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# **Coping with Teacher Shortages**

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Department of Education  
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## FOREWORD

We are extremely grateful to the National Union of Teachers for enabling us to investigate something that has long puzzled us: how can the official figures for teacher vacancies be so low when there has been chronic under-recruitment to teacher training over many years? If not enough teachers are being trained yet there are teachers in the classroom (and rarely does one hear about children being sent home because no teacher is available), how have schools been able to manage?

The School Teachers' Review Body itself is intrigued by the paradox. We know this because last year we were invited to its Oxford Street headquarters to discuss it with them. Not quite believing the vacancy figures provided by the DfEE, the Review Body has commissioned its own surveys and has largely borne out the claim that there are few unfilled vacancies. So what is going on? Why if there are not enough teachers to go round does it not show up in the statistics gathered by DfEE and STRB?

What the funding from the NUT has enabled us to do is to talk at length to the people who should know - the headteachers themselves. We have visited a geographically representative sample of over a hundred schools from Cornwall to Northumberland, either personally or through a team of experienced interviewers who themselves had been senior staff in schools, to hear from headteachers how they have been filling their vacant posts. Although the headteachers were approached at a very busy time for them in the summer term 2000, none refused to see us. It emerged during the course of the study that they were only too willing to meet us because they felt that the true situation affecting their schools was not getting through.

Given the opportunity to talk the headteachers sometimes resorted to strong language to bring home the extent of the problems facing them. They admitted that they rarely made their staffing difficulties public because they did not want to put parents off when their school was having to compete for pupils in a quasi-market place. They also emphasized that the ethos of the profession is to try to solve difficulties by working harder. But in the safety of a confidential interview they opened up. In some cases it became almost a counselling session and when the tape recorder was turned off and, in several, the heads came close to breaking down with the relief of having got it off their chests.

To establish a numerical context for the interviews we conducted a questionnaire survey of teacher vacancies in England and Wales. When we asked about unfilled vacancies we got a similar result to the DfEE and STRB; but we also went further and asked how easy or difficult it had been to fill the vacancies arising. About half the schools indicated it had been difficult. These were not just schools in London and the South East, but throughout England, and in the secondary phase, Wales.

We have also had the opportunity of discussing the staffing situation with 21 independent schools ranging from the top public and day schools to small and remote boarding schools. By and large, they were not experiencing difficulty in finding staff even though many of them had exacting requirements. Our principal interest here was to see if there were any lessons for the maintained sector.

We are very grateful to the headteachers for making the time to talk to us, to our team of 13 interviewers and to Mandy-Diana Coughlan our IT specialist for carrying out the data analysis. But we are especially grateful to the NUT for providing the funding. Without support of this kind it would not be possible for the Centre for Education and Employment Research to undertake independent inquiries into important and interesting questions emerging during its studies.

We believe that though the questionnaire survey and interviews with headteachers we have got to the bottom of the conundrum of why teacher-training shortages are not apparently showing up in schools.

**Alan Smithers**  
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**September 2000**

## SUMMARY

There is a paradox in teacher supply. Over the years there have been continuing and severe shortfalls in recruitment to teacher training, yet the official figures show that the schools themselves are apparently fully staffed. On the one hand, we thus appear to have a recruitment crisis and, on the other, schools seemingly able to fill the posts that become vacant. How can this be? *Coping with Teacher Shortages*, and its companion volume, *Talking Heads*, report an investigation of how headteachers are apparently managing to square the circle.

Survey returns from 573 primary schools and 350 secondary schools, geographically representative of England and Wales by sex, type, category, and age range of school found that about 10 per cent of posts fell vacant. Of those, 4 per cent (0.4 per cent of posts) remained unfilled by a full-time or part-time appointment. This is in line with figures obtained by the DfEE and the School Teachers' Review Body.

But the present study went further and asked schools how difficult it had been to make appointments. This offered the first major clues to resolving the paradox. About half the posts were reported as difficult to fill, and a fifth as very difficult to fill. Although there were variations with region, nearly the whole of England and Wales was to some extent affected.

The nature of these difficulties and their consequences were explored through interviews with the headteachers of 50 primary schools (1 in 400) and 57 secondary schools (1 in 66). These were drawn as sub-samples from the survey returns so that they could be set in context.

The interviews revealed that the teacher shortages are not showing up in the vacancy figures primarily because headteachers are adopting a number of coping strategies to cover the posts that became vacant. These include:

- actively seeking out the staff who are available through networking, pre-emptive appointments, stealing a march on colleagues, using student placements to head hunt, appointing without seeing, and not being too specific in requirements (Chapter 4);
- using part-time, temporary and supply appointments to paper over the cracks and also sometimes as an unofficial probationary period (paras 5.5 to 5.12);
- relying on overseas staff particularly from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada (paras 5.13 to 5.21);
- modifying the curriculum to fit the staff available (paras 6.2 to 6.5);
- raising class and group sizes (paras 6.6 and 6.7);
- reducing non-contact time (paras 6.8 and 6.9);
- increasing the amount of teaching staff are asked to take outside their subject, thereby reducing the match of skills to job (4.16 to 4.19, 5.24, 6.10, 6.11);
- on occasions using technicians and Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (formerly Section 11) staff to teach (paras 5.19 to 5.21);

- training up their own staff (paras 4.14).

There were variations with region, location and school (Chapter 7), and subject and post (Chapter 8). But it is not just London and the South East, and the so-called shortage subjects that are affected. Schools in some seemingly very attractive and relatively low cost parts of the country are finding it hard to make appointments. Most subjects, with the possible exceptions of history, PE and art, gave rise to difficulties. Problems in appointing deputy heads and co-ordinators to primary schools were widespread. The schools that tended to be the most badly affected were those in the most financially disadvantaged areas.

The continuing struggle to staff schools is taking its toll on both the headteachers themselves and the classroom teachers (Chapter 9). The headteachers are at the sharp end. They not only have to bear the brunt of finding people and living with consequences of appointing staff not of the desired calibre, but also in many cases, particularly in primary schools, they are having to do a lot more teaching themselves in order to plug the gaps. The extra stress on teachers is emerging in various ways from shouting at the children, through more tiredness, headaches, absences, and illnesses, ultimately to higher levels of resignation than there need be. The shortages are causing further shortages.

It all tended to look rather different in the independent sector where we interviewed 21 headteachers. The schools were chosen so as to be a cross-section in terms of standing, size, location, whether single-sex or coeducational, whether day or boarding. The leading schools pitched their starting salaries and salary scales sufficiently attractively to bring in well-qualified graduates (Chapter 10). In areas of high cost housing they also often provided help with accommodation. They also sought to create conditions in which teaching could be a pleasure. Nevertheless, some independent schools were noticing the effects of teacher shortages. Some were losing more staff than usual to other independent schools with more pulling power than themselves. Independent schools are also drawing more heavily on the maintained sector. Boarding schools, prep schools and schools tying their salaries to the maintained scale tended to experience more difficulty. Even the leading schools could sometimes have to delay an appointment until someone came along who met their exacting standards.

The numerical picture presented in Chapter 2 sets out the extent of under-recruitment to the training institutions. The interviews with the headteachers of the maintained schools reveal why this does not show up fully in unfilled vacancies in schools. The interviews with the headteachers of independent schools offer us some pointers as to how teaching can be made a more attractive profession.

The findings suggest that both the intrinsic and extrinsic satisfactions of teaching need to be addressed. Teaching has to be made both more pleasurable and rewarding. Both will require extra funding. More money for schools (and independent schools do, on average, receive as least twice as much per pupil as maintained schools) would enable them to provide a higher quality of education for pupils which would be more satisfying for teachers to deliver. Making teaching more intrinsically satisfying would include smaller classes, more non-contact time and better facilities.

On the difficult issue of where to set the extrinsic reward of salary so as to be fair to both teachers and taxpayers, we suggest that the recommendations of the Royal Commission

on the Civil Service in 1955 could usefully be re-visited. This explicitly sought a balance of interests and proposed that the rate should be “not lower than the median; but not above the upper quartile”. It did so on the grounds that in order to attract from among the most able you have to pay somewhat above the average. This seems to us to be an admirable basis for deciding teachers’ salaries.

Making teaching more attractive is vital to both the economy and quality of life. Penny pinching now will lead to substantial social and financial costs to be met in the future. It is the poorest schools and the children within them that suffer most. Attracting teachers in sufficient numbers is a prerequisite for a fairer society.

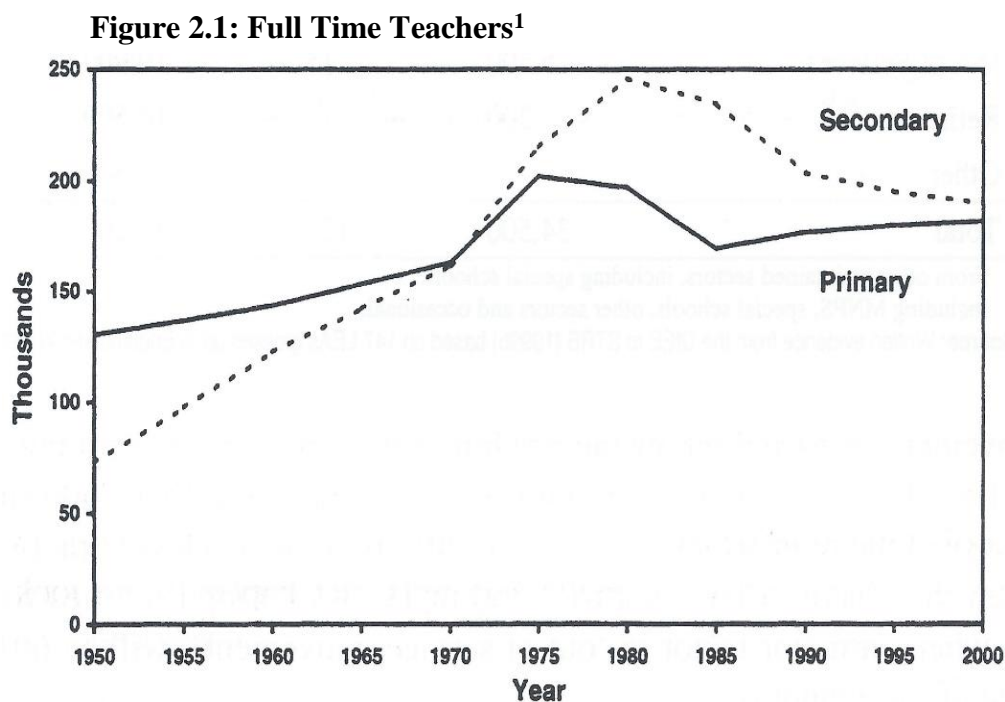
# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There is a conundrum at the heart of teacher supply. Trends in recruitment to teacher training show that, except in times of economic recession, there have been severe shortfalls, particularly in subjects like mathematics, the physical sciences and modern languages (Robinson and Smithers, 1998). These could have been expected to have impacted on recruitment to schools. Yet, in its annual submissions to the School Teachers' Review Body, the DfEE has been able to show - and advance as an argument for restraining salaries - that vacancy figures have been very low, generally less than one per cent. When the Review Body itself investigated recruitment to schools (STRB, 1999a), it too found few vacancies and headteachers generally satisfied with the appointments they had been able to make.
- 1.2 We thus appear to have, on the one hand, a crisis in recruitment to training and, on the other, schools seemingly able to fill the posts that become vacant. It could be that the targets are inaccurate in overstating the requirement. But more likely the vacancy figures do not reflect the actual situation in schools. This could be for both conceptual and technical reasons. First, the construct of 'unfilled vacancy' is a composite of a post falling vacant, a decision to re-establish that post and the ease of making an appointment. Secondly, at any one time a school may have a number of vacancies and fill them by a variety of means. The dynamics of the situation are not easily captured in a questionnaire and while it may appear that all the vacancies have been satisfactorily filled schools may, in fact, be merely making do. Headteachers may also be reluctant to admit to making unsatisfactory appointments in case it affects the reputation of their schools.
- 1.3 This report attempts to resolve the paradox. The first chapters look at the numbers. Chapter 2 sets out the trends and present position in recruitment to training, examining in detail the targets and the extent to which they have been met. Chapter 3 then reports the results of a survey of vacancies and appointments in a national sample of schools, including significantly the difficulty schools experienced in making appointments - something which the surveys of neither the DfEE nor the STRB have taken into account.
- 1.4 The people, however, in the best position to know why any training shortfalls are not showing up in unfilled vacancies are the headteachers. They have the managerial responsibility to ensure that there are teachers in the classroom and the authority to decide on appointments. Our main research strategy has therefore been to talk with a representative cross-section of headteachers. This has enabled us to pursue the issues in depth, but the practicalities of such an approach mean that the samples can only be small. In this case the plan involved 50 primary schools (1 in 400) and 57 secondary schools (1 in 66) reflecting both regional distribution and types of school. By making the interviews a sub-sample of a random survey we have been able to set the findings in the context of the numerical picture provided by the survey. The details of both the questionnaire survey and the interviews are given in the Appendix.

- 1.5 In Chapter 4, we hear from the headteachers how they are having to become increasingly proactive to find staff. And, in Chapters 5 and 6, we learn of their coping strategies when they cannot get the staff they need. Chapter 5 focuses on the 'people strategies', for example, making temporary and/or part-time appointments, drawing on supply staff or teachers from overseas, or calling upon technicians and other school staff. In Chapter 6, attention turns to the organisational devices used to plug gaps, like dropping subjects or options, bumping up class or group sizes, reducing non-contact time and asking teachers to teach outside their subjects.
- 1.6 The chapters so far have provided the general picture. In Chapter 7, we look at the variations with region and type of school and, in Chapter 8, with the variations with subject and post. The constant struggles to paper over the cracks inevitably takes its toll and, in Chapter 9, we consider the impact of the shortages on existing school staff, first the headteachers themselves and then the classroom teachers who are showing increasing signs of stress.
- 1.7 In addition to the interviews with the headteachers of maintained schools we also talked with the heads of independent schools. Originally it was intended to restrict the sample to senior schools, but it emerged that small boarding schools and prep schools tended to be experiencing more difficulty than the others and they were included. Details are given in the Appendix. In Chapter 10, we look at the situation in state schools from the point of view of the independent sector and consider why it is that those schools are seemingly more attractive and can generally fill their posts without too much difficulty. In a final chapter we present our understanding of how it is that schools are coping and what this might imply for policies to make teaching a more attractive proposition for new graduates faced with a tempting array of job opportunities.
- 1.8 To some extent the continuing decline in the attractiveness of teaching is like the tide going out. As the numbers of new teachers recede first one or two large rocks appear, then scattered smaller rocks and ultimately a vast expanse of seaweed. But, in some ways, it is a misleading analogy because twelve hours later the water is back and it is as if it had never been away. The present government's policies are aimed at turning the tide, but whether they will exert sufficient pull given the extent of the problem revealed in this report remains to be seen.

## 2. TRENDS IN TEACHER TRAINING

2.1 In 1999 there were 423,513 teachers (in full-time equivalents) in maintained primary (including nursery) and secondary schools in England and Wales (DfEE, 1999). The size of the teaching force is determined by a range of factors including pupil numbers, government policies and funding. Figure 2.1 shows the growth in teacher numbers since 1950.



1. Including sixth-form colleges, excluding special schools.

Source: *Statistics of Education, Teachers, England and Wales, 1986-1999.*

- 2.2 Over the years there has been a dramatic growth in the secondary phase. From 72,872 full-time teachers in 1950 numbers increased to 245,981 in 1980, reflecting mainly the rising pupil population, the raising of the school leaving age in 1974, reducing class sizes and increased participation in the sixth-form. Since 1980, numbers have fallen back somewhat to 190,237 with the drop occasioned mainly by a fall in pupil numbers, but also other factors such as cost constraints. The requirement for primary school teachers has also gone up appreciably over the 50 years, increasing by nearly half as much again from 130,412 in 1950 to 182,140 at the turn of the century.
- 2.3 The requirement for newly-trained teachers is set not only by the numbers and types of teachers needed overall, but also by the extent of losses from the profession. About ten per cent of the teaching force leaves each year, with a slightly higher proportion going from primary schools than secondary, and a slightly higher proportion of women leaving from both phases than men. Table 2.1 shows that in 1997-98 just over 36,000 full-time teachers left, with about 40 per cent retiring, 30 per cent dropping out of service and 22 per cent switching to part-time.

- 2.4 Table 2.1 also shows staff appointed. In 1997-98 somewhat fewer full-time teachers entered than left. Of the 34,500 full-time teachers recruited, nearly two-thirds were newly trained. The remaining third consisted of re-entrants to the profession, those transferring from other sectors, part-time posts and supply, and recruits from abroad.

