The teaching profession under pressure

Global challenges and the case of England

Dr Wonyong Park | EDUC1033 Week 9 · Lecture



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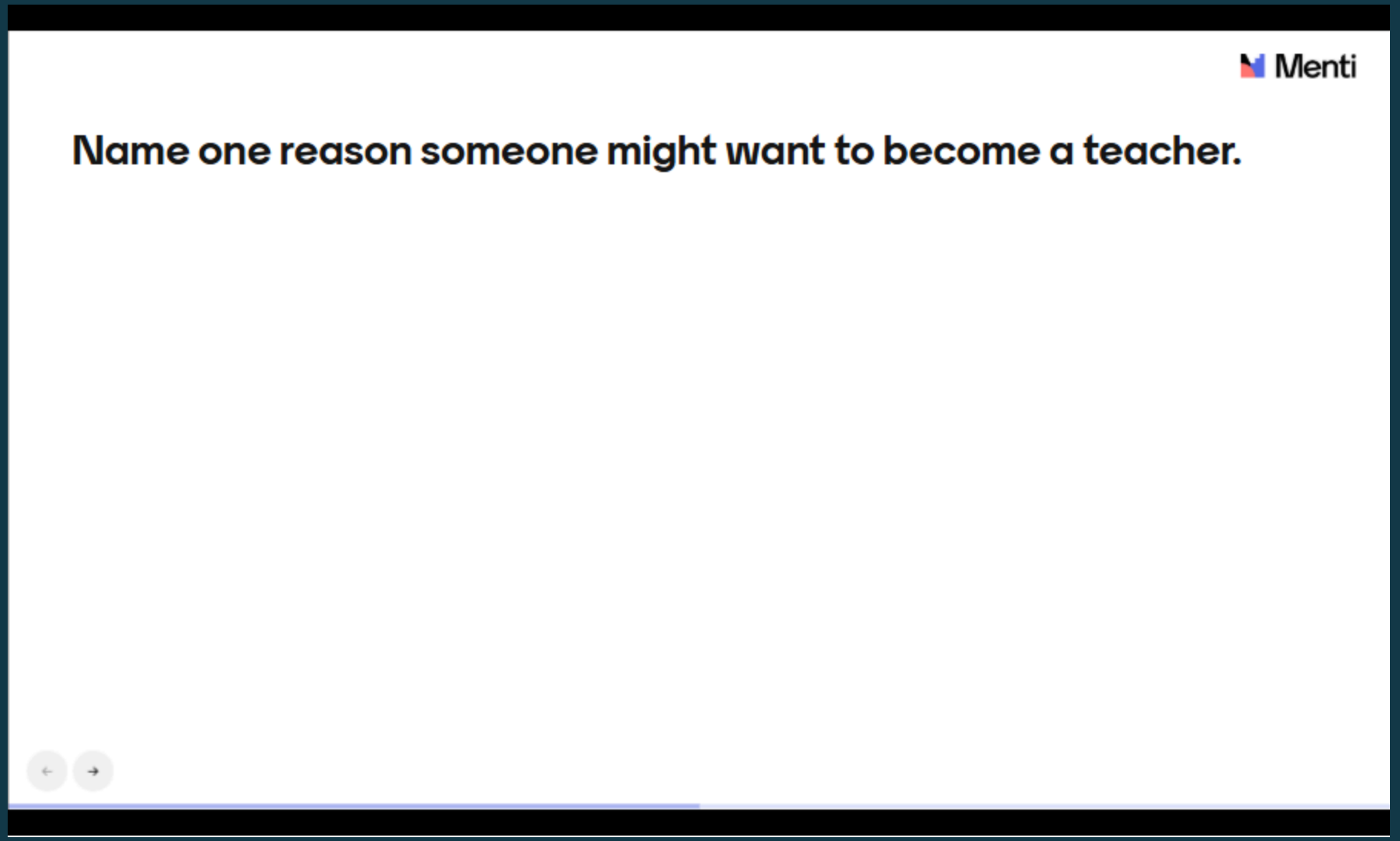
Session outline

1. What would count as a crisis in teacher supply?
2. International evidence on teachers' work
3. England: recruitment, retention, workload and pay
4. Policy responses and a summary of the evidence

Activity 1

In pairs | 3 minutes

Open Mentimeter ↗



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Emergency measures needed to stop teachers quitting, say Lib Dems



The Lib Dems say schools are approaching an "existential crisis" in teacher retention

Emilia Belli

Political reporter

31 August 2026

Burnt out teachers urgently need better working hours and more support to stop them leaving the profession, the Liberal Democrats say, as the new term approaches.

The Guardian UK

News | Opinion | Sport | Culture | Lifestyle

Education | Schools | Teachers | Universities | Students

Schools

This article is more than **5 months old**

Number of teachers in England's state schools drops for second year in row

Despite Labour's promises to increase recruitment, school census shows a fall of nearly 2,000 teachers since last year



Labour's 2024 manifesto included a pledge to 'recruit 6,500 new teachers in key subjects to set children up for life, work and the future'. Photograph: Ben Birchall/PA

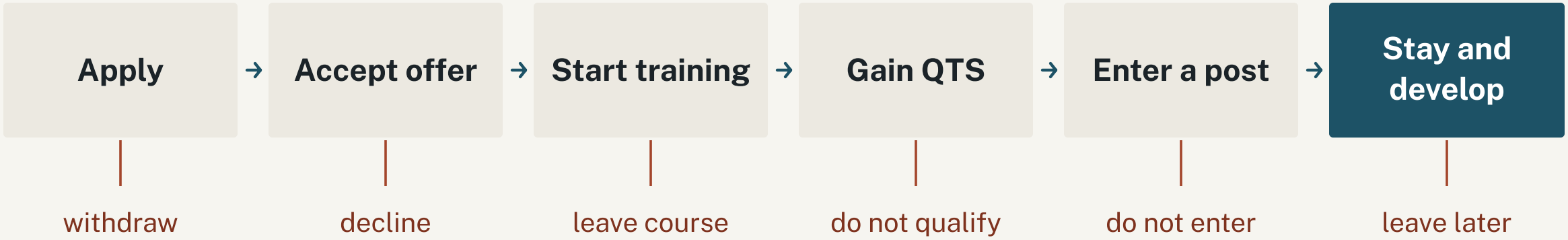
What would count as a crisis in teacher supply?

