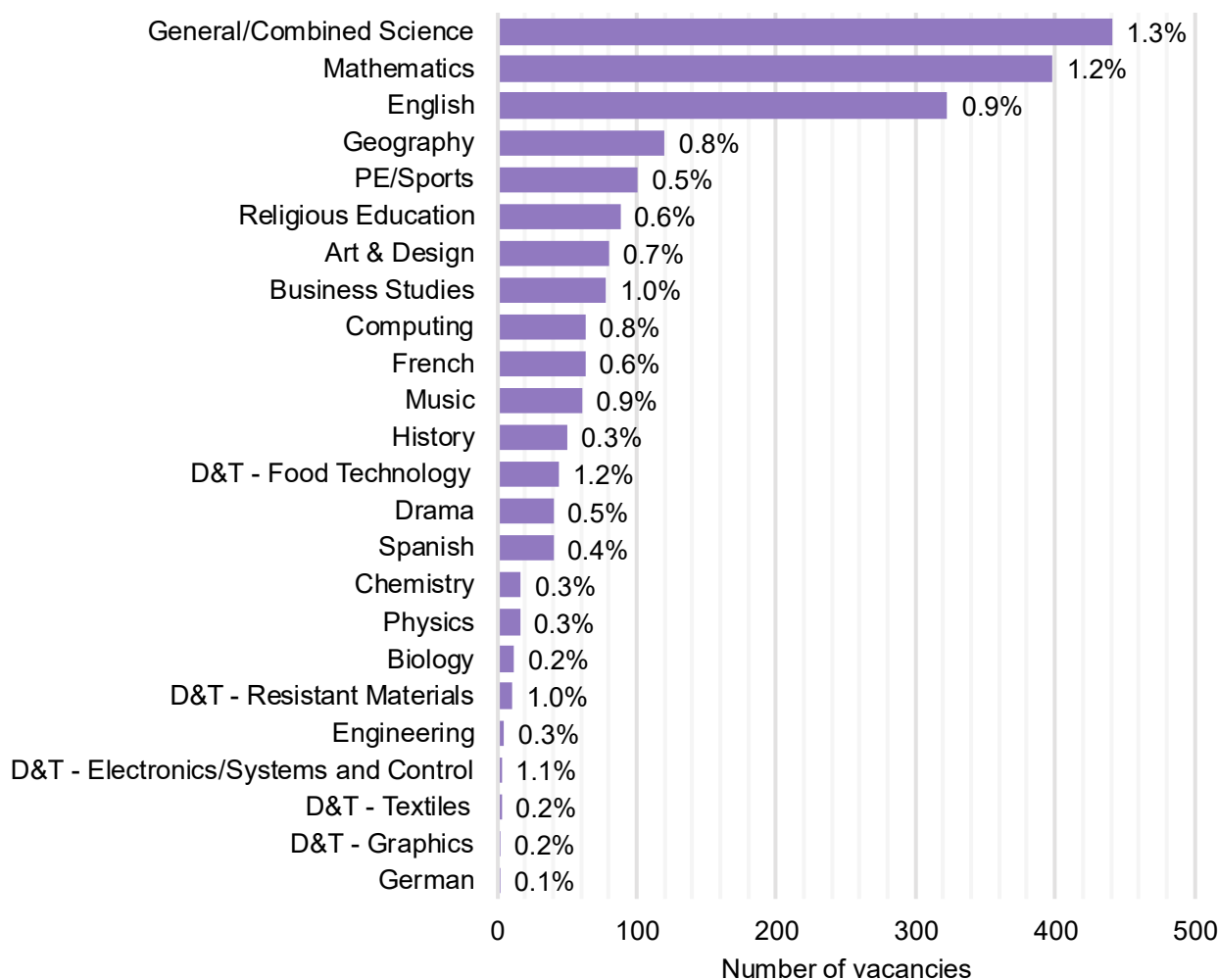
<sup>119</sup> A vacancy refers to a full-time appointment of at least one term's duration that, on the November census date, had been advertised but not filled. Vacancies exclude those filled on a temporary basis unless it is by someone on a contract of less than a term. We note the limitation of the vacancy data in that the data is a mid-term snapshot. As vacancies may have been filled in time for the start of the school year, the school vacancy data does not reflect the challenges faced by schools throughout the year, as vacant posts may be advertised at other times such as over spring/summer.

<sup>120</sup> To reduce burden during the COVID-19 pandemic, schools and LAs were not required to provide the tenure (full-/part-time working pattern) of teachers in the November 2020 School Workforce Census. Therefore, the figure for 2021 includes both full- and part-time staff vacancies, whereas previous publications have focused only on full-time vacancies.

<sup>121</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *School workforce in England: Reporting year 2024 - School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK*

Mathematics and General/Combined Science continue to have the highest number of vacancies in absolute terms and the highest vacancy rates amongst STEM subjects.

**Figure B.23: Secondary school vacancies and vacancy rates by subject, November 2024 (vacancy rates shown at the end of each bar)<sup>122</sup>**



78. As the latest vacancy data from the SWC refers to a snapshot in November 2024, which contrasts with the seasonal peak of hiring in April/May, we have also looked at other available vacancy data.
79. Information from SchoolDash, an organisation which collects data on job adverts for teacher vacancies in England, indicates that the rate at which secondary schools in England have been advertising teacher vacancies has fallen sharply over the last year.<sup>123</sup> The number of advertised vacancies was down over 39% for the 2024/25 academic year compared to 2023/24. This decrease follows a previous reduction in the number of advertised vacancies of 11% in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23.
80. In the years following the COVID-19 pandemic vacancy numbers rose sharply to a peak in 2022/23, reversing the fall in adverts seen during the two years of the pandemic-related disruption. The rate of advertised vacancies has continued to fall

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> SchoolDash gathers weekly advert data from school and college websites. It covers all registered secondary schools, sixth form colleges and colleges of further education in England.

since this peak and is now below pre-pandemic levels. Cumulative vacancy data for all secondary school subjects showed that the number of vacancies for all teaching positions during the 2024/25 academic year was 30% below that recorded in 2018/19 (pre-pandemic).<sup>124</sup>

## Teacher conditions and satisfaction

81. In the Department’s Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Survey (WLTL), wave 4 carried out in early 2025, 38% of teachers and leaders agreed that they were satisfied with the salary they received for the work that they did, an increase compared to all previous years.<sup>125</sup> Around half (49%) disagreed that they were satisfied, lower than in previous waves (see Table B.13).

**Table B.13: Key outcomes from the Department for Education’s WLTL, 2022 to 2025**<sup>126,127,128,129</sup>

Survey question response	2022	2023	2024	2025
Agreed that their workload was acceptable	17%	17%	22%	26%
Agreed that they had sufficient control over their workload	26%	30%	34%	39%
Agreed that they are satisfied with the salary they received for the work done	26%	20%	30%	38%
Disagreed that they are satisfied with the salary they received for the work done	61%	69%	58%	49%
Agreed that they are satisfied with longer-term salary prospects compared with other career paths	20%	15%	21%	26%
Agreed that they experienced stress in their work	86%	88%	89%	86%
Agreed that their job does not leave them enough time for their personal life	65%	73%	70%	64%
Agreed that their job negatively affected their mental health	56%	63%	62%	57%
Agreed that their job negatively affected their physical health	45%	52%	49%	46%
Were considering leaving the state school sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement	25%	36%	34%	29%

82. The most cited reasons for considering leaving in the 2025 wave were ‘high workload’ and ‘stress and/or poor wellbeing’ (both reported by 89%) which is consistent with 2024 (both reported by 90%). Lack of state school funding (76%) and teachers’ views not being valued by policymakers (71%) had the next most popular responses for considering leaving.

<sup>124</sup> OPRB analysis of SchoolDash Insights data. Available to SchoolDash subscribers.

