TEACHERS LEAVING

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SUMMARY

The resignation rate from schools is rising sharply. Our survey in summer 2001 of a representative sample of maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales found 36,483 resignations from full-time permanent contracts and 12,880 from fixed-term and part-time contracts. Converted to the year, this represents an annual resignation rate of 15.8 per cent, four per cent more than the comparable figure for 1999, the latest published by the Employers' Organisation, but continuing a trend evident in their unpublished data for 2000.

Of the resignations, some 24,400 were leavers or retirers. In addition, it is likely that extra funding and rising secondary numbers will have led to another 8,100 posts being created. In all, schools will therefore have been looking to recruit about 32,500 new or returning teachers for September 2001.

Given that there were some 30,000 final-year trainees, most of this demand could have been expected to have been met by new supply. But close scrutiny of flows through the training process reveals its incredible wastefulness. About 12 per cent of those admitted to PGCE courses, or reaching the final year of BEd courses, do not successfully complete. But this pales beside an inexplicable post-training wastage of over 30 per cent. Of every 100 final year students, 40 do not make it to the classroom. With the initial teacher training budget currently standing at £245 million this represents an annual loss of £100 million.

A further 18 per cent leave during the first three years of teaching, so over half the trainees are soon lost. Or, put another way, with adequate retention the training targets would largely have solved the teacher shortage. As it is, the teaching profession is not renewing itself. The teacher cohort, aged 40-49, is twice the size of the present intake, with a much lower resignation rate, but retirement already looming.

If the trends of recent years are continued, 18,500 newly-trained teachers will have been available for September, leaving a shortfall of about 14,000. About half the posts on past trends could be expected to have been taken by returners, leaving a gap of 7,000 to be filled by overseas recruits and other means. It is this gap - whose effects will be cumulative - which gives rise to the teacher-vacancy headlines each September.

The gap could be considerably reduced if fewer teachers were to leave prematurely. We interviewed 102 teachers from a cross-section of schools. Typically, they gave about three reasons each for leaving. These were overwhelmingly negative. Of the total of 290, 85.2 per cent referred to getting out of teaching and only 14.8 per cent to the attractions of something else (themselves often a comment on teaching).

Among the secondary teachers, the most frequently given reasons for going were workload (57.8 per cent), pupil behaviour (45.1 per cent) and government initiatives (37.2 per cent). Others included salary (24.5 per cent), stress (21.6 per cent) and status/recognition (19.6 per cent), career prospects (17.6 per cent), school management (14.7 per cent), resources and facilities (14.7 per cent), and difficult parents (10.8 per cent). Primary teachers less often mentioned pupil behaviour (15.8 per cent), but were more likely to cite workload (73.9 per cent), government initiatives (42.1 per cent) and stress (26.3 per cent).

About half the leavers were going without anything else in mind. They were retiring early, leaving with no immediate plans, or signing up for supply until they were clearer about what to do. Those leaving to do something else were mainly going to independent schools, either in this country or abroad, or taking one of the numerous education posts that have grown up around school teaching. These well paid quasi-teaching jobs, as consultants, advisors or trainers associated with various initiatives, are an unacknowledged factor in the teacher shortage. Very few teachers were moving to established posts with other employers, and those who reported alternative work tended to have invented for themselves - in IT development, drama workshops, odd jobs and rural crafts, for example. The over-riding impression is of moving away rather than towards.

This is sad because the leavers had often come into teaching with idealism and commitment. Many had positively chosen teaching, sometimes after experience of other employment. They said they were looking for something worthwhile that was not linked to targets and the bottom line. They wanted to work with children, pass on their enthusiasm for their subjects and enjoy the freedom of the classroom. They were leaving because they perceived these satisfactions to have been eroded.

Some of the leavers could be tempted back, but it would take substantive improvement to what has been causing them to go – the workload, pupil behaviour and excessive change. Significantly, they also said more money, which seems to be more of a pull factor than a push factor. It was also suggested that since teaching was now more like industry the rewards should be commensurate.

Why the teachers are going, where they are going, and what would tempt them back offer policy pointers to the government. Its present strategy of seeking to boost recruitment to initial training and make teaching more attractive through modernising the profession seems not to be working. The huge drop-out post-training and the hike in resignations means that any increase in applications and trainees is being largely dissipated.

Policies for recruitment must be balanced by policies for retention. It is important to listen to the teachers and address their concerns. Our study suggests that concerted action on at least four fronts will be required: workload, pupil behaviour, excessive change - and salary. There is some urgency. The retirement is fast approaching of the large number of teachers recruited during the seventies when an independent review underpinned teaching's attractiveness. A lesson from history here perhaps for the government on how to tackle a seemingly intractable problem.

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Our focus is teachers leaving – how many, and where, and why they are going. An accurate picture of the extent of the loss provides a basis for estimating demand - perhaps more accurately than in any other way. But it also provides a clear insight into the current state of teacher morale and what it would take to hold on to many of the excellent teachers who are going.

1.2 The beginning of each school year seems to be marked by ever-more strident headlines about teacher shortage. Claims are made for 4,000, 8,000, 10,000 vacancies, with the number varying confusingly from headline to headline. The Department of Education and Skills usually counters that since vacancy levels tend to be below one per cent there is little cause for concern. Some of the confusion arises because of the difficulties in counting vacancies.

1.3 Vacancies are difficult to pin down for at least two reasons. First, they are transient. A post becomes available, it is advertised, applicants are seen, and an appointment is made or not made. Recording vacancies on a fixed date as the Department seeks to do can only be a snapshot of a moving scene. But, secondly, seeking to count unfilled vacancies, as many of the newspaper surveys do, is flawed because rarely is a post left unfilled, even where it is not possible to make a satisfactory appointment. To do so could mean children having to be sent home. Our report last year, *Coping with Teacher Shortages* (Smithers and Robinson, 2000), explored in detail the many ways in which schools seek to ensure that all classes have a teacher.

1.4 In contrast to vacancies, resignations are a solid statistic.

- They deal with actual people.
- Resignations have to be submitted by particular dates so they are potentially knowable and countable.
- The number of resignations, plus the number of new posts, can be used to calculate the demand for teachers, and this can be compared with the supply available from the training institutions and other sources.
- A study of who is going, where they are going, their reasons for going and what it would take to hold on to them, enables us to better understand the teaching profession.