"Crisis" suggests a serious problem that existing arrangements are failing to manage. In discussions of teaching, the word can refer to several connected problems.

Recruitment	Too few people apply to train, start training or enter teaching posts.
Retention	Too many teachers leave a school, the state-funded sector or the occupation.
Matching	Teachers are scarce in particular subjects or places, such as physics or some regions.
Working conditions	Teachers in post find the work difficult to sustain.

An education system can improve on one of these measures while continuing to struggle on another.

Teacher supply works like a pipeline



Long & Bridges (2026), section 2; Worth & Scott (2026), pp. 10–17; report section 1.

International evidence on teachers' work

UNESCO's estimate of global teacher need, and the OECD's TALIS 2024 survey of teachers' working lives.



A classroom in Japan · Darklanlan, Wikimedia Commons, CC0

UNESCO estimates that 44 million more teachers are needed by 2030

The estimate covers the additional primary and secondary teachers needed to achieve universal education at these levels. Around 15 million of them are in sub-Saharan Africa.



Additional teachers needed by 2030, total 44 million

Expansion

More children need places in school, or the pupil population is growing. This need exists even if every teacher stays.

Replacement

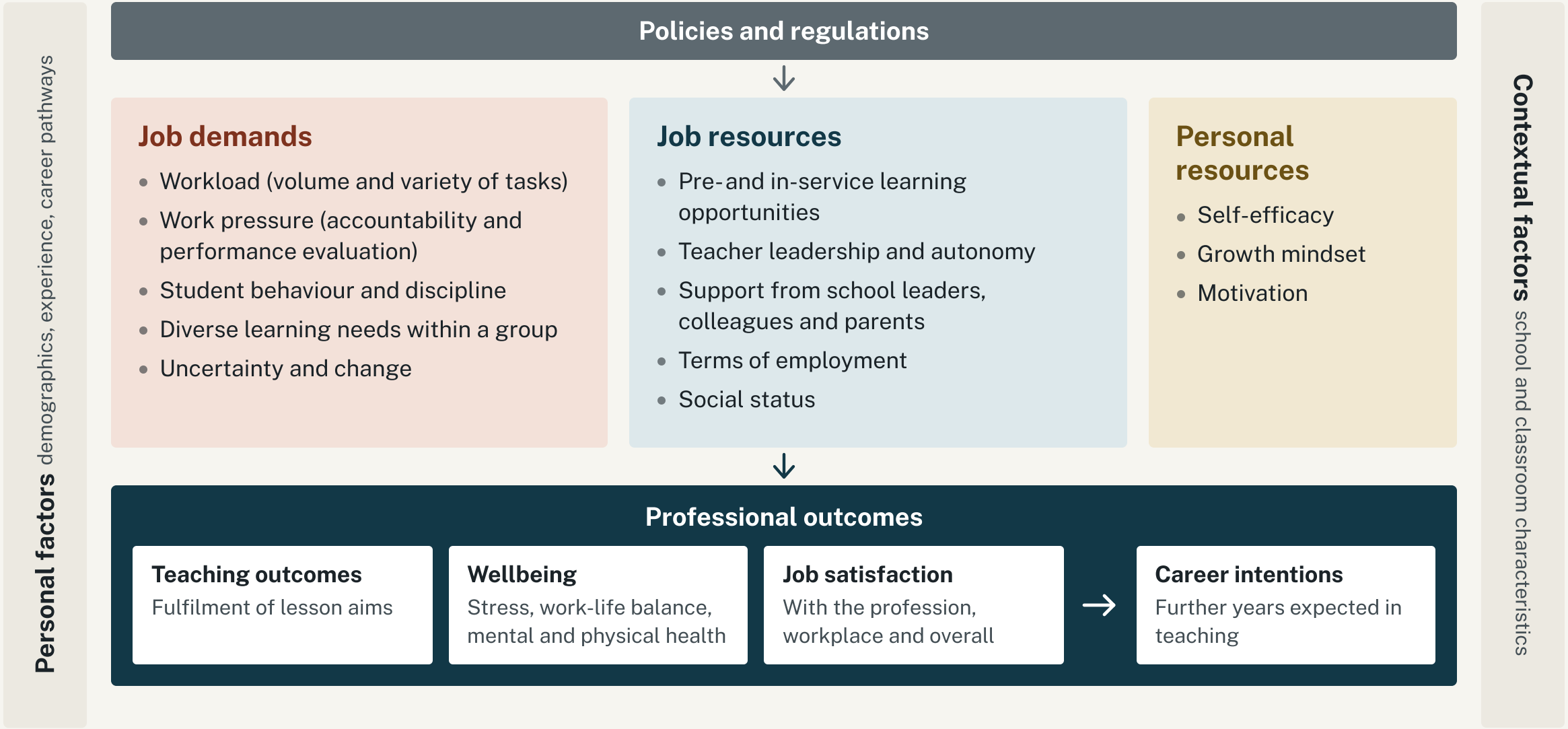
Teachers retire, change occupation or leave. A system with falling pupil numbers can still face shortages if departures are high.

Distribution

International recruitment moves teachers between systems, with effects in both the sending and receiving countries.

UNESCO & International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2024), *Global report on teachers*.

The OECD links job demands and resources to teachers' outcomes



OECD (2025), *Results from TALIS 2024*, Figure 1, p. 24, after Bakker & Demerouti (2017) and Granziera et al. (2020). © OECD, CC BY 4.0.

TALIS 2024: what the survey covers

The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey asks teachers and school leaders about their work. Its main comparisons are of **lower secondary** teachers. Results were published in 2025.