<sup>125</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 4 summary report* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-4>

<sup>126</sup> Department for Education (2023) *Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-1>

<sup>127</sup> Department for Education (2024) *Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 2 summary report* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-2/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-2-summary-report>

<sup>128</sup> Department for Education (2024) *Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 summary report* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

<sup>129</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 4 summary report* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-4>

83. Among the reasons cited by teachers who had actually left the profession between the 2024 and 2025 survey, it was noticeable that pupil behaviour was more commonly cited in the latest survey than it had been by those who left between 2022 and 2023, and between 2023 and 2024.
84. Around a quarter (28%) of leavers between 2024 and 2025 who were still in work reported earning more than they did when compared with their role in English state sector teaching or leading, while 18% reported earning the same amount and around half (53%) reported earning less.
85. Among those currently in work, leavers' average working hours per week (34.8) were lower than the average of those still teaching and leading in an English state school (48.2).
86. Table B.14 shows the 2025 WLTL survey found that average working hours for teachers and leaders in both primary and secondary schools were lower than the hours reported in the 2024 WLTL, but remained above the 2019 Teacher Workload Survey (TWS).<sup>130</sup>

**Table B.14: Average reported working hours by teachers and leaders, from the TWS 2016 and 2019, and WLTL 2022 to 2025<sup>131,132,133,134,135,136</sup>**

	TWS		WLTL			
	2016	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Primary leaders	59.8	54.4	57.2	57.9	57.5	56.5
Secondary leaders	62.1	56.4	58.6	59.1	58.3	57.3
Primary teachers	55.5	50.0	53.2	53.9	52.5	51.4
Secondary teachers	53.5	49.1	51.2	51.4	50.3	49.3

<sup>130</sup> Department for Education (2019) *Teacher Workload Survey 2019* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-survey-2019>

<sup>131</sup> Department for Education (2017) *Teacher Workload Survey 2016* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-survey-2016>

<sup>132</sup> Department for Education (2019) *Teacher Workload Survey 2019* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-survey-2019>

<sup>133</sup> Department for Education (2023) *Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-1>

<sup>134</sup> Department for Education (2024) *Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 2 summary report* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-2/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-2-summary-report>

<sup>135</sup> Department for Education (2024) *Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 summary report* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

<sup>136</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 4 summary report* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-4>

## ***ITT Performance profiles***

87. The Department for Education provides information on the outcomes for teacher trainees, including the proportion of trainees that gained Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), and the employment rates of these qualified teachers. The latest data relate to the academic year 2023/24 and were published in July 2025.<sup>137</sup>
88. In total there were 21,210 postgraduate trainee teachers awarded QTS in 2023/24, a 5% decrease from 2022/23 (22,437). This follows a recent increasing trend in QTS award numbers and recent peak of 30,706 in 2020/21, possibly linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.
89. The reduction in the number of trainees awarded QTS is largely due to the reduction in overall trainee numbers, however the percentage of trainees being awarded QTS has also fallen steadily over the last four years, from 96% in 2019/20 to 93% in 2023/24. The QTS award rate had previously been stable at 95% or 96% between 2017/18 to 2020/21 (see Table B.15).
90. Of the 21,210 postgraduate trainees awarded QTS in 2023/24, it is estimated that 75% will be teaching in a state-funded school within 16 months of the end of the 2023/24 academic year, the same proportion as the last two years. However, in terms of absolute numbers, there has been a noticeable reduction in recent years, with 15,921 trainees estimated to enter the teacher workforce in state-funded schools from the 2023/24 cohort, compared to over 20,000 each year before 2022.
91. For primary postgraduate trainees, 93% were awarded QTS. QTS award rates varied by secondary subject, from 89% in Business Studies, to 97% in Physical Education and Classics. The proportion of trainees awarded QTS and teaching in state-funded schools also varies by secondary subject, from 48% for Classics to 76% for Design & Technology, History, Music and Religious Education. Postgraduate trainee outcomes by all subjects can be seen in Table B.16.

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<sup>137</sup> OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *Initial teacher training performance profiles, Academic Year 2023/24* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-performance-profiles/2023-24>

**Table B.15: Number and percentage of postgraduate trainees awarded QTS and teaching in a state-funded school within 16 months of the academic year end<sup>138,139</sup>**

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<b>Total number of trainees</b>	26,794	27,750	28,733	32,312	31,956	24,277	22,760
<b>Awarded QTS</b>	25,490	26,402	27,542	30,706	29,715	22,437	21,210
<b>Percentage of total trainees</b>	95%	95%	96%	95%	93%	92%	93%
<b>Teaching in a State-Funded School</b>	20,503	20,670	20,110	22,151	21,971	16,720	15,921
<b>Percentage of those awarded QTS</b>	80%	78%	73%	72%	74%	75%	75%
<b>Percentage of total trainees</b>	77%	74%	70%	69%	69%	69%	70%

<sup>138</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Initial teacher training performance profiles, Academic Year 2023/24* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-performance-profiles/2023-24>

<sup>139</sup> Percentage of those awarded QTS teaching in a state-funded school is the percentage of trainees awarded QTS who are employed in a state-funded school in England within 16 months of the academic year end. For 2023/24, employment rate figures are provisional.

**Table B.16: Number and percentage of postgraduate trainees awarded QTS and teaching in a state-funded school within 16 months of the academic year end, by subject for the 2023/24 academic year<sup>140,141</sup>**

Subject	Total number of trainees	Percentage of trainees awarded QTS	Percentage teaching in a state-funded school (of those awarded QTS)	Percentage teaching in a state-funded school (of total number of trainees)
Art & Design	401	95%	75%	71%
Biology	885	92%	80%	74%
Business Studies	227	89%	73%	64%
Chemistry	764	90%	79%	71%
Classics	69	97%	49%	48%
Computing	413	91%	75%	68%
Design & Technology	576	94%	81%	76%
Drama	246	92%	77%	71%
English	2,210	93%	81%	75%
Geography	822	94%	78%	73%
History	977	94%	81%	76%
Mathematics	1,900	93%	79%	73%
Modern Foreign Languages	1,024	95%	76%	72%
Music	237	94%	80%	76%
Other	327	95%	76%	72%
Physical Education	1,485	97%	67%	65%
Physics	540	90%	77%	69%
Religious Education	279	92%	82%	76%
Primary	9,378	93%	72%	67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,760</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>70%</b>

### ***Initial teacher training***

92. This section presents information on undergraduate and postgraduate entrants to ITT and includes data relating to entrants' characteristics and delivery against recruitment targets.

<sup>140</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Initial teacher training performance profiles, Academic Year 2023/24* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-performance-profiles/2023-24>

<sup>141</sup> Percentage of those awarded QTS teaching in a state-funded school is the percentage of trainees awarded QTS who are employed in a state-funded school in England within 16 months of the academic year end. For 2023/24, employment rate figures are provisional.

## Total number of entrants

93. There were 32,175 new entrants to ITT in 2025/26, including both postgraduate and undergraduate students. This is up from 28,898 entrants in 2024/25, representing an 11% increase.<sup>142</sup> Of this overall total:
- There were 26,620 new entrants to postgraduate ITT (PGITT) in 2025/26, an increase of 10% from 2024/25.
  - There were 5,555 new entrants to undergraduate ITT in 2025/26, an increase of 16% from 2024/25. Undergraduate entrants accounted for 17% of new entrants in 2025/26, remaining the same since 2024/25.

## Postgraduate ITT candidate numbers and acceptances

94. The overall number of PGITT candidates and accepted candidates who started PGITT courses between 2022/23 and 2025/26 is shown in Table B.17.
95. The number of candidates applying to primary PGITT courses has remained steady from 2024/25 to 2025/26, while the number of accepted candidates increased by 10% to 9,634. For secondary subjects, the number of candidates applying for 2025/26 courses increased by 5% compared to the previous year, while the number of accepted candidates increased by 12%.
96. 55% of candidates who applied to 2025/26 courses went on to be offered and accept a place (in-cycle acceptance rate), up from 53% in 2024/25 but lower than 58% in 2023/24.<sup>143</sup> The year-on-year decreases until this year were largely driven by increases in international applicants who typically have a lower acceptance rate. The proportion of international candidates has fallen slightly this year, and the acceptance rate has increased slightly.
97. The number of Physics candidates increased by 5% in 2025/26 from 5,363 to 5,657, while the number of accepted candidates increased by 39% to 1,258. STEM subjects saw a 5% increase in candidates (19,592) and a 22% increase in accepted candidates (6,763).<sup>144</sup>
98. About half the subjects saw a decrease in the number of candidates applying. However, only two subjects saw a decrease in the number of acceptances from the previous year: English (16%) and Classics (18%).

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<sup>142</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Initial Teacher Training Census Academic year 2025/26* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census>

<sup>143</sup> 'In-cycle' acceptances include accepted candidates regardless of whether they later choose to withdraw or defer their accepted application.

<sup>144</sup> STEM Subjects are Biology, Chemistry, Computing, Mathematics and Physics.