1.5 In *Teachers Leaving* we report a survey of the resignations in summer 2001 from a representative sample of maintained primary and secondary schools. It describes how many teachers are resigning and where they are going. In addition, we have interviewed in depth one hundred of the leavers to find out what attracted them to teaching in the first place, where they are going and, if they are leaving education, what, if anything, would tempt them back.

1.6 In Chapter 2, we look at the details of the resignations and attempt to establish whether the rate is rising. Since teachers have to resign from one post to take another, by no means all the resignees are lost to the system. We, therefore,

differentiate between the movers, leavers and retirers, and project what the loss implies in terms of teachers sought for September 2001.

1.7 In Chapter 3, we examine how far new supply can meet that demand and report, with some astonishment, the wastefulness of the training process.

1.8 We then turn to the personal accounts of the leavers (not those moving elsewhere in the system). Each person has his or her own story which we illustrate in Chapter 4 through four case studies, a man and a woman from each of primary and secondary, spanning the age ranges from young to pre-retirement.

1.9 Although each leaver is unique, the four stories contain a number of common threads. In Chapter 5, we record the main reasons our interviewees gave for quitting. These refer to the usual concerns with salary, conditions and workload, but they bring out, as never before, the extent to which deteriorating pupil behaviour is an issue. The government's initiatives also came up so regularly that we treated them as a category separate from workload.

1.10 It is clear that many of the teachers are leaving because they want to get out of the profession and they do not have anything else in mind. In Chapter 6, we explore the forms that this can take with young people taking time out, perhaps to see the world, older teachers retiring early, and those in-between looking for something to turn up. The overwhelming impression was of escape.

1.11 In Chapter 7, we explore what the leavers say it would take to bring them back. Not surprisingly, this is mainly the obverse of what is causing them to leave. But salary emerged more strongly among the inducements to return than it did among the reasons for leaving, because teaching was thought to have become more difficult. We also asked what had attracted them to teaching in the first place and this makes a sad contrast to what they are saying now. It is evident that they feel strongly that what brought them to teaching has been seriously eroded.

1.12 This says something serious about the state of teacher morale and makes uncomfortable reading for policymakers. In a final chapter we pull the various lines of evidence together and seek to draw out the implications.

2. RESIGNATIONS

2.1 Our survey (see Appendix A for details of the sample) found that, during the summer term 2001, 36,483 teachers had resigned from full-time permanent contracts in maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales. This is over ten per cent of the total. Converted to an annual rate (about 70 per cent of the resignations fall in the summer term)[1] this comes to 14.5 per cent or about one in seven teachers moving or leaving.

2.2 Chart 2.1 gives the details. There was variation with region, with schools in London, the South East and Eastern regions losing most staff from both primary and secondary phases. Northern England fared rather better. But not as well as Wales where school staffing seemed remarkably stable.

Chart 2.1: Resignations of Full-Time Permanent Teachers[1] by Region

Regions	Primary		Secondary	
	Resignations[2]	Per Cent	Resignations[2]	Per Cent
Eastern	1,702	11.3	2,672	13.4
East Midlands	972	10.2	1,498	10.1
Inner London	1,508	17.5	858	13.5
Outer London	2,223	14.2	1,968	13.5
North East	737	7.7	897	6.8
North West	1,867	7.7	1,845	6.8
South East	4,333	17.0	3,626	14.5
South West	1,466	9.5	1,653	11.0
West Midlands	1,949	10.0	1,020	6.6
Yorks & Humb	1,051	9.7	1,818	10.8
England	17,808	11.0	17,855	10.6
Wales	374	2.7	446	4.0
Total	18,182	10.3	18,301	10.2

1. Resignations from full-time permanent contracts effective from end of summer term 2001.
2. Grossed up from sample to reflect number of schools in region.

2.3 As well as full-time permanent teachers there are full-time fixed-term contracts and part-time staff. Our survey found that they added a further 12,880 resignations, making 49,363 in all. Grossed up this suggests an annual figure of 70,500, or a resignation rate of 15.8 per cent on a headcount or full-time equivalent basis. When just full-time staff are considered, turnover in primary schools becomes 16.5 per cent.

[1] We have taken this figure from our study, *Teacher Turnover* (Robinson and Smithers, 1991), where we surveyed schools after each of the three resignation dates. We realise this is only one year and the information may be somewhat dated, but there do not appear to be any nationally agreed statistics on this point. Discussions with LEAs suggested that they work to a rule of thumb of two-thirds leaving in the summer, but we stayed with our figure of 70 per cent as a more conservative basis for grossing up.

2.4 Chart 2.2 compares the annual resignation rates expressed on the various bases with the latest published survey of the Employers' Organisation for Local Government (2001) giving figures for 1999. In all cases, the summer 2001 resignations appear to be running some four percentage points higher. Although such comparisons must be interpreted with caution, the extent of the difference points to a rapidly rising rate.

Chart 2.2: Annual Resignation Rates Compared

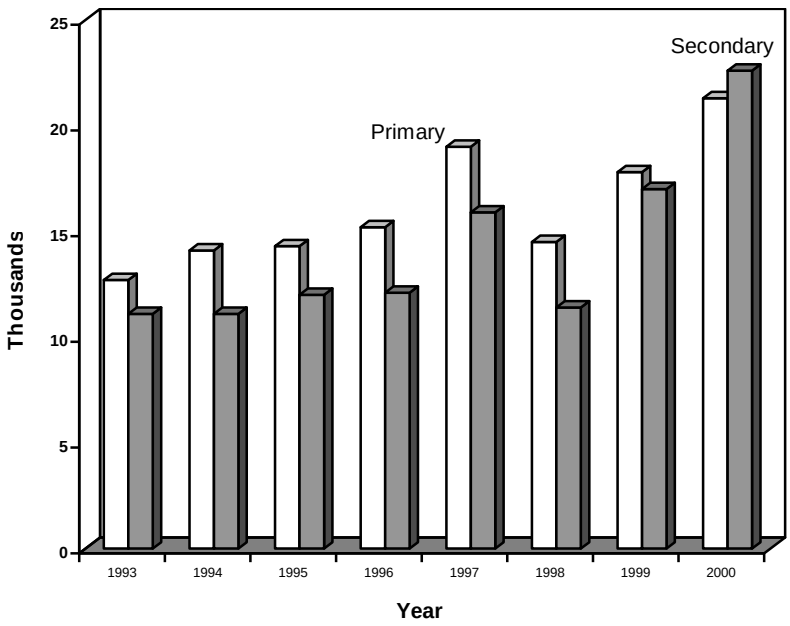
Base	Primary		Secondary	
	Survey	EO[5]	Survey	EO[5]
Full Time Permanent[1]	14.6	10.3	14.5	9.4
Full Time[2]	16.5	11.8	15.3	10.7
Headcount[3]	15.9	11.9	15.8	11.5
Full Time Equivalent[4]	15.8	11.9	15.7	11.1

1. Full-time permanent resignations annualised on assumption that 70 per cent of resignations occur in summer term.
2. All full-time teachers, whether permanent or fixed contract.
3. All teachers whether full or part-time, permanent or fixed contract.
4. All teachers, converted to full-time equivalents.
5. Data published by the Employers' Organisation relating to 1999.