**Table 2.1: Movements in Maintained Schools, 1997-98**

Category	Coming From		Going To	
	N	%	N	%
New Entrants	21,000	62	-	-
Full-Time <sup>1</sup>	1,300	4	2,000	6
Part-Time <sup>2</sup>	6,200	18	8,200	22
Out of Service	5,300	15	10,900	30
Retirement	200	1	14,500	40
Other	-	-	500	1
Total	34,500	100	36,200	100

1. From other maintained sectors including special schools.

2. Including MNPS, special schools, other sectors and occasional.

**Source:** Written evidence from the DfEE to STRB (1999b) based on 147 LEAs grossed up to England and Wales.

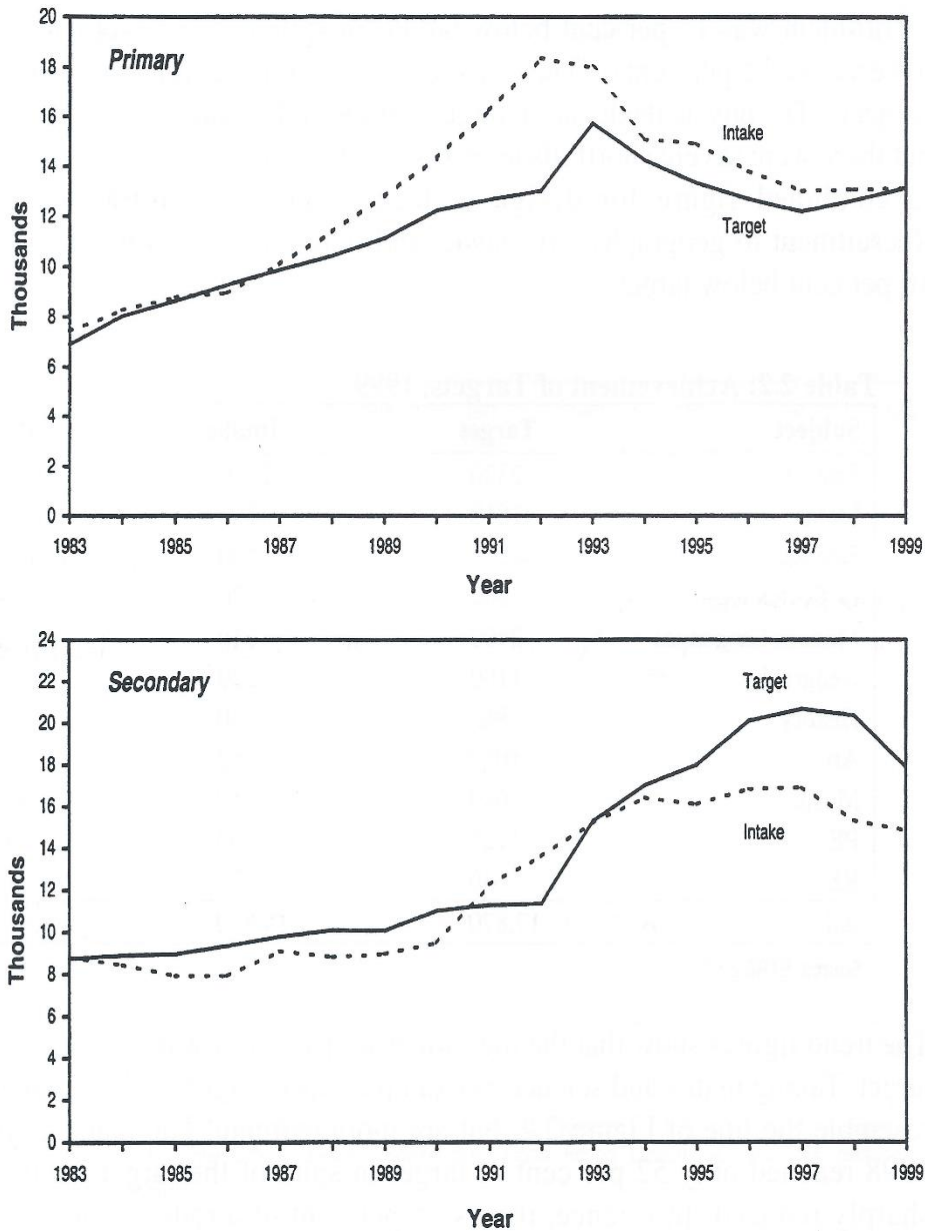
- 2.5 Movements into and out of the teaching force are affected by a number of factors. In 1997-98, for example, premature retirements rose to 12,600 in advance of a change in the regulations which made early retirement a less attractive option, since when they have fallen back to 2,500 in 1998-99. Opportunities for employment elsewhere, a major factor in 'out of service' movements, will be influenced by the state of the economy.
- 2.6 On the basis of the projected optimal size of the teaching force and assumptions about likely movements in and out, the number of newly qualified teachers required each year can be calculated. Allowing for wastage from the training process itself, which the DfEE has estimated at 40 per cent (STRB, 1999c, para 53), it is possible to set training targets.

### ***Targets***

- 2.7 In the decade from 1972 the number of teacher training places was cut sharply from 48,500 to a mere 15,000. This severe pruning, carried out in response to a belated recognition that the post-war baby boom had come to an end, is likely to have been a significant contributor to the teacher shortages of the eighties (Smithers and Robinson, 1991). Accepting that the assumptions underlying these cutbacks may have been too broad-brush, the Department has subsequently developed a more sophisticated means of modelling teacher supply and demand (DES, 1990, DfEE, 1998b).
- 2.8 Figure 2.2 shows that from the nadir of 1983 the training targets for both the primary and secondary phases have been more than doubled, although their paths have differed somewhat. In the case of the primary target, this was progressively raised from 6,904 in 1983 to 15,750 in 1993 since when it has been reduced to currently

stand at 12,900. But the aggregate secondary target was increased only from 8,750 in 1983 to 11,346 in 1992 after which it was allowed to take off reaching 20,360 in 1998. Since these targets do not follow projected pupil numbers that closely other considerations must predominate. An unspoken one in relation to the secondary target could be the likelihood of its being met.

**Figure 2.2: Targets and Intakes by Phase**



Source: *School Teachers' Review Body Reports 1995-2000*, Welsh Assembly for data in 2000-2001, DfEE personal communication 11.7.00.

2.9 Figure 2.2 also shows the success in meeting the targets. It is striking that, while throughout the period the primary target has been met or exceeded, there have been considerable shortfalls in relation to the secondary target. We can see that from 1985 to 1990 the secondary intake ran at ten per cent or more below target, a pattern

which resumed from 1995 onwards. In 1998 intake reached a mere 75.4 per cent of target.

- 2.10 It was only in the years 1991-1993, a period of economic recession, that the secondary target was reached or exceeded, and significantly perhaps it was during those years that the target itself was increased sharply from 11,275 to 15,300 (36 per cent). In considering the impact on recruitment to schools we therefore not only have to bear in mind the chronic shortfalls, but also the fact that the target may itself have been held down by the anticipated difficulty of meeting it.
- 2.11 The secondary target is, of course, an aggregate of individual subject targets. Table 2.2 shows that in 1999, the latest year for which we have complete figures, recruitment was 17 per cent below target (in spite of the target itself having been lowered by 12 per cent). There was, however, considerable variation between the subjects. The physical education target was exceeded and the history target was met, but there were severe shortfalls in maths, modern foreign languages, and technology (a combined figure for design & technology and information technology). Recruitment to geography, art, music, and religious education was also more than 10 per cent below target.

**Table 2.2: Achievement of Targets, 1999**

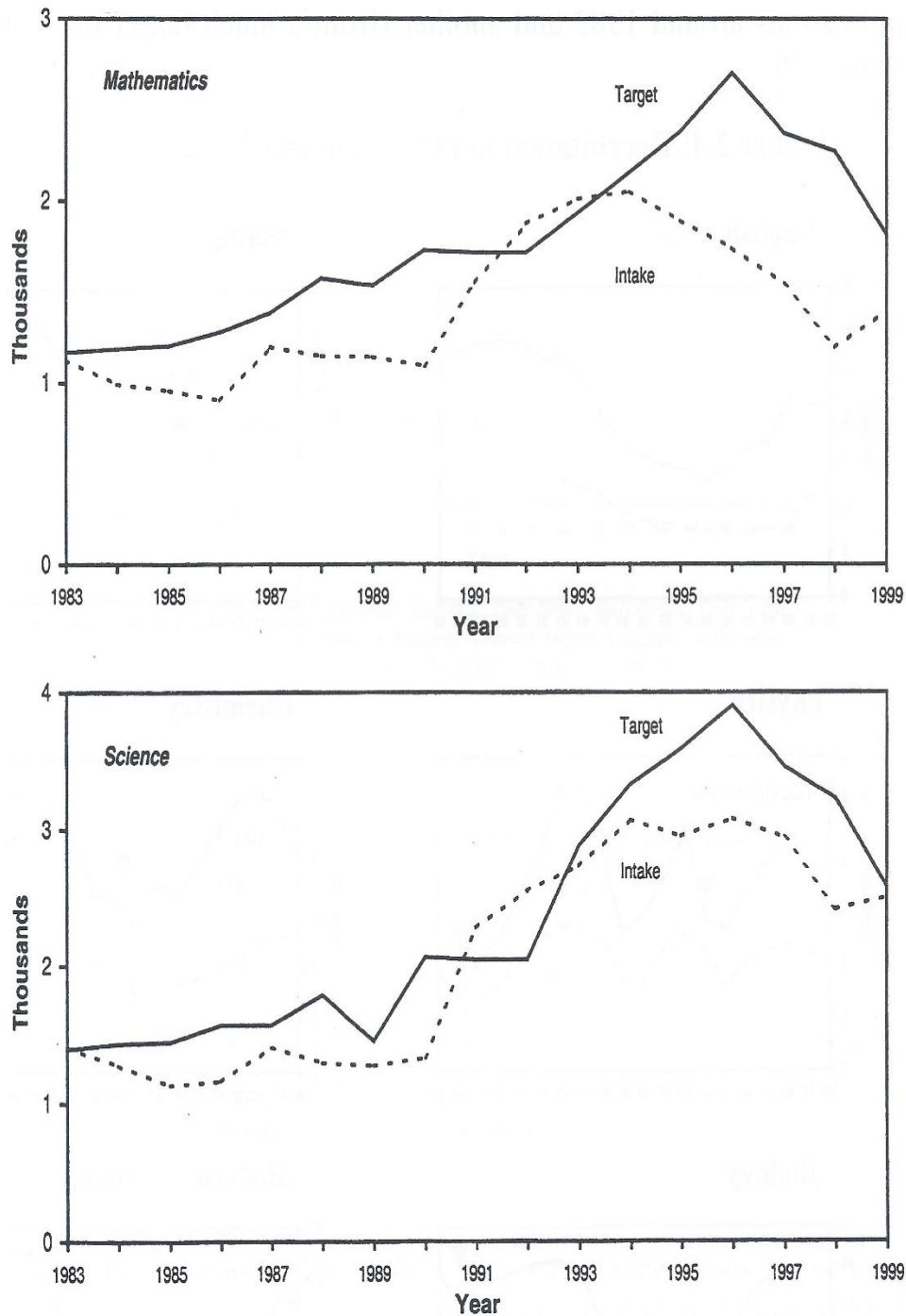
Subject	Target	Intake	Per Cent
English	2320	2170	-6.4
Maths	1810	1390	-23.2
Science	2570	2500	-2.7
IT Technology	3060	1820	-40.5
Modern Languages	2400	1610	-32.9
Geography	1100	920	-16.4
History	860	880	+2.3
Art	1010	850	-15.8
Music	610	550	-9.8
PE	1120	1290	+15.2
RE	640	570	-10.9
All	17,870	14,820	-17.1

Source: STRB 2000.

- 2.12 The trend figures show that the individual subjects follow the pattern for the overall target. Taking maths and science as examples, as in Figure 2.3, we can see that they resemble the line of Figure 2.2, but are more extreme. The mathematics intake in 1998 reached only 52 per cent of target in spite of the target itself having been sharply reduced. In science, it was 75 per cent of a reduced target. As with the overall target, it was only in the brief period around 1992 that recruitment exceeded target and it was at this time that the targets were raised.
- 2.13 The situation improved somewhat in 1999 when a scheme was introduced for postgraduate trainee teachers in these subjects by which they would receive £2,500 during training and a further £2,500 on starting teaching in a maintained school

(DfEE, 1998a). This boosted applications and led to increases of 200 in the maths intake and 84 in the science intake. The targets were also appreciably reduced allowing the claim to be made that the science intake was only three per cent below target. However, even with the adjustments the maths intake was still 23 per cent below target.

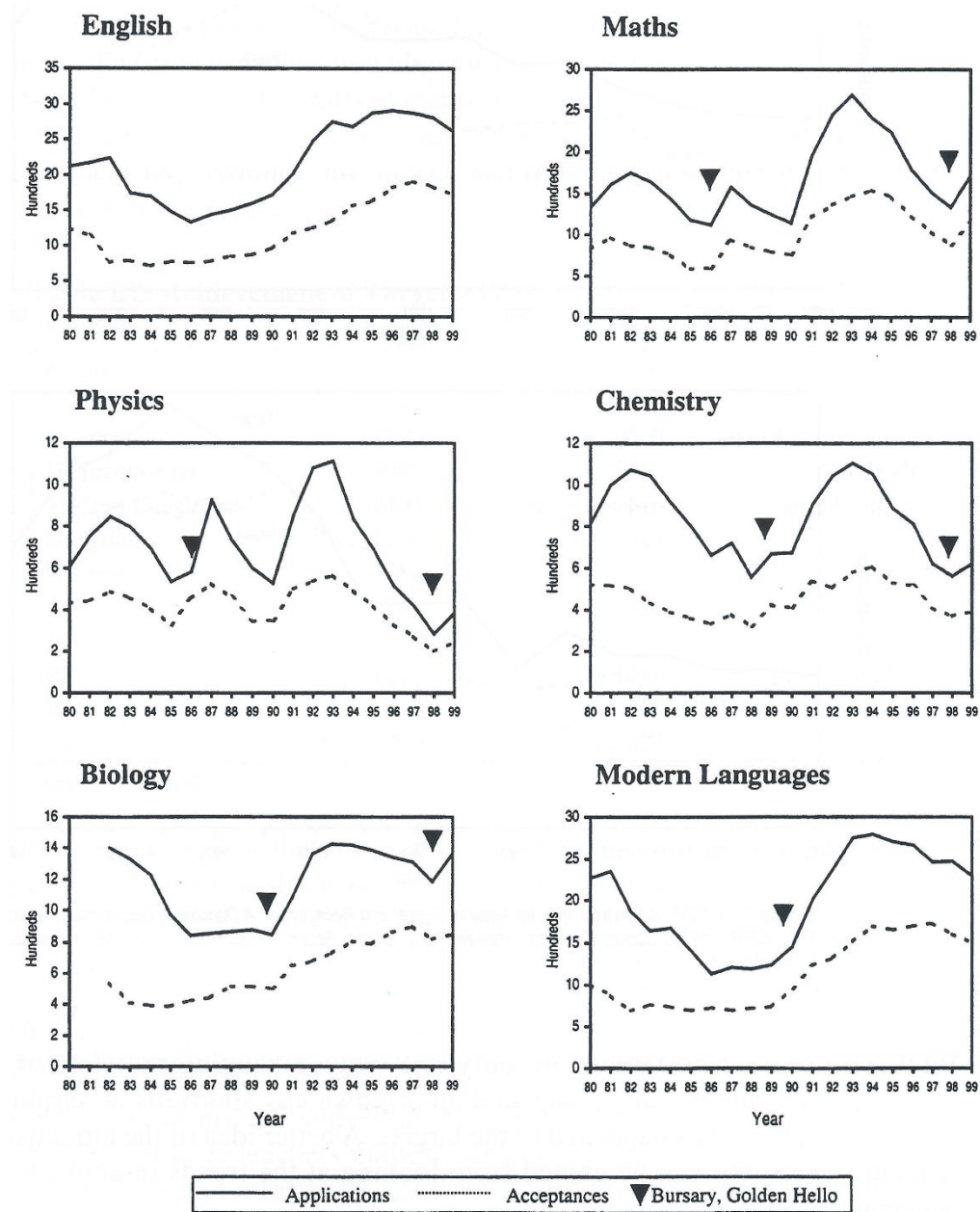
**Figure 2.3: Targets and Intakes to Maths and Science**



Source: TTA (1996) *A Strategic Plan for Teacher Supply and Recruitment. A Discussion Document*, London: TTA; STRB (1999) *School Teachers' Review Body Eighth Report*, London: SO; and DfEE personal communication.

2.14 Intakes in relation to targets are only one way of gauging the state of teacher training. Since targets can be adjusted up or down any shortfalls or surpluses may merely reflect what has happened to the targets. A better idea of the attractiveness of teaching over time can be gained from looking at the trends in applications and acceptances.

**Figure 2.4: Recruitment to PGCE Courses**



Source: Updated from Smithers, A. and Robinson, P. (1991) *Teacher Provision: Trends and Perceptions*. Manchester: CEER.

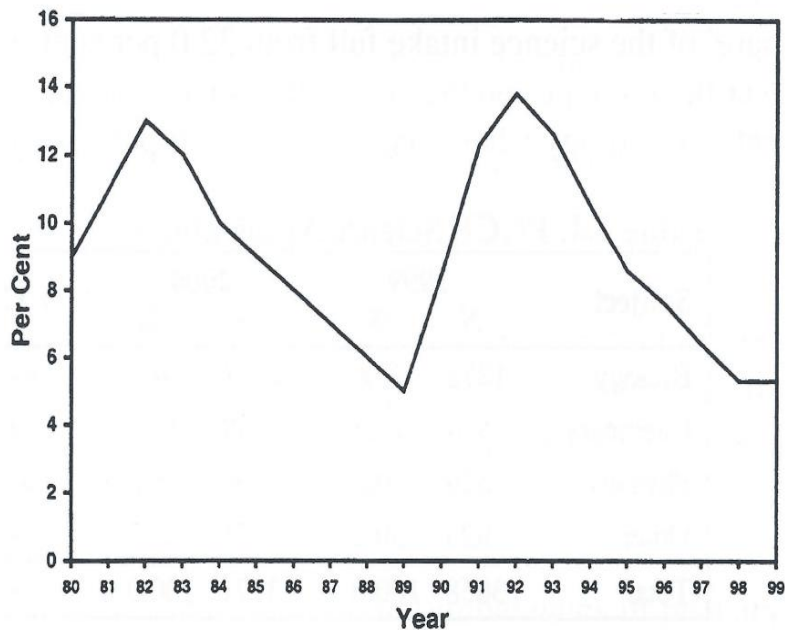
***Applications and Acceptances***

2.15 Figure 2.4 shows applications and acceptances to selected PGCE courses over the past twenty years. The applications curves to the main subjects turn out to be

remarkably similar, apart from the odd bump or two associated with the incentives of the earlier bursaries and the recent ‘golden hellos’. In each case there is a peak in applications around 1982 and another (from a much larger pool of graduates) around 1992.

- 2.16 The application pattern is remarkably like that for new graduate unemployment shown in Figure 2.5. It appears that teaching can attract applications when opportunities elsewhere are limited, but as soon as the economy picks up teacher training struggles to fill its places.

**Figure 2.5: New Graduate Unemployment**



Sources: *First Destination Statistics, 1980-1994*. Manchester: CSU; *First Destination Statistics of Students Leaving Higher Education Institutions, 1994/95, 1995/96, 1996/97, PR32, SFR41*. Cheltenham: HESA.

- 2.17 Figure 2.4 also shows that the curves for acceptances follow those for applications to some extent, but are less pronounced. The proportion of applicants accepted varies considerably from year to year. In the boom year for applications of 1993 only about half those seeking places in maths, physics and chemistry were accepted, but in leaner times the proportion rises to 70 per cent or more suggesting that the quality of the intake is likely fluctuate from year to year.
- 2.18 The latest PGCE application figures shown in Table 2.3 suggest that the 1999 increases in maths and science are being sustained. The financial incentive to train and teach in shortage subjects has also given a significant boost to applications in modern languages to which it was extended in 1999-2000, and secondary applications generally seem to be benefiting from the decision to pay PGCE students during training (TTA, 2000). The acceptance ratios though are down markedly suggesting that the training institutions are finding that many of the extra applications are unsuitable.

**Table 2.3: PGCE Applications<sup>1</sup>**

Subject	1998	1999	2000	% Change	
				1998-1999	1999-2000
English	2449	2409	2458	-1.6	+2.0
Maths <sup>2</sup>	956	1416	1408	+48.1	-0.6
Science <sup>2</sup>	2247	3058	3171	+36.1	+3.7
Modern Languages <sup>3</sup>	2087	2072	2427	-0.7	+17.1
Secondary	16018	17679	18605	+10.4	+5.2
Primary	12478	12963	12583	+3.9	-2.9

1. As of week 41 (end of July)

2. Incentive scheme introduced 1998-99.

3. Scheme extended to cover MFL in 1999-2000.

Source: TTA (GTTR Weekly data), personal communication.