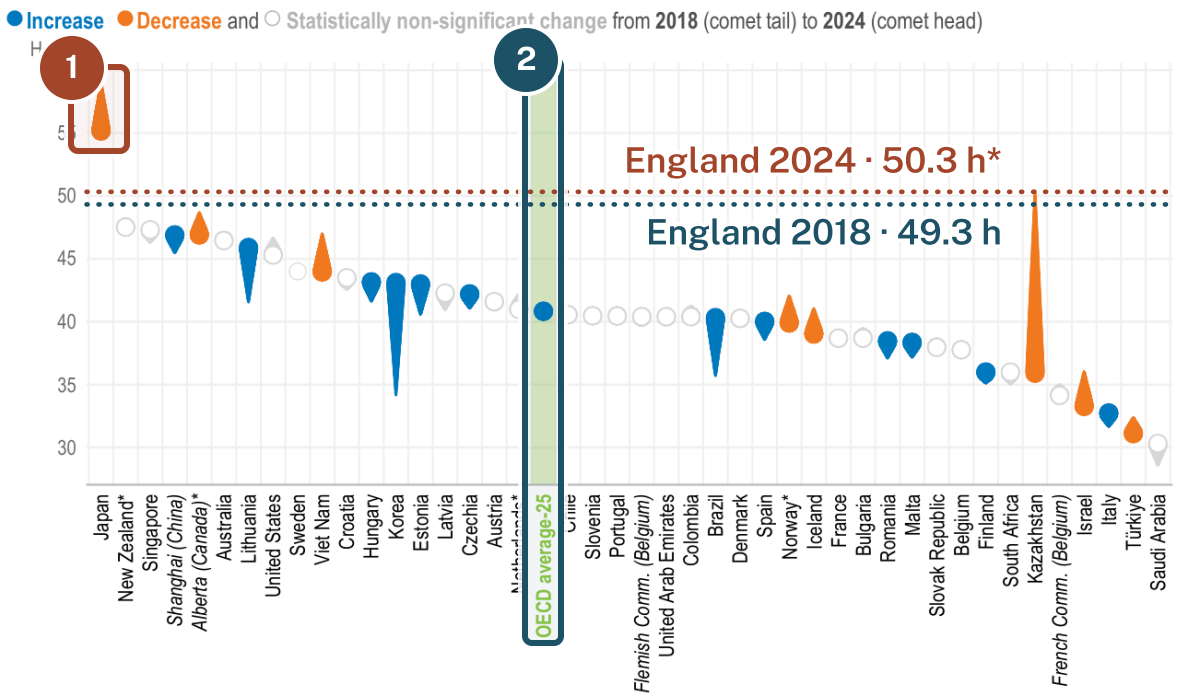
Self-report	Teachers describe their own experiences of support, workload and stress.
OECD average	The average across participating OECD education systems.
England	England took part in TALIS 2018 but **not in TALIS 2024**. Evidence on England in this session comes from DfE statistics, the Working Lives survey and NFER.

OECD (2025), Reader's Guide; OECD TALIS participation lists.

Reported working hours differ widely between systems

Figure 3.2. Change in teachers' total working hours, from 2018 to 2024

Average number of hours full-time lower secondary teachers report spending on job-related tasks during the most recent complete calendar week



Note: *Estimates should be interpreted with caution due to higher risk of non-response bias.
Source: OECD, *TALIS 2018* and *TALIS 2024 Databases*, Table 3.8.

Weekly hours reported by full-time lower secondary teachers. Each comet runs from 2018 (tail) to 2024 (head).

1. **Japan** reports around **55 hours a week**, after a significant fall since 2018.

2. The **OECD average** is about **41 hours a week**.

Chart: OECD (2025), Fig. 3.2, p. 108 (CC BY 4.0). England: Jerrim & Sims (2019), Table 3.1.1; IFF/UCL (2025), *Working lives* wave 3, §3.
2018: full-time lower secondary. 2024*: full-time state secondary. Different surveys and populations; indicative comparison.

Most teachers report job satisfaction, and some report high stress



~9 in 10

lower secondary teachers are **satisfied with their job** (OECD average)



19%

experience **stress at work "a lot"**

A teacher can **value working with pupils and the purpose of teaching** while finding **workload, pay, leadership or accountability** difficult.

TALIS asks about several aspects of wellbeing: **stress**, **time for personal life**, and effects on **mental and physical health**.

Interviews with teachers in England who had left or were considering leaving also describe **valued relationships with pupils** alongside **pressures of the job**.

OECD (2025), pp. 73–76; IFF Research & UCL IOE (2026).

England: recruitment, retention, workload and pay

DfE statistics, NFER's annual labour market report, and the Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey.



Albany Senior School, Enfield, 1943 · Ministry of Information, public domain

How England's system is organised

England, not the UK

Education is devolved. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland differ on qualifications, training routes and early career support.

State-funded schools include maintained schools and academies.

QTS and the PGCE

Qualified teacher status is a professional status for meeting the Teachers' Standards. A **PGCE** is an academic award.

An undergraduate Education degree does not automatically award QTS.

Headcount and FTE

Headcount counts people; FTE counts full-time posts. A teacher moving to part-time work reduces FTE.

Primary pupil numbers are falling, while secondary and special schools follow different patterns.

Long & Bridges (2026); DfE, *Get Into Teaching*; Worth & Scott (2026), pp. 4, 8–10.

Routes into teaching in England

ROUTE AND SHARE		IN BRIEF
Undergraduate ITT	**16.6%**	Degree with preparation for QTS
Teacher degree apprenticeship	**0.6%**	Employed degree-level training
Postgraduate, fee-funded	**70.2%**	For graduates; QTS, often a PGCE
Postgraduate, salaried	**12.6%**	Training in a salaried school post
Assessment-only		Experienced teachers without QTS
Overseas-trained		Recognition, subject to criteria



Partnership

Schools provide practice and mentoring. Universities contribute research, subject knowledge, educational study and academic awards. Many routes involve both.



After QTS

Early career teachers (ECTs) receive a two-year induction. The Early Career Teacher Entitlement, introduced from September 2025, links to the ITT and Early Career Framework.

Long & Bridges (2026), §§2.1, 3.2; DfE, *Initial Teacher Training Census 2025/26* (provisional); shares calculated from entrant counts.

A critical perspective on teacher education

In *Teacher Education in Crisis*, Ellis and Childs (2024) argue that reforms in England **intensified central control** over training providers and **constrained the contribution of universities**.

Their account draws on the **experiences of teacher educators**.