Sources: Employers' Organisation (2001) *Survey of Teacher Resignations 1985/6-1999*.

2.5 This is borne out by a time series collected by the Employers' Organisation (2001 plus private communication). Chart 2.3 shows resignations since 1993 (when sixth-form colleges were removed to become part of the further education sector). They rose steadily, year by year, until 1997 when there was a sudden surge due to an impending change in the pension regulations making early retirement more difficult. This reduced resignations in 1998 since when they have risen sharply particularly in the secondary phase. Our survey continues that trend. Employers' Organisation figures show resignations increased from 25,900 in 1998, to 34,800 in 1999, to 43,900 in 2000. Our survey indicates that in 2001 they reached 52,100.

Chart 2.3: Trend in Teacher Resignations[1]



1.Full-time permanent teachers.

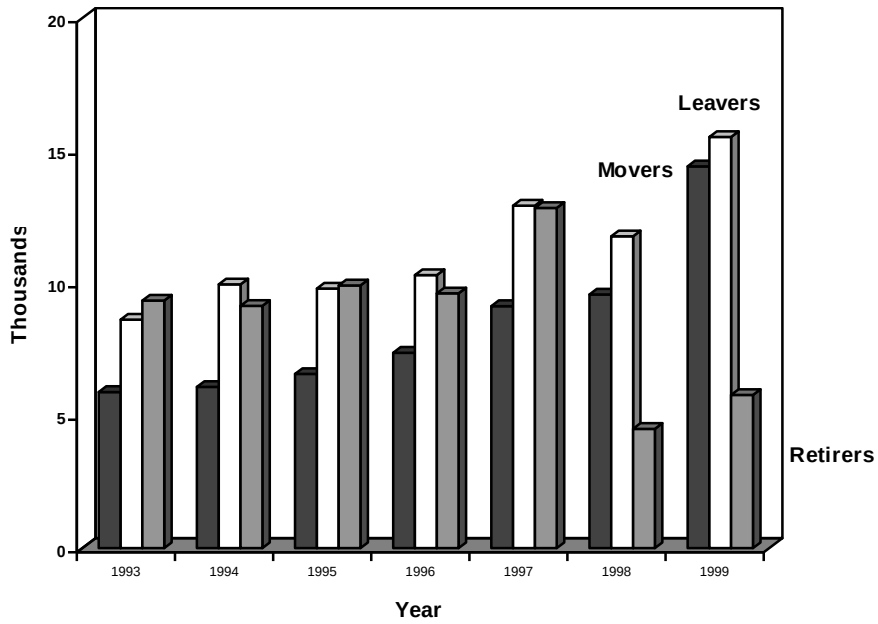
Source: Employers' Organisation's annual *Survey of Teacher Resignations*.

Movers, Leavers and Retirers

2.6 Resignations are from schools, not the system, so include those moving between schools. There are thus movers and leavers. Leavers are those giving up teaching in maintained schools to take alternative employment (including teaching in independent schools, or another sector, or working in education in the penumbra of jobs that has grown up around education), taking a break for maternity or family care, or going for some other reason. Among the leavers, it is convenient to distinguish the retirees. The retirees include those retiring early - some through ill-health - as well as those reaching retirement age. We shall be looking in detail at these various destinations in Chapter 6.

2.7 Chart 2.4 shows the resignations of full-time permanent teachers falling into these three categories. The steep rise in resignations since 1996 has occurred among both movers and leavers. It suggests that as shortages have grown, mobility in the system has increased. More departures lead to greater opportunities for remaining staff to trade up.

Chart 2.4: Resignations by Destination[1]



1. 'Movers' those moving to other posts in maintained primary, secondary and special schools; 'leavers' those leaving including to take posts in independent schools and other sectors, to take other education and non-education employment, to have a break for maternity or other reasons, or to leave for other reason; retirers those taking retirement including normal age, early and ill-health.

Source: Derived from Employers' Organisation (2001) *Survey of Teacher Resignations 1985/6-1999*.

2.8 Our survey suggests that the churning had increased even more by summer 2001. We found that 36,483 full-time permanent teachers were resigning, of whom 19,082 were moving to teaching posts in other maintained schools. Chart 2.5 shows that, in addition, 6,002 of the fixed-term and part-time teachers were transferring to other schools. But altogether 17,162 teachers were leaving and 7,117 were retiring.

Chart 2.5: Resignations Summer 2001

Category	Full-Time Permanent		Other	
	N[1]	%	N[1]	%
Movers	19,082	52.3	6,002	46.6
Leavers	11,714	32.1	5,448	42.3
Retirers	5,687	15.6	1,430	11.1
Total	36,483	100.0	12,880	100.0

1. Grossed up from sample

Resignations by Age and Gender

2.9 Chart 2.6 shows that the younger teachers were particularly likely to resign. In part this was because they were more likely to move. Moves between schools were at their height for the 25-29 age group and thereafter decreased with age band.

2.10 But younger teachers were also more likely to leave the profession with the departure rate running at 6.3 per cent a year for the under 30s. This is equivalent to 17.7 per cent of a cohort leaving over three years. The most stable employment period for teachers is between the ages 40 and 49, with relatively few movers or leavers. But already there are some early (ill-health) retirers. In the next age band, 50-59, about 4.5 per cent of the teachers a year are retiring. Currently, nearly 60 per cent of the profession are aged over 40, and 37.6 per cent are in the 40-49 age band alone. Younger cohorts tended to be only about half this size, so the profession is in danger of not renewing itself.