**Table B.17: Postgraduate ITT candidates and accepted candidates for courses in 2022/23 to 2025/26<sup>145,146</sup>**

		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Primary	Total candidates	18,561	19,350	19,237	19,157
	Total accepted candidates	11,189	9,271	8,780	9,634
Secondary	Total candidates	22,216	29,951	37,561	39,259
	Total accepted candidates	11,586	12,795	14,662	16,448
Total	Total candidates	38,581	45,608	52,405	54,562
	Total accepted candidates	22,775	22,066	23,442	26,082

### Entrants' characteristics

99. The broad characteristics of ITT entrants are shown in Table B.18 and Table B.19. Postgraduate entrants tend to be older and more diverse than undergraduate entrants. The median age for postgraduate entrants in 2025/26 was 24, compared to 18 for undergraduate entrants, remaining in line with 2024/25. Females account for a larger proportion of primary entrants compared to secondary; this applies to both postgraduate and undergraduate entrants.
100. The proportion of entrants from minority ethnic groups has increased for ITT entrants between 2020/21 and 2025/26, from 19% to 31% for postgraduate and 15% to 22% for undergraduate entrants.
101. Young entrants form the largest component of each cohort of ITT students. In 2025/26, 93% of undergraduate entrants were aged under 25, compared with 50% of postgraduate entrants.

<sup>145</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Initial Teacher Training Census Academic year 2025/26* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census>

<sup>146</sup> 'Total candidates' is the total number of candidates that applied to postgraduate ITT for courses that start in the given time period. 'Total accepted candidates' is the total number of candidates who have accepted an offer to start ITT in the given cycle. This includes candidates who deferred an offer from a previous cycle. Withdrawn applications and deferrals into the next cycle have been excluded. Candidate totals may not sum due to duplication caused by candidates applying for multiple subjects. High Potential ITT (HPITT) route and undergraduate routes are not included in this data.

**Table B.18: Characteristics of postgraduate ITT entrants, England, academic year 2020/21 to 2025/26<sup>147</sup>**

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Primary Male (%)	17	16	16	16	16	14
Primary Female (%)	83	84	84	84	84	86
Secondary Male (%)	39	39	39	39	40	40
Secondary Female (%)	61	61	61	61	60	59
Minority ethnic group (%)	19	20	23	25	28	31
Non-minority ethnic group (%)	81	80	77	75	72	69
Declared disability (%)	13	14	13	18	19	20
No disability declared (%)	87	86	87	82	81	80
Under 25 (%)	51	52	52	52	51	50
Median age	24	24	24	24	24	24

**Table B.19: Characteristics of undergraduate ITT entrants, England, academic year 2020/21 to 2025/26<sup>148</sup>**

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Primary Male (%)	11	12	11	12	12	8
Primary Female (%)	89	88	89	88	87	91
Secondary Male (%)	23	44	44	38	44	43
Secondary Female (%)	77	56	56	62	56	57
Minority ethnic group (%)	15	17	18	21	24	22
Non-minority ethnic group (%)	85	83	82	79	76	78
Declared disability (%)	17	17	19	22	21	21
No disability declared (%)	83	83	81	78	79	79
Under 25 (%)	91	91	93	94	95	93
Median age	19	19	19	18	18	18

### ITT performance against targets

102. The teacher workforce model (TWM) provides an annual estimate of the number of trainees needed to start postgraduate ITT each year to provide sufficient numbers of qualified teachers in the year after their training is completed.<sup>149</sup> This results in ITT recruitment targets for both the primary phase and for secondary subjects, taking into

<sup>147</sup> Figures for 2025/26 are provisional and are subject to change. 2024/25 figures have been revised. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *Initial Teacher Training Census Academic year 2025/26* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census>

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> In 2020, the TWM replaced the Teacher Supply Model (TSM). The TWM considers both recruitment and retention alongside estimates of teacher demand. From the 2021/22 training year (ITT2021), the TWM model has been used by the Department for Education to set postgraduate ITT targets.

account entrants from other sources including returners, deferred newly qualified entrants and teachers new to the state-funded sector.

103. In order to provide a sufficient supply of teachers for 2026/27, the Department estimates that 26,920 trainees are required to start PGITT in the 2025/26 academic year. This is a 19.3% decrease from the 2024/25 PGITT target. Within this overall decrease, the 2025/26 target for primary PGITT trainees decreased by 18.6% and the target for secondary PGITT trainees decreased by 19.6%.<sup>150</sup>
104. In 2025/26, the 26,620 new entrants to PGITT accounted for 99% of the target, up from 69% in 2024/25. Within the overall total, 88% of the secondary PGITT target was achieved (16,975 new entrants), up from 61% in 2024/25. This was the net result of an increase in the number of secondary entrants and a decrease in target numbers.
105. For primary, the 9,645 new entrants in 2025/26 accounted for 126% of the target. This is an increase from 90% in 2024/25, largely driven by the reduction in the target number. In absolute terms, the number of postgraduate ITT entrants for primary increased by 14%, from 8,473 in 2024/25 to 9,645 in 2025/26.
106. Table B.20 shows the number of postgraduate ITT recruits and target figures for the primary and secondary phases over recent years. Figure B.24 highlights how the primary target has had a higher percentage of its ITT target reached compared to the secondary phase over the last ten years. The secondary postgraduate ITT target was only achieved in one of the last ten years; this was in 2020/21 when there was a boost to entrants driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the first year that the PGITT primary target was met since 2021/22.

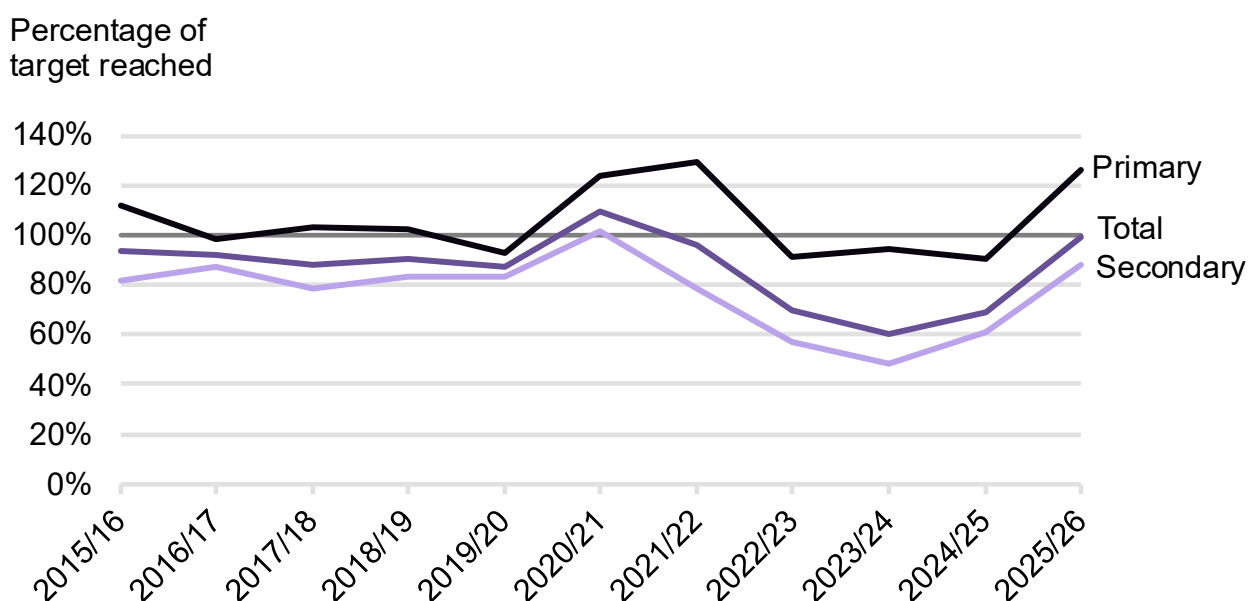
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<sup>150</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Postgraduate initial teacher training targets, Academic year 2025/26* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/postgraduate-initial-teacher-training-targets>. Modern Foreign Languages here includes Classics.