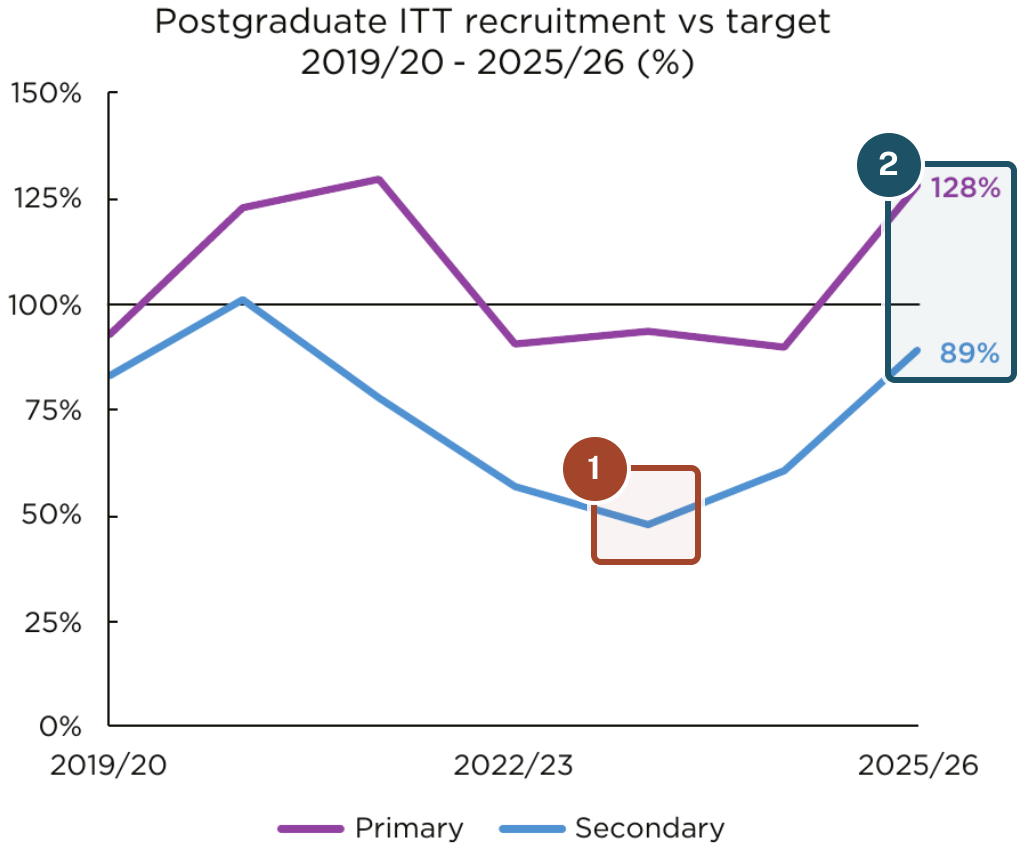
It connects teacher supply to a wider question: how **practical competence**, **knowledge of subjects and pupils**, and **professional judgement** fit together in teacher preparation, and **who decides**.



Fortepan 3612, Wikimedia Commons, public domain

Ellis & Childs (2024), "Introducing the crisis", in V. Ellis (Ed.), *Teacher Education in Crisis*, pp. 1–26.

Recruitment to postgraduate training rose in 2025/26



Source: DfE ITT Census.

Postgraduate initial teacher training (ITT) recruitment as a percentage of the DfE target.

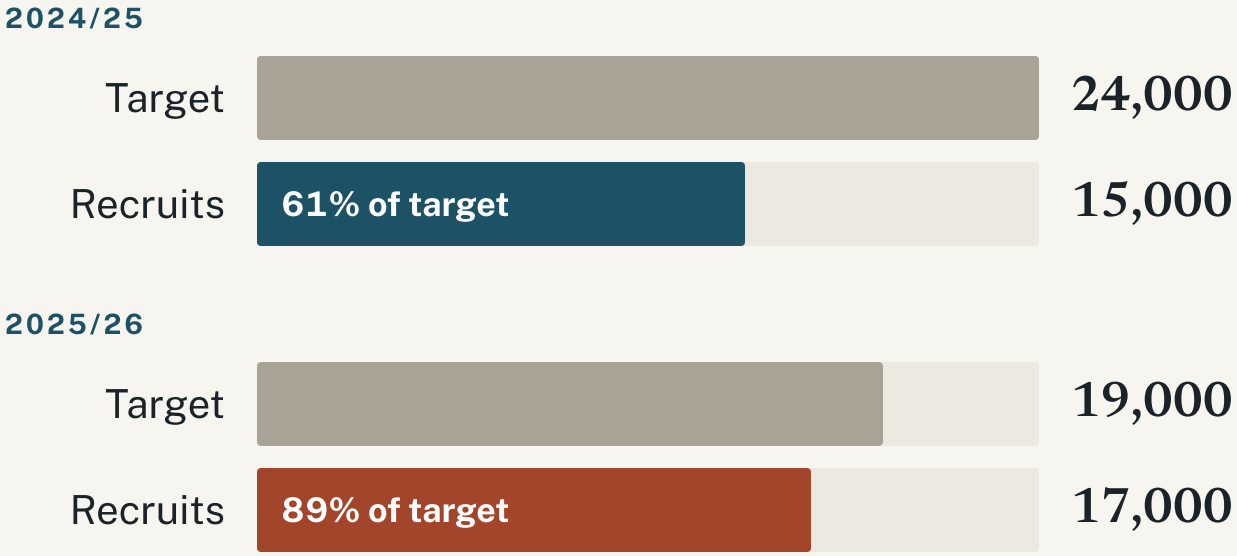
1. Secondary recruitment fell to **under half of target** in 2023/24.

2. In 2025/26, primary reached **128%** of target and secondary **89%**. NFER links the improvement partly to weaker job opportunities for graduates elsewhere.

Worth & Scott (2026), NFER, p. 10, using DfE ITT Census data.