Chart 2.6: Resignations by Age[1]

Age Range (%)[2]	Resignation Rate[3]			
	Overall	Movers	Leavers	Retirers
Under 25 (4.6%)	13.1	7.0	6.1	-
25-29 (14.6%)	15.5	9.1	6.4	-
30-34 (11.3%)	14.5	8.2	6.3	-
35-39 (9.8%)	10.6	5.5	5.1	-
40-49 (37.6%)	5.4	2.6	2.2	0.6
50-59 (21.2%)	7.6	1.3	1.8	4.5
60 Plus (0.9%)	55.7	0.7	4.7	50.3
Mean	9.7	4.3	3.8	1.6

1. Data supplied by the Employers' Organisation.
2. Per cent full-time permanent staff by age.
3. Percentage resigning in 1999.

2.11 Chart 2.7 shows that female teachers are more likely to leave the profession than men, in part because of family commitments. Since they currently comprise 85 per cent of the primary teachers and nearly half the secondary teachers, and the proportions are increasing, this could be expected to influence future resignation rates. Male teachers tend to be older and more likely to retire.

Chart 2.7: Resignations by Gender[1]

Gender (%)[2]	Resignation Rate[3]			
	Overall	Movers	Leavers	Retirers
Primary				
Female (83.3%)	10.1	4.2	4.2	1.7
Male (16.7%)	10.7	5.4	3.4	1.9
Secondary				
Female (52.8%)	9.9	4.6	4.0	1.3
Male (47.2%)	8.5	3.9	3.0	1.7
Mean	9.7	4.3	3.8	1.6

1. Data supplied by the Employers' Organisation.
2. Per cent full-time permanent staff by gender.
3. Percentage resigning in 1999.

Appointments for September 2001

2.12 Summer resignations in our 200l survey suggest that schools will have been looking to replace 49,363 teachers for September. In addition, the government has been finding some extra money for schools and the number of secondary pupils is rising. Last year 8,100 extra posts were created, four-fifths full-time. Assuming a similar increase this year, total vacancies are likely to have been of the order of 57,500.

2.13 Our survey indicates that about 25,000 places will have been taken by teachers moving between schools, leaving 32,500 to be filled by new supply, teachers returning to the profession and recruitment from other sources such as overseas. We now turn to see how successful the training system is in meeting this demand.

3. THE WASTEFULNESS OF TEACHER TRAINING

3.1 The main thrust of the first Blair government's policy on teacher shortage has been to introduce incentives to train as teachers. A variety of inducements has been on offer. A 'golden hello' scheme was introduced in 1999 for those training as science and maths teachers. This was extended the following year to modern languages. A training salary of £6,000 was introduced from September 2000, with subjects attracting a bonus now extended to include English.

3.2 Chart 3.1 shows that these schemes have apparently been successful. Applications to science and maths were boosted considerably in 1999 - admittedly from a very low base - by the first incentives. Modern languages applications rose in 2000 when they came within the remit. The new scheme has raised English applications significantly in the current year, with further rises also in science and maths. But we should remember that we are here only dealing with applications.

Chart 3.1: PGCE Applications[1]

Subject	%Change		
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
English[2]	-1.6	+2.0	+24.8
Maths[3]	+48.1	-0.6	+13.7
Science[3]	+36.1	+3.7	+9.8
Modern Languages[4]	-0.7	+17.1	+1.5
Secondary	+10.4	+5.2	+17.5
Primary	+3.9	-2.9	+18.9

1. As of week 41 (end of July).
2. New scheme embracing English came into effect March 2000.
3. Incentive scheme introduced 1998-99.
4. Scheme extended to cover MFL in 1999-2000.

Source: Graduate Teacher Training Registry (2000b).

Trainees

3.3 Chart 3.1 also shows that the latest incentive scheme has increased applications to primary and secondary training overall. But applications are not the same as trainees. Chart 3.2 shows how applications and admissions to secondary PGCE course have varied over the last seven years. Both applications and admissions are both up somewhat in 2000 though not by huge amounts, with about three-fifths of the applicants being accepted.

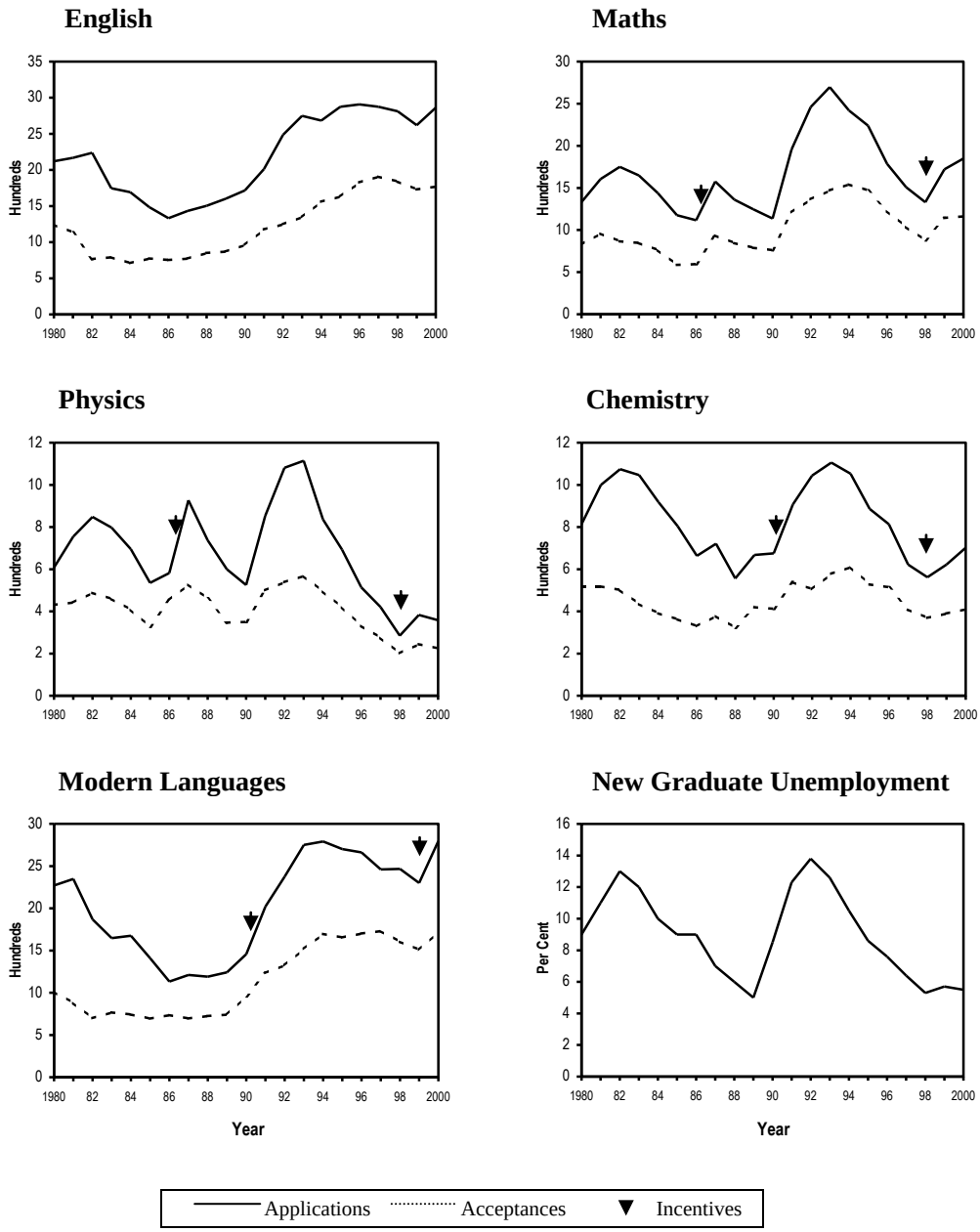
Chart 3.2: Recruitment to Secondary PGCE