2.19 Much of the increase in science applications has come from biologists. Table 2.4 shows that biology applications have continued to rise in 2000 as those from physics have fallen. This has further contributed to a swing which has seen the physics 'share' of the science intake fall from 32.0 per cent in 1983 to 17.7 per cent in 1999. Over the same period the chemistry 'share' has fallen from 30.1 per cent to 17.7 per cent, but biology's has gone up from 28.6 per cent to 38.4 per cent.

**Table 2.4: PGCE Science Applications**

Subject	1999		2000		% Change
	N	%	N	%	
Biology	1272	41.6	1418	44.7	+11.5
Chemistry	534	17.5	549	17.3	+2.8
Physics	329	10.8	279	8.8	-15.2
Other	923	30.2	925	29.2	+0.2
Total	3058	100.0	3171	100.0	+3.7

Source: TTA week 41 (end of July).

### *Graduate Output*

2.20 The scale of the recruitment challenge is apparent from the proportion of graduates from even the greatly expanded higher education system. The overall total teacher training target for England and Wales in 1999 of about 31,000 (that is, including both the B.Ed. and PGCE for primary and secondary) amounts to nearly 12 per cent of the graduate output of 263,671 for that year (for the whole of the UK including Scotland and Northern Ireland). In individual subjects even taking only the PGCE targets and a broad view of eligible degrees the proportion required is daunting.

2.21 Table 2.5 shows that to meet the PGCE targets in modern foreign languages and religious education over 40 per cent of the graduate output for the UK in those subjects is required each year. In maths the proportion is almost as great. In English it is over 30 per cent. The science target of 2,355 can be compared with the total physics output of 2,320 and the total chemistry output of 3,624. But in biology it was 11,636, which in part explains why the subject has come to dominate science teacher training applications.

**Table 2.5: Graduate Output, 1999**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>PGCE Target<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Graduate Output</b>	<b>%</b>
English	1297	6275	30.7
Maths	1577	4250 <sup>2</sup>	37.1
Science	2355	24119 <sup>3</sup>	9.8
Languages	2106	4932 <sup>4</sup>	42.7
History	872	5862 <sup>5</sup>	14.9
Geography	1062	4536	23.4
Music	555	2521	22.0
RE	639	1339	47.7

1. Personal communications from TTA and Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

2. Mathematical Sciences Subject Group.

3. Includes Biological Sciences Subject Group without psychology, Physical Sciences Subject Group without geography, and combined or general science subjects. For chemistry N = 3624, and physics N = 2320.

4. French, German, Spanish and balanced combinations within languages.

5. History, and Economic and Social history.

**Source:** *Graduate Output Figures from Students in Higher Education Institutions 1998/99*, Cheltenham: HESA, 2000.

### **Conclusion**

- 2.22 It is evident that for a number of years the teacher training institutions have been struggling to meet the secondary teacher training targets, particularly in certain subjects. If the number of places allocated accurately reflects what is required, then we would expect there to be consequences for schools.
- 2.23 It is not only the overall targets that are important, however, but also how they are met. Teaching's lack of success in tapping the widest pool of potential applicants may mean the profile of those accepted on training courses for the secondary age range does not adequately reflect the needs of schools in terms of gender, age, ethnic background and location. This may also apply to the primary courses where targets are met, but there is no subject specification.
- 2.24 Shortfalls to many secondary subjects and imbalances in primary output make it likely that schools will be finding it difficult to appoint. But, surprisingly, results from the DfEE and STRB (1999a and b) suggest that there are very few vacancies left unfilled. How can this be? Are the vacancy figures wrong? If not, just how are schools coping, and what sorts of appointments are they able to make?

### 3. VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS

- 3.1 The official view seems to be that the shortfalls in recruitment to teacher training are having relatively little impact on schools. Last year in its evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body, the DfEE (STRB, 1999b) asserted that "despite suggestions to the contrary in the media, figures on teacher vacancies suggest that there is no substantial shortage of teachers across England and Wales as a whole". This could, of course, be more of a bargaining counter in pay negotiations than something that is seriously held, but it is nevertheless odd since it could only mean that the targets for teacher training are grossly inaccurate. The case for the DfEE's contentious position rests on vacancy figures.
- 3.2 Each January the Department conducts a survey of unfilled vacancies in schools, and regularly relatively few are found. In January 1999, for example, only 2,400 vacancies (0.7 per cent) were reported out of a workforce of 366,000 regular full-time appointments. Although there was some variation with region and subject the vacancy rates were uniformly very low. The highest for a region was 1.9 per cent in London and the highest for a subject 0.9 per cent in information technology. Moreover, 1999 continues the trend of many years.
- 3.3 The deeply puzzling nature of the discrepancy between the chronic under-recruitment to teacher training and DfEE's vacancy figures led the School Teachers' Review Body to commission its own surveys of vacancies. They arrived at much the same result as the DfEE. In January 1999, the STRB (1999a) reported that of the 41,700 vacancies advertised for September 1998, 38,600 (92.6 per cent) had been filled. Of the others, about half were covered by supply teachers, and most of the rest by short-term contracts, with-in school moves, and other arrangements. Only 155 (3.7 per cent of the vacancies or 0.4 per cent of posts) had not been filled. The headteachers rated 79 per cent of the permanent appointments as having skills well suited to the post. The STRB (2000a) repeated the survey for September 1999 and found that overall nine per cent of posts were advertised of which about one in 20 was not filled.
- 3.4 We are therefore left with the conundrum – not enough teachers being trained, but posts being filled – which prompted this inquiry. As the first step in our investigative strategy of interviews set within a numerical context (see para 1.4, p. 1) we conducted a survey of vacancies. But, crucially, we also sought to obtain information on whether schools were finding it difficult to fill posts. A questionnaire survey was conducted, as described in the Appendix, asking for details of posts falling vacant for September 1999 and January 2000. Responses were received from 573 primary schools (57.5 per cent) and 350 secondary schools (46.2 per cent) which matched the national distributions in terms of region, sex, type and category of school, age range and size. The details are given in the Appendix.
- 3.5 The vacancy levels revealed are shown in Table 3.1. The figures obtained for full-time posts are comparable with those of the DfEE and STRB surveys. About ten per cent of the posts in the 923 schools had fallen vacant, slightly above in the

primary phase and slightly below in the secondary. A similar proportion of part-time posts was advertised.

**Table 3.1: Vacancies**

Phase	Posts	Full-Time		Posts	Part-Time	
		Vacancies	%		Vacancies	%
Primary	4937	558	11.3	967	79	8.2
Secondary	16569	1490	9.0	2306	233	10.1

- 3.6 The present study also bears out the DfEE and STRB surveys in finding few of the vacancies remaining unfilled. Table 3.2 shows that, of the full-time posts, 4.4 per cent had not been filled - a figure very similar to that obtained in the research commissioned by the STRB (1999a). In the cases of 3.4 per cent of the primary posts and 1.7 per cent of the secondary posts part-time appointments had been made even though the advertisements specified full-time.
- 3.7 It was not a one-way street however. Nearly a tenth (8.7 per cent) of the part-time posts were filled by full-time appointments. Of the part-time posts, 6.3 per cent of the primary and 3.4 per cent of the secondary had remained unfilled.

**Table 3.2: Appointments to Vacancies**

Post	Vacancy			
	Full-Time		Part-Time	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Primary</b>				
Full Time	514	92.2	6	7.6
Part Time	19	3.4	68	86.1
None	25	4.5	5	6.3
Total Primary	558	100.0	79	100.0
<b>Secondary</b>				
Full Time	1396	93.9	21	9.0
Part Time	26	1.7	204	87.6
None	64	4.3	8	3.4
Total Secondary	1486	100.0	233	100.0

- 3.8 As well as part-time contracts, schools are making extensive use of temporary contracts. Table 3.3 shows that only about half the full-time appointments to primary schools and three-quarters of those to secondary schools were 'permanent'. Most of the rest were for a year or less. Some of the temporary appointments were sought to cover extended absences or to create necessary flexibility. As we shall see from the interviews, however, some were offered instead of permanent appointments because the headteachers were unsure of the suitability of the applicants. The great majority of the part-time appointments were temporary.

**Table 3.3: Appointments by Length of Contract**

Length Contract	Vacancy			
	Full-Time		Part-Time	
	N	%	N	%
<i>Primary</i>				
Permanent	263	50.3	15	20.5
More than one year	9	1.7	2	2.7
Between one term and one year	241	46.1	52	71.2
Less than one term	10	1.9	4	5.5
Total Primary	523	100.0	73	99.9
<i>Secondary</i>				
Permanent	1009	71.9	43	20.3
More than one year	13	0.9	5	2.4
Between one term and one year	354	25.2	157	74.1
Less than one term	28	2.0	7	3.3
Total Secondary	1404	100.0	212	100.1

- 3.9 Part-time and temporary appointments provide some clues, but shifting the focus from eventual outcome to process is especially revealing. The present study went beyond the DfEE and the STRB surveys to explore the ease with which the posts falling vacant were filled. Table 3.4 shows about half the full-time posts were reported as being difficult to fill, and a fifth very difficult to fill, in both phases.

**Table 3.4: Difficulty of Filling Posts**

Difficulty	Full-Time		Part-Time	
	N	%	N	%
<i>Primary</i>				
Very	115	20.6	20	25.6
Some	157	28.2	16	20.5
Little	284	51.0	42	53.8
Total	557	100.0	78	100.0
<i>Secondary</i>				
Very	326	22.3	73	32.0
Some	398	27.2	69	30.3
Little	736	50.4	86	37.7
Total	1460	100.0	228	100.0

- 3.10 The main reasons schools gave for the difficulty of filling posts were ‘too few applicants’ and ‘poor quality of the applicants’. Table 3.5 shows that the proportions expressing these difficulties were similar across the primary and secondary phases. The next most frequently expressed difficulty was ‘experience’ in case of the primary schools and ‘subject specialism’ by secondary schools.

**Table 3.5: Reasons for Difficulty in Filling Posts**

Reasons	Primary		Secondary	
	N	%	N	%
Too Few Applicants	180	46.4	552	5.3
Quality of Applicants	126	32.5	385	31.64
Specialism	31	8.0	195	16.0
Experience	46	11.9	71	5.8
Age	5	1.3	16	1.3
Total	388	100.1	1219	100.0

***Conclusion***

- 3.11 The present survey provides us with some of the key pieces in the picture we are trying to put together. Yes, schools are filling the posts they advertise, but only with difficulty. There were differences with subject, post and region which we shall be taking up in Chapters 7 and 8, but the general experience was that in about half the cases appointments could be made only with ‘some difficulty’, and in about a fifth only with ‘great difficulty’. This is what you would expect if not enough teachers were being trained and taking posts in schools to meet the schools’ requirements.
- 3.12 Schools are driven by an imperative to have a full complement of staff. Sending children home is an option of last resort. They will therefore go to great lengths to fill their posts. If one looks only at whether posts are eventually covered one might – as the DfEE has done – chose to conclude there is no problem. But if one looks at what schools have to do in order to get someone in place then it might look very different. In the next three chapters we report the findings from detailed interviews with representative samples of the headteachers of maintained primary and secondary schools to discover how they are coping.

## 4. RECRUITMENT

- 4.1 Head teachers and their deputies are having to devote enormous amounts of time and energy to finding suitable staff. The evidence from the survey of too few applicants for posts is supported many times over in the personal comments of the headteachers. *“Over the last five years we’ve found it difficult to fill posts. We’ve advertised nationally, but we’ve had only two or three responses. We’ve advertised through the local colleges and in the local bulletin. What we’ve found is, if we make ten contacts three come for interview. Twice we’ve selected somebody and they’ve said no”* (B2\*).
- 4.2 Traditionally, schools have been reactive. A vacancy has arisen, they have advertised, sifted the responses, shortlisted and selected the best candidate. *“In the old days we could expect twenty or more applications, we’d short-list four and appoint one. But in the last two interviews there’s been only one candidate. For a standard English teacher we invited three; one turned up. For physics we actually had nine applicants, we invited two, but only one came”* (B3).
- 4.3 Nowadays, headteachers are finding that they have to get out there and actively recruit. It is important to get in early because, *“The response is determined when you can get to the marketplace”* (B6). *“If you can actually establish your staffing and get in early then you can actually appoint. The people who come for interview often have had the offer of interviews every day that week and are picking and choosing”* (B7).
- 4.4 One of the frustrations is the speed with which likely looking applicants get snapped up. *“We short-listed seven and sent out the interview dates. It was a quick turnaround with only four days between the closing date and the actual interviewing. Even in that time they were getting jobs and it came down to just two candidates who were available to come for interview”* (B4).
- 4.5 In order to catch potential candidates headteachers are interviewing within hours of an application arriving, contacting candidates at home in the evenings, interviewing off premises in hotels. *“For the English job I went to the Russell Hotel in London to interview this chap in order to sign him up before somebody got him in the afternoon. I booked a room, we had the interview, I took the papers with me and that was that”* (B8). *“I interviewed a physicist on a Saturday morning knowing that he was being interviewed elsewhere on the Monday. That’s why I got him”* (B9).

### **Networking**

- 4.6 Schools are also extensively networking. An infant-junior school in the Eastern Region told us, *“It’s not unusual to get an e-mail once a week from other schools saying: can you help, we’ve advertised...”* (B10).

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\* Identification in brackets refers to the paragraph number of the full quotation as it appears in *Talking Heads*, the companion volume.

- 4.7 Another appointed a teacher from a neighbouring school's list. *"A local school I knew was interviewing for modern languages. I wanted modern languages as well and said what are your candidates like? They said the one who came second seemed to be very good and she's still here. I said put her in a taxi, we'll pay. She came round and I appointed her"* (B11).

### ***Pre-emptive Appointments***

- 4.8 Headteachers are sometimes seeking out staff in advance of advertising. *"The science situation arose because we had a teacher who was experiencing difficulties. I decided to put her on competency procedures. She decided to resign. I did what we do as heads round here; I didn't wait for the advert. I heard about a teacher from another head, rang him at home and asked him if he'd like to apply. When he said he would, I said put a letter in the post. The science department put him through his paces and I got him within 24 hours. Meanwhile the advert had gone in and we did get some response"* (B12).
- 4.9 They also sometimes offer posts where there is no vacancy in order to hang on to a good second choice applicant. *"Taking maths, we had two vacancies. On a national advert we got eight applicants. Three looked okay. We interviewed them and decided to appoint all three. Filling the two vacancies would have been spot on, but tight, so we decided to take the risk and create another post"* (B13). *"We advertised for RE. Although we only had one vacancy, because we know how rare RE teachers are, we appointed two. They were both good people so we grabbed while we could"* (B14).

### ***Stealing a March***

- 4.10 The heads are not above poaching or trying to steal a march on colleagues. *"But for maths all my principles are collapsing around me. One of the candidates was said to be the outstanding student at the University. So I agreed with the head of maths we'd see him early - never mind about the others"* (B15). *"An English teacher from here who had been promoted to another school said he had a very enthusiastic nice young man in his department. I invited him across to visit us and he is up for interview next week"* (B16).

### ***Student Placements***

- 4.11 Some are keen to participate in PGCE training as a means of recruiting staff. *"I make notes on who might be suitable and for next September I have two NQTs coming who were students here two years ago and now they're finishing I've headhunted them"* (B17).

### ***Appointing Without Seeing***

- 4.12 There are instances of overseas applicants being appointed without any face to face contact at all. *"I was in great danger of losing the teachers of the other two classes due to stress and violence (we've had a lot of problems with violence this year) so we took this lady on after a twenty-minute interview on the phone to Australia. It was an act of faith"* (B18).

### ***Not Being Too Specific***

- 4.13 Difficulties in making appointments have made primary schools increasingly wary of asking for specialisms. *“As a result of the difficulties in making appointments, I now have to be very careful about the specification of subject expertise – to be not too specific in fact in order not to put any potential applicants off”* (B19). *“In fact when we’ve advertised we’ve made it clear that our main criterion is classroom practice, a quality teacher. We’ll mix and match the subjects if we can’t get both the things – teaching is the priority”* (B20).

### ***Training Up***

- 4.14 Some schools are prepared to take inappropriately qualified applicants and train them in the subject. *“We have a vacancy for a physicist. I think it will be a question of bringing in some other scientist and training them up to do physics”* (B22). *In other cases it is a matter of growing your own teachers. “I had this IT technician. When I saw how he reacted with children and in the computer rooms I said it is about time someone sorted you out. He’d no qualifications from school, but he had an HNC, and I managed to persuade the local university to take him on. We put him on licensed status and put him through his degree while he was working here”* (B23).

### ***Seller’s Market***

- 4.15 The time and tension involved are magnified by applicants being in a seller’s market. Increasingly, they are shopping around and playing schools off against each other. *“I am not going to bribe anyone if I can help it. It has been suggested to me last week that I want to bribe a physics teacher, but it is not money he wants”* (B24). *“In view of our earlier experience since one of the candidates was obviously better than the others we felt she should be offered the job at interview. Her response was that she’d already had an interview and was awaiting the outcome next morning. I talked to her about it for a long time and asked her to go and think about it and ring me. She rang later in the day to say she was going to wait so I had to withdraw the offer of a place. So there is still a vacancy.”* (B25).

### ***Conclusion***

- 4.16 It might be thought that most of these things are what sensible managers would do in order to optimise their staffing. In the quasi-market that education has become it is to be expected that headteachers will want to actively recruit in an attempt to gain a competitive edge. But the issue is whether this is merely a shift from being reactive to being proactive or a response to teacher shortage. Apart from anything else it is obviously very time consuming, and in some cases it has led to the collapse of standard, fair and equal interviewing procedures.
- 4.17 The survey reported in Chapter 3 showed that about half the appointments were difficult and the major reason for the difficulty was too few applicants. The personal accounts of the headteachers reveal the reality behind those bald figures. One particularly put her finger on it when she referred to *“the quality of the small pool we are fishing in”* (B4).

- 4.18 We saw also that the expectations of the headteachers were adjusting to what is possible. No longer were they necessarily looking for highfliers, but only for people who looked as though they could hold their own. This possibly explains the STRB's (1999a) somewhat surprising finding that headteachers were largely content with the appointments they were able to make - content in the circumstances. As we shall be seeing, the notion of an acceptable standard tended to vary with type of school which is why some of the seemingly more attractive schools were also reporting recruitment difficulties.
- 4.19 In spite of the best efforts of the headteachers, even with lowered expectations, it may not always be possible to find someone suitable for the post. This leaves them with something of a dilemma: do they attempt to plug the gap in some way or do they change the timetable to one the available staff can offer? In fact, they employ both forms of compensation, and we turn first to what might be called 'the people strategies'.