Both the number of recruits and the target changed

Secondary postgraduate ITT, rounded figures



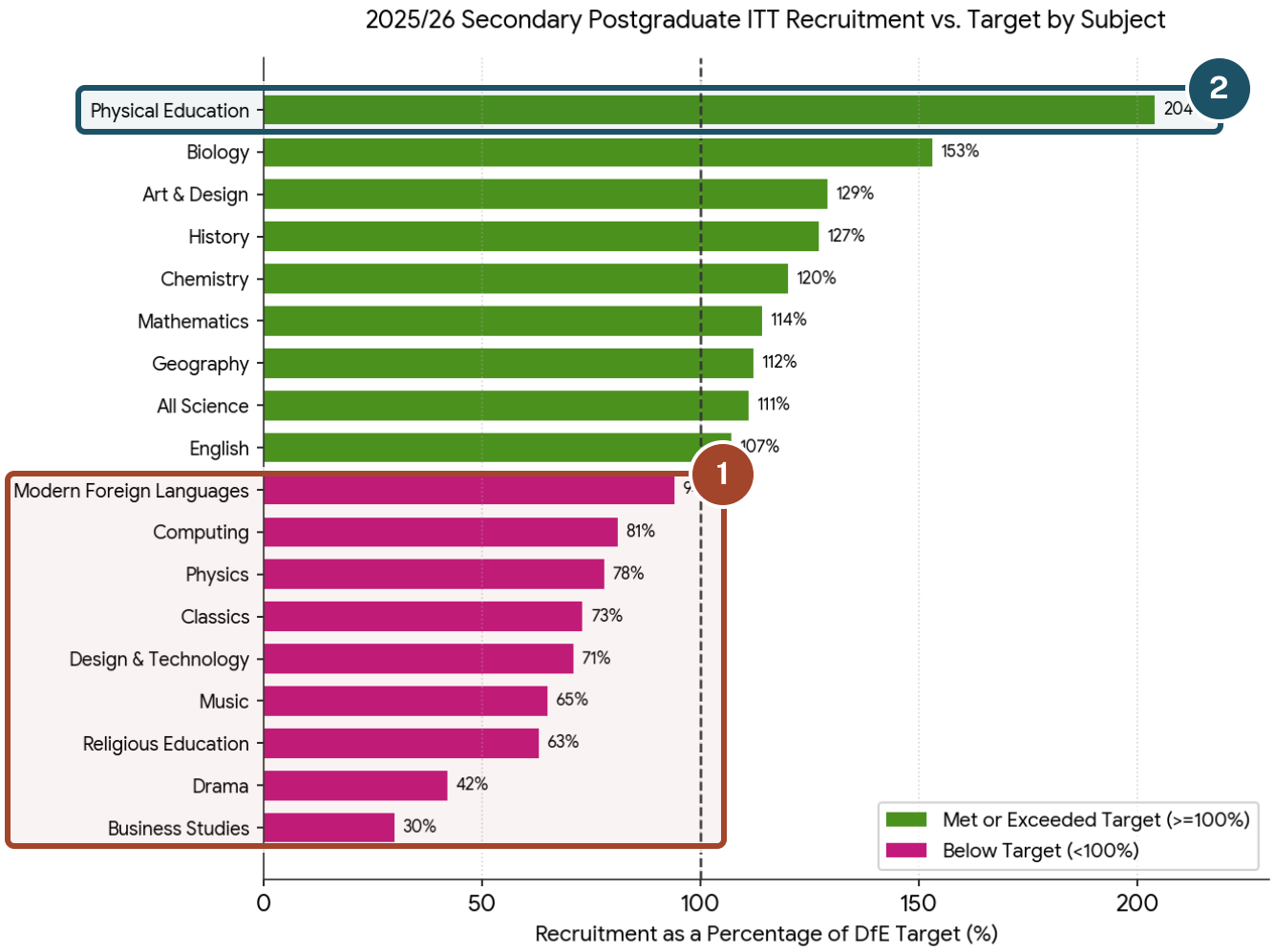
Recruits rose by about **2,000**. The target fell by about **5,000**. Both changes raised the percentage of target met.

A target is an estimate of future need, based on pupil numbers, retention, returners and other sources of teachers.

Part of the rise in the percentage came from a lower target.

Worth & Scott (2026), p. 10; report section 11.

Recruitment against target varies widely by subject



Source: NFER analysis of DfE Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Census (2025/26).

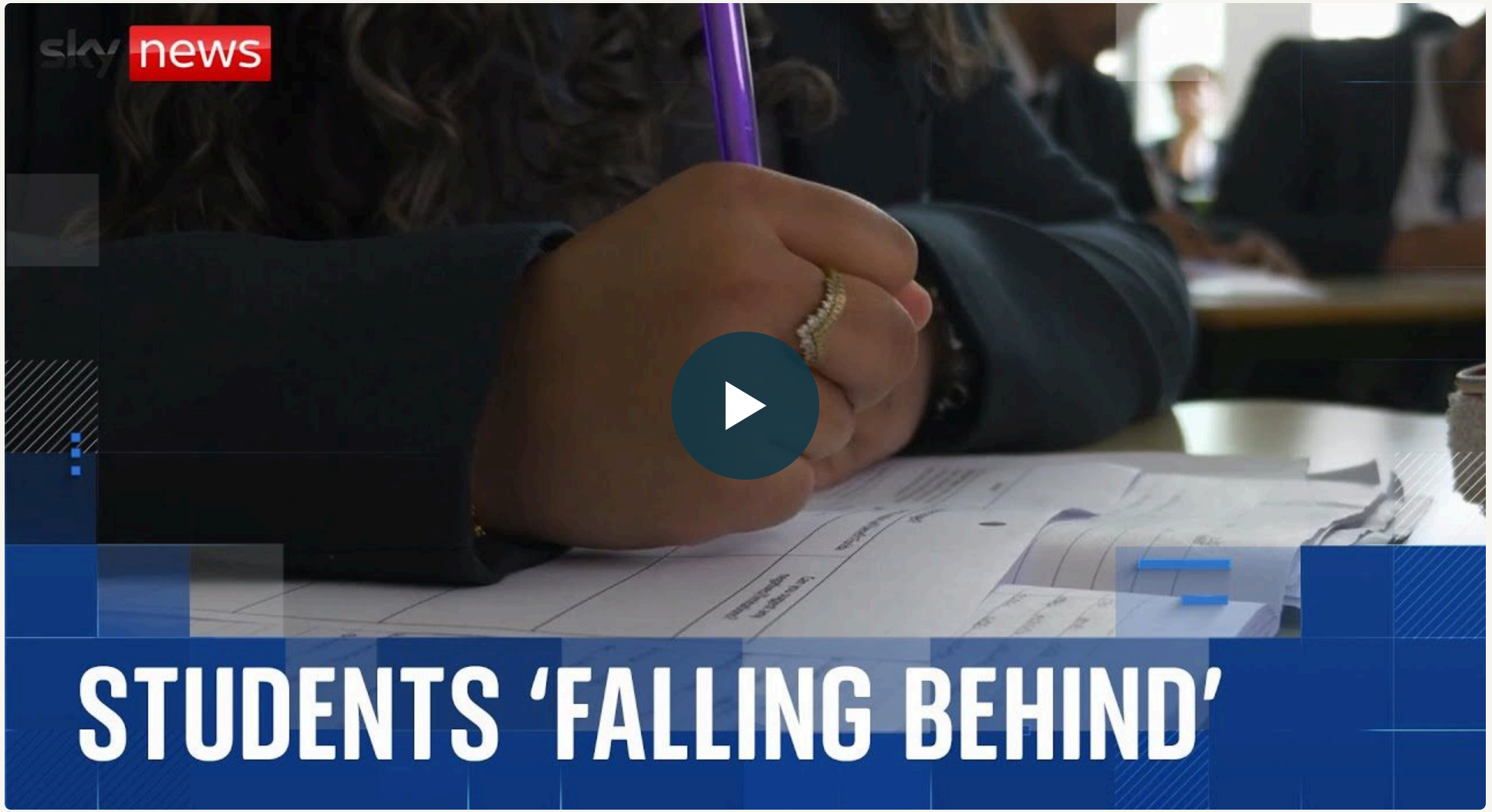
Secondary postgraduate ITT recruitment by subject, 2025/26, as a percentage of each subject's target.