Year	Applications	Admissions	Per Cent
1994	21,553	12,303	57.1
1995	21,754	12,249	56.3
1996	21,585	13,210	61.2
1997	21,195	13,928	65.7
1998	19,648	12,682	64.5
1999	20,136	12,788	63.5
2000	22,406	13,875	61.9

Source: Annual Reports of Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR, 2001a).

3.4 Early figures for 2001 are available on the Graduate Teacher Training Agency's Website (GTTR, 2001b). Admissions by early September look to be up by 5.5 per cent on the same time last year, welcome, but much less than the widely publicised 18 per cent increase in applications. Accepted applications showed increases in English, maths and science as well as some of the non-shortage subjects like history and physical education, but worryingly they fell in modern languages (except Spanish) in spite of the incentives.

Chart 3.3: Recruitment to Selected Secondary PGCE Courses



Sources: Graduate Teacher Training Registry (2001a) and Higher Education Statistics Agency (2001).

3.5 Chart 3.3 shows applications and acceptances in selected subjects. The similarity of the application curves to the graph for new graduate unemployment indicates how susceptible applications are to economic conditions. Both Conservative and Labour

governments have tried incentives to boost recruitment to training. The bursaries of a decade ago did little to buck the trends in chemistry and modern languages though they did have detectable, if limited, effects on recruitment to maths and physics. It is early days for the present schemes, but their effects will need to be carefully monitored.

Completions

3.6 Not all those entering training complete. Data held by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA, 2001b), and presented in Chart 3.4, show that, overall, about 12 per cent drop out. Non-completion is regularly higher for secondary courses, perhaps reflecting the higher application rates to primary which allow more choice as to whom is admitted. But primary completion may be apparently higher because 54 per cent of the trainees currently follow the B Ed route (as against 10 per cent for secondary) and here only survivors to the fourth year of the courses are counted.

Chart 3.4: Trainees Not Completing[1]

Year	Primary		Secondary		Total[2]	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1997	1431	11.0	2273	14.3	3723	12.2
1998	1467	11.8	2132	14.2	3635	13.4
1999	1344	10.3	1728	12.6	3126	11.5
2000	1272	11.4	1689	13.1	2988	12.3

1. PGCE and final year of BEd; England only.
2. Includes K2/3.

Source: Teacher Training Agency (2001b).

Taking Up Teaching

3.7 But the remarkable thing about the training figures is the seeming sheer wastefulness they reveal. Chart 3.5, compiled from official statistics (DfEE, 2000a), shows that regularly over 30 per cent of the successful completers cannot be accounted for in the year following training as teaching full-time or part-time in maintained nursery, primary, secondary or special schools.

Chart 3.5: Completers into Teaching

Year	Completers[1]	Teaching[2]	Per Cent Loss
1993	23,436	16,084	31.4
1994	25,470	15,540	31.1
1996[3]	27,980	17,170	38.6
1997	28,280	19,110	32.4
1998	26,730	18,070	32.4

1. Both BEd and PGCE, England and Wales, including Open University and School-based schemes.
2. In maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools by 31 March the folllowing year.
3. Data not published for 1995.

Source: *Statistics of Education: Teachers England and Wales.*

3.8 Chart 3.6 shows that this is NOT due to loss to independent schools or to the further and higher education sectors. Only about four per cent of the trainees opt for teaching in these spheres. The missing 30 per cent simply do not turn up in the Teachers' Pension Scheme which must mean that they are in a branch of teaching not covered by it, or their details have not yet been entered, or the trainees are doing other things. Quite why there should be this huge wastage is not clear and it should be investigated.

Chart 3.6: Destinations of 1998 Completers

Phase or Sector	N[1]	Per Cent
Nursery and Primary	8,990	33.6
Secondary	8,940	33.4
Special	140	0.5
Independent	820	3.1
Further and Higher[2]	240	0.9
Not in Service	7,610	28.5
Total	26,730	100.0

1. In full or part-time service as at 31 March 1999.
2. Includes sixth form colleges, further and higher education.

Source: *Statistics of Education: Teachers England and Wales, 2000.*

Entrants

3.9 It is likely to be a real loss. Data from the Employers' Organisation on full-time permanent recruits to teaching in maintained schools in 1999 reveals, as Chart 3.7 shows, that only 9,870 were new entrants. These will mainly have been the newly trained. A further 6,320 of the first appointments were to fixed-term or part-time posts (more than we supposed). Even so, only 16,190 of the trainees could be accounted for as recruits to LEA schools. Others will have opted to teach elsewhere, but as we have seen already the proportion is not large. Neither can deferral account for the discrepancy since the figure includes those delaying entry from previous years (about 10 per cent of the new entrants).