## 5. BRIDGING THE GAP

- 5.1 The constant struggle to recruit staff sometimes leaves headteachers with the dilemma of how best to meet the imperative that there must be someone in the classroom. Do they appoint the most likely candidate from the shortlist they are able to muster or do they postpone? Some headteachers are settling for what they can get, often drastically lowering their expectations. *“When push comes to shove you’ve got to put a body in front of the class. So long as you know they are not going to kill a child or maim them what choices do we have”* (C1). *“When faced with a candidate who ‘will do’, but is not outstanding, what would you do? You’d say I’ll appoint because I need a teacher”* (C2).
- 5.2 Other headteachers either through preference or because circumstances force it on them do not make a permanent appointment but adopt one or more of a number of strategies to bridge the gap. In this chapter we look mainly at what might be called the people strategies - temporary contracts, part-time appointments, supply staff, overseas staff, using school staff whose qualifications are not recognised for the purpose of teaching by the DfEE.

### ***Fixed-Term Contracts***

- 5.3 The latest DfEE figures show that about seven per cent of full-time teachers and 40 per cent of part-time teachers are on fixed-term contracts, about half for a year or less. There has been a great growth in temporary appointments. The reasons are varied, but include not being able to find a suitable person for a full-time permanent appointment, to see what they are like, and for flexibility.

### **Postpone Appointment**

*At that time we were looking to appoint two English teachers. We received about a dozen applications and interviewed five, but we felt we could only make one appointment from that calibre of field. For the other post, the decision was to appoint a temporary teacher for a year and re-advertise this year* (C3).

*We weren’t able to find suitable candidates for the science and technology posts. Temporary appointments were then made at the end of the summer term* (C4).

### **Try Out**

*I originally appointed a teacher on a temporary contract. At the interview I liked her presentation and she was cheery and smiley, but her references from the college said she could be lazy. I told her straight and she promised she would work very hard. She has done and I have made her contract permanent* (C5).

*I had doubts because of the references and I offered it to her on a one-year contract which she accepted. As the year wore on I became more and more grateful that I’d listened to that small voice. I think that is an issue – people who are not up to scratch are gaining employment when they wouldn’t if there were reasonable choice* (C8).

### **Flexibility**

*My NQTs are all on one-year contracts, so that I can see that they live up to my expectations. Also because of mobility in the area, I can never be certain of my*

*numbers. I have to have flexibility there instead of having to do redundancies (C10).*

- 5.4 Not all temporary contracts arise as a response to recruitment difficulties, but many do. In neither of the cases above (C3, C4) where appointment was postponed was the temporary member of staff recruited from the short list drawn up for a permanent post. But temporary appointments can sometimes arise this way, principally as a safeguard. Sometimes, as the above quotes show, it works out and sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes all newly-qualified staff are put on one-year contracts as a matter of course, both as a trial and to give flexibility. But other headteachers hold strong reservations about this approach, which de facto involves an unofficial probationary period, not only for ethical reasons, but also because it is seen as counterproductive. "I never have a policy of appointing people temporarily to try them out. Some people do, I don't agree with that. I don't think you are going to get the right kind of person – they won't look at that sort of advert first" (C11).

### ***Part-Time Appointments***

- 5.5 Fixed-term contracts can be full-time or part-time. DfEE (1999) statistics show a doubling of part-time staff since 1985 to 67,000 or about seven per cent of the workforce in FTEs. The data of Table 2.1 (page 4) show that there is considerable movement between full-time and part-time appointments. In 1997-88, for example, 22 per cent of those leaving full-time posts moved to part-time posts and, conversely, 18 per cent of the full-time recruits came from part-time appointments.
- 5.6 Part-time contracts can arise in a variety of ways. Some are a response to the difficulties of teacher recruitment. They can be used cover vacancies through filling in, job sharing or by taking some of the load that would otherwise fall on the existing staff. They can also be used as a way of retaining staff.

### **Filling In**

*The school found it impossible to fill the other maths post. We have been coping by the temporary employment of a recently retired science teacher from the school and the local Baptist minister who job share (C12).*

### **Job Share**

*A student who had seen my advert rang through. She had completed her training a year ago and had a baby so she was looking to work part-time. She said that if anybody else came forward for a job share she would be interested in the other half (C13).*

### **Sharing Load**

*Maths has been giving us extreme difficulty. We haven't been able to make an appointment since last summer. We found a retired head of maths from a nearby school, who had a problem and we had to approach him to leave. We replaced him part-time with another retired maths teacher and the rest we have had to cut up and over-burden other teachers (C14).*

### **Retention**

*What has changed dramatically is the number of full-time teachers as a proportion of the whole staff. We now have 23 part-timers. Teachers are getting fed up and we don't want to lose them so we let them go on a contract of three or four days a week for a couple of years while their children grow up (C15).*

- 5.7 Part-time contracts can also arise for positive reasons. There may be specific tasks, for example, that are best met by such appointments. *"I have a contract for a special educational needs teacher to look at a group of year 9 children who weren't disaffected, but they were of low ability and low maturity, and it came out as disaffection"* (C16). But much of the rapid growth has been forced on headteachers and it is not entirely welcome. *"In my time here over ten years the number of part-timers has doubled. It presents all sorts of problems over things like continuity of form teachers, shared classes and it makes a significant difference"* (C15).

### **Supply Staff**

- 5.8 The issue of part-time and temporary contracts merges into that of supply cover, especially when it is long-term. In fact, the difference in practice may essentially be only in how the appointment is made and who "holds the contract. Schools are becoming increasingly reliant on supply cover. This is in part to cover for ill-health, out-of-school training in connection with numerous government initiatives and an increased load of monitoring and assessment. But it is also a response to the difficulties of recruitment. Long-term supply cover is used particularly in London and the South East.
- 5.9 Supply cover plays a major part in enabling schools to keep functioning in the face of staff shortages and absences. But the headteachers were concerned at its effects on the education of the children. *"The supply issue seems to keep everything ticking over, but at a level that is less than desirable"* (C17). *"It is the recruitment issue that is the problem for us. The worry that we now have is that some students may find themselves with four, five or even six supply teachers"* (C18). The cost is also considerable. *"We probably have four or five long term supply every year and we try to hold them for a year. We spend well over £150,000 a year on cover"* (C19).
- 5.10 In particular, headteachers expressed concerns about the availability and quality of supply staff.

### **Availability**

*The biggest growth industry in London is supply teachers. Four or five years ago there was just one agency; now there are loads of them. We just go round them. I have become a wheeler dealer; it is terrible but that is what I am (C20).*

*Any supply staff that are good have been taken into schools. I am happy to take teachers outside their specialism just to get somebody in front of the class (C21).*

*It is difficult to get supply cover, but even more so when the school is like this is. If they know it is for a year 6 class they won't take it. I am very unhappy with supply (C22).*

## **Quality**

*In theory, they're vetted by the agency and LEA before they go on the supply list in terms of their qualifications, police clearance and quality. We've had both very good and absolutely dreadful supply teachers. A number of times I would have been better putting one of our classroom assistants in charge of a class (C24).*

*We advertised the technology post extensively and didn't have a response. A supply teacher was appointed who proved absolutely dreadful - couldn't control classes, just quite awful (C25).*

*It is very variable. I would say at best we are talking about one in four being any good. I have had some very dangerous people (C26).*

- 5.11 Former staff who have retired early are often the most welcome for short term supply. *"We've got a few regulars who are absolute gold. They're often retired and often retired from here. They are people who took the last exit to Brooklyn and on whom we can rely"* (C27). But they can also be drawn into long-term arrangements as well. *"I had to get a friend of the school to come out of retirement to take that class"* (C28). There were fears that this source would soon be drying up with the changes in retirement arrangements. Some heads hankered after their own supply staff:

*I'll tell you what I'd really like and that is our own appointed supply people who could slot in and take anything and have an annual contract. But I can't afford to do that obviously (C23).*

## **Overseas Recruitment**

- 5.12 A major source of supply teachers particularly in London and the South East is from overseas, particularly countries with historic ties to Britain. *"Nearly all the agency staff come from abroad -Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa"* (C29). *"Overseas teachers are absolutely crucial to us. If we took out the Australians I don't know what we would do. I really don't. When I say Australians, I also mean New Zealanders and South Africans"* (C31).
- 5.13 The schools generally have a high regard for their overseas staff. *"We are very keen on Australians and New Zealanders, they tend to be very good quality teachers. It is a stop-gap, but it is effective"* (C32). *"If I had to choose between an Australian supply and a British supply I would go for the Australian. They have the nous. If the British supply were any good they would have been snapped up years ago"* (C33).
- 5.14 On occasions, the schools would like to make the appointments permanent, but they are debarred from doing so unless the applicants have residency and their teaching qualification is recognised. *"You can't employ the Australians as teachers, only as instructors. The nature of that is that you can only employ them one year at a time"* (C34). *"The other two science posts we wanted to put on permanent contracts, but we were not able to because they were from South Africa. They are two very, very good teachers, South African trained, well trained. We wanted to treat them as*

*NQTs, but the DfEE refused to accept their qualifications. So we could only employ them as instructors and we had huge problems with their visas” (C35).*

- 5.15 Some concerns were expressed about their lack of knowledge of the English system. *“The supply situation is variable because you have got people from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and they have no idea of the English educational system, and they have no idea of what GCSEs are, let alone the national curriculum” (C36).* This was seen as an even greater difficulty with Europeans. *“I’ve had applications from French nationals, but they were not appointable. They had no experience of the English system and couldn’t offer German” (C38).*
- 5.16 Nevertheless, one of the responses to the chronic teacher shortage in England and Wales has been to draw in teachers from all round the world, not only for supply, but for permanent appointments where the teaching and residency qualifications make this possible. *“The new food technology teacher we have just appointed, her qualification, indeed her first ten years of teaching were in Sierra Leone. A business studies teacher has an Indian qualification and we have a teacher from the West Indies and we are talking about another in relation to the maths vacancy” (C37).*
- 5.17 A weakness of the reliance on staff from overseas is that many may decide at once that they want to be in their own country. At the time of our interviews the millennium was fresh in the headteachers’ minds. *“The agencies have been phoning to say they couldn’t get long-term cover either. I went to three or four agencies they were all having the same difficulties. They relied on Australians, Canadians and South Africans, and they just could not get them to come over because of the millennium celebrations” (C29).* With the Sydney Olympics imminent, autumn 2000 could be a difficult time for supply staff. *“They all went back for the millennium. Also it is the cost of living here, it’s phenomenal. I think the Sydney Olympics has had an impact as well. There are also big recruitment drives in Canada. It has certainly got critically worse since Christmas. I think it is going to be one heck of a bumpy ride. I do envisage where we will not teach things and send kids home” (C30).*

### ***Using other School Staff***

- 5.18 Schools are also having to look beyond temporary appointments, supply teachers and recruiting overseas to ensure that there is at least someone to take their classes. They are sometimes inappropriately calling on their other staff to take on teaching duties.
- 5.19 Sometimes it’s technicians who have shown themselves able to cope beyond their prescribed duties. *“We have got one person who is really a technician, and she fits that well. She teaches technology. She’s not qualified but she’s very effective. It is interesting that we never pick up behavioural problems from her classes” (C39).*
- 5.20 On other occasions staff provided for specific purposes, for example to support ethnic minorities, can find that they are diverted to teaching duties. *“We are having to do more what I call fixing. I don’t know if you are aware that schools have a range of non-teachers working in them which are basically funded under Section 11. What we are finding, and although some of this is dodgy and we have to be*

*careful what we say, we are using these people to actually teach because they are often highly qualified and graduates who will turn their hand to the subject” (C40).*

### **Conclusion**

- 5.21 The limited pool of qualified staff available to take full-time teaching posts leaves many schools thinly stretched. We have seen that temporary, part-time, long-term supply, and overseas staff are often the means by which headteachers are able to put someone in front of their classes and not have to send children home. Sometimes such appointments can be successful, at least in holding the fort in the hope that an advertisement next year will bring forward a suitable person. But, on many occasions, particularly in relation to supply, concern was expressed at how time-consuming it was to get cover and the quality the staff available.
- 5.22 The pressures of coping seemed to be leading some headteachers to resort to ways of covering the teaching that might be thought not entirely appropriate. Pressing non-teaching staff into service as teachers is a blatant example, but the over-ready use of temporary contracts particularly when posts are advertised as permanent is an issue.
- 5.23 Although in these various ways schools may be covering classes one also has to be concerned at the quality of education that is possible. Pupils who find that their teaching is mainly in the hands of temporary staff, perhaps teaching outside their specialist subject and not entirely familiar with the curriculum, will not be getting the same opportunities as their contemporaries taught by high-quality teachers. The under-supply of teachers may not show up in vacancies, but it does affect who is actually in the classroom. There may be someone there so that, in this sense, the vacancy is filled, but whose knowledge and skills clearly do not match the job.

## 6. TAILORING THE TIMETABLE

- 6.1 Bringing in staff by hook or by crook is one group of strategies for making ends meet; another is to tailor what is offered to the staff available, including stretching the acceptable limits of what a teacher is able to teach. The curriculum is increasingly being adjusted by removing or reducing subjects or options where the schools find it difficult to get the staff, particularly for the lower ability groups. Classes are also being joined for particular subjects. Teachers are increasingly being expected to teach outside their subjects to enable the school to achieve curriculum coverage. Headteachers themselves are having to be particularly versatile.

### *Modifications to the Curriculum*

- 6.2 A number of schools were changing their curricula in response to not being able to recruit teachers of appropriate quality in those areas. In a few cases they were prepared to break the law, but more often they were taking advantage of the new flexibility in statutory requirements.
- 6.3 Languages and design & technology were the most frequently affected. *“In modern languages we have decided to take advantage of the disapplication regulations (which happily) releases us from a vacancy we cannot seem to fill”* (D1). *“What we have had to do is to make some modifications in modern languages with the bottom ability groups”* (D3). *“We are going to disengage food technology because we won’t have a food technologist”* (D5). *“I am happy to see technology go because I haven’t got the teachers to close the gap. If Ofsted want to come in and slap me on the wrist, fine”* (D6).
- 6.4 But the time devoted to a number of other subjects, including information technology, music and Welsh, could also be reduced, at least for some pupils. *“So because I don’t have enough IT teachers I have had to cut down the number of groups who actually do it”* (D7). *“We have just made a decision not to offer GCSE Music next year. It is because we have a problem vacancy in music and no immediate prospect of filling it”* (D8). *“We have got the expansion of compulsory Welsh and nobody out there to recruit. I have gone to the Chair of Governors and said I might have to break the law”* (D10).
- 6.5 The core subjects are generally being maintained but sometimes with great difficulty. *“I am delivering the curriculum, but in some areas like maths I am barely doing it because maths is not being taught at a level I would consider satisfactory within the school”* (D11).

### *Increasing Class or Group Sizes*

- 6.6 The national statistics show that class sizes are tending to creep up in secondary schools. This seems partly to reflect the difficulties of appointing staff and partly affordability. Much of the impact of this double whammy is concealed from the public for fear it will affect a schools reputation. *“Tutor group sizes have gone from 25 to 28 at key stage 3, even in technology where they say there should be a maximum of 20 for safety. It is all hidden. You would never talk about any of that simply because if it got into the local newspapers it would be seen as quite damning”* (D12). *“I lost the person naturally earlier than expected. There was a*

*big knock-on effect. It meant that I had to bring three year 6 classes down to two” (D14).*

- 6.7 It sometimes boils down to a choice between bigger classes or cutting courses. *“I have successfully avoided restricting the number of choices at key stage 4, but I have had to increase class sizes in some subject areas like English and Humanities in key stage 3” (D15).*

### ***Reducing Non-Contact Time***

- 6.8 Another difficult decision which sometimes has to be taken is between bigger classes and reducing the preparation time for teachers. *“In the debate there are different views about whether we should keep contact ratios steady and allow class sizes to go up or whether we should go the other way. We have tended more to keep contact ratios steady and allow the class sizes to grow” (D17).*

- 6.9 But cutting down on non-contact time is being forced upon some schools through their inability to fill posts. *“We couldn't make an appointment in January for English. Eleven people had to give up some of their non-contact time” (D18).* *“Not being able to fill the technology vacancy we have substantially reduced the non-contact time. It is iniquitous. It has actually caused us some difficulty with moderation. The staff are stressed; they are tired. Development has gone by the board. They are just hanging in there to deliver technology” (D19).*

### ***Increased Teaching Outside Subject***

- 6.10 As well as teaching more, staff are also being asked to teach outside their subjects to offer courses for which teachers have not been, or cannot be, recruited. *“It's inevitable. We have got technologists who teach art. The PE staff teach a bit of maths, a bit of geography. The maths teachers, when we appointed the three, we had to say 'you'll be teaching a bit of science, is that all right?' just hoping that they did not say 'on your bike'” (D22).* *“We have got a SEN teacher who teaches textiles and we have got a textiles teacher who has been teaching a bit of food, but we honestly might have to say we don't have a food specialist and we can't do it” (D23).*

- 6.11 It is often the senior staff who have to spread themselves most widely. *“I found myself as a scientist having to teach childcare a couple of years ago to fit in with shortage. We are having to make all kinds of adjustments” (D24).* *“Our only trained business studies teacher has been on long term sickness – he has only taught four or five weeks in the past 12 months. For a term I could find no one to replace him. So I as a geographer having some knowledge of business studies at GCSE but none at A-level, had to take over some of the teaching” (D25).* The head of a primary school told us, *“We couldn't get a D&T specialist because they are so thin on the ground. I have no knowledge of it whatsoever and I am actually having to pick it up as I go along in terms of books etc.” (D26).*

- 6.12 It is clear that staff are being asked, or heads are taking it on themselves, to teach subjects with which they are not familiar. This is likely to affect Ofsted evaluations of the schools, where lesson quality is a key criterion.

### ***Conclusion***

- 6.13 By means of these various organisational devices and the compromises on appointments illustrated in the previous two chapters, it is possible to see how at the same time there can be a teacher shortage and few teacher vacancies. The schools can be very thinly stretched but by one means or another contrive to have someone to teach all their classes. Getting everything to come together often imposes great demands on the headteachers and severe stresses and strains on the teachers, which may well exacerbate the recruitment problem by increasing wastage and absences.
- 6.14 Not all schools are affected. There may not be enough teachers to go round in some subjects and some areas, but there are teachers being trained and some schools are able to snap them up. What the shortages do lead to, however, is considerable unevenness in provision. Since the quality of education provided depends crucially on the teachers, it must follow that within our national education system there is considerable unevenness of opportunity. It is to these variations with region, school, subject and post that we now turn.

## 7. REGION, LOCATION AND SCHOOL

- 7.1 There is a tendency – at least on the part of the government – to claim that teacher recruitment difficulties are largely a London problem. But Table 7.1 shows that they are widespread. The vacancy figures themselves vary round the average of about ten per cent, with perhaps some indication of higher turnover in London and the South East. But there was a wide range in the proportions of the posts that were difficult to fill.