**Table B.20: Postgraduate ITT new entrants and targets, 2018/19 to 2025/26<sup>151</sup>**

Target	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Primary	12,888	12,092	14,147	14,001	10,638	8,644	8,473	9,645
Primary target	12,552	13,003	11,467	10,800	11,655	9,180	9,400	7,650
<i>Percentage of Primary target</i>	103%	93%	123%	130%	91%	94%	90%	126%
Secondary	16,327	16,660	19,706	15,852	12,023	12,766	14,632	16,975
Secondary target	19,674	20,087	19,485	20,230	20,945	26,360	23,955	19,270
<i>Percentage of Secondary target</i>	83%	83%	101%	78%	57%	48%	61%	88%
Total	29,215	28,752	33,853	29,853	22,661	21,410	23,105	26,620
Total TSM/TWM target	32,226	33,090	30,952	31,030	32,600	35,540	33,355	26,920
<i>Percentage of total target</i>	91%	87%	109%	96%	70%	60%	69%	99%

**Figure B.24: Percentage of postgraduate ITT recruitment target reached, for primary, secondary and total, 2015/16 to 2025/26<sup>152</sup>**



107. Figure B.25 focuses on 2025/26 and shows the absolute numbers of postgraduate trainees and target numbers, as well as the percentage of the target reached by subject. Eight subjects shown reached or exceeded their targets in 2025/26 (Physical Education, Biology, Mathematics, History, Art & Design, Chemistry, English, Geography). The figure shows how subjects with a similar percentage performance against target can differ in the absolute numbers of trainees by which they fell short. For example, Physics and Classics both reached a similar percentage of their targets

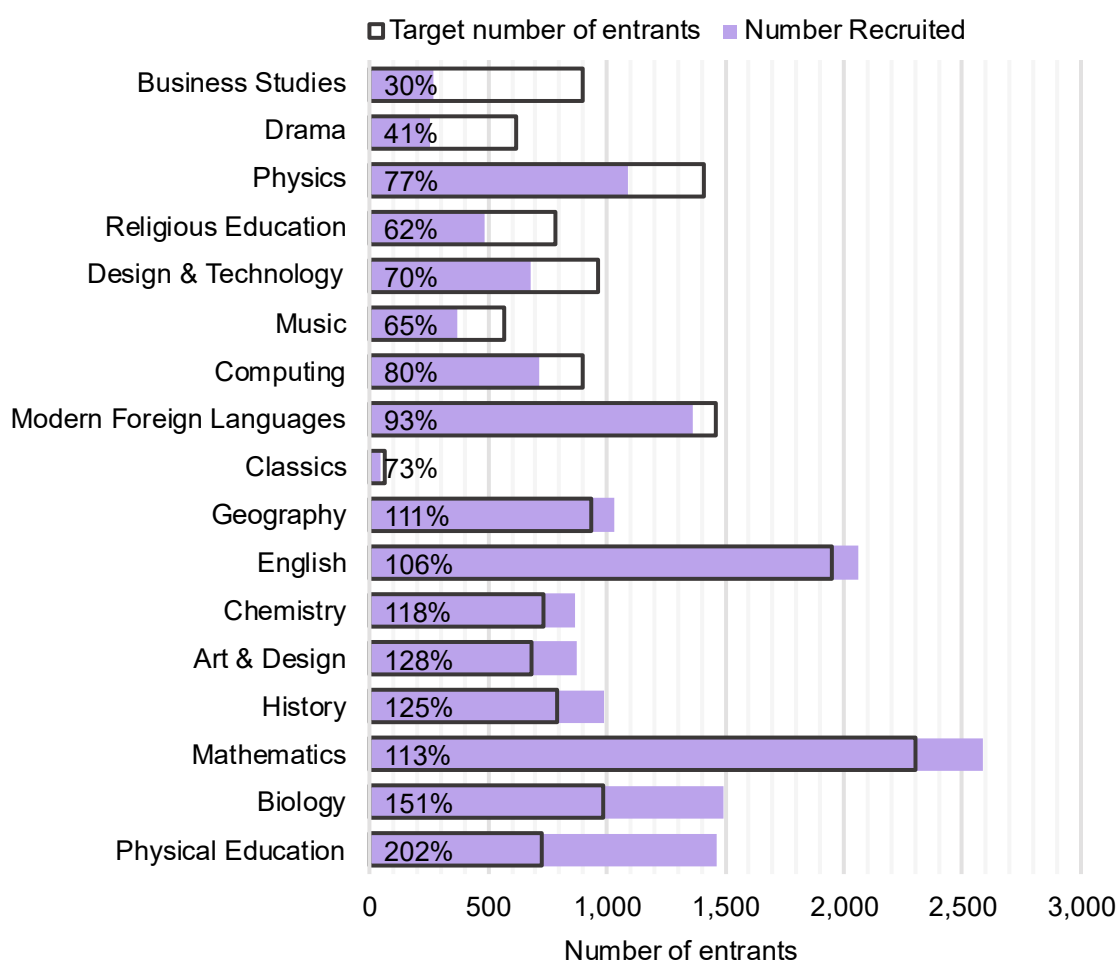
<sup>151</sup> Figures for 2025/26 are provisional and are subject to change, 2024/25 figures have been revised. Due to methodology changes, self-funded trainees are now included in trainee numbers and recruitment targets for 2025/26 onwards but are excluded prior to 2025/26. OPRB analysis of Department for Education (2025) *Initial Teacher Training Census Academic year 2025/26* - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census/2025-26>

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

(77% and 73%); yet this equated to shortfalls of 16 for Classics and 324 for Physics. The subject with the largest shortfall in entrants was Business Studies, at 629.

108. For STEM subjects (Biology, Chemistry, Computing, Mathematics and Physics), 107% of the PGITT target was reached in 2025/26, which is higher than in 2024/25 at 60%. Computing and Physics are the only STEM subjects to not reach their targets in 2025/26.

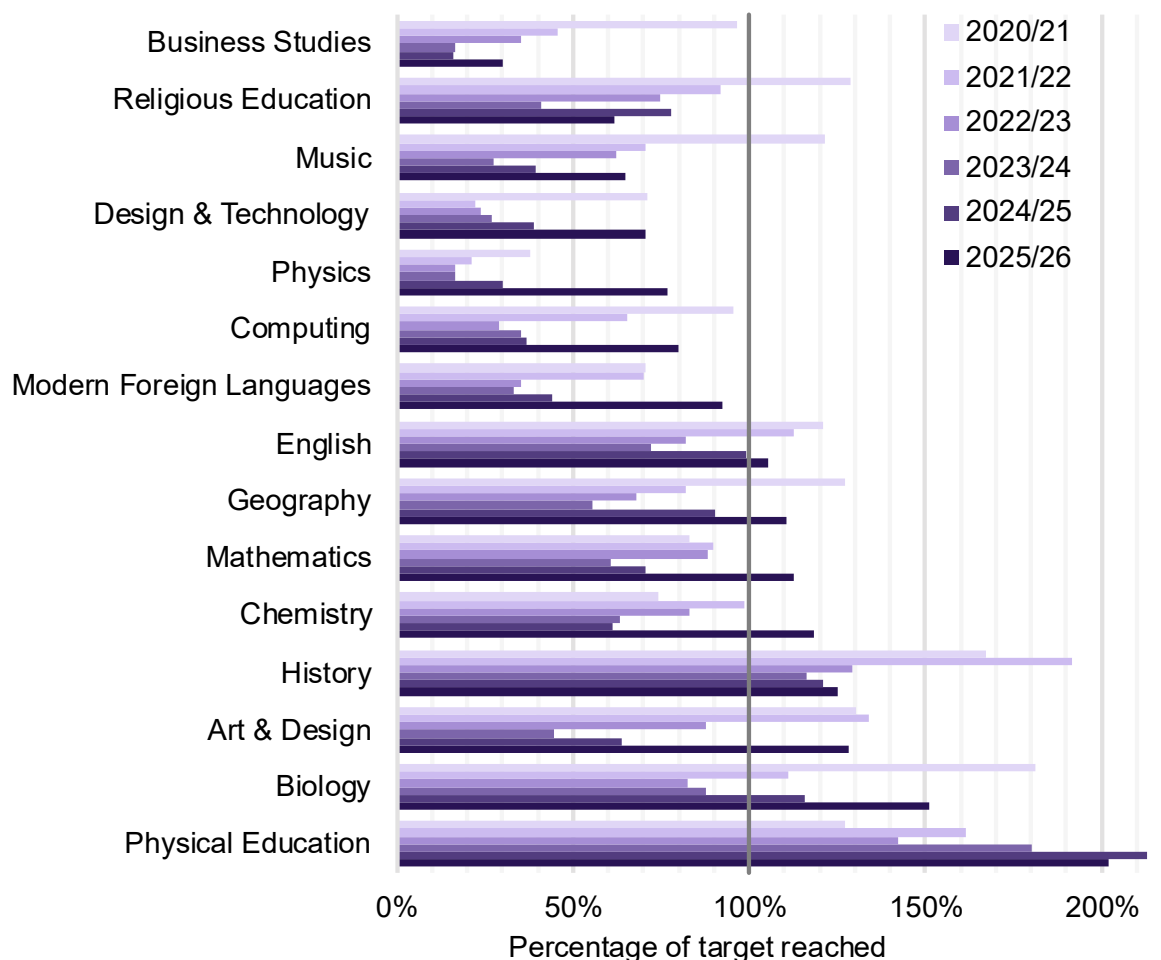
**Figure B.25: Secondary subjects' target numbers of postgraduate entrants versus the numbers recruited in 2025/26. Subjects are sorted in order of the shortfall of recruitment against targets in absolute terms.<sup>153</sup>**