Chart 3.7: Full-Time LEA Permanent Teaching Recruits 1999

Source	Primary		Secondary		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
First Employment[1]	4,020	33.4	5,850	37.3	9,870	35.6
Moves[2]	5,360	44.6	7,960	50.7	13,320	48.0
From Employment	80	0.7	110	0.7	190	0.7
Re-Entrants[3]	290	2.4	160	1.0	450	1.6
Other	170	1.4	120	0.8	290	1.0
Not Known	2,110	17.5	1,480	9.4	3,590	12.9
Total	12,030	100.0	15,700	100.0	27,730	100.0

1. Newly-trained including those who have deferred entry (about 10 per cent). In addition 6,190 of the newly trained took part-term or fixed term contracts in LEA schools and 140 went to sixth-form colleges.
2. From other schools including independent schools, from further and higher education and from schools abroad.
3. Returning from break for maternity or other reasons.

Source: Employers' Organisation (2001) *Survey of Teacher Resignations 1985/6-1999.*

3.10 If we attempt to track one cohort, as in Chart 3.8, the scale of the loses becomes apparent. Of some 30,000 trainees in 1997, only just over 19,000 on DfEE figures (DfEE, 2000a) were in any teaching in 1999 (full-time or part-time, in maintained or independent schools, or in further and higher education). On Employers' Organisation figures (EO 2001) only 16,900 were in maintained schools, just over half the trainees (54 per cent).

Chart 3.8: Training Wastage

Stage	N	Per Cent
Final Year Trainees 1997[1]	30,037	100
Completed 1998[2]	26,730	89
Any Teaching 1999[3]	19,130	64
Any teaching 1999 in LEA schools[4]	16,190	54

1. Teacher Training Agency for England (TTA, 2000b), plus data for Wales (National Assembly, 2001).
2. *Statistics of Education, Teachers England and Wales, 2000*.
3. Full-time or part-time, in maintained or independent schools, or in further or higher education.
4. Employers' Organisation (2001), plus private communication, includes full and part-time, permanent and fixed term in primary and secondary schools, and sixth-form colleges.

Conclusion

3.11 There seems to be a huge and unacknowledged loss of newly-trained teachers. The extent of the wastage calls into question the government's policy of attempting to tackle teacher shortage through training incentives. At the very least, it cautions against taking an over-optimistic view (as the government has been prone to do) of the likely impact of increases in applications. The post-training dropout of about 30 per cent comes on top of the 12 per cent failing to complete the courses who were themselves admitted as about 60 per cent of the applicants.

3.12 In round figures, it seems that of every 100 final-year trainees, on average, 12 do not complete the course successfully. Of the remaining 88, another 28 do not seem to enter teaching, even when this is interpreted to include independent schools and other sectors. On a narrow definition of entering LEA schools only 54 can be accounted for full-time or part-time, permanent or fixed term.

3.13 The stark fact is that about 40 per cent of the trainees cannot be traced to teaching in any form. The cost of initial teacher training, including training salaries, is currently £245 million (TTA, 2001). The loss to the public purse will therefore be about £100 million.

3.14 In Chapter 2 we estimated that maintained schools would be seeking to make 32,500 appointments in September 2001 over and above teachers moving between schools. Recruitment to training would seem to indicate that most of this demand could be met by new supply. But past experience suggests that only about 18,500 (on DfES figures) will have become available for employment in maintained schools from this source. This leaves a gap of 14,000 about half of which could be expected to be filled by returners. This still leaves some 7,000 places to be filled by overseas recruits and other means. No wonder headteachers have been scrabbling around to achieve a full complement of staff.

4. PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

4.1 Our study was designed mainly to hear the personal stories behind the numbers. Headteachers in our survey were asked to pass on a questionnaire to each of the teachers leaving. Teachers returning their questionnaire were asked to indicate whether they would be willing to be interviewed. We talked at length on the telephone to 102 who were leaving teaching in maintained schools.

4.2 Inevitably, it is a volunteer sample and time constraints meant that those returning their questionnaires early were more likely to be approached, but as far as possible we ensured that those we spoke to were representative by age, sex and region (see Appendix A for details). In this chapter we present four of the personal accounts to illustrate the ways in which a variety of factors interact to produce a life changing decision. The four people have been chosen to reflect a range of circumstances, a man and a woman, from the primary and secondary phases, at different stages of their lives. Let us call them Alec, Lubna, Donald, and Carol.

Chart 4.1: Alec
Alec was the headteacher of a primary school in the South West. He is aged 55-59 and began teaching in 1967 on qualifying with a teacher's certificate. He has been offered consultancy work, but is uncertain whether to take it up.
Reasons for Going
Massive work overload – normally 60+ hours per week. Too many initiatives/changes. Working conditions are appalling – I am often a secretary, cleaner, caretaker. No time for breaks in the school day. Developing illness – colitis – stress-related for the last four years, but no time off school in the 17 years I have been here. LEA supporting early retirement scheme. Have a successful school in a deprived area – outstanding Ofsteds – right time to go before my body packs up. Love the job – would have stayed to 60 but for all the stresses.

Alec's Story

4.3 "I went into teaching because I enjoyed working with people. I had worked with youngsters before in the Scouts and youth clubs, and was in the retail trade before training. So to me, being a teacher is obviously dealing with children, but it is also dealing with staff, dealing with the public and dealing with parents. I loved the job – hated the holidays. Really the last day was so sad for me because in the beginning I liked it so much.

4.4 "I am going early. I just feel that I will burn out and will be really ill if I carry on. In the natural course of things I would have gone on to 60, but the sheer pressure of work is too much. I work 60 hours every week – 60 is normal, some weeks I am working more hours than that. You are doing reports till midnight, you are doing governors' reports and you are looking at assessment procedures, you are trying to sort out your new classroom and basically there is no one to whom you can delegate. I have got very good teachers – but in a primary school they have a full time commitment as they have very little non-contact time.

4.5 "When I go I'll try sleeping for a bit. I have got a lot of interests. I like sport, I like travelling – my wife loves travelling. She was a teacher too and she retired a year

before. She hated the paperwork which just took all the joy out of it. I might do some writing – though nothing to do with education. I might do some part-time work in education – I have had some offers but I may just make a clean break.

4.6 "I am not bitter, but I am burned out. My two children now have just finished at university and have jobs, so for the first time, literally, this year they are not dependent upon us. The other thing is – and I know it sounds morbid – but I have lost a few good friends, some of whom were younger than me and looked fairly fit and healthy. I have got a health problem. I have had it for about ten years and it is stress-related, but I have not had a day off. This is how I am. I have colitis and proctitis, which is uncomfortable and quite difficult, but I have not given in to it. The staff don't know about it; they see me as a very healthy person, a hugely energetic person.