**Table 7.1: Difficulty of Filling Full-Time Posts by Region**

Region	Primary		Secondary	
	% Vacancies	% Difficult	% Vacancies	% Difficult
East Midlands	11.6	56.8	9.5	50.0
Eastern	12.2	44.6	8.4	48.4
Inner London	13.1	86.3	9.7	53.3
Outer London	14.2	40.6	13.5	51.7
Merseyside	8.3	12.5	7.8	39.0
North East	15.3	48.0	6.3	50.7
North West	8.5	55.0	7.9	49.7
South East	14.5	54.0	11.2	48.6
South West	10.0	37.3	9.8	40.1
West Midlands	11.3	51.7	5.9	55.6
Yorks & Humb	11.6	50.9	6.9	53.9
Wales	5.5	29.4	6.9	55.4
Total	11.3	48.8	9.0	49.5

- 7.2 The patterns differed somewhat between the primary and secondary phases. For primary schools there was wide regional fluctuation. In Inner London 86 per cent of the primary posts were reported as difficult to fill in contrast to only 13 per cent on Merseyside and 29.0 per cent in Wales. The vacancy levels in these two regions also tended to be below average. Among secondary schools, although again Merseyside emerged on the low side for both vacancies and difficulty, the proportion of posts reported as difficult to fill was rather similar across the regions. This could be because secondary schools throughout the country are having to contend with the severe and continuing under-recruitment to training in many of the subjects. Since for the primary phase the training target has been consistently met the school recruitment difficulties in some regions must reflect in part the reluctance of the teachers to live and work there.

### ***Region***

- 7.3 The contrasting situations of London and Wales stand out starkly in the personal accounts of the headteachers. The head of a primary school in inner London told us, *“It has become increasingly difficult to fill vacancies because there are so few applicants. In this part of London the difficulties are compounded by the cost of housing. No teacher can afford to buy even a flat on the salary. We are not on any tube line, so it is not easy to get to the school – it is either bus or car. Nobody can live near because it is so expensive”* (E1). Another London headteacher said, *“When*

*we advertised people would see the area we were in and we can't even get them to come and visit us. When people see the name, it is not an area where you actually look for jobs in" (E2).*

- 7.4 Wales however seems to be in the happy position of being over-supplied with primary school teachers. *"In all probability if I have a full or part-time job available I would expect at least eighty applicants" (E3). "A friend in a junior school was saying to me that he has had more than two hundred applications for one job and that seems to be par for the course round here. The area seems to generate a lot of teachers" (E4).*
- 7.5 The experiences of schools in others parts of the country were somewhere in-between. In some cases they mirrored those of London. The head of a school in a northern city was reduced to advertising out-of-town, *"I think the pattern is that being an inner-city school local teachers know how difficult it is and they put the word round, don't go to that place. We tend to advertise in a neighbouring city to get away from this" (E5).* In a school in the South East a school was left with having to take someone who had lost her job at her previous school through not being good enough, *"In the spring term a teacher who had not had her contract renewed in her previous school because of competency issues was appointed. She was known to us and we decided to take the risk. It illustrates the recruitment issue" (E6).*
- 7.6 At the secondary level, under-recruitment to some of the subject areas becomes a major factor. Even Wales is feeling the pinch. *"Maths is very difficult. Physics is very difficult. Welsh is impossible, it is utterly ridiculous" (E7).* The lack of subject specialists is something we take up in Chapter 8. The global target for primary teacher training, however, to some extent masks their requirement for specialists also, and this, as we shall be seeing (para 8.11, page 38) can lead to difficulty in making appointments.

### **Location**

- 7.7 A number of features of the local environment individually or in combination appeared to make it easier or more difficult for schools to recruit staff. Three aspects that stood out were the attractiveness of the area, the price of housing, and remoteness.

#### **Attractiveness of Area**

*"We have a nice catchment area. We do have our difficulties, but we are perceived as a more attractive school" (E8). Or a turn off. "A lot of teachers are reluctant to come and work in this school in an area where they don't feel safe. There are also other complications to the job, as they see it, like a large proportion of children for whom English is not the home language, and a very high pupil turnover in terms of children coming in and out of the school throughout the year" (E9).*

#### **House Prices**

House prices are not just a problem for London, but for a whole swathe of the South East and other parts of the country as well. *"I think one of the difficulties is that it so expensive to come and live in Oxfordshire because of the house*

prices” (E10). It is particularly a problem for promoted posts. *“Nobody moves into the area from outside beyond main scale. We can attract NQTs because they’re near London and they haven’t started thinking about buying a house”* (E11). House prices, however, are only one of the factors. *“I don’t think it is house prices, none of us can work it out what it is because the town is expanding. It is not particularly expensive around here. I would say it is a generalised teacher shortage”* (E12).

### **Remoteness**

Very attractive-seeming rural areas can also find themselves short of applicants. *“I don’t know whether Cornwall is just too far away although I would think it’s a rather more attractive proposition than an awful lot of other places”* (E13). *“Unless people come to the village specifically we can’t get the staff. The young people simply don’t want the jobs”* (E14). One view that was put to us is that the remoteness factor has been exacerbated by the restructuring of the profession. Ambitious young teachers want a more prominent opportunity to demonstrate what they can do as they climb the first few rungs of the career ladder. *“We’re going to have to work very hard to demonstrate to new entrants what we can offer in terms of staff development possibilities and that we are not as remote as all that”* (E18).

### **School**

- 7.8 Although the patterns with region and location are interesting, in some ways they are too broad as categories to reveal the true impact of the teacher shortages. It is perfectly possible for a school to have few recruitment difficulties while just a few miles away another could be really struggling. Among the school features frequently mentioned in our interviews were the standards of acceptability to which the schools were operating, whether or not as a secondary school they had a sixth form, whether the school was in special measures, and whether it had particular requirements, as a denominational school, for example.

### **Quality**

Rather unexpectedly, some of the top schools in terms of exam results were reporting recruitment problems not very different from schools in more difficult circumstances. But on probing it emerged schools operate to very different standards of acceptability. Contrast the requirements of these two grammar schools with the somewhat defeatist comments about taking about anybody who we can get, with which we began Chapter 5: *“What I am looking for above all else in people I appoint here is academic ability. I have to start with that: a good teacher fine, but they have got to teach Oxbridge pupils and therefore one is looking for someone with perhaps a good A-level as well as a good degree. You are going to have to ask these people to teach the very best students”* (E15). *“I’m interested in recruiting brains into this school. This is a grammar school and my first requirement is that I have somebody who has secure knowledge of an academic discipline, a genuine interest in it and a capacity to put that across to other people”* (E16).

When schools like these indicated recruitment was difficult they were essentially expressing disappointment at the standard of the applicants, not that there were

none. *“In the good old days we could expect a 2.1 and an A in the A-level to be taught, but nowadays forget it. In some subjects more likely it is third-class honours. For example, my maths teacher has a degree in engineering”* (E17). The difficulty of finding academic high-fliers interested in teaching was echoed in some of the interviews with headteachers of independent schools reported in Chapter 11. As we shall be seeing, in the competition for the scarce supply at this level, the independent sector is often able to win out and attract good teachers away from state schools.

### **Lack of Sixth Form**

Although the heads of grammar schools and independent schools may be lamenting the shortage of the academically very able, other heads are finding that it is more difficult to attract subject specialist if they have no sixth forms. *“We struggle. We don’t have a sixth form and we are twenty miles from the city. Other heads in the area don’t seem to have a problem so for us it could be that those features come into play”* (E18).

### **Special Measures**

Since the introduction of league tables and a rigorous inspection service the examination performance of the school has become an important factor in attracting teachers. It is likely to become even more important with the coming of performance-related pay since teachers will find that effectiveness will be judged to some extent by the performance of the pupils. This makes it especially difficult for those schools designated as failing and put in ‘special measures’ to find staff. *“I think we would have had problems anyway in maths, but I am sure some teachers wouldn’t touch the school with a barge pole because it was in special measures”* (E19). *“A lot of schools in this neck of the woods have been in special measures, and a lot of us have had problems in recruiting. On the odd occasion, it has had an impact the other way in that people will say ‘it is a challenge, let me have a go at this’. But if you know someone who has been at a school in special measures you will know how much extra the work is”* (E20). *“The school is in intensive support with the local authority. We do feel very vulnerable. The attainment in the school is low; also it is an inner city school. When we send out an applicant’s enquiry pack, we do include performance, there’s no point in hiding it. I think it puts people off if they were to work here they know they would be under very close scrutiny in terms of achievement”* (E21).

### **Denomination**

Some schools have requirements over and above competence; they are looking for teachers of a particular religious faith or at least willing to promote a particular ethos. In our interviews this emerged especially as an issue for Roman Catholic schools where the effect on recruitment was seen as double edged. *“Being a Catholic school, I think generally we are regarded as a good school. Catholics tend to be attracted to teach here. But there are a number of occasions where non-Catholics are invited for interview and it is the non-Catholic who gets the job”* (E22). *“The whole area is having problems with recruitment. But our status as a Catholic school tends I think to put people off. I tell them not to worry.*

*They need to be able to support the ethos of the school and it is not just a Catholic ethos” (E24).*

### ***Conclusion***

- 7.9 In circumstances where there are not enough teachers to go round it is inevitable that the shortages should show up more in some regions, locations and schools than others. But what is unfortunate is that the schools on which the prospect of a fairer society depends most – those which in the past have been found to be failing – should find it most difficult to get teachers.
- 7.10 While such policies as league tables, school inspections and performance-related pay can all be claimed to have benefits they do seem to conspire together to make working in a ‘special measures’ school extremely challenging. Scanlon’s (1999) recent research has clearly demonstrated that in such schools there is likely to be increased staff turnover, greater difficulty in recruitment, heavier workload and the lowering of morale. Policies on teacher supply and affordability must take into account what is happening right across the spectrum.

## 8. SUBJECTS AND POSTS

- 8.1 Teaching is not a species, but a genus. It is not one job, but a collection. It becomes important therefore not to look just at recruitment overall, but what is happening in each domain. These may be in terms of subject or level of responsibility.

### *Subject*

- 8.2 Table 8.1 shows that secondary vacancies most frequently occurred in English, maths, science, modern foreign languages, PE and D&T. The ease of filling these posts, however, varied greatly. Whereas PE seemed to cause little difficulty, 71 per cent of those in D&T and two-thirds of those in maths and foreign languages were declared difficult to fill. Of the other subjects, posts in the physical sciences, home economics and RE seemed difficult to fill, and those in history, geography, biology, art and English less so.

**Table 8.1: Vacancies in Secondary Schools by Subject**

Subject	Vacancy		Experiencing Difficulty	
	N	% <sup>1</sup>	N	% <sup>2</sup>
English	219	13.1	85	39.4
Maths	195	11.6	127	66.5
Science	147	8.5	88	60.3
Physics	28	1.7	18	64.3
Chemistry	21	1.3	12	60.0
Biology	21	1.3	6	30.0
MFL	230	13.7	148	66.0
Geography	56	3.3	14	25.9
History	48	2.9	7	14.9
D&T	117	7.0	79	70.6
Home Economics	34	2.0	21	61.7
Computer Studies	41	2.4	22	55.5
Art	63	3.8	24	38.7
Music	79	4.7	38	51.3
PE	126	7.5	26	20.8
RE	65	3.9	40	62.5

1. Per cent of total of 1677 vacancies.

2. Per cent experiencing difficulty (ignoring missing cases).

- 8.3 This pattern corresponds closely with the success in meeting the training targets discussed in Chapter 2. The latest figures shown in Table 2.2 (page 6) continue the trend of recent years. PE has been recruiting over-target, but there have been large shortfalls in technology, modern languages and mathematics. Of the other top six subjects for vacancies, the 40 per cent of posts found difficult to fill in English reflect the recent below-target recruitment to the subject. The position in science, however, is masked by the grouping together of biology, physics and chemistry. While it looks as if, after many years, the incentive payments may be bringing science recruitment closer to target, schools are still expressing considerable difficulty in filling posts particularly in physics and chemistry. This is consistent with the progressive ‘biologicalisation’ of science revealed in Table 2.4 (page 10).

- 8.4 Of the subjects generating fewer vacancies, those in history were the easiest to fill and this is consistent with history always having been able to meet its targets with well-qualified graduates. Even though not many vacancies arose in RE these proved difficult to fill, again consistent with the failure of the teacher training institutions to meet their targets. Although it may appear obvious that shortfalls to teacher training would lead to recruitment difficulties in schools it is satisfying to be able to demonstrate it in this way. It not only gives confidence in the validity of the survey and interview data, but also the lie to the DfEE's (STRB, 1999b) surprising claim that teacher shortages have not been impacting on schools.
- 8.5 The personal accounts of the headteachers bring home the full force of the practical consequences of there being insufficient teachers.

### **Mathematics**

*For the maths teacher we had two applicants. If there had been a bigger field they wouldn't have been short-listed. It was forced on us and we interviewed them, but at interview they were even more appalling than they were on the application forms (F1).*

*Maths has been absolute murder. Incredibly difficult. You put in an advert and you may get one or two, so you re-advertise, and you get the one or two you had and a couple more (F2).*

### **Science**

*Our experience has been that whenever you advertise a science post you get lots of biologists, but very few people who are capable of doing physics and chemistry up to a high level (F3).*

*I have already told my head of science that he himself is to do A-level physics so that when the crunch comes and she goes, and we can't recruit, we'll have some sort of back-up (F4).*

### **Modern Foreign Languages**

*Two years ago I would have said modern foreign languages was a difficult area, but now I would say it is practically impossible (F6).*

*French started off with what looked like a good field and we had five people that we were going to interview. But by the interview we had one left and we appointed her (F7).*

### **Design and Technology**

*We had no applicants for the D&T post last year and in the end it was filled because our deputy-head's daughter knew somebody who only had a temporary job for one term and so we managed to get hold of him (F8).*

*We have had two applicants – one of whom is a mature gentleman who left teaching to set up his own business which has fallen flat and he wants to get back into the profession. So, although he is qualified, you have to ask if he is up-to-date. The obvious answer is 'No' (F9).*

## **ICT**

*Out of that whole ICT database I got one qualified person who is coming round to look at the school next week but they could well be employed by the time they come next Thursday (F10).*

*We have had the head of ICT advertised and nobody applied for a whole year (F11).*

## **English**

*We had allowed five days between the invitation and the interview (with two of those days being a weekend and one a bank holiday). But by the day of the interview we had only one candidate because all the others had got jobs in the meantime (F13).*

*There were ten expressions of interest, nine applications, of whom we short-listed five with some reserves, but we managed to get only three candidates to interview because the others had picked up jobs. We were just about able to make an appointment (F12).*

## **RE**

*RE has always been a big problem. For the past three or four years we have had to persuade, and it has been to persuade, several colleagues to come back and cover. In some cases we have tried to advertise and been unsuccessful and in others we have not advertised because we thought we would not get anybody (F17).*

*The number being trained is not high and you know they are posts difficult to fill (F18).*

## **Music**

*We advertised nationally and through the bulletin and I think we only got five or six applications. For interview we ended up with just two because the people that had responded had been offered jobs before our interview date. Only one of those came (F16).*

- 8.6 As might be expected from the training figures and the survey data, PE and history posts posed few problems. *“We had absolutely no difficulty in making the PE appointment. There are far more people looking for PE jobs than there are jobs available” (F21). “History has no problems, loads of applicants all of good calibre. In history, alongside PE and art, there’s loads of people around” (F20).* Art also seems well supplied though recruitment fell back last year. *“There are plenty of art teachers, you can’t stop them. History is not so bad. These are the subjects where there are plenty of people who want to work in schools” (F19).*
- 8.7 That is the general picture. But as might be inferred from Chapter 7 there can be huge regional variations. Even a subject like design and technology which heads most lists of shortage subjects can be locally well supplied due to particular circumstances *“We can always get plenty of D&T applicants. A lot of them have been in the mining and engineering industry and have retrained later in life” (F22).*

### ***Post***

- 8.8 As with subject, there were variations with level of responsibility. This is particularly the case in primary schools. Table 8.2 shows that in this phase it was the special needs co-ordinators and deputy heads posts that were the most difficult to fill. This accords with the findings of the School Teachers' Review Body's (2000a) latest survey. In secondary schools, as we have seen, major problems can arise in recruiting to classroom posts in some subjects. The filling of senior posts, however, seemed less difficult.

**Table 8.2: Vacancies by Post**

<b>Post</b>	<b>Vacancy</b>		<b>Experiencing Difficulty</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b><i>Primary</i></b>				
Classroom Teacher	531	83.5	250	47.3
SEN Co-ordinator	11	1.7	8	72.8
Head of Key Stage	15	2.4	9	60.0
Deputy Head	35	5.5	25	71.4
Headteacher	14	2.2	4	28.5
<b><i>Secondary</i></b>				
Classroom Teacher	1370	78.8	698	52.0
SEN Co-ordinator	11	0.7	6	54.6
Head of Year	20	1.2	10	50.0
Second in Dept	45	2.8	15	34.9
Head of Dept	184	11.3	98	54.5
Second in Faculty	4	0.2	2	50.0
Head of Faculty	10	0.6	5	50.0
Deputy Head	25	1.5	6	24.0
Headteacher	14	0.9	4	28.6

- 8.9 The difference in the attractiveness of deputy headships in primary and secondary schools is probably not unconnected with salary. In 1999 over three-quarters (76.8 per cent) of primary deputies were earning less than £30,000, a sum which 96.3 per cent of the secondary deputies exceeded, and often considerably. But it will also have been due to the nature of the job. Whereas in secondary schools deputy headships are specialist roles, in primary schools senior staff may find themselves as little more than classroom teachers having to carry a substantial administrative load. Primary schools are often fully stretched with little or no non-contact time. Any staff shortages due to recruitment difficulties or staff absences are likely to fall disproportionately on the senior staff (see Chapter 9).
- 8.10 The School Teachers' Review Body has recognised the problem and in 1999 aimed through improving minimum salaries to make it financially attractive for classroom teachers to take up more senior posts. But the view at the time of our survey was the salary differential was not sufficient to compensate for all the extra hassle.

### **Deputy-Headships in Primary Schools**

*Whether perhaps really dedicated people don't want deputy headships, because it is a tough position in school now. They just don't want the extra responsibility (F23).*

*On our first trawl we were unsuccessful. The advertisement attracted about half a dozen applicants from whom we chose four, one of whom dropped out. At the interview there was one we thought outstanding, but who turned us down. We did not think the other two were up to it so we started the process again. The difficulty of appointing a deputy in a school like this says something about the national situation (F24).*

- 8.11 The difficulties of appointing to senior posts in primary schools also need to be acknowledged. They partly explain why there are still recruitment problems in this phase even though the overall training target is being met. The requirement for subject specialists as co-ordinators is a further factor.