1. **Nine of eighteen** subjects were below target, including business studies (30%), physics (78%) and computing (81%).

2. **Physical education** recruited twice its target (204%). Extra trainees in one subject cannot fill vacancies in another.

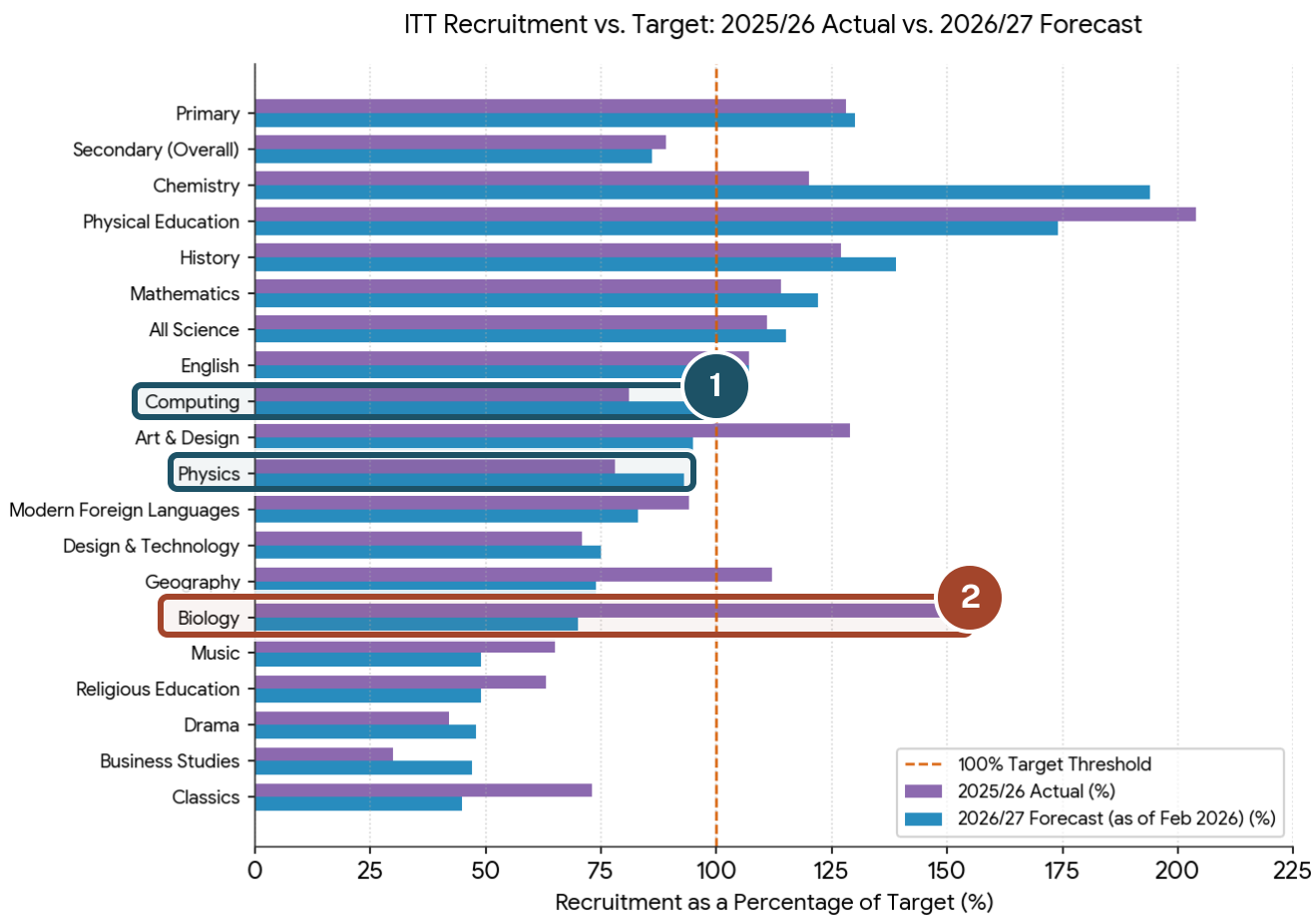
NFER analysis of DfE ITT Census 2025/26; Worth & Scott (2026), p. 11.

Students' accounts of teacher shortages



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxp2Sj6gl50 · Sky News, *Students say they are 'falling behind' due to chronic teacher shortages*

NFER's forecast for 2026/27 shows changes by subject



Source: NFER analysis of DfE ITT Census and Apply data up to February 2026.

Purple: 2025/26 recruitment. Blue: NFER forecast for 2026/27, based on applications to February 2026.

1. **Computing** (~99%) and **physics** (~93%) are forecast to come close to target.

2. **Biology** is forecast to fall from 153% to ~70%. Secondary overall: ~86%.

NFER analysis of DfE ITT Census and Apply data to February 2026 (Worth & Scott, 2026).

International recruitment and the challenge of staying

England widened access to training bursaries for international physics and languages candidates. In physics, **63% of trainees were non-UK nationals in 2025/26**, up from 12% in 2021.

Visa costs

"super expensive to get a visa"

International trainee on the cost of staying after training (p. 53)

School sponsorship and upfront immigration costs can obstruct entry into teaching jobs.

Housing support

"leaving them to find somewhere to live?"

International teacher on gaps in recruitment agency support (p. 37)

Securing a post can still leave teachers without practical help to relocate.

Workload

"I never worked [such] long hours back [home]"

International teacher comparing working hours (p. 66)

Tailored induction, mentoring and manageable working conditions matter for retention.