4.7 "I am sad to be going, but the strength of the school is not me, it is the staff I have got together and the systems I have created. We have a very good head coming in who has just been appointed. What does worry me though is the rate at which top grade, really keen people are leaving. They are going because they are totally demoralised by the sheer weight of work, the planning, the paperwork, the assessments, and the fact that they don't feel that they have got a life.

4.8 "The initiatives still keep coming. On top of everything else we have had the performance threshold and a few extra things for team leaders and things like that. They may be worthwhile, but they are not funded generously in terms of getting them done properly. The ICT training – as I understand it from talking to a lot of colleagues from different schools – is a real mess. You haven't got the expert trainers, or the trainers are really poor. IT is not like the literacy and numeracy schemes where you can have all the staff together and take them through stage by stage – all the people are at different stages.

4.9 "I have always tried to manage very carefully. We keep the meetings very focused, very sharp and we have a very clear path, and as soon as they are finished that's it. The same with the assessment, because assessment is an area where some schools have gone absolutely mad. We have completely lost control of it – children are being assessed if they walk from A to B. It has got to be manageable. I get the feeling that the government has lots of ideas, all in separate boxes and they are pouring them down different tubes, but they are all landing in one place – on us.

4.10 "The problem with the government is that it is centralised and remote. If you keep putting in more and more initiatives simultaneously, you are going to lose the thread. There are so many things that they have started. They have spawned a monster. And the people responsible are totally and completely away from it.

4.11 "There is another issue. The LEA, because of a stupid law, has got to devolve all the money to the schools. Now a lot of the money that they give to the schools is money that we don't want in primary. We have just been given our special needs money for statements. I have now got to organise all the contracts which were previously done by the LEA. I have now been told that next year that we are going to be given – although we have all said that absolutely no way do we want to touch it – school meals. I don't know the first thing about school meals.

4.12 Putting it right will be difficult. I know the government is going for 'golden hellos' and things. Financially the job has got to be more rewarding, but second, third and fourth for me would be conditions of service. Conditions of service in teaching are appalling. They have got to make them more attractive. People are not going to stay in a job where they almost feel guilty if they go home to their families and spend some time with them because of the planning, preparation and everything else. That is what the government needs to address. When I speak to young teachers who are leaving they say to me 'we are chained to a job, we have no social life or anything else'".

Chart 4.2: Lubna
Lubna taught in a primary school in Yorkshire and Humberside. She is from an ethnic background but raised in Britain. Aged 30-34 she began teaching in 1995 after graduating in Home Economics and Business Administration in 1993 and qualifying as a teacher through the Articled Teachers Scheme. She is going to teach on a Classroom Assistants Course at an Adult Education Centre and also tutor different age groups in their home environment as part of a Home Study project.
Reasons for Going
I do enjoy the teaching side, but there seems no end to the planning and administration that comes with it. I thought the first couple of years would be the most difficult and then it would get easier. But I was wrong. There are too many initiatives. It takes time and patience to get used to them. Particularly the last couple of years have been difficult. It was a career I longed to stay in, but not anymore, unless it were to improve.

Lubna's Story

4.13 "I have always loved working with children. I do still enjoy teaching, but it is everything else that comes with it that I am tired of. At the beginning I really enjoyed it. When the numeracy and literacy hours came into force I started to feel differently about things. The problem with teaching is that as soon as you get used to something it all changes, you never have enough time to adjust yourself. Teachers who have been teaching for a long time say that they have found the last few years the hardest ever.

4.14 "I feel upset at leaving the children, but I am happy to go because I need a different challenge. The government initiatives have had a lot of effect on me personally and is one of the reasons why I want to get out. The workload has been so excessive that people have gone off sick. We are often pulled in to cover other classes since we don't get supply until the third day. It is difficult if the class is a different age group and you don't know what they are supposed to be doing. Our school has only just introduced one non-contact hour, but I never seem to get it.

4.15 "I miss time to chat to the children. We are now teaching so many subjects that everything is a rush. The pay structure needs improving and so does the starting salary for new teachers. My new jobs will pay less, but I shall be doing fewer hours and I think they will be more enjoyable.

4.16 "I have brother who is in teaching who wants to better himself, but not necessarily in the school environment. I think he will find it easier because he is male and is very good at his job".

Chart 4.3: Donald
Donald teaches physics in a comprehensive school in the East Midlands. He is aged 25-30 and began teaching in 1995 after graduating in Physics in 1993 and taking a PGCE in secondary science in 1994. He is going to work in pharmaceutical sales.
Reasons for Going
The job, quite frankly, is awful. You get badly paid for the amount of work you are expected to do – no bonuses, no incentives, someone looking over your shoulder picking on everything. No prospects, no respect, goalposts that are constantly changing always getting narrower and lower. Long hours, no thanks, little money. Need I go on? I could not recommend this job to anyone and I'd rather be unemployed than do it for another 32 years.

Donald's Story

4.17 "I became a teacher for the usual reasons such as vocation and the desire to do something useful. I really enjoyed it when I first started. All sorts of things have led to me leaving. It was mainly the things that aren't there any more such as time to plan properly, and the chance to do things as you wanted to do them.

4.18 "The salary isn't great. My brother did the same degree as me and walked into a job, in IT, on the same salary that has taken me three years to achieve. Performance related pay is trying to apply commercial world criteria to education and it is completely divorced from reality. I like to teach in my own way and I find the curriculum too prescriptive. Having just finished my reports I am so tired and don't know how I managed it. So much time is taken up with political correctness and form filling. Pupil behaviour is definitely getting worse. I have never had any discipline problems, but that just means that you get all the bad classes because they know that you can deal with them.

4.19 "I am going to work in pharmaceutical sales. It will involve a lot of travelling which suits me. I currently spend either three hours on the bus or two in the car getting to work. I am attracted by the challenge. There isn't a challenge for me in teaching any more. The salary will be slightly less, but I was prepared to take a drop. We do however get performance bonuses and a car. I am not going to have to move house so I have been quite lucky in that respect.

4.20 "I'm not going to miss teaching. I have met loads of people who have left and I have not heard one of them say that they have made a mistake. My colleague left last week after fourteen years service. On his last day nobody from management said thank you or good luck to him. I didn't feel that this was intentional, but it highlighted the fact that people are too busy and too wrapped up in the politics of the job to acknowledge the efforts of others.