### **Co-ordinators**

*It is getting more difficult to appoint people to enhanced posts. Just looking at the response to the three posts which we recently advertised. I have sent out about 18 sets of forms for the classroom teacher. I have had no one inquire about the assessment post and I have had three for the deputy-headship (F25).*

*I lost my SENCO and at the same time my key stage 2 co-ordinator. Inevitably in a small school these people have several responsibilities so my SENCO was also my science co-ordinator. I had three and a half applications for the SENCO post – half because it was so poorly written I could barely read it. I've never seen such a poor application and the others were not strong enough for special needs. So I was SENCO for a second term. Science you can let slip, SENCO you can't (F26).*

- 8.12 In secondary schools there can be difficulties with more senior posts but they are often a reflection of subject shortages. *"In the past few years three very significant roles in this school have come up – Head of Humanities, Head of English, Head of Modern Languages. In each case there has been only one viable applicant. We have not been able to call in a field at all"* (F27). Or because of rapid turnover. *"The government has a policy whereby the head may in certain circumstances leave. That has been massively taken up round here"* (F28).

### **Conclusion**

- 8.13 Looking at difficulties in making appointments by subject and post, just as by region, location and school, reveals what happens when there are not enough teachers to go round. Setting the training targets so as to get a reasonable balance between having enough slack in the system and unemployment must be difficult enough since local circumstances can vary so much. But, as we have seen, recruitment has been persistently under target for the secondary phase. Too often this means that schools receive hardly any applications for the posts they advertise. When there is a possible clutch and interviews are quickly arranged, it is not

uncommon to find that most of those on the short list have been snapped up elsewhere before they can take place.

- 8.14 This is essence of the recruitment crisis as headteachers see it. Not being able to advertise a vacancy and get a reasonable response from which a new member of staff can be confidently chosen. Having to compete so vigorously for the staff who are available and cope when a suitable appointment cannot be made inevitably takes its toll on the senior staff and there are knock-on effects to the classroom teachers.

## 9. IMPACT ON STAFF

- 9.1 We have seen that there do not appear to be enough teachers to go round. In spite of the active and vigorous steps headteachers are taking to secure the best possible staff, they are having to plug the gaps in various ways and to adjust the timetable to cope with the teachers they have. All this is taking its toll of the headteachers themselves and imposing stresses and strains on the existing staff. The signs of stress are emerging in various ways.
- 9.2 One was the response to our request for interviews. Given all the demands on headteachers' time we had thought it might be difficult to get to see them. But they put themselves out for us and on all occasions our requests were granted. During a number of the interviews it emerged that they had agreed because they thought the topic so important and they didn't feel the message was getting through. *"There must be four or five schools in this authority with serious vacancies for teachers, but we got a written reply from a Minister saying there is not a recruitment problem"* (G16).
- 9.3 They accepted that in part it could be their fault. *"Let's face it we are in competition with local schools. So when I go to a heads' meeting which is supposed to be my support, I am not going to tell my colleagues some of the things that are going on"* (G15). But they wanted to tell someone the true situation on an anonymous and confidential basis. Having unburdened themselves the relief was sometimes almost palpable. On a few occasions when the tape recorder had been turned off the headteacher came close to breaking down.
- 9.4 The headteachers were both frustrated that the recruitment situation did not seem to be fully accepted by those with the power to do something about it and concerned at the way the seemingly endless stream of initiatives was adding to the burdens. They were unhappy both for themselves and their staff. As one put it, *"I feel more stressed out. Being in school when you are ill and if you are away feeling guilty. Feeling guilty about going on to courses and putting work on to colleagues"* (G1).

### ***Headteachers and Senior Staff***

- 9.5 For headteachers and their senior colleagues the main problems arising from the shortfalls in teacher supply have been the sheer amount of time it is taking to recruit, the tension of not getting people of the quality they want, and the extra teaching they are having to do themselves by either taking over classes or covering for absences.

#### **Time**

*Recruiting good teachers is taking up a lot of my time at the moment – you can imagine with four vacancies. Having to think about where to go, screening them, phoning up for references and interviewing them. It's taking up a lot of time and I've got a million other things to do this term* (G2).

#### **Quality**

*The biggest tension is the quality of teachers because it affects everything you do in the school. I am not a negative person, but I find that the hardest* (G3).

*If you are appointing staff who are not of the calibre you would like then you have a series of knock-on problems. They will need more support. If they are not performing as you would want them to then that is unsettling to the class and it gives the next teacher a more difficult task (G4).*

### **Extra Duties**

*I was unable to get anyone of adequate quality for the early years/home-school liaison post so I decided to take it on for two terms and re-advertise for September. My day now starts at six in the morning doing the preparation for the class. At the other side of teaching I have to do everything else (G5).*

*The recruitment situation is very difficult. I have just lost my science co-ordinator and cannot replace her. I am having to do that job. My RE, art and history co-ordinator is up for another post and if she gets it and I can't fill it I will have to do that too. On average, I teach about half the week at present. Sometimes it might be for the whole week, sometimes less – whatever it takes to cover over the cracks (G6).*

- 9.6 The above two comments are from primary school headteachers who found themselves taking over classes or other people's roles. Secondary school headteachers also sometimes took on an extra load of regular classes. *"I currently teach 14 hours a fortnight and my deputy 20 hours. We have been teaching above expectation and part of that has been to keep the ship afloat"* (G7). But they were more likely to find themselves having to cover episodically for absences, sometimes with very large groups:

*I do maths covers on occasions. There are times when the only way for me to operate is to take four classes in the gym (G10).*

*I've done 60 covers since September. There aren't many supply teachers out there anymore. I am the highest paid supply teacher in the world (G9).*

- 9.7 The recruitment problem is being exacerbated by the numerous initiatives which the government currently has on the go. They are both increasing the workload and taking staff from schools.

*I do believe vehemently and probably quite militantly that the previous government and the present government have burdened the profession – ludicrously so with innovation after innovation, vast amounts of expectation and paperwork. My own middle age stress levels are going through the roof because a hell of a lot of it falls on me (G14).*

*You get a letter from David Blunkett saying I am writing this letter to you personally because I am worried that you might be over-loaded and over-stressed. Then you get a letter saying you have got to improve your teacher absences by 20 per cent and it is because of bad management (G15).*

*There appears no acceptance that these things are intrinsic to the way we work. Frankly, and please excuse my French, it irritates the hell out of me when you hear people in government talk about the need to introduce languages at key*

*stage 2 when you cannot get the necessary teachers already at key stage 3 and 4. We need to feel involved as part of a team (G16).*

*Because the more initiatives that you have, the more immediate need there is for these general posts and the more you need really good teachers to do them. All just at a time when you are having problems with recruitment (G17).*

- 9.8 On occasions, it all becomes too much for the headteacher:

*The Director came in to see me a few months ago and said 'look we need you at the centre'. I had not considered that at all, but I've now actually accepted the post. Not that I want to get out of school, but I have to. I can't keep up the pace. I have to look at myself and say am I going to see the age of 60 (G18).*

*The government has a policy whereby the head may in certain circumstances leave. That has been massively taken up round here. Five or six headships have already been advertised and two or three have already been re-advertised because they have let their heads go and nobody wants to take the job (G19).*

### **Classroom Teachers**

- 9.9 At least headteachers are to some extent in control. But many of the consequences of under-recruitment and extra load are passed down to the teaching staff. This has resulted in raised stress levels which have shown up in a spectrum of behaviours ranging from more shouting at children through to actually resigning.

#### **Shouting at Children**

*When I first arrived in this school the ethos was very much the quiet word with the child. I am seeing more yelling in corridors this year. I am seeing more haranguing of groups of children and I have to admit I have done it in the whole school assembly. There is a more desperate tone to it (G20).*

#### **Tiredness, Headaches and Withdrawal**

*Staff are very stretched. People are having times with migraines and such which is difficult and they are very tired. We feel like hamsters on wheels, going really fast and staying in one place (G21).*

*I have seen very good, very conscientious teachers almost going under. I have got one very capable head of department who I have seen becoming less sociable in the staff room. She is almost withdrawing. I've got one who applied for the second in languages, but told me yesterday that she is withdrawing because of the extra work entailed. Certainly there is more stress around. There was my senior teacher, who was very good at the money side and the timetable, and suddenly she'd had enough, she couldn't face coming in (G22).*

#### **Absences**

*I am finding that very good teachers – teachers for whom I have a very considerable regard – are finding it harder to sustain themselves. They are not the people who go off because they think they are going to have a headache that day. They come in when they shouldn't and you have to say 'go home you will only make yourself worse'. Those people even are finding they are having to take more time off and that is very sad (G23).*

*I've got someone absent now who has been off for a week, our maths co-ordinator. I know she is worn out and has worked her socks off. She has run around classes giving resources and ideas to people and seeing reps, and she is physically stressed. There is definitely a feeling of being on the edge (G24).*

### **Illnesses**

*The people who have been and are off with stress-related problems have been seriously bad, so there is no way you can say they are just being wimps. When you talk to them and look at them, they are not well (G25).*

*There was an illness last term that was, I think, caused directly by stress. My deputy had chest pains and they put it down to stress (G26).*

### **Leaving**

*The fun has gone out of teaching. I've just lost a first class English teacher, really inspiring. She has just resigned and taken up a position in a prep school where she is going to be teaching classes of 10 to 13 (G27).*

### **Conclusion**

- 9.10 It is evident that a number of headteachers and teachers are showing signs of stress. Teacher recruitment difficulties will have contributed to that. They are not the only cause. Under-funding over the years has tended to leave schools short of staff even if they have been able to achieve a full complement. There have also been the many changes successive governments have demanded of schools as they have sought to improve the education service. Prominent among these have been the many initiatives and the greatly increased accountability in terms of examination results and inspections.
- 9.11 But all of this would have been more tolerable if schools had been able to get the staff they needed. That they have not has served to ratchet up the other tensions. Teacher shortage has itself contributed to more teachers leaving.
- 9.12 The full extent of the impact of under-recruitment to training on schools does not appear to have got back to, or been accepted by, the government, the School Teachers' Review Body and the Teacher Training Agency. In part, this is because of the heroic efforts that teachers have been making, at no little cost to themselves, of providing the best education of which they are capable whatever the circumstances. *"Yes I know it is wrong that the true picture hasn't been fed back, but I think the very nature of teachers and people in education is that we will make it work. Like Boxer in Animal Farm, if something is going wrong, I will work harder, I will work harder, I will make this work" (G15).*

## 10. A VIEW FROM THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR

- 10.1 In addition to the 400,000 plus teachers in maintained schools there are over 40,000 in independent schools. They are largely drawn from the same pool as their state colleagues, the same universities, the same teacher training institutions and, indeed, a number are recruited from state schools. Although the PGCE is not a formal requirement, many independent schools like their staff to have it. Many independent schools play their full part in teacher training. They offer places for student teachers, they are organised to provide the formal induction programme for newly-qualified teachers, and they have links with various providers so as to be able to offer on-the-job teacher training.
- 10.2 Independent schools tend to have fewer recruitment difficulties than state schools, but that depends to some extent on their standing and requirements. Although the independent sector tends to be thought of as homogenous it, in fact, consists of a great variety of schools. They do, however, fall into a number of broad groupings defined in part by the association to which they belong. Many of the schools usually thought of as independent schools are members of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) or the Girls' Schools Association (GSA). But, in addition, there are the Society of Headmasters and Headmistresses (SHMIS), mainly for smaller schools with a tradition of boarding, the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) and the Independent Schools Association (ISA). Preparatory education is sometimes separated into pre-prep for the 2-7 year-olds and prep for the 7-13 year-olds. ISA includes schools for all ages. The distribution of staff across the schools is shown in Table 10.1.

**Table 10.1: Full-Time Staff in Independent Schools<sup>1</sup>**

Association	Men		Women		Total
	N	%	N	%	
HMC <sup>2</sup> (242)	10,824	(70.1)	4,620	(29.9)	15,444
GBGSA <sup>3</sup> (213)	1,334	(15.3)	7,398	(84.7)	8,732
SHMIS <sup>4</sup> (90)	1,880	(57.5)	1,390	(42.5)	3,270
IAPS <sup>5</sup> (517)	4,320	(38.6)	6,869	(61.4)	11,189
ISA <sup>6</sup> (289)	1,539	(31.2)	3,387	(68.6)	4,926
Total <sup>7</sup> (1279)	18,271	(45.0)	22,302	(55.0)	40,573

1. In January 2000.

2. Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference - boys' and co-educational senior schools.

3. Governing Bodies of Girls' Schools Association.

4. Society of Headmasters and Headmistresses - boys' and co-educational senior schools with tradition of boarding.

5. Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools - boys', girls' and mixed preparatory schools to age 12/13.

6. Independent Schools Association - preparatory and senior schools and schools for children of all ages.

7. Schools totals do not match column totals because some schools belong to more than one association.

**Source:** ISIS *Annual Census 2000, Statistical Survey of Independent Schools*, London: Independent Schools Council.

- 10.3 Teaching in independent schools tends to be less of a female-profession than it is in state schools. Even the equivalent of primary schools have nearly 40 per cent men. Indeed the headmaster of a leading coeducational boarding school indicated that "there aren't enough women. I think the particular difficulty for women is the long hours at a boarding school. We have meetings at 6 o'clock or 8 o'clock, or we're on duty at the house from 6.30 till 11.00 at night" (H49). But the higher

proportion of men also reflects the greater choice available to independent schools when appointing staff.

- 10.4 Table 10.2 shows that during 1999 there was about 12.5 per cent turnover in the staff of independent schools with rather more joining than leaving. A notable source of recruitment, accounting for over a quarter of the intake, was from state schools. Over three times as many were joining from the maintained sector as were leaving to go to it.

**Table 10.2: Movements in Independent Schools<sup>1</sup>**

	Coming From		Going To	
	N	%	N	%
Independent Schools	1768	33.2	1355	28.6
Maintained Schools	1522	28.5	469	9.9
Initial Teacher Training	591	11.1	61	1.3
New Graduates	397	7.4	14	0.3
Industry/Employment	140	2.6	178	3.8
Other (inc Retirement)	915	17.2	2660	56.2
Total <sup>2</sup>	5333	100.0	4737	100.0

1. Full-time teachers only.

2. Includes some double counting, but it will have little effect on the proportions.

**Source:** ISIS Annual Census 2000, Statistical Survey of Independent Schools, London: Independent Schools Council.

- 10.5 In order to try to understand the reasons for the unbalanced flow and to see if there are any lessons to be learned from it, we talked at length to the headteachers of 21 independent schools. Originally the intention was to focus on HMC and GSA schools chosen as to be representative of size, geography and the day and boarding traditions. But, as the pattern of differences between schools emerged, it was decided to include one or two SHMIS and prep schools (which accounts for the slightly odd number of interviews- see the Appendix).
- 10.6 There is no doubt that transfers to the independent sector can be a serious loss to some state schools. The headmaster of one grammar school in the South East told us:

*We're having a record loss at the end of this year. Eight people are leaving which is incredibly high for this school and all bar one are going to the independent sector. Staff from here are known to be academically sound and to be coming from a good school. In the independent schools they can get a better salary and a better life style. There has been a loss over a number of years, but it has been growing. There are people going who would not previously have got in. This seems to say something about the whole of education because if the independent sector with its greater resources is struggling to find staff of the calibre it seeks, then that is a sign of a desperate shortage (H1).*

- 10.7 The view that the upward drift stems from teacher shortage is echoed by the headteacher of a middle-ranking independent day school in the East Midlands:

*The interesting feature for me is that the high proportion of well-established independent schools which are appointing people from a school like this which hasn't got a history of being a supplier in any numbers. I think it's pretty evident, there aren't the teachers in the quantity nor necessarily the quality one would like. I would imagine that the better known schools are having to draw increasingly from those who perhaps aren't in the same, shall we say, league table divisions, in order to find people perhaps they wouldn't have found elsewhere. We're drawing from people who might or might not have gone to the state sector, but certainly aren't going there now. I've had to settle for lower-seconds. Also we are taking from other than the traditional universities (H42).*

- 10.8 The top independent schools therefore seem to draw off their staff from other independent schools and the independent sector as a whole from maintained schools.

### ***Attractions***

- 10.9 What is it that makes independent schools broadly more attractive to teach in than state schools? In general terms it seems to be about quality of life. *"I think there is a view that the quality of the teaching life here is better"* (H7). *"I think they were looking for a more academic environment and obviously the terms and conditions"* (H8). *"Certainly one of the science appointments that I have put in took a drop in salary. He was working in a sixth-form college and felt that, with the increasing financial pressures there, what he was expected to do, especially the size of classes, was increasingly unsustainable"* (H9). But if we try to be more specific it looks as if the reasons lie in the pleasure of teaching, salary, help with housing and other benefits, facilities and working conditions, and contact time and class sizes.

### **Pleasure of Teaching**

The main reason why the headteachers of independent schools thought they were able to attract staff was that they felt that teaching within them was enjoyable. *"I think the over-riding message that comes across is that it is a nice environment to teach children"* (H10). *"Certainly the thing they will give most often at interviews as their reason is the fact that they want to get on with the teaching and not crowd control. And I think also in a selective school if they are bright academic people themselves there is an attraction to teaching the top end of the ability range"* (H11). *"I would suspect that they think the children would be better behaved, which on the whole they are because we have inevitably very supportive parents"* (H32).

### **Salary**

*If you research across the independent sector you will find everything from schools which pay exactly the state scale. I can even think of one or two that pay less than it does. The majority either have their own extended spine, so you would start perhaps at the same point as you would in a state school, but have the opportunity to progress further. Some offer state, plus a flat fee of £800 or something of that order. So there is no uniformity (H15).*

At the top end of the range some of the most highly selective and sought-after schools pay considerably above the scale for state school teachers. *"I have*

*always gone for a very attractive starting salary. In September our starting salary will be about £22,500, which for a young person is good, and I should hope that helps” (H12). “We pay our own scale which is higher than in many independent schools. Our starting salary is about £21,000 and heads of department get about £38,000. I would say we are a comfortable £5,000-£6,000 above anyone in the state system in an equivalent position” (H13).*

A number of schools, however, particularly girls’ schools, follow the state scales. *“We are totally tied to the maintained sector scale” (H20). “We are in the country, we have nice grounds, squash courts they can use, free food and the children are nice. There are enough advantages to teaching in a school like this that I don’t think I have to pay vast amounts for” (H21).*

In between, other approaches to deciding salary vary from flat-rate enhancements to the entrepreneurial. *“I find out what they are paid and I will try and pay them more, or at least match their London salary if that is where they are coming from. There is a certain inequality in what people are paid. But I reserve that as my right. What you are hoping is that they are not all going to sit together and say ‘I am on this, what are you on?’” (H18). More often though schools operated their own scales. “The average member of staff is paid about 14 per cent more than they would be getting in a state school. It is collegial system with very few special allowances” (H14).*

SHMIS (H19) and IAPS (H22) schools pay at least the state sector rate with most striving to pay above it. However some of the smaller and less well-known schools are struggling to maintain the differential. They have been doubly hit by losing assisted places and the restructuring of state salaries. *“When we lost the assisted places scheme, three years ago, the school has really gone into a period when I think it’s going to drop from about 700 down to 550 over seven years. During that time losing the odd member of staff is almost welcome. I’m not doing a great deal of recruitment” (H56). “We used to pursue the maintained scheme with a 2.5 per cent inflation. With the changes that are about to happen this September we have gone on to our own scale and it bears little resemblance to the national scale, but it is a bit more generous” (H23).*

### **Housing and Other Benefits**

As well as enhanced salaries many independent schools can offer help with housing and have a package including other benefits. *“I was just seeing in the local newspaper this morning my colleague down the road, at the grammar school, at his prize day, bemoaning the difficulty of attracting appropriate members of staff because of the cost of housing around here. We, like most boarding schools, offer housing and the great majority of those who join us do go into school housing and we find ourselves buying or renting properties. I think it is a crucial element in attracting the right quality of staff” (H25). “We have retained about half dozen of what we call starter flats, and that actually is a big selling point” (H24). “Probably the biggest issue in people moving here is the accommodation one. We do have a very small number of school-owned flats and we can offer youngsters accommodation to start with in some instances, but it has been an issue” (H27). The other benefits can include “discounted education for sons and daughters, and health insurance” (H10).*

### **Working Conditions and Facilities**

But while the extrinsic benefits are important as we saw at the outset, intrinsic satisfactions are likely to be even more so: *There is often a sense of appreciation of how lucky one is with resources, children and class sizes, and discipline. Some of the more sensitive people, and some of the more intellectual people, will find teaching in a comprehensive dispiriting, particularly if it is only to 16. A very good physicist that I have just appointed was in an 11 to 16 comprehensive. He has got a very good first-class degree and he so appreciative. It makes the old hands realise how lucky they are, as indeed they are* (H31).