Interview excerpts: DfE / IFF Research (2025), pp. 37, 53, 66 (2024 fieldwork). Physics figures: NFER (2026).

About two in three teachers from the 2020 cohort remained after five years

89.7% of teachers who **qualified in 2024** were in England's state-funded schools **one year later**

67.4% of the **2020 cohort** were there **five years after** qualifying

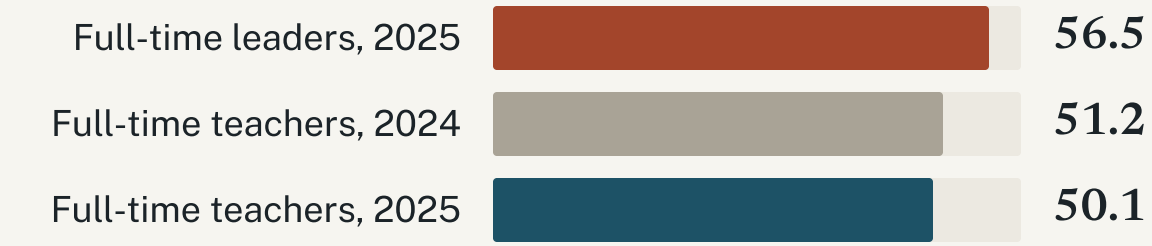
Some leavers move to independent schools, other UK nations or other education roles, and some return later.

Experience carries knowledge of subjects, pupils and school routines. Departures also add mentoring and extra classes for colleagues.

DfE (2026a), *School workforce in England: reporting year 2025* (June 2026); Long & Bridges (2026), section 2.4.

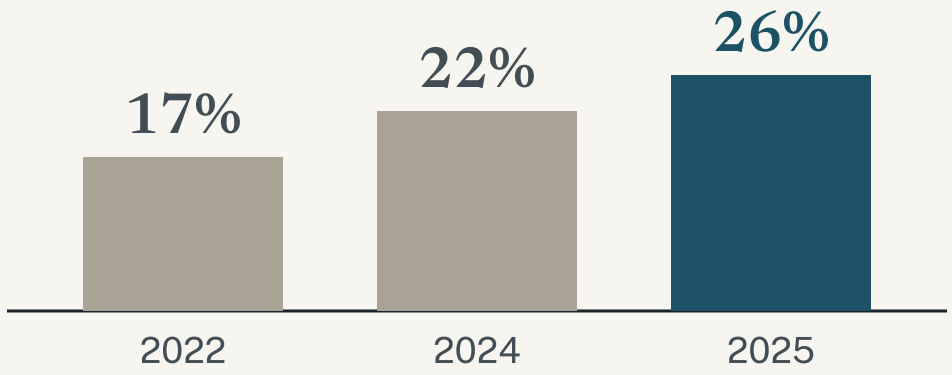
Reported hours have fallen slightly, and more teachers find workload acceptable

Hours in the most recent full term-time week



Working Lives survey, Wave 4, January–May 2025; 10,808 teachers and leaders

"My workload is acceptable": teachers and leaders

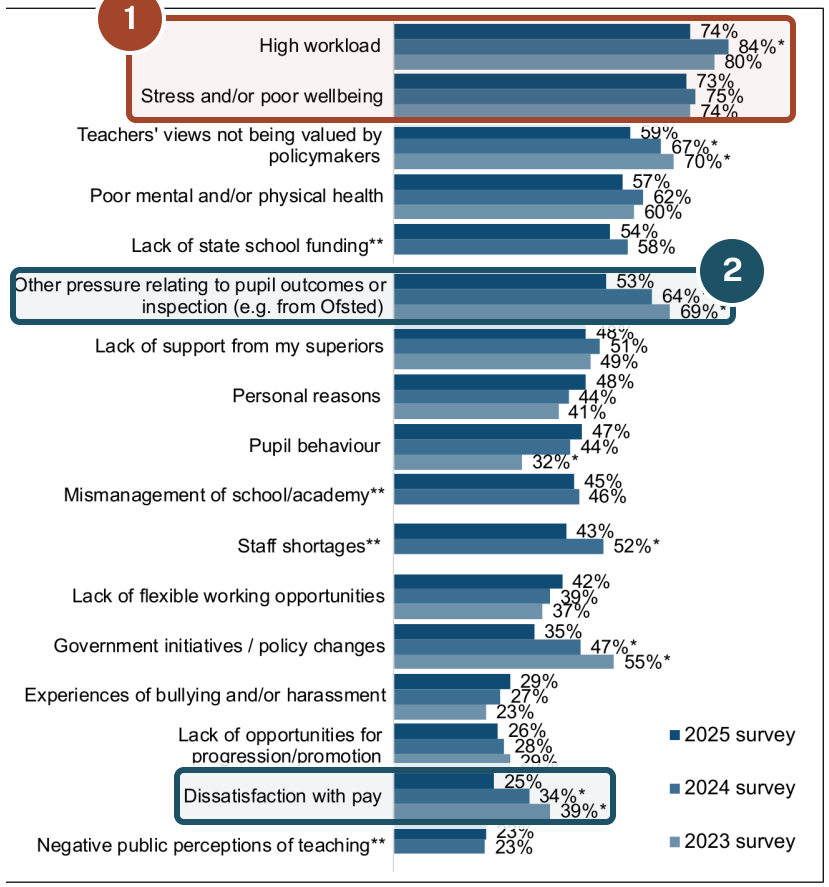


About three in four teachers and leaders did not agree that their workload was acceptable in 2025.

IFF Research & UCL IOE (2025), *Working lives of teachers and leaders: Wave 4*, pp. 6–8.

Leavers most often cite workload and stress

Figure 11.1 Proportion of leavers citing different reasons for leaving the English state school education sector



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. M6. How important were the following factors in your decision to leave the state education sector? Single response. All who have left the state education sector (wave 2, 2023, n=442) (wave 3, 2024, n=520) (wave 4, 2025, n=461). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2025 survey. **Indicates response option not asked in 2023 survey.