4.21 "The people that are coming into the profession are given six thousand pounds to train. These people pay off their student loans, do their time and then leave. We are constantly put under stress. I wouldn't recommend the job to anybody. We have some very smart children in our school, but they don't want to go into teaching because they see the workload that we are under. We have a huge turnover of staff and the pupils want to know why so many people are leaving."

Chart 4.4: Carol
Carol teaches English in a grammar school in the South East. She is aged 40-44 and began teaching in 1982 after graduating in 1981and taking a PGCE. She also has a higher degree and experience of teaching abroad. She is going to teach in an independent school.
Reasons for Going
I am dissatisfied with the constant testing of pupils (SATs) and frustration with the new AS level. There is an over-abundance of paperwork and unreasonable class sizes (up to 32 pupils). In my new post I shall have more control over teaching, a better salary and prospects for pay increases, and a chance to be appreciated rather than constantly appraised.

Carol's Story

4.22 "I went into teaching because I think it was always something I felt I could do and I was interested in. Being a bossy child, from an early age I always felt that I was good at communicating my enthusiasm for things to other people. When I went for my degree, I didn't necessarily intend to go into teaching, it was something that I entertained, but when I got to the end of my English degree I decided that was what I wanted to do. A lot of it was just the fact that I was so fond of my subject and I wanted to be able to pass that on.

4.23 "That is still true today. I knew that teaching wasn't going to be a particularly lucrative career and it was going to be hard work as well. But I am moving on, well, I suppose, because of what has happened to state education. The workload, for example. This crosses over into other areas as well, but particularly for a subject like English very large class sizes, especially lower down the school, make for a tremendous amount of marking. We have some classes of 31 or 32 and this was something that I did find difficult.

4.24 "When I came back into the system (returning from abroad) I was amazed by all the Key Stage things and what have you and I think the fact that we are running round in circles trying to fulfil all these different new ideas that need to be put into place. You can't get comfortable with the system and run with it for a while because there are constant changes. There is never a time where you could think, well I have taught this A-level syllabus and I am feeling happy with it, and I don't have to prepare the text for next year. There is always something else to do.

4.25 "We have a lot of covering for other teachers and it is quite usual if you have one free period that day for it to go. That can be very frustrating and certainly it has led to frustrations amongst staff and that all adds to a rather negative atmosphere in school.

4.26 "I went through the threshold last year. I decided to go ahead with that with the number of years teaching experience I had. I understand the importance of quality control, but an awful lot of it is attitude. You are constantly being appraised rather than appreciated.

4.27 "Then various behavioural problems have surfaced. One of the boys has been in confrontation with a lot of staff, particularly female staff. It started with late homework and it got quite unpleasant in the classroom. We are talking about a grammar school not about schools where you have to put up with four letter words

all the time. We are lucky in comparison to that, but things are happening that you wouldn't have expected a couple of years ago. I don't feel there are systems in place to deal with these sorts of things and they tend to get brushed under the carpet. This boy was actually suspended for swearing and he was out for a day. Not only was he back in class the next day, but there was a note up on the staff notice board saying try not to be confrontational with him! What do you do when he talks all through your lesson? You get to the situation where your hands are tied.

4.28 "I think the whole AS business has been an absolute disaster and certainly the number of texts that we have to choose from has been reduced for the AS level as opposed to A level. There doesn't seem to be the range. Who is making these decisions it is very hard to tell – if you teach pre-1800 poetry you have to teach post-1800 drama and these sort of things.

4.29 "I am going to an independent school where I will be teaching English. I will have more sixth-form teaching which is one reason I wanted to make the move. I believe in state education and I feel to a great extent I am compromising my ideal of excellence within the state system. Obviously I will be teaching privileged children whose parents can afford it or are making sacrifices in order to afford it. I have problems with that as I don't think that one should resort to the private sector in order to get that standard of education.

4.30 "I haven't closed off a return to the state sector. Obviously financially it would be difficult – once you have made that jump. We are making quite a few changes as a result of my new job and the money being so much better. My husband is giving up his full-time commuting job and he is going to try and make a go of it working from home. Moving has enabled us to do things that we wouldn't have been able to envisage if I'd stayed in the state system.

4.31 "I might be tempted back if we returned to something like the old A level and got rid of standardised tests like SATs as I do think, certainly in my school, there is little correlation between them and GCSE results so I don't know why they are being done. They take up an inordinate amount of time and send all the wrong messages. Class sizes need to be reduced as well if you are going to encourage people back into the system.

4.32 "Otherwise teachers will continue to leave. Obviously you get retirement and people move into other positions of responsibility, but a lot have gone into the independent sector."

5. REASONS

5.1 Although Alec, Lubna, Donald and Carol are very different people in very different circumstances, common threads run through their accounts. They were going because of, as they saw it, work overload, much of it brought about by the constant changes and government initiatives. They also felt unappreciated, with an inadequate salary and too many people looking over their shoulders. They also alluded to the confrontational atmosphere in some classrooms which they felt had got worse in recent years.

5.2 In all we talked at length to 102 teachers who were leaving. They were people from our survey schools who agreed to be interviewed. We did not include in the sample people who were moving to another maintained school or those who were taking a break for maternity reasons because we felt their main motivation would be obvious. We have preferred to concentrate on those going prematurely.

5.3 In response to the open-ended question "Why are you leaving teaching in a maintained school?" our 102 interviewees volunteered 290 reasons. Most of these (247, 85.2 per cent) were expressed negatively, explaining the push away from teaching. Only 43 (14.8 per cent) gave reasons for moving towards something else and they often implied a criticism of the conditions in teaching, for example, better salary and prospects. Chart 5.1 shows the pattern which emerged in a content analysis of the responses.

Chart 5.1: Reasons Given for Resigning

Reason	Negative	Positive	Total	Per Cent[1]
Workload	57	2	59	57.8
Pupil Behaviour	46	-	46	45.1
Govt Initiatives	37	1	38	37.2
Salary	15	8	25	24.5
Stress	22	-	22	21.6
Status/Recognition	19	1	20	19.6
Career Prospects	5	13	18	17.6
School Management	15	-	15	14.7
Resources/Facilities	13	2	15	14.7
Travel	-	12	12	11.8
Parents	11	-	11	10.8
New Challenge	-	5	5	4.9
Other[2]	4	-	4	4.0
Total	247	43	290	100.0

1. Per cent of 102 interviewees
2. Two moving with husband, one wanting to live nearer home, one wanting to take advantage of the reduced fees charged by an