More prosaically it can boil down to facilities. *“We have a lot of staff facilities, everybody has their own desk, their own work space, their own cupboards and shelves, which again makes an attractive environment to work in”* (H9).

### **Contact Time and Class Sizes**

The average termly fee in 1999 of £2,285 (ISC, 2000) enables independent schools to be able to afford proportionally more teachers than state schools. This affects both class sizes and the amount of preparation and marking time that an individual teacher has. *“It’s a 44 period week and 35 minute periods. They teach 30 of those 44. In the main body of the school the class sizes are 20 or less. By GCSE because we often run the same subject two or three times so that it can go into different combinations it could be as low as 14, and for minority subjects even smaller than that”* (H34). *“Out of the sixty teaching periods in a ten-day cycle the average ordinary member of staff, not a head of department or housemaster, would probably be teaching about forty-five”* (H33). *“I did a calculation recently: even allowing for the fact that we have this long day, we do a shorter teaching year, and it’s something like 80 hours a year less teaching than in the state sector. That of course doesn’t take into account the classroom atmosphere which is utterly different, it’s dynamic”* (H35).

- 10.10 The pupil-teacher ratio in independent schools in 1999 was about 10 to 1 across both prep and senior schools (ISC, 2000). This compares with 23.5 for primary schools and 17.0 for secondary schools in the state sector (DfEE, 1999). The contact ratio also tends to be 80 per cent or less, a norm which the independent schools inspection service is working to. Teachers in state primary schools have little or no non-contact time, as we have seen, so the contrast with prep schools could not be starker.

### **Requirements**

- 10.11 Even with these considerable advantages independent schools can sometimes, in their own terms, experience difficulties in recruitment. But these have to be seen in relation to whom they are willing to appoint. The standards can be very high indeed. One of the headteachers to emphasize the importance she attached to track record rather than qualifications said, *“So I certainly don’t rule them out automatically because they don’t have an Oxbridge degree, because they have only got a 2.2”* (H39).
- 10.12 Getting the right people is extremely important. *“I have never gone into appointments as thoroughly as we do here. Not only are the girls very demanding,*

*their parents are too” (H37). “I need somebody who is intellectually on the ball or they are going to eat them alive” (H39). “We have been looking for a head of IT for a long while. But because we are very choosy we haven’t made an appointment yet” (H50).*

10.13 Academic qualifications, particularly how well the applicants themselves did at school, are a major criterion, as well as teaching skills though not necessarily a PGCE. *“I look at someone’s A-levels; class of degree is pretty uninteresting to me. I couldn’t care less about a PGCE. I look at where they took their degree, and I am very interested in where they have taught” (H40). “Subject, good skills as a teacher, robust enough to cope with highly intelligent young women questioning the whole time, willing to give something extra in the way of extra-curricular activities. We do tend to recruit on their track record in other schools” (H37).*

10.14 But they are also looking for something more. This is particularly the case with boarding schools. *“I am looking for good knowledge and interest in their direct subject. I am looking for wider intellectual interests too because we believe strongly in encouraging people to teach beyond their subjects as far as possible. I am looking for a commitment to boarding, of course, because of the special nature of the school and I have got to feel happy that they are going to fit in and enjoy it and get on with people. A PGCE is not necessary. I think we have probably got the highest proportion of non-accredited teachers in the country” (H38). “We’re a mixed boarding and day school so the full life of the school is a major consideration. I need people to run extra-curricular activities. If there is somebody who is interested in being resident, that’s helpful although it’s not a critical factor” (H41).*

### ***Recruitment by Subject***

10.15 In spite of these very high requirements and the wide range of skills they are looking for, independent schools generally are able to get the people they want. *“We have not experienced any difficulties here. We ran an advert for a modern languages post and got about 45 responses. For history we had 132” (H43). “On an average we would expect to receive between 50 and 80 applications for each post. I would expect to interview six” (H48).*

10.16 Both of these schools are in the North West where state schools too experience less difficulty. In other parts of the country it can be more difficult. *“Recruitment of staff is patchy. It depends where you live. It is extremely difficult to recruit staff in areas where housing is very expensive” (H54).*

10.17 Where independent schools do have difficulties they tend to mirror those of the state sector, but be on a much smaller scale. This is not only because they have more pulling power, but also because they can respond to the market. We have already seen that a number of them provide help towards housing. As regards subjects it is a familiar story.

### **Languages**

*The difficult areas which we found, and have found in the past, are most particularly modern languages. I guess from conversations with other independent heads that this is quite common. We were very lucky with the*

*modern languages post and had about twenty applicants and we managed to appoint a very good person who joined us from one of the local selective grammar schools, somewhat to their loss (H44).*

*Linguists, a very strong field, but very difficult to find a man. We have now got an all-female languages department (H52).*

### **Maths and Science**

*We advertised for a mathematician and didn't do very well. In the end my head of maths headhunted. He rang a university contact and got someone who proved to be very good. I also had to look around for the chemistry post. I got someone from industry with a 2.1 from an old university and a PhD but no PGCE (H45).*

*We advertised twice for a head of maths this year and even then didn't get the field we would have expected for a school like this. If we are having trouble, others are too (H46).*

*The quality of the applicants, particularly in the sciences, where we had to appoint a chemist and we had to advertise three times before we could get somebody of the right calibre, and that is somebody who is coming over from the state system into the independent sector. For our biologist we are also appointing from the state sector, which is great (H53).*

### **IT and D&T**

*I think the general picture is that I have no difficulty in filling the posts with the exception of IT and design technology. Both are very difficult areas. I have managed, but only just. Those are two areas where, I think, even in the independent sector, or at least as far as we are concerned, there are not many good applicants (H49).*

*In IT I was really pushed. The only person I think I could have appointed was the one I did, and there was a bit of a discussion with him about his salary. But had he turned me down I think I would have been stuck (H51).*

- 10.18 The headteachers are also sometimes concerned about the age of their staff and what the future might bring if teacher supply does not improve. *“My main concern is the retirement time bomb that is ticking away. If I look at the age profile of my staff it is horrendous. In about six years' time, over a span of about three years, I think I will lose through retirement, something like a third of staff. We are an ageing profession, and we are not replacing with young people coming in” (H55).*

### **Recruitment by Type of School**

- 10.19 Girls' schools which stick to the state salary scale perhaps find a bit more difficulty in recruiting. Boarding schools and prep schools can also have their particular problems.

#### **Boarding Schools**

For boarding schools it is the time commitment. *“I had some difficulties with younger teachers worried about what they perceived we wanted from them in terms of a time commitment. It seems to be a common thing - you are going to want my every hour. Boarding these days is more difficult because although the*

*money's good people do want free time" (H58). "I have detected an increased reluctance to be involved as the boarding house tutor, but in all fairness, I am still able to find people, they get free accommodation and meals in return for duties, but people are less ready to become boarding house masters" (H57). "Another thing that is perhaps applicable to boarding schools more than day schools, though not entirely so, is that it is more difficult now to find good all-rounders who are able to teach their subject and then to coach games. I am thinking particularly of games here, and not just music or drama" (H59).*

One of the few instances we found of staff moving from the independent to the state sector was from a boarding school. *"He is one of the residential boarding staff who actually is involved in a serious way in boarding. I think a factor might be fatigue, or perhaps over commitment – he wants to get married" (H5).*

### **Prep Schools**

Prep schools can find it more difficult to recruit staff than other independent schools. This is partly because they tend to be small and it is more difficult for them to fund generous salaries. But it is especially because unlike state primaries they teach a subject-based curriculum. Since the primary PGCE is not subject based they are often in a position of trying to tempt someone who is a subject specialist and secondary trained to teach their subject up to age 13 only. *"It can be a problem attracting subject specialists. You have got to be committed to this age group to be perfectly honest. There are far greater opportunities for a career-minded teacher if they go into the secondary level" (H60).*

The only other teacher we found moving to the state sector was from a prep school. *"I have actually had one who moved into the state sector this year; which was an interesting move and was the right one for him. He was a D&T teacher and needed to work as part of a larger team. He was actually secondary trained and of course was working at a much more sophisticated level than we go to – the age of 13 – so he wanted to work with secondary" (H6).*

### **Conclusion**

- 10.20 The picture which emerges of recruitment to independent schools is that, apart from occasional difficulties in relation to their exacting standards or particular requirements, they are able to find the staff they want without too much difficulty. As autonomous institutions generating their own income they are able to create the conditions to attract the staff they are looking for and adjust them when difficulties arise.
- 10.21 The headteachers, however, were aware of teacher shortages and concerned for the future. One way it hit home was in transfers between schools. Just as in football where some clubs are consistently able to have their pick of the talent available, so some schools seem much more attractive than others. A pecking order seems to exist. The leading independent schools draw on those below them, independent schools take disproportionately from the state sector, and within the state sector the weaker schools lose out. In times of scarcity the teachers available are pulled up through the system leaving schools at the bottom, as we have seen, struggling to find someone to stand in front of the class.

10.22 The independent schools seem to be able to attract high quality staff and draw off from the state system by offering an enjoyable working life. They do, in the main, offer competitive salaries. They also ameliorate the costs of housing in expensive parts of the country. But they also employ more teachers leading to smaller classes and allowing more time for preparation and marking. They also provide good facilities. Not all aspects of the independent schools' attractiveness to teachers are reproducible – the sector has the advantage of being only a small part of a system that has to cater for everyone. But it does provide insights into what would enable teaching to claim its share of the most able graduates.

## 11. TURNING THE TIDE

- 11.1 The main message of the study is that schools are finding it very difficult to recruit good teachers. Not enough are being trained to go round and about half the vacancies in our representative survey were described as difficult to fill. Analysis of the teacher training figures shows that for many years there has been a failure to reach the targets in a number of subjects. Admittedly, this is to some extent cyclical. But even this is worrying since it is the inverse of the economic cycle implying that teaching is not competing successfully against a wide range of other occupations for the very large numbers of graduates that it needs. Recruitment to some subjects is better than others, but all except history and PE are to some extent affected.
- 11.2 What happens in conditions of teacher shortage is that the education system becomes even more polarised and inequitable. Some schools are able to attract the teachers they need while others are left out in the cold. The schools that are most successful are the top independent schools which offer high salaries, good working conditions, good facilities and the prospect of a fulfilling working life. They are not only able to recruit some of the best graduates, but also draw in teachers who have proved themselves in other schools, both state and independent. They can select according to the most exacting standards. Below them there is a whole raft of independent schools and some state schools which, on occasions, lose staff upwards, but draw in from other schools. They are also in a better position to attract newly qualified teachers and choose among them. At the bottom of the heap, however, are the schools glad to recruit any teacher they can get. In times of shortage they will tend to lose their best staff and find it hard to attract newly qualified teachers. Their main concern at times will be to have someone in the classroom rather than selecting to a standard.
- 11.3 None of this has shown up in the vacancy figures – which has been something of a minor mystery. They have been something which the government has been able to use in urging pay restraint on the School Teachers' Review Body. As this study shows, the main reason why the shortages do not really come through in the vacancy figures is the tremendous efforts teachers are making to do their best for the children in the circumstances. One headteacher graphically compares their response to Boxer's in *Animal Farm*: "we will work harder". Another said, "We feel like hamsters on wheels, going really fast and staying in the one place." Schools have also been reluctant to talk about their circumstances. Having been put in a competitive situation whereby their income depends on pupil numbers they are extremely wary of revealing their difficulties in case parents send their children elsewhere exacerbating the situation.
- 11.4 The true extent of the effects of teacher shortage on schools has thus been to a large extent hidden. In our interviews many headteachers expressed relief at finally being able to talk about it. In Chapters 5 and 6 we record the details of their main coping strategies. On the one hand, the schools may have to bring in who they can. This may be people they are doubtful about and to whom they give short-term contracts, they may juggle with a variety of part-time contracts, or pull in supply staff known to them or from LEAs or increasingly the agencies that have sprung up to meet the demand. Many of the most sought-after supply staff, in London and the South East

particularly, come from overseas, from countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. Failing the recruitment of additional staff by these various means, schools are calling on their existing staff to do more, eating into the non-contact time in secondary schools and throwing more responsibility on to the heads and deputy heads of primary schools. Some school staff like technicians and Section 11 support staff are sometimes inappropriately being called upon to act as teachers.

- 11.5 If the teachers simply cannot be found, as Chapter 6 shows, the curriculum suffers. Non-core subjects, or options within them, may be withdrawn. Modern foreign languages and design and technology seem particularly vulnerable, though science is becoming increasingly dominated by biology. In Wales, the statutory requirement for Welsh is under threat. It is the less able children who are most likely to be offered an impoverished curriculum. Classes and groups may also be combined leaving them larger than is desirable and, in some cases, as in design and technology, bigger than held to be safe.
- 11.6 All the efforts at squaring the circle are inevitably exacting a price from existing staff. Headteachers, as we saw in Chapter 4, are having to put an enormous amount of time and effort into finding suitable staff. They have also over the years grown used to making do with fewer staff than needed. Over the decade to 1999 the pupil-teacher ratio in primary schools rose from 22.0 to 23.5 and in secondary schools from 15.3 to 17.0 (DfEE, 1999). One consequence of this is that headteachers themselves, particularly in primary schools, are having to take more classes on a regular basis themselves and play a greater part in covering for absent colleagues. This coupled with the tension of not knowing whether they are going to be able to get suitable staff, or living with the thought that the person they have appointed is not quite up to it, has led to a number of headteachers taking early retirement or moving elsewhere in the education service.
- 11.7 Classroom teachers themselves are also put under additional stress. They may find themselves with colleagues who need extra support, filling in gaps, coping with supply staff and covering absences. The stress, as we saw in Chapter 9, is emerging in various ways. At one end of the scale headteachers have detected more signs of bad temper and, at the other, teachers have been leaving because of the hassle. In between there are signs that the pressures are giving rise to more tiredness and headaches, and more absences and illnesses. The absences of course exacerbate the teacher shortages.
- 11.8 Some may say that we are looking at this from the point of view of the bottle being half-empty, whereas in reality it is half-full. It is true that half the posts were filled with little difficulty, but these were clustered mainly in some parts of the country, some locations, some schools, some subjects and some posts. The schools that were most badly affected were schools in the most financially disadvantaged areas where it might be thought that society would want to offer the highest possible level of education to ameliorate the circumstances of birth. Instead, some of the recent policies, like linking teachers' pay to pupil results, will make working in 'failing schools' even less attractive. We would argue strongly therefore that it is not 'half

all right', but badly wrong. The whole of the government's policy for improving education is put at risk if it cannot secure a supply of teachers of appropriate quality.

### ***Policy Issues***

- 11.9 The numerical analysis and interviews suggest that the teacher shortages arise in two ways. First, not enough people are attracted to train as teachers and, secondly, those that are distribute themselves unevenly. It is always going to be difficult to get the numbers needed in subjects like maths, physics, chemistry and modern languages, bearing in mind the limited size of the graduate pools from which teaching is recruiting, and the attractive opportunities elsewhere. The government is attempting to address this through payments for teachers in training with extra incentives in these subjects (DfEE 2000a, TTA, 2000). An earlier version of the scheme boosted applications in 1999 and it remains to be seen whether this will be sustained. It is also true that the enhanced level of inquiries increased acceptances less than might have been expected suggesting that not all the extra applications were credible.
- 11.10 As regards the uneven distribution of teachers we can learn from where they chose to go. In the main, teachers tended to gravitate to schools where they could enjoy the highest quality of life within the school and outside. The pull of many of the schools, as we saw in Chapter 10, seemed to reside in offering the prospect of a satisfying professional life. Intrinsicly, this amounts to having adequate time, good facilities and good back up. It also means having children wanting to learn which raises deep-seated societal issues which may not be immediately capable of solution.
- 11.11 As well as better conditions of service in terms of non-contact time and physical facilities, it is important to get the salary right. Schools were generally able to attract staff if they were able to offer them salaries plus packages sufficient to provide a good life style bearing in mind the cost of housing in their part of the world. Respect and security are other extrinsic rewards. Some of these are within the government's hands, but others can only be influenced indirectly.

### ***Funding for Schools***

- 11.12 Perhaps the thing the government could most directly do to help teacher recruitment would be to provide more money for schools. Schools could then offer, by employing more staff and improving the facilities, a more intrinsically satisfying working life. Once this became known it is likely to bring more people forward to train. The government (HM Treasury, 2000) will argue that it has only recently found the money to raise education spending from £45.8 billion in 2000-1 to £57.7 billion in 2003-4. If a substantial part of that extra money goes to the core funding of schools then this is welcome news. But the government has not yet announced its detailed plans and much of the extra money in 2000-1 went into special allocations with which - because it could be temporary - the schools did not feel they could increase their core staffing.
- 11.13 The promised increases in extra spending also have to be seen against the backdrop of funding in recent years. In the five years from 1994-95 the real terms funding per

secondary pupil was reduced by four per cent. It also dropped in the intervening years for primary school pupils, but was raised back to its 1994-95 levels in 1998-99. Funding per secondary pupil in 1998-99 at £2,450 was still 30 per cent higher than that per primary pupil at £1,882 (DfEE, 2000b). These figures can be compared with the average fee charged by a day school in the independent sector, in 1999, of £5,823 (ISC, 2000).