109. Figure B.26 shows recruitment levels against targets for selected subjects in the last five years. In 2025/26, all subjects other than Religious Education, Physical Education, Drama and Classics reached a higher proportion of their target compared to 2024/25.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

**Figure B.26: Postgraduate ITT contribution to targets by subject, 2020/21 to 2025/26. Subjects are sorted in order of contribution to targets in 2025/26.<sup>154</sup>**



### **Bursaries**

110. Bursaries are available to trainees on tuition fee-based teacher training courses in England that lead to the award of QTS, dependent on highest relevant academic award and ITT subject. Table B.21 shows recent changes to bursaries for postgraduate subjects. The 2020/21 academic year had bursaries available for most subjects; many of these were dropped in 2021/22 and were later reinstated over the years to 2024/25.
111. The number of bursaries available for 2026/27 has been reduced across a range of subjects, with others seeing a reduction in the bursary value. The bursary values for Biology and Geography are both down by £21,000, while Modern Foreign Languages and Design & Technology are down by £6,000. Art, Music and Religious Education are down by £10,000 to zero, with English down by £5,000 to zero. We also note that for Business Studies, Music, Religious Education, Modern Foreign Languages and Design & Technology, the reduction in bursary value coincides with the failure to reach target entrant numbers in 2025/26.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

**Table B.21: Postgraduate bursaries by subject available in academic years 2020/21 to 2026/27. Subjects sorted by percentage of ITT target reached in 2025/26.**<sup>155,156</sup>

Subject (postgraduate)	2020/21 (£)	2021/22 (£)	2022/23 (£)	2023/24 (£)	2024/25 (£)	2025/26 (£)	2026/27 (£)	ITT target performance 2025/26
Business Studies	9,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	30%
Religious Education	9,000	0	0	0	10,000	10,000	0	62%
Music	9,000	0	0	0	10,000	10,000	0	65%
Design & Technology	15,000	0	15,000	20,000	25,000	26,000	20,000	70%
Physics	26,000	24,000	24,000	27,000	28,000	29,000	29,000	77%
Computing	26,000	24,000	24,000	27,000	28,000	29,000	29,000	80%
Modern Foreign Languages <sup>157</sup>	26,000	10,000	15,000	25,000	25,000	26,000	20,000	93%
English	12,000	0	0	15,000	10,000	5,000	0	106%
Geography	15,000	0	15,000	25,000	25,000	26,000	5,000	111%
Mathematics <sup>158</sup>	26,000	24,000	24,000	27,000	28,000	29,000	29,000	113%
Chemistry	26,000	24,000	24,000	27,000	28,000	29,000	29,000	118%
History	9,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	125%
Art & Design	9,000	0	0	0	10,000	10,000	0	128%
Biology	26,000	7,000	10,000	20,000	25,000	26,000	5,000	151%
Physical Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	202%

## Overseas teachers awarded qualified teacher status

112. In addition to trainee teachers, there are existing teachers from overseas who can be awarded QTS without ITT, given their previous experience. Applicants for teaching jobs from overseas need a visa or other immigration status allowing them to work in the UK. The main visa route for non-UK teachers in England is the skilled worker visa, which requires certain conditions to be met. Alternative visa routes are also available, such as the Graduate visa or the Youth Mobility Scheme visa. More information is available via the Department's website.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Funding: initial teacher training (ITT)* -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-initial-teacher-training-itt>

<sup>156</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Initial teacher training (ITT) bursary: funding manual*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-itt-bursary-funding-manual/initial-teacher-training-bursary-funding-manual-2026-to-2027-academic-year>

<sup>157</sup> The bursaries shown apply to all 'Languages' and from 2022/23 onwards include 'Ancient Languages'.

<sup>158</sup> The bursary in 2020/21 applies to secondary Mathematics. A bursary of £9,000 was available for primary Mathematics.

<sup>159</sup> Department for Education (2026) *Recruit teachers from overseas* - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/recruit-teachers-from-overseas>

113. Since 1 February 2023, teachers who hold qualifications and recognition from an increased number of countries have been eligible to apply for QTS through a new digital service, 'Apply for QTS in England'.<sup>160</sup>

- Applicants with a teaching qualification from any of the following countries or regions can apply for QTS in England, if they meet the requirements: Australia, Canada, the European Economic Area (EEA), Gibraltar, Guernsey, Hong Kong, Jersey, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, Ukraine and the USA.
- Applicants with a teaching qualification from the following countries who are working in a valid teaching role in England can apply for QTS if they meet the requirements: Ghana, India, Jamaica, Nigeria, Singapore and South Africa.

114. Following the introduction of the service in February 2023, the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) received a very high number of applications from teachers who had qualified in the newly eligible countries; however, demand has now stabilised. The new approach sets more robust requirements that highly qualified overseas teachers must meet to obtain QTS in England. All qualified teachers who gained QTS through this route have achieved a teacher training qualification of at least academic level 6 or equivalent.

115. As of June 2025, teachers who qualified in 48 countries and regions were eligible to apply for QTS using the new 'Apply for QTS in England' service.<sup>161</sup>

116. Overall, there were 5,453 Overseas Trained Teachers (OTTs) awarded QTS between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, following the 3,786 awards between 1 February and 31 March 2023 when the 'Apply for QTS in England' service launched.<sup>162</sup> There were 7,417 applications made in the year to 31 March 2025, down 59% from the 18,310 applications made in the year to 31 March 2024. As of 31 May 2025, 1,130 applications made in the year to 31 March 2025 resulted in an award, although we note that around 4,000 applications are still awaiting an outcome.

117. We note that teachers trained in Wales can also apply for QTS recognition. In the year to March 2025, 1,174 teachers trained in Wales were awarded QTS. This represents a 5% decrease from the previous year. 218 teachers qualified from Scotland and Northern Ireland were also awarded QTS in the year to March 2025, a decrease of 1% from the previous year.

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<sup>160</sup> Department for Education (2025) *Routes to qualified teacher status (QTS) for teachers and those with teaching experience outside the UK* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-qualified-teacher-status-qts-if-you-teach-outside-the-uk/routes-to-qualified-teacher-status-qts-for-teachers-and-those-with-teaching-experience-outside-the-uk>

<sup>161</sup> Teaching Regulation Agency (2025) *Annual reports and accounts, 2024 to 2025* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-regulation-agency-annual-report-and-accounts-2024-to-2025>

<sup>162</sup> We note that the 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 figures have been revised since our last report following the outcome of applications which were previously awaiting a decision.

## APPENDIX C

### The remit letter from the Secretary of State

Dr Mike Aldred,  
Chair, The School Teachers' Review Body

22nd July 2025

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your thoughtful and considered views and recommendations earlier in the year. I was pleased to be able to accept in full your recommendations for a 4% pay award and changes to TLR pro-rating in your last report, and to have taken action on flexible working in the STPCD. The Government remains committed to supporting teachers to stay in the profession and thrive, as high quality teaching is the in-school factor that makes the biggest difference to a child's education. I want to thank you and the other STRB members for your valuable advice, which contributes to us achieving that goal, and for your ongoing hard work.

#### Pay Awards

I write to you now to formally commence the next pay round. Over the next three years, we will be asking the schools sector to continue to innovate in order to deliver the best possible education for every child, with ambitious reforms to Ofsted/accountability, curriculum and assessment, and SEND. I know how important budget certainty is when making strategic decisions – especially in the context of the wider ask on the public sector to maximise value from every pound spent – and I want to help schools plan to spend their money as effectively as possible to provide every child with the high-quality education they deserve. I would, therefore, ask you to look further ahead with your pay recommendations. I would like your formal recommendations for pay awards for school teachers and leaders in the academic year 2026/27 and 2027/28, as well as an indicative pay award for the 2028/29 academic year to be confirmed or reconsidered in a future remit.

