The teaching profession under pressure

Seminar: helping teachers stay

Dr Wonyong Park | EDUC1033 Week 9 · Seminar

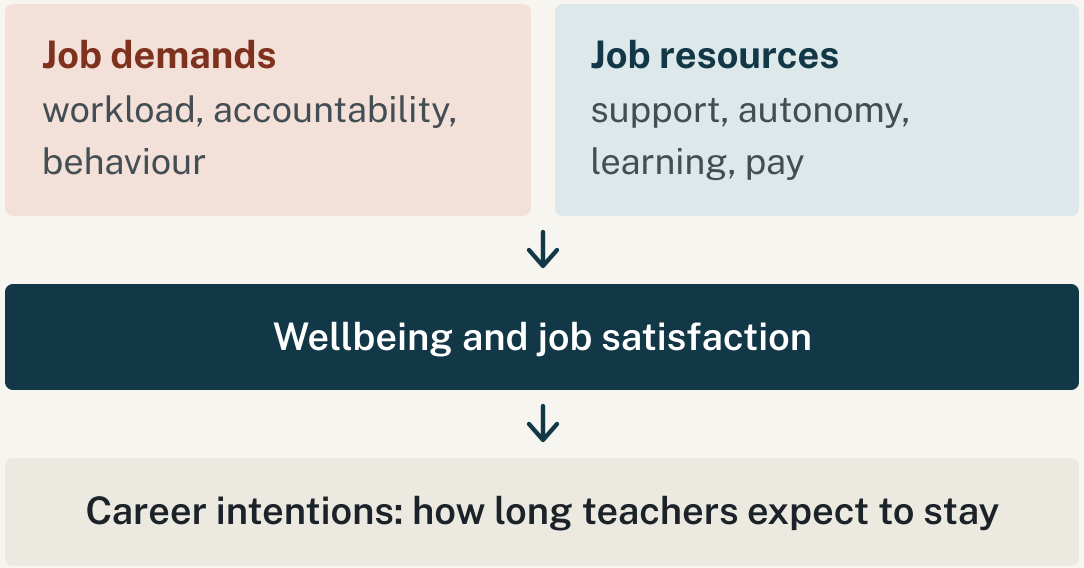


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Recap: what we mean by teacher supply

- **Recruitment:** enough people training and entering posts
- **Retention:** teachers staying in school, sector and occupation
- **Matching:** specialists in the right subjects and places
- **Working conditions:** work that teachers can sustain

Job demands–resources model (OECD)



Report sections 1 and 3; OECD (2025), Figure 1, p. 24.

Recap: recruitment and retention in England

Recruitment, 2025/26

128% of target for **primary** postgraduate training

89% of target for **secondary**, up from under half in 2023/24

9 of 18 secondary subjects **below target**, e.g. physics 78%, computing 81%

Retention

89.7% of 2024 qualifiers still in state schools **one year** later

67.4% of the 2020 cohort still there **five years** later

The 6,500 pledge



4,654

additional FTE reported in June 2026

Elected in July 2024, Labour pledged to add 6,500 teachers in England's secondary and special schools and further education colleges, linking recruitment, retention and professional development.

Worth & Scott (2026), pp. 10–11; DfE (2026a); DfE (2026b), *6,500 additional teachers delivery plan*. Cover: Crown copyright, OGL v3.0.

Recap: workload, leaving and pay

Workload

50.1 hours a week in term time for full-time teachers (2025)

Only **26%** of teachers and leaders find their workload acceptable

Why teachers leave

74% of 2025 leavers cite high workload; **73%** stress or poor wellbeing

89% of those considering leaving cite each of these

Pay

Starting salaries are **back to their 2010/11 real level**

Experienced teachers' real pay is **8.6% below** 2010/11

IFF Research & UCL IOE (2025); DfE WLTL Wave 4 (2025); Worth & Scott (2026), pp. 18, 20.

Activity 1

Small groups 10 minutes

We will hear one teacher describe their workload. Use the account to connect everyday experiences with the lecture's evidence on why teachers leave.

As you watch the video, think about these questions:

What does the teacher describe about their workload?

What could help a teacher in this situation stay in teaching?

A teacher's account of workload



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNUZKdQ1PEQ · BBC Teach, *Confessions of a Teacher: Workload*

Recurring themes in interviews with leavers

- Enjoyment of classroom teaching and relationships with pupils
- Administrative demands and limited support
- Difficulty keeping boundaries around work
- Less autonomy, and a gap between what teachers valued and how the job had developed

60 interviews in autumn 2025 with teachers and leaders who had left or were considering leaving.