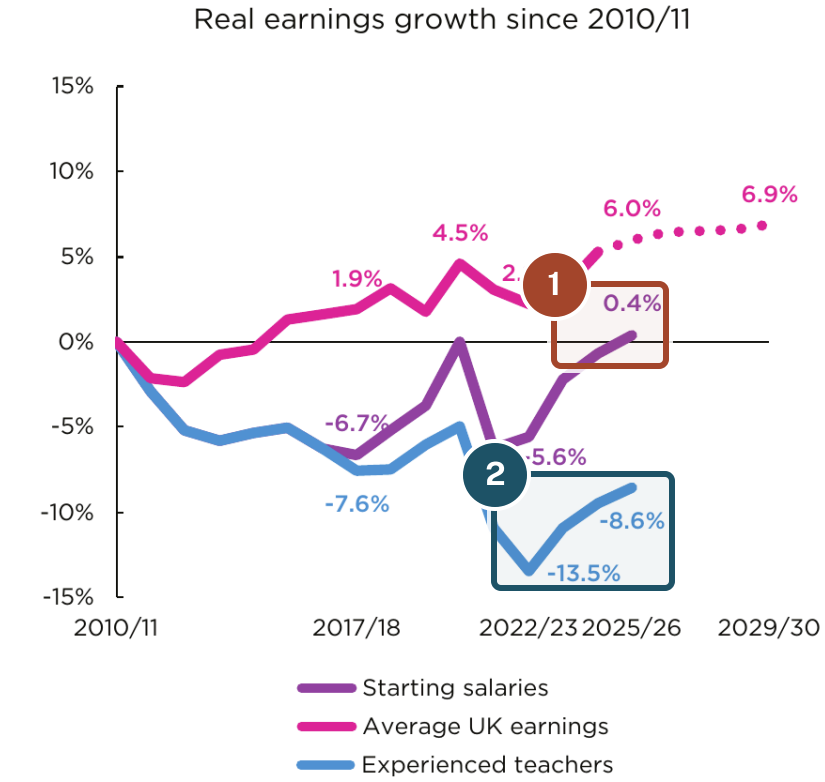
Reasons rated important by teachers and leaders who left England's state schools, surveys of 2023, 2024 and 2025 (n = 461 in 2025).

1. In 2025, **74%** of leavers cited high workload and **73%** stress or poor wellbeing.

2. Fewer leavers now cite **inspection pressure** (69% to 53% since 2023), government initiatives (55% to 35%) and **pay** (39% to 25%).

IFF Research & UCL IOE (2025), Figure 11.1, p. 36; pp. 35–36. Crown copyright, Open Government Licence v3.0.

Starting salaries have returned to their 2010/11 real level; experienced teachers' pay has not



Note: 'Experienced teachers' refers to teachers at the top of the upper pay scale. The dotted line represents the forecast of real earnings growth based on OBR projections from March 2026.

Sources: School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document; Office for Budget Responsibility.

Real earnings growth since 2010/11, adjusted for prices. The dotted line is an OBR projection from March 2026.

1. **Starting salaries** in 2025/26 are back to their 2010/11 real level (+0.4%).

2. **Experienced teachers'** real pay is **8.6% below** 2010/11, after a low of −13.5% in 2022/23. Average UK earnings rose 6.0% over the same period.

Worth & Scott (2026), p. 18. Sources: School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document; Office for Budget Responsibility.

Policy responses

The government's pledge of 6,500 additional teachers: where it came from, what has been done, and how it is going.



Julian Herzog, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 4.0

Where the pledge of 6,500 additional teachers came from

June 2024 — **Labour's election manifesto** promises to "recruit 6,500 new expert teachers", paid for by ending private schools' tax breaks, including VAT on fees.

July 2024 — Labour wins the election. Education Secretary **Bridget Phillipson** launches the recruitment drive on 8 July.

April 2025 — The **National Audit Office** warns of uncertainties as secondary and college student numbers grow, and asks for a delivery plan.

Feb 2026 — The DfE publishes its **delivery plan**.

What the pledge measures

- At least **6,500 more FTE teachers** by the end of this Parliament than in 2023/24
- Baseline: **284,626 FTE**
- Covers **secondary schools, special schools and FE colleges**
- Primary schools are left out because primary pupil numbers are falling

Labour Party (2024); Long & Bridges (2026), p. 7; NAO (2025); DfE (2026b), pp. 4–7.

What the government has done: attract, retain, develop

The DfE reports around **£700 million** of measures since July 2024, grouped in three areas.

Attract

- Bursaries, scholarships and salary grants worth up to £31,000 tax-free
- Simpler teaching apprenticeships
- Support for applicants and returners

Retain

- School teacher pay up by nearly 10% since July 2024
- Retention payments up to £6,000 after tax in shortage subjects
- Flexible working, including planning time at home

Develop

- Early career support
- Professional learning
- Routes into specialist and leadership roles

DfE (2026b), pp. 4–5, 8–18; report section 18.

How the pledge is going, and the criticism

Progress reported

4,654 of 6,500 additional FTE

DfE workforce data, June 2026



- School teacher leaver rate at **9%**, the lowest since 2010 outside the pandemic
- Secondary vacancies at their lowest for five years
- 17,274 teachers returned to state schools in the latest year

Criticism and debate

1. **National Audit Office (2025):** secondary schools and colleges face a challenge finding enough teachers for growing student numbers.
2. **NFER (2026):** shortages continue in science, maths and computing, and special schools and alternative provision need more deliberate workforce planning.
3. **Scope:** the count leaves out primary schools, where teacher numbers are falling with pupil numbers.

DfE (2026a; 2026b), pp. 4–9; NAO (2025); Worth & Scott (2026), pp. 4–9.

Summary of the evidence on England

Indicators that have improved

- Postgraduate ITT recruitment: primary **128%**, secondary **89%** of target in 2025/26
- Full-time teachers' reported hours: **51.2 to 50.1**
- Workload rated acceptable: **17%** (2022) to **26%** (2025)
- Starting salaries **back to their 2010/11 real level**
- **4,654** additional FTE towards the 6,500 pledge

Pressures that continue

- Subjects below target, e.g. business studies **30%**, physics **78%**, computing **81%**
- **67.4%** of the 2020 cohort in state-funded schools after five years
- About **three in four** do not find workload acceptable
- Experienced teachers' real pay **8.6% below** 2010/11
- **74%** of leavers cite workload; **73%** cite stress

The picture differs between subjects, schools and career stages.

Report sections 11–20; sources as on previous slides.

Key takeaways

Teacher supply	Recruitment, retention and where teachers are needed shape the workforce.
Job satisfaction	Teachers can value their work while finding its demands difficult to sustain.
Teacher education	Practical experience, specialist knowledge and professional judgement belong together.
Sustainable improvement	Fair pay, manageable workload and support throughout teachers' careers all matter.