During this pay round, you will receive evidence from my Department, HM Treasury and statutory consultees. My Department's evidence will, as usual, cover the recruitment and retention context for school teachers and leaders, alongside pay and earnings data, and our work towards delivering an additional 6,500 new expert teachers across secondary and special schools and in our colleges.

As last year's pay recommendation came in above the figures we set out as affordable within evidence, the decision to accept the recommendation required trade-offs. We've taken tough but fair decisions to ensure every pound of taxpayers' money is driving high and rising standards for our children. As was confirmed at the Spending Review, the Department's settlement was predicated on the basis that no additional funding will be made available for pay awards, in any year of the multi-year Spending Review period. We will continue to support schools to drive better value from every pound as we expect schools will need to continue to contribute to the costs of future pay awards and ensure spending is maximised to deliver for children and young people.

## Teachers' and Leaders' Working Conditions

Working conditions are important to teachers' and leaders' experience and wellbeing, and support the recruitment and retention of staff. Conditions can also play a role in supporting schools to strategically and efficiently manage their budgets and deploy their workforce to best support schools' local needs.

You will be aware that I am introducing measures in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill which will require academies to offer at least a minimum level of pay and to have regard to the STPCD. This legislation is passing through Parliament. I have also committed to make changes to the teacher pay and conditions framework to create a pay floor with no ceiling, to enable healthy competition and innovation beyond a core framework, that will help to improve all state schools. These changes will mean that all state school teachers will be able to rely on a core pay offer and all schools will be able to innovate to attract and retain the best teachers that our children need. Whilst the bill continues its passage through Parliament, to begin laying the groundwork for increased flexibility, in this year's remit I would value your expert advice on some initial changes, namely to salary safeguarding and the facility to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses).

Firstly, on salary safeguarding, we understand that the existing salary safeguarding period of 3 years can be a barrier to schools making workforce changes. I invite you to provide recommendations on whether the salary safeguarding period should be reduced to enable employers to deploy their workforce most effectively, whilst ensuring that teachers are still protected from sudden drops in their salary.

Secondly, maintained schools cannot currently make non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to their teachers, whilst academy schools can use them to recruit, retain or reward their staff. In line with my commitment to ensure all schools have the ability to innovate to attract and retain the best teachers, I am seeking your recommendations on whether to introduce the option for maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to reward teachers, separate to and above any pay progression arrangements and the annual STRB recommended pay uplift.

Finally, teachers and leaders are at the heart of delivering our reforms to the school system. I know that workload is a commonly cited reason for teachers leaving the profession and our evidence tells us that teachers and leaders often work long hours. I appreciate that directed time is also an unusual contractual provision, potentially creating a constraint on schools' deployment of teachers, other than what is best for pupils and staff. However, I also recognise that a change to the current system of directed and undirected time could bring substantial complexities and unintended consequences to the system, and any such change would need careful consideration. I would welcome the STRB's views of the benefits and drawbacks of the current working hours arrangement within the STPCD, considering both directed and non-directed time for teachers, and working hours for leaders.

Alongside the pay round, we will continue to work on wider reforms as part of the STPCD review, push forward to make progress to support our schools and raise the status of the teaching profession, and work with stakeholders through various channels, including the Improving Education Together partnership.

## Timing

We know that public sector workers delivering our vital public services deserve timely pay awards, and that early notice of the pay award is important for schools' budget planning. The Government announced 2025-26 pay awards two months earlier than last year, and we remain committed to bringing 2026-27 pay announcements forwards further. That is why we are launching this pay round two months earlier than the previous pay round, and five months before the previous government commenced the 2024-25 pay round.

I would be grateful if you could support an earlier pay announcement by submitting your recommendations for the pay award at the earliest point that allows you to give due consideration to the relevant evidence, which I understand to be the end of February. I recognise that changing the timeline from recent years will present challenges for you and statutory consultees, but I am sure you also share the government's belief in the importance of returning to more timely annual pay processes.

I also understand that producing detailed and considered views on the other matters covered in this remit letter would be highly challenging to this timeframe, and therefore I would be content for you to provide a separate response to the remaining matters in a second report, to be provided by April 2026. My officials would be happy to work with you to support this ambition.

## Matters for recommendation

I refer to the STRB the following matters for recommendation:

- By February 2026, an assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in the academic years **2026/27** and **2027/28**;
- By February 2026, an indicative assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in the **2028/29** academic year, to be confirmed or reconsidered in a subsequent remit;
- By April 2026, an assessment of whether the current salary safeguarding period should be reduced to enable employers to deploy their workforce and resources most effectively, whilst maintaining core teacher protections;
- By April 2026, whether to introduce the option for maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses), for those who want to use them, separate to and above any pay progression arrangements and the annual STRB recommended pay uplift.

## Matters for your views

In addition, I refer to the STRB the following matters for views by April 2026:

- Views on current working hours arrangements in the STPCD for teachers;
- Views on current working hours arrangement for leaders.

I look forward to hearing your views on this important topic and will reflect before deciding whether to formally remit the STRB on this matter in future remits.

## **Considerations to which the STRB should have regard**

In considering your recommendations and views, you should have regard to the following:

- a) The cost pressures that schools are already facing and may face over the coming years (and how they affect individual schools).
- b) Potential equalities impacts associated with any changes proposed to the STPCD.
- c) The need to ensure that any proposals are not too difficult or onerous for schools to implement and minimise the impact on staff.
- d) Evidence of the national state of school teacher and leader supply, including rates of recruitment and retention, vacancy rates, and the quality of candidates entering the profession.
- e) Evidence of the wider state of the labour market, including the impact of recommendations on the further education teaching workforce in England.
- f) Forecast changes in the size and shape of the pupil population and consequent changes in the level of demand for teachers.
- g) The flexibilities that exist in the current framework, which allow school leaders and governors to develop pay arrangements suited to the individual circumstances and to determine teachers' pay within the statutory minima and maxima.

Thank you again for your considered and important advice. I look forward to engaging with the process over the coming year.

Yours faithfully,

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP  
Secretary of State for Education

## APPENDIX D

### Conduct of the review

1. To inform our recommendations on the remit matters, we consulted with our statutory consultees and considered a wide range of evidence. Links to the written evidence we received from consultees have been included in [Chapter 1](#). Evidence from our visit programme is summarised in [Appendix E](#). Details are set out below of the statutory consultation we undertook and the visits and meetings which informed our understanding of the issues relevant to this remit.

### Consultation

2. The following organisations were invited to make written representations and provide evidence:

#### Government

- The Department for Education

#### Organisations representing teachers

- Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (BATOD)
- National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
- NASUWT
- National Education Union (NEU)
- Community Union

#### Association of local authorities

- National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST)

#### Organisations representing governors

- National Governance Association (NGA)

#### Organisations invited to comment on the FE labour market

- Association of Colleges (AoC)
- Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA)
- University and College Union (UCU)

3. We also notified the following organisations of the remit:

- Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS)
- Board of Education, General Synod of the Church of England
- Catholic Education Services for England and Wales

- Confederation of School Trusts (CST)
  - Free Churches Education Committee
  - Information for School and College Governors (ISCG)
  - Methodist Independent Schools Trust
  - Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted)
  - SSAT (The Schools Network) Ltd
  - Teach First
4. Our secretariat wrote to consultees on 25 July 2025 to invite them to submit written representations on the remit matters by 20 October 2025.
  5. The following organisations made written submissions: ASCL, BATOD, Community, The Department, NAHT, NASUWT, NEOST, NEU, NGA. We also received submissions on the FE workforce from the AoC, SFCA and UCU.
  6. Our secretariat shared links to all the consultees’ written submissions and invited consultees to submit supplementary representations commenting on others’ submissions by 20 November 2025. Supplementary submissions were received from ASCL, Community, NAHT, NASUWT and NEU.
  7. The following consultees made oral representations: ASCL, Community, The Department, NAHT, NASUWT, NEOST, NEU and NGA. All made these representations in the period 1-4 December 2025.
  8. Links to all the written submissions we received are provided in Chapter 1 of this report.