IFF Research & UCL IOE (2026), *Qualitative insight into experiences of leavers and those considering leaving*, pp. 5–7. Crown copyright, OGL v3.0.

The DfE delivery plan: four priorities

The DfE's 2026 delivery plan sets out how England aims to add **6,500 teachers** in secondary and special schools and further education colleges.

The government's approach

Attract	Help candidates enter teacher training and teaching.
Retain	Improve working conditions, flexibility and pay.
Develop	Support professional learning throughout a career.

Four priorities to examine

We can group the plan's measures into four priorities. We will look at each in turn:

1. Financial support for entry into training
2. Competitive pay
3. Protected mentoring and professional learning
4. Reduced administration and more flexibility

For each priority, compare the policy with evidence about teachers' experiences.

DfE (2026b), *6,500 additional teachers delivery plan*.

Priority 1: financial support for entry into training

In place now

- Tax-free training **bursaries of up to £31,000** in the subjects where teachers are most needed
- **Earn while training:** the postgraduate teaching apprenticeship cut to 9 months; a teacher degree apprenticeship pilot in maths
- Help to apply: a "Find a Candidate" service for providers and an advice service for returners

Evidence from this week

- Postgraduate trainees rose **10%** in 2025/26, with STEM trainees up **21%** (computing +44%, physics +36%)
- Secondary still at **89%** of target; business studies (30%) and music (65%) well below
- NFER suggests considering higher bursaries for languages and arts subjects

Does money to start training also help people stay?

DfE (2026b), pp. 4–5, 9–12; Worth & Scott (2026), pp. 4, 10–11.

Priority 2: competitive pay

In place now

- School teacher and leader pay up by **nearly 10%** over two pay rounds
- **Retention payments of up to £6,000** after tax for early career teachers in shortage subjects such as physics and maths, including in FE
- Planned: more pay flexibility for schools, and full maternity pay doubled from 4 to 8 weeks

Evidence from this week

- Starting salaries are back to their 2010/11 real level; experienced teachers are **8.6% below**
- Average UK earnings rose **6.0%** in real terms over the same period
- Pay cited by **25%** of 2025 leavers (39% in 2023) and **49%** of those considering leaving

Who should extra pay go to: new teachers, experienced teachers, or shortage subjects?

DfE (2026b), pp. 8, 14–15; Worth & Scott (2026), p. 18; IFF Research & UCL IOE (2025); DfE WLTL Wave 4 (2025).

Priority 3: protected mentoring and professional learning

In place now

- New teachers get a **two-year induction**; the Early Career Teacher Entitlement started in September 2025
- Reformed **National Professional Qualifications** and new inclusive teaching programmes
- In FE: the Teacher Mentoring Programme and Taking Teaching Further

Evidence from this week

- About **1 in 4** novice teachers across OECD systems has an assigned mentor; **~79%** in Shanghai
- **55%** say professional learning improved their teaching
- Mentoring takes time from experienced colleagues, and meetings can be lost when staff are needed for cover

What would protected time for mentors and new teachers need from a school?

DfE (2026b), pp. 13, 17–18; OECD (2025), pp. 137, 147; report sections 7 and 16.

Priority 4: reduced administration and more flexibility

In place now

- Planning, preparation and assessment time can be done **at home**; a new programme to spread flexible working
- From September 2026, responsibility payments based on responsibility, **fairer to part-time staff**
- Workload tools: Oak National Academy's AI lesson assistant, EdTech testing, a simpler complaints process

Evidence from this week

- Full-time teachers work **50.1 hours** in a term-time week; **26%** find workload acceptable
- **74%** of leavers cite high workload; **42%** cite a lack of flexible working (49% of those considering leaving)
- Leavers describe administrative demands and difficulty keeping boundaries around work

Which tasks could go, and who would pick up the rest?

DfE (2026b), pp. 8, 15–16; IFF Research & UCL IOE (2025; 2026); DfE WLTL Wave 4 (2025).

Activity 2

Small groups | 20 minutes

Choose two of these priorities. For each, discuss:

1. What problem does it address well?
2. What might it miss, or what could go wrong in practice?

- Financial support for entry into training
- Competitive pay
- Protected mentoring and professional learning
- Reduced administration and more flexibility