

26 March 2019

Teacher supply and recruitment

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr C Towe, Children's Services and Education

1. Report:

- 1.1 The Local Authority is not responsible for teacher supply or recruitment but works with its partners within Walsall's Strategic Education and Inclusion Board on initiatives to attract and retain the best teachers for Walsall's children; as it is one of the five Board priorities.
- 1.2 The Government's vision is for all young people to have access to a world class education and that every child should attend a great school. There are many great schools in this country, but schools can only ever be as good as the people that work in them. Over a number of years, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff of the calibre required.
- 1.3 The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (see overview summary) presents an important step in tackling this issue.
- 1.4 This strategy marks the start of a conversation with the profession. Importantly, it represents an adjustment of focus, recognising that greater attention must be given to ensuring that teaching is a profession where people are supported to stay and thrive.
- 1.5 This must begin with the right foundations. At the centre of this strategy is the most significant reform to teaching in a generation – the introduction of the Early Career Framework (ECF). The framework will underpin a step change in support for early career teachers, providing a funded entitlement to a structured 2-year package of high quality development.
- 1.6 The four strategy priorities include:
 - We will help to create the right climate for head teachers and other school leaders to establish supportive school cultures. At the heart of this will be reforming the accountability system.
 - We will transform support for early career teachers, introducing the most significant reform to teaching since it became a graduate only profession – backed by substantial extra investment. In particular:
 - We will build on the foundation of the Early Career Framework to support teachers – whatever their expertise or circumstances – to pursue the right career opportunities for them. In particular:
 - We will radically simplify the process for becoming a teacher, introducing new digital systems designed to make application much easier and more user-friendly.
- 1.7 The strategy hopes to provide the steps in supporting Head teachers to drive down unnecessary workload and pressure so that they can ensure schools are brilliant places to work, freeing teachers to focus on teaching great lessons.

2 Walsall Perspective

2.1 Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy

Walsall Council recognises and respects the autonomy of all schools and recognises its responsibility to work in partnership. As a local authority with our schools and other partners, we are committed to providing an appropriate, high quality, inclusive education to ensure the best possible outcomes for all our pupils. This will be delivered through Quality First Teaching which will provide high quality experiences and opportunities using flexible and adaptable approaches in learning environments where every child is able to flourish. We need to ensure all our learners have a voice and are supported throughout their educational journey, building resilient citizens and communities who feel valued and positive about their future.

2.2 Appropriate Body – NQTs

Our five Teaching schools act as the appropriate body for Walsall Newly qualified Teachers (NQTs). This involves both a monitoring and assessment role as well as providing extensive CPD opportunities. These include opportunities to undertake Master's degree modules, Recently Qualified Teachers (RQT) fast tracking to middle/senior management, becoming a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) and attending a range of leadership courses. Our primary teaching schools have also been able to gain further funding to provide additional mentoring for those vulnerable NQTs during their first year of teaching.

2.3 NQT Development Programme – Strategic board

The Board has approved a development programme which will set Walsall apart as an area that invests in and supports new teachers in the profession. This work is being undertaken collaboratively between Wolverhampton University and our primary teaching schools. This will be through:

- The offer of a bursary towards the cost of training for those who qualify.
- A structured programme of training and development during their initial period as a teacher in Walsall.
- A Walsall-wide recruitment campaign, attending job fairs at local universities/colleges.
- The potential for top up funding for qualified teaching assistants undertaking apprenticeships, funded through use of the agreed use of the apprenticeship levy.

Those that are successful will receive a bursary and a tailored professional development package through one of the teaching schools. In signing up to the package any prospective new teacher would be tied to working within a Walsall school for 3 years.

The project will look to place successful candidates in schools across Walsall including vulnerable schools that find it most challenging to recruit skilled teachers. This is with the aim of ensuring strong teachers support those schools most in need and in turn pupils with greatest support needs, regardless of the setting.

Total funding granted is £80,000 over 2 years (funding towards 3 teachers per Teaching School plus bridge funding for apprenticeships for Teaching Assistants).

Recruitment is presently going well with the three teaching schools, up to 15 trainees already (a lot better than this time last year) with some being exceptionally strong.

2.4 Teaching schools leaders on Workload reduction

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the Secretary of State has identified reducing teacher and head teacher workload as a key priority for the DfE. Workload is cited as the main reason for teachers leaving the profession and is therefore central to our broader strategy to retain staff. It also has a strong link to school improvement as by reviewing practice to identify areas which have become overly burdensome and acting on this teaching quality improves. This is often due to channelling greater effort into what makes most difference to pupils and stopping unhelpful practice.

The Teaching School Council, through a bid process, has appointed 2 regional lead teaching schools for the West Midlands to address workload reduction in the region- Evolve Teaching School (Barr Beacon) as the secondary Teaching School and Ryders Hayes as the primary partner. Our remit will be to work with schools and share the DfE toolkit; to challenge practices in schools which lead to unnecessary workload (e.g. related to marking, planning, data management, reporting to parents and other administrative tasks); write up case-studies and share good practice, with the ultimate aim of impacting upon:

- recruitment and retention – workload reduction is linked to improved retention / can also save time and money in recruitment costs.
- school improvement – review and reduce ineffective and inefficient practices to focus on ‘what works’.
- the positive impact on teaching quality - more time to focus on reflection and professional development.
- teacher morale and wellbeing – more focus on ‘purposeful’ activities leads to perception of workload being more manageable / improved morale.

We will identify schools and work with a cohort of schools in the region including primary, secondary and special schools, to actively review their practice and take action through the use of the toolkit. Working with DfE contracted researchers and the chosen schools, we will assist their choices of approaches to reducing workload and design pilot projects to evaluate them.

The schools will then test the new approaches in the Autumn Term 2019.

The contractors will also write an overall report for DfE on the support they provided and its impact on the teachers and pupils for wider use.

Reason for Scrutiny:

To provide members with an overview of the DfE's latest Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy. As well, as an insight to the work taking place across the borough.

Recommendations

The report to be noted.

Background Papers:

None.

Resource and Legal Considerations:

Not applicable to this report.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

CH1: Children will be ready for school.

CH2: The gaps in educational attainment between the least and most deprived communities will be narrowed for all under achieving groups.

Citizen Impact:

In order for the children and young people of Walsall to be able to fully participate in adult life, it is vital that they be supported to reach their full academic potential, and that the school provides Quality first Teaching and a curriculum that is appropriately broad and balanced. Schools are encouraged to provide a range of extra-curricular opportunities to supplement the taught curriculum.

Environmental Impact:

Not applicable to this report.

Performance Management:

Continues to be an annual requirement on schools that all teachers undertake this and it relates to their pay. Objectives set should be SMART.

Reducing Inequalities:

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

Consultation:

Report has been prepared in consultation with our Teaching schools and members of Walsall's Strategic Education and Inclusion Board.

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