### ***Visits and Meetings***

9. In total, we held 16 meetings of the Review Body between July 2025 and February 2026.
10. We also heard from teachers, school leaders and other people involved in the education sector during our 2025 visit programme. Between June and October, we conducted three face-to-face visits. We spoke to a range of staff, including primary and secondary teachers, and school leaders. We would like to thank all participants for their time and valuable input into the discussions.
11. In January 2026, the Chair and STRB Economist attended a briefing by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and HMT officials on the Government’s economic evidence to the pay review bodies.
12. As part of our evidence-gathering process, we also hosted discussions that provided us with information about the wider context to our consideration of teachers’ pay and conditions.
  - In July 2025, we received a presentation from officials from the Department about the context to the forthcoming pay round.

- In September 2025, we received a presentation from the National Audit Office (NAO) on its report examining whether DfE is achieving value for money through its work to recruit and retain teachers in state-funded secondary schools and further education colleges (including sixth-form colleges) in England.
- In September 2025, we received a presentation from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) on the latest trends in teacher supply and insights from NFER's latest teacher workforce research
- In October 2025, we held discussions sessions on working time and issues relating to the remit with the CEO of Lift schools and with HR practitioners from the school sector.
- In October 2025, we hosted a panel discussion with academics on issues relating to teacher supply and pay, and school funding.
- In December 2025, we received a presentation from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research NIESR on economic forecasting.

13. We would like to thank all those who engaged with us over this period.

## APPENDIX E

### Findings from the STRB's 2025 visit programme

1. The Review Body undertook a programme of face-to-face and virtual visits in summer and autumn of 2025. STRB members visited schools in Devon, Durham and Hertfordshire.
2. Our visits were facilitated by Devon County Council, Durham County Council and Hertfordshire County Council. We are very grateful to all those who made the visits possible.
3. We were able to speak to staff across school phases and in both the local authority maintained and academy sectors. The discussions were informative and enhanced our understanding of a range of issues. We summarise key points below.

#### ***STRB report and 2025 Pay award***

- Teachers generally responded positively to the 2025 pay award. However, some experienced teachers noted the 4% increase was less generous than previous years and did not compensate adequately for earlier periods of pay stagnation.
- There was widespread concern that the pay award was not fully funded, leading to fears of redundancies and budget pressures.
- The STRB report's recommendations on flexible working and planning time at home were welcomed.

#### ***Recruitment and retention***

- Recruitment remained difficult for certain subjects, notably Business Studies, Computer Science, and languages, partly due to the lack of incentives and bursaries.
- Support staff recruitment was also challenging, with poor pay and working conditions deterring applicants, despite increasing reliance on these roles due to greater SEND and EHCP needs.
- Some suggested the profession faced longer-term threats including rising work-related stress and mental health issues, leading to early retirement and career changes.
- Deteriorating pupil behaviour was also seen as a cause of retention issues.
- The lack of respect for teaching, insufficient training routes, and the perception that teaching was no longer a viable long-term career, especially for new entrants, were critical concerns for recruitment and retention nationally.

#### ***Pay and the pay framework***

- While recent awards have benefited those at the lower end of the pay scale, experienced staff in particular, felt their workload and responsibilities were not adequately recognised or rewarded.
- Disparities in pay between the UK nations were causing some staff to seek employment across borders for better salaries, highlighting the need for a consistent, competitive pay structure nationwide to prevent talent loss from English schools.

- The pay framework, including TLR payments and use of the Upper Pay Range, was seen as insufficiently compensating additional workload and responsibility, with affordability limiting its use - especially in primary schools.
- There was a strong desire for greater transparency and consistency on pay progression, with teachers advocating for it to be automatic as intended, noting that this is not always the case in practice.
- Teachers highlighted the significant stress associated with progressing to the Upper Pay Range (UPR) or leadership roles under the current system. They requested that these processes be reviewed and improved.
- Other issues highlighted were teachers opting out of pensions for financial reasons and the perceived potential divisiveness of targeted or differential pay.

### ***School finances***

- The funding of teacher pay awards was a significant issue. Some schools, especially in the primary sector, managed increased salaries by drawing on reserves or through restructuring, sometimes involving redundancies.
- Schools reported facing severe financial constraints, leading to difficult decisions, such as cutting A-level subjects, reducing support staff, and relying on less experienced teachers due to cost. These negatively impacted both staff morale and the breadth of educational provision.
- There was widespread concern about the lack of core funding and inadequate support from local authorities, especially for students with complex needs, leading to overstretched services, long waiting lists, and additional pressures on already tight school finances.
- Falling birth rates and reduced pupil numbers were putting financial pressure on primary schools, leading to smaller intakes, potential class closures, and a need to combine year groups, factors which may impact funding, staffing, and job security.

### ***Workload and morale***

- Teachers reported consistent high and often unsustainable workloads, characterised by long hours – including evenings, weekends, and holidays – and additional responsibilities beyond teaching, such as pastoral care and administrative tasks.
- Teachers reported additional workload and stress due to increasing parental expectations and challenging behaviour, the lack of sufficient SEND and special school provision. Regional disparities in funding - especially in rural and coastal areas - further exacerbated pressures on staff and resources.
- The directed hours model (1,265 hours) was widely seen as not capturing the full extent of teachers' professional commitments. Teachers also expressed concern that elements of the STPCD, such as 'reasonable additional hours', were too vague, and called for clearer, more precise language to reduce ambiguity and potential for misinterpretation.
- Morale among teachers appeared resilient, with many expressing genuine passion for their profession and a commitment to delivering high-quality education. However, this

goodwill was increasingly strained by insufficient support, unrealistic expectations, and a lack of effective protection for planning, preparation, and assessment (PPA) time. While financial benefits such as pay and pensions were valued, teachers equally prioritised improvements in workload, pupil behaviour, and working conditions. Increasing PPA time and offering sabbaticals were seen as more effective retention strategies than salary increases.

- Teachers reported that the current pay and conditions frameworks did not adequately reflect the scale and complexity of their workload. Some prioritised increased, protected non-contact time (PPA), indicating that time to plan and recuperate was valued more highly than financial compensation.

### ***Flexible working***

- Flexible working was highly valued by teachers, who sought clearer guidance within the STPCD to ensure schools offer meaningful options.
- Small flexibilities, such as attending family events, were deeply appreciated but were inconsistently applied. Teachers were still required to plan and prepare cover work, even for unpaid leave or emergencies, which added to their workload and stress.
- While some school leaders were supportive of flexible working - recognising its potential to improve retention, especially for women balancing family commitments - they were concerned about the practicalities, including timetabling and maintaining adequate cover for safeguarding and pupil needs.
- Suggestions to improve the provision of flexible working included:
  - Updating the STPCD to include more explicit guidance on flexible working.
  - Developing model policies and best practice toolkits for schools. including practical solutions for timetabling and safeguarding cover.
  - Introducing a framework for allowing teachers to attend significant family or life events without penalty.
  - Encouraging and facilitating the sharing of part-time and supply staff across local schools.

### ***Career Development***

- Teachers reported limited progression opportunities due to financial pressures reducing TLRs and a lack of flexible or part-time leadership roles. This particularly affected those wishing to remain in their current school, with larger MATs (Multi-Academy Trusts) sometimes offering better, but not risk-free, progression pathways.
- There was strong support for redesigning the career framework, favouring more transparent and varied pathways, increased use of TLRs, and greater access to flexible working.
- Opportunities for professional development were seen as hampered by shrinking CPD budgets, with some schools reducing core teaching days to accommodate training. Some teachers suggested initial teacher training did not adequately prepare them for the job's realities or the increasing challenges in mainstream classrooms, emphasising the need for adequate ongoing CPD.

- Career ambitions were influenced by workload, accountability and personal circumstances (notably for women considering family), with many teachers preferring to stay in classroom roles rather than pursue leadership. Leading Practitioner roles were of interest but were not widely understood or available, and the current pay and progression system was seen by some as demotivating and unclear.

### ***Other issues***

- Teachers expressed significant stress and frustration with external perceptions of their profession, citing a lack of public awareness and respect for the demands of teaching, alongside persistent myths about short working hours and long holidays. There was a strong call for efforts to raise the status and appreciation of teachers nationally.
- Many teachers emphasised the need for improved funding for support staff and resources, citing worsening behaviour, rising special needs, and the need for more adults in classrooms.