- 11.14 We have seen that in the independent sector this extra income goes primarily on more staff, better facilities and more back-up. The pupil-teacher ratio in independent schools at 10 to 1 is less half that in state primaries and 60 per cent of that in state secondaries. The extra teachers not only allow smaller classes, but more and guaranteed non-contact time. Independent schools can also afford better facilities. In 1999 they spent, on average, £260 per pupil on improvements to buildings and equipment compared with £175 per state pupil, and this latter figure also includes books.
- 11.15 More money for schools therefore means the potential for a more satisfying professional life. The contrast between the independent and state sectors is acute at the primary level. Whereas the average yearly fee for an IAPS day prep school at £5,943 is only 1.6 per cent less than that for an HMC senior day school at £6,039, state primaries receive 30 per cent less per pupil than the already low figure secondaries receive. The justification for this lower level of funding for primary schools is obscured in history, but its consequences can be seen in the working conditions. For example in the very limited non-contact time available. As one head told us *“basically all they get is what is engineered through acts of collective worship.”* Or another, *“it’s a case of the SENCO trying to sneak out of Assembly to talk to the psychologist and the ICT co-ordinator trying to get someone to read her class a story whilst she talks to the technician.”*
- 11.16 The differences between the independent and state sectors show up in pupils’ results. In 1999, 95 per cent of the prep school pupils taking the test achieved a level 4 in English and 93 per cent in maths. This compares with 70 and 69 per cent respectively for state primaries. Over half the prep school pupils achieved level 5 and above against less than a quarter of their state counterparts. As one of the independent heads told us, *“It’s not the raw intellect that counts, but what you do with it”*.
- 11.17 Lack of funding has meant that schools, both primary and secondary, have grown used to managing with fewer teachers than they really need. When asked what would be a realistic staff profile they were often surprisingly modest in their ambitions. Most primaries thought that an extra teacher would make all the difference. Typical comments were: *“Ideally, it would be nice to have another teacher, to release the deputy or be a floating teacher, but I don’t think that is going to happen,”* and *“In an ideal world I think we could manage very comfortably on two extra teachers, and a support assistant in every class for say 10-15 hours a week.”*
- 11.18 The financial constraints on secondary schools have left them having to reduce staffing in recent years. *“We have had to cut every single budget heading to the*

*margin and some of them below margin. We got to the stage where we could not employ all the teachers we needed. At the extreme we actually had to send year 7 home.” “In this county a school of 1000 pupils has five fewer teachers than in September 1995; you can translate that into larger classes and reduced non-contact time”. “In the merger we lost nine staff and the pupil-teacher ratio went up from 15.5 to 18.8”.*

- 11.19 In thinking of what they ideally needed they were often thinking of recouping lost ground. *“I really need the two I lost through budgetary constraints.”* Like the primary schools their dreams were modest. *“I would like the money to pay for an additional deputy head which would give us the flexibility we need.” “Realistically, I would like another scientist. That would allow us to reduce group sizes to 22 instead of 26/27. Similarly maths and English.”*
- 11.20 The government in the last year has put in some extra money and that has been appreciated. *“The £40,000 which I have received has kept us afloat. It has not enabled me to do anything new. It’s a lifebelt. If I didn’t have it I wouldn’t be able to staff my school in September. We’re running on empty.” “Last year was a tough budget and we tightened up by cutting back on the staff-pupil ratio. This year has been more straightforward because of the £40,000 from the Chancellor; and the Standards Funds.”* Primary schools are also benefiting. *“We will be awash with teaching assistants in September, two funded by local initiatives, two funded by the Action Zone and two funded by Mr Blunkett himself.”*
- 11.21 But a concern for the schools is how safe is this extra money, bearing in mind the government’s preferred ‘something for something’ approach. Recently, money has often been given for specific programmes of limited duration. How much of it can be treated as core funding to make permanent appointments as opposed to staff on temporary contracts for particular purposes? The government could with advantage engage in less short-termism.
- 11.22 We would therefore like to see two main policy issues addressed in connection with more funding for maintained schools. First, we would argue for substantial extra funding to enable them to provide higher quality education which would be more satisfying to teachers and give the prospect of attracting more into the profession. That should include better working conditions for teachers which, as we have noted earlier, compare unfavourably with those in independent schools, notably smaller classes, more time for preparation and marking, and better facilities. Secondly, we would like to see a re-consideration of the different weighting of primary and secondary pupils. This is hard to justify and it is where the difference from what the independent sector provides is at its sharpest. It may be that the difficult working conditions in many primary schools accounts, in part, for the higher turnover and wastage from this phase (DfEE, 1999). This in turn helps to explain the seeming contradiction that while the overall training targets for primary teacher training are met, schools are still finding it difficult to make appointments. (Another factor is that while the target is general, the schools’ requirements are specific.)

### *Salary Structure*

- 11.23 There is also a need for a salary structure which underpins teaching as an attractive profession. In the salary scales effective from 1 September 2000 the basic salary scale runs from £15,141 to £23,958, with someone with a second-class honours degree or better starting at least at £16,050 (STRB, 2000b). In restructuring teachers' pay the government is setting great store by its performance-related scheme. This establishes a number of points above the basic scale which can be achieved by crossing a threshold which itself would bring an increase of £2,000 (DfEE, 2000c). The scheme has proved to be controversial and has yet to be fully implemented so it remains to be seen whether it will encourage more people to come into teaching.
- 11.24 But as well as the length of the pay spine and the possible maximum salary, starting salary is also important. The latest figures from the Association of Graduate Recruiters (Judd, 2000) show that salaries for new graduates range from £13,000 in the public sector and insurance to £28,500 in law and banking, with an average of £18,300. Against these figures a starting salary of £16,000 for a good honours graduate does not look very generous. It is below average and does not put teaching in a good position compared with many other graduate occupations. We would therefore urge the issue of starting salaries to be addressed.
- 11.25 Where the starting salary should be pitched is a matter of skilled judgement. It is notable that the schools in our study which had the least difficulty in recruiting the people they wanted, some of the top independent schools, paid very good starting salaries. One was intending to pay £22,500 from September and another currently pays £21,000. These are comfortably above average, in the upper quartile. Admittedly these schools were attractive in other ways, but they also recognised the need to compete for good graduates through starting salary.
- 11.26 The problem is not confined to starting salaries. If teaching is to attract graduates, and to retain them, it must also offer opportunities for continuing career salary progression competitive with comparable occupations. Just as the independent schools have had to compete for good graduates through starting salary, they have also had to offer commensurate opportunities thereafter with salaries of £38,000 or more for heads of department. Even taking into account the newly introduced threshold payment this is some £6,000 above that payable in a maintained school. Our calculations suggest that even allowing for the threshold payment nearly 50 per cent of all teachers will still be below £26,000, which is unlikely to attract the requisite numbers of graduates into teaching.
- 11.27 Against that background, and the serious problems of recruitment and retention set out earlier, it is important to think how the salaries might be decided to be fair both to teachers and the taxpayer. The Royal Commission on Civil Service Pay (1955) set out some clear principles:
- *'Fair comparison' as the primary principle is fair to the community at large for two reasons. First, it looks after the ordinary citizen's interest as a taxpayer. If the Government which represents him pays him what other responsible employers pay for comparable work, the citizen cannot reasonably complain*

*that he is being exploited. Equally we consider that he would agree that he could not, in the long run, obtain an efficient service by paying less (para 97).*

- *We consider that the Civil Service should be a good employer in the sense that while it should not be among those who offer the highest rates of remuneration, it should be among those who pay somewhat above the average. Expressing the point in statistical terms we should say that if it were possible to obtain for any specific job a set of rates 'representative of the community as a whole' which would be arranged in order from top to bottom, and with no complications such as we have described in this Section, the civil service rate should not be lower than the median but not above the upper quartile (para 172).*

11.28 This seems to us to be not a bad way of settling teachers' salaries. A level somewhere between the median and upper quartile salaries of other employees would, as we saw in some independent schools, create a reasonable prospect of attracting good graduates to the profession. This need not involve any explicit link with civil service pay which has sometimes caused controversy in the past, but it could be decided on its own terms. It is worth remembering, however, that the Houghton Report of 1975 which did use civil service pay as a referent succeeded in raising teacher recruitment and retention substantially. The detailed information available from the Association of Graduate Recruiters, among others, makes it possible to apply the Royal Commission's principles even more accurately than in the past.

### ***Housing***

11.29 One of the major problems many schools have, particularly in London and the South East, is that teachers simply cannot afford to live in the area because housing is so expensive. Here is another lesson that the state system might learn from the independent sector, because in those schools help with housing was routinely part of the recruitment package in high-housing cost areas. What form this might take in the state sector is again a matter for careful consideration. But the present position of having to rely on transient teachers from abroad, because British teachers cannot afford housing is no way to run an education system.

### ***Conclusion***

11.30 It will take considerable investment in education to address the intrinsic satisfactions of teaching through more funding to schools and the extrinsic satisfactions through the salary structure of teachers. But it will have to be done to enable teaching to compete for a reasonable share of the good graduates emerging from our universities. It is surely a mark of a healthy society that it should be able to attract some of the most able within it to the work of passing on their knowledge and understanding to the next generation.

11.31 The present government can claim that it is putting in substantial new money. But this has to be seen against the background of the severe cutbacks of recent years and the interventionist approach it has adopted. This often leads to schools having to bid for extra money; the teachers, themselves, are to be subject to merit pay. These add to the bureaucracy and impinge on the intrinsic satisfactions of what is

already an over-stretched workforce. It will be difficult in the present climate to tip the pendulum back towards ‘trust’ from the present extreme position on ‘regulation’, but the attempt should be made.

- 11.32 We recognise that governments must increasingly justify spending and investment in public services. They are concerned to strike the right balance between availability of resources for the public and private sectors. That balance will vary according to the circumstances of particular times. If, however, the education service does not receive the resourcing necessary for it to operate effectively other parts of the economy, private and public will suffer, particularly in today’s increasingly skills driven global economy. Furthermore, if problems are not tackled effectively at the earliest opportunity, the problems will become more serious and costly to remedy.
- 11.33 We opened by suggesting that the shortfall in teacher supply was like the tide going out, with the difficulties experienced by particular schools being the rocks exposed as the sea begins to disappear towards the horizon. The government through its Comprehensive Spending Reviews, and measures like payments for teacher training and performance-related pay, believes it has done enough to turn the tide. But the jury must still be out. Recruiting able people in the numbers that are needed will require both the intrinsic and extrinsic satisfactions of teaching to be addressed. Without enough good teachers to go round some schools will be all right, but those in the most financially disadvantaged areas will tend to be the ones that miss out. The aspiration for a fairer society through education will recede even further with the tide.

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## APPENDIX: METHODS

- A.1 Data were obtained by (1) a questionnaire survey of a representative sample of primary and secondary (including middle) maintained schools in England and Wales and (2) interviews with headteachers/deputies in a representative sub-sample of schools drawn from the returned questionnaires and (3) interviews with headteachers in a cross-section of independent schools.

### Sample

- A.2 The questionnaires were sent to 758 of the 3789 secondary schools (20 per cent) and 996 of the 19,915 primary schools (5 per cent) in the first week in February 2000. The samples were stratified by Government Office Region and LEA. The sampling frames were derived from the Register of Educational Establishments which provided the basic information of name and address of school and LEA to which were added region, category, type and sex of school.

**Table A1: Primary Schools by Region**

Region	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
East Midlands	55	9.6	1751	8.8
Eastern	66	11.5	2125	10.7
Inner London	12	2.1	734	3.7
Outer London	32	5.6	1178	5.9
Merseyside	14	2.4	476	2.4
North East	25	4.4	986	5.0
North West	55	9.6	2285	11.5
South East	95	16.6	2749	13.8
South West	59	10.3	2005	10.1
West Midlands	58	10.1	1964	9.9
Yorks & Humb	58	10.1	1981	9.9
Wales	44	7.7	1681	8.4
Total	573	100.0	19915	100.1

**Table A2: Secondary Schools by Region**

Region	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
East Midlands	25	7.1	343	9.1
Eastern	45	12.9	432	11.4
Inner London	5	1.4	132	3.5
Outer London	20	5.7	270	7.1
Merseyside	13	3.7	103	2.7
North East	24	6.9	230	6.1
North West	42	12.0	390	10.3
South East	49	14.0	518	13.7
South West	31	8.9	335	8.8
West Midlands	42	12.0	422	11.1
Yorks & Humb	32	9.1	385	10.2
Wales	22	6.3	229	6.0
Total	350	100.0	3789	100.0

A.3 A total of 923 questionnaires were returned - 573 from primary schools (57.5 per cent) and 350 from secondary schools (46.2 per cent). Tables A1 and A2 show that they reflected the national distribution by region, though schools in inner and outer London were slightly under-represented in both phases. Tables A3 and A4 show that the secondary schools were representative by type of school.

**Table A3: Secondary School Sample by Sex of School**

Sex of School	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Boys'	21	6.0	190	5.1
Girls'	18	5.1	227	6.1
Co-ed	311	88.9	3143	88.8

**Table A4: Secondary School Sample by Type of School**

Type of School	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Comprehensive	266	76.0	3073	81.1
Grammar	24	6.9	165	4.4
Secondary Modern	12	3.4	124	3.3
Technical/Other	0	0.0	50	1.3
Middle deemed Secondary	48	13.7	377	9.9

A.4 Tables A5 and A6 show that both the primary and secondary school samples were representative by age range.

**Table A5: Primary Schools by Age Range**

Age Range	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Infant – First (4-9 years)	126	22.0	4366	21.9
Infant – Junior (5-11 years)	391	68.2	13088	65.7
Junior (7-11 years)	49	8.6	2274	11.4
Middle deemed Primary (8-12 years)	7	1.2	187	0.9

**Table A6: Secondary Schools by Age Range**

Age Range	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Up to 16 years	138	39.4	1415	37.3
Up to 18 years	164	46.8	1997	52.7
9 – 13 years	48	13.7	377	9.9

A.5 Tables A7 and A8 show that the primary and secondary samples were representative in terms of the new categorisation of schools into community, foundation and voluntary which has replaced the distinction between grant maintained and local authority.

**Table A7: Primary Schools by Category**

Status of School	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Community	369	64.4	11469	62.9
Foundation	15	2.6	511	2.8
Voluntary Aided	99	17.3	3585	19.7
Voluntary Controlled	90	15.7	2669	14.6

**Table A8: Secondary Schools by Category**

Status of School	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Community	234	66.9	2412	67.8
Foundation	44	12.6	668	18.8
Voluntary Aided	61	17.4	349	9.8
Voluntary Controlled	11	3.1	131	3.7

A.6 Tables A9 and A10 show that the samples were also representative in relation to the size of the schools.

**Table A9: Primary Schools by Size**

Number of Pupils	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Up to 100	93	16.2	2716	14.9
101 – 200	154	26.9	5196	28.5
201 – 300	187	32.6	5941	32.6
301 – 400	76	13.3	2763	15.2
401 – 500	47	8.2	1238	6.8
501 or more	16	2.8	380	2.1

**Table A10: Secondary Schools by Size**

Number of Pupils	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Up to 400	31	8.9	295	8.3
401 – 700	94	26.9	887	24.9
701 – 1000	118	33.7	1136	31.8
1001 – 1300	57	16.3	805	22.6
1301 – 1600	40	11.4	337	9.5
1601 or more	10	2.9	100	2.9

### Questionnaire

A.7 The questionnaire asked for information on vacancies arising in September 1999 and January 2000, the type of post, whether an appointment was made, the nature of the appointment, and the ease of making the appointment. In this period 1,723 vacancies arose in 316 (90.3 per cent) of the secondary schools responding, and 637 vacancies in 349 (61.1 per cent) of the primary schools providing information

Additional comments on the recruitment situation were volunteered by 43 per cent of secondary and 39 per cent of primary schools.

### **Maintained Schools Interviews**

- A.8 The questionnaire provided a representative numerical context from which the sub-samples to be interviewed could be identified. Since the aim was to discover how headteachers are coping with teacher shortages without these showing up in vacancy figures, the interviews were directed towards the 50 per cent of headteachers encountering difficulty. The sub-samples of 50 primary and 57 secondary schools were drawn so as to be geographically representative. A further filter applied was the length of service of the headteacher. The distribution is shown in Table A11.
- A.9 Pilot interviews were carried out in early March in a small sub-sample of schools on Merseyside. In the main study, all except a handful of the interviews were carried out from mid-March through to the end of May with a break at Easter when the schools were on holiday. At the request of a small number of headteachers some interviews were postponed until the first week in June after the summer half-term break.
- A.10 The interviews were carried out by a team of 13 consultants in addition to the researchers themselves. The team recruited was very familiar with the workings of the educational system. All except one, who was a doctoral student, formerly held very senior positions in the education service (e.g. headteacher, deputy head, LEA inspector, or LEA Advisor). Each interview was taped and lasted between one and one and a half-hours. Schools were also asked for copies of their current prospectus and the latest report to governors.

**Table A11: State School Interviews**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
East Midlands	4	5
Eastern	5	7
Inner London	2	2
Outer London	3	4
Merseyside	1	2
North East	3	3
North West	6	6
South East	7	8
South West	5	5
West Midlands	5	6
Yorks & Humb	5	6
Wales	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>57</b>

- A.11 A briefing meeting for interviewers was held in April. It was agreed that the central team would first contact the schools to seek the agreement of the headteachers. This was followed up by the interviewers who then made the particular arrangements for the visit to the school. Altogether 111 interviews were conducted (59 secondary and

52 primary), slightly more than the sample chosen in case appointments could not be kept or there were problems with the recording. No headteacher, when approached, refused an interview and most were eager to help. In a minority of schools the interviews were with a deputy head, either because they had completed the original questionnaire and/or because they were responsible in the school for staffing, cover and the timetable.

- A.12 The interview schedule was semi-structured and designed to explore in more depth the problem of recruitment and retention, to find out about the current staffing profile and to discover what, if any, adjustments to the curriculum and the timetable were being made as a result of recruitment difficulties, what the impact was on the teachers in post, and the part played in recruitment by affordability. The taped interviews were then transcribed to produce hard copies.
- A.13 A de-briefing meeting for interviewers was held in June. This lasted about two and a half hours and was taped. In addition to the evidence from the interviews themselves, the aim of the de-briefing was for interviewers to identify the main issues affecting the schools they had seen (each interviewer mainly covered a particular geographical area), and to find out the degree of consensus in their perception of the situation.

**Table A12: Ind Sch Interviews**

Type	Day	Boarding
Girls <sup>1</sup>	2	2
Boys <sup>1</sup>	2	2
Co-ed	4	7 <sup>1</sup>
Prep <sup>2</sup>	2	
Total	10	11

1. 2 major, 5 smaller.

2. One with boarders, the other with small weekly boarding element.

### **Independent School Interviews**

- A.14 Interviews were also conducted, in this case all by ourselves, with the headteachers of 21 independent schools as shown in Table A12. They were chosen so as to be representative by standing, location, whether single-sex or co-educational, and whether day or boarding. At first it was intended to restrict the sample to senior schools, but when it emerged that the boarding schools and preparatory schools were facing particular difficulties the study was extended to include them.