## APPENDIX F

### Recommended pay levels from 1 September 2026<sup>163</sup>

#### *Classroom teachers' pay ranges and advisory pay points*

Spine point	England excl. the London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Fringe area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Outer London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Inner London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)
M1	34,069	3.5	35,602	3.5	39,196	3.5	41,729	3.5
M2	36,042	3.5	37,647	3.5	41,246	3.5	43,713	3.5
M3	38,400	3.5	39,979	3.5	43,403	3.5	45,787	3.5
M4	40,941	3.5	42,513	3.5	45,673	3.5	47,961	3.5
M5	43,529	3.5	45,070	3.5	48,438	3.5	50,666	3.5
M6	46,940	3.5	48,479	3.5	52,241	3.5	54,131	3.5
U1	49,134	3.5	50,625	3.5	54,047	3.5	59,650	3.5
U2	50,956	3.5	52,442	3.5	56,047	3.5	62,581	3.5
U3	52,835	3.5	54,328	3.5	58,120	3.5	64,684	3.5

#### *Leading Practitioner Pay Range*

	England excl. the London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Fringe area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Outer London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Inner London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)
Minimum	53,847	3.5	55,332	3.5	58,120	3.5	64,024	3.5
Maximum	81,861	3.5	83,347	3.5	86,136	3.5	92,043	3.5

#### *Classroom teachers' allowance ranges*

Allowance	Minimum (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Maximum (£)	Change from 2025 (%)
Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment 3	727	3.5	3,600	3.5
Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment 2	3,651	3.5	8,913	3.5
Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment 1	10,531	3.5	17,819	3.5
Special Educational Needs (SEN) Allowance	2,885	3.5	5,690	3.5

<sup>163</sup> All pay values have been rounded up to the nearest £.

## Leadership group pay range

	England excl. the London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Fringe area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Outer London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Inner London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)
Minimum	53,586	3.5	55,060	3.5	57,837	3.5	63,709	3.5
Maximum	148,829	3.5	150,301	3.5	153,042	3.5	158,863	3.5

## Head teacher group pay ranges

Band	England excl. the London area (£)	Fringe area (£)	Outer London area (£)	Inner London area (£)
1	60,619 - 80,652	62,102 – 82,118	64,871 – 84,865	70,754 – 90,686
2	63,688 - 86,796	65,166 – 88,273	67,940 – 91,010	73,824 – 96,831
3	68,691 - 93,414	70,169 – 94,885	72,940 – 97,624	78,820 – 103,450
4	73,827 - 100,536	75,310 – 101,999	78,074 – 104,742	83,960 – 110,562
5	81,457 - 110,881	82,939 – 112,353	85,715 – 115,095	91,594 – 120,916
6	87,664 - 122,305	89,153 – 123,776	91,921 – 126,515	97,799 – 132,339
7	94,349 – 134,834	95,836 – 136,298	98,602 – 139,041	104,485 – 144,864
8	104,059 – 148,829	105,536 – 150,301	108,311 – 153,042	114,189 – 158,863

## Pay range and advisory points for unqualified teachers

Spine point	England excl. the London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Fringe area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Outer London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)	Inner London area (£)	Change from 2025 (%)
1	23,732	5.0	24,909	3.5	27,727	3.5	29,336	3.5
2	26,075	3.5	27,589	3.5	30,412	3.5	32,018	3.5
3	28,758	3.5	30,272	3.5	33,094	3.5	34,702	3.5
4	31,124	3.5	32,636	3.5	35,465	3.5	37,068	3.5
5	33,811	3.5	35,321	3.5	38,146	3.5	39,747	3.5
6	36,494	3.5	38,004	3.5	40,831	3.5	42,429	3.5

## National Living Wage

The National Living Wage (NLW) (for those aged 21 and over) is planned to increase to £12.71 per hour in April 2026.<sup>164</sup> Employers should ensure that implementation of the pay award complies with the National Living Wage policy. We also expect that the Department will want to satisfy itself that employers are compliant.

<sup>164</sup> GOV.UK (2025) National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates - <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

## Recommended pay levels from 1 September 2027<sup>165</sup>

### Classroom teachers' pay ranges and advisory pay points

Spine point	England excl. the London area (£)	Change from 2026 (%)	Fringe area (£)	Change from 2026 (%)	Outer London area (£)	Change from 2026 (%)	Inner London area (£)	Change from 2026 (%)
M1	35,092	3.0	36,671	3.0	40,372	3.0	42,981	3.0
M2	37,124	3.0	38,777	3.0	42,484	3.0	45,025	3.0
M3	39,552	3.0	41,179	3.0	44,706	3.0	47,161	3.0
M4	42,170	3.0	43,789	3.0	47,044	3.0	49,400	3.0
M5	44,835	3.0	46,423	3.0	49,892	3.0	52,186	3.0
M6	48,349	3.0	49,934	3.0	53,809	3.0	55,755	3.0
U1	50,609	3.0	52,144	3.0	55,669	3.0	61,440	3.0
U2	52,485	3.0	54,016	3.0	57,729	3.0	64,459	3.0
U3	54,421	3.0	55,958	3.0	59,864	3.0	66,625	3.0

### Leading Practitioner Pay Range

	England excl. the London area (£)	Change from 2026 (%)	Fringe area (£)	Change from 2026 (%)	Outer London area (£)	Change from 2026 (%)	Inner London area (£)	Change from 2026 (%)
Minimum	55,463	3.0	56,992	3.0	59,864	3.0	65,945	3.0
Maximum	84,317	3.0	85,848	3.0	88,721	3.0	94,805	3.0

### Classroom teachers' allowance ranges

Allowance	Minimum (£)	Change from 2026 (%)	Maximum (£)	Change from 2026 (%)
Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment 3	749	3.0	3708	3.0
Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment 2	3,761	3.0	9,181	3.0
Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment 1	10,847	3.0	18,354	3.0
Special Educational Needs (SEN) Allowance	2,972	3.0	5,861	3.0

<sup>165</sup> All pay values have been rounded up to the nearest £.

### **Leadership group pay range**

	<b>England excl. the London area (£)</b>	<b>Change from 2026 (%)</b>	<b>Fringe area (£)</b>	<b>Change from 2026 (%)</b>	<b>Outer London area (£)</b>	<b>Change from 2026 (%)</b>	<b>Inner London area (£)</b>	<b>Change from 2026 (%)</b>
Minimum	55,194	3.0	56,712	3.0	59,573	3.0	65,621	3.0
Maximum	153,294	3.0	154,811	3.0	157,634	3.0	163,629	3.0

### **Head teacher group pay ranges**

<b>Band</b>	<b>England excl. the London area (£)</b>	<b>Fringe area (£)</b>	<b>Outer London area (£)</b>	<b>Inner London area (£)</b>
1	62,438 - 83,072	63,966 - 84,582	66,818 – 87,411	72,877 – 93,407
2	65,599 – 89,400	67,121 – 90,922	69,979 – 93,741	76,039 - 99,736
3	70,752 – 96,217	72,275 – 97,732	75,129 – 100,553	81,185 – 106,554
4	76,042 – 103,553	77,570 – 105,059	80,417 – 107,885	86,479 – 113,879
5	83,901 – 114,208	85,428 – 115,724	88,287 – 118,548	94,342 – 124,554
6	90,294 – 125,975	91,828 – 127,490	94,679 – 130,311	100,733 – 136,310
7	97,180 – 138,880	98,712 – 140,387	101,561 – 143,213	107,620 – 149,210
8	107,181 – 153,294	108,703 – 154,811	111,561 – 157,634	117,615 – 163,629

### **Pay range and advisory points for unqualified teachers**

<b>Spine point</b>	<b>England excl. the London area (£)</b>	<b>Change from 2026 (%)</b>	<b>Fringe area (£)</b>	<b>Change from 2026 (%)</b>	<b>Outer London area (£)</b>	<b>Change from 2026 (%)</b>	<b>Inner London area (£)</b>	<b>Change from 2026 (%)</b>
1	24,444	3.0	25,657	3.0	28,559	3.0	30,217	3.0
2	26,858	3.0	28,417	3.0	31,325	3.0	32,979	3.0
3	29,621	3.0	31,181	3.0	34,087	3.0	35,744	3.0
4	32,058	3.0	33,616	3.0	36,529	3.0	38,181	3.0
5	34,826	3.0	36,381	3.0	39,291	3.0	40,940	3.0
6	37,589	3.0	39,145	3.0	42,056	3.0	43,702	3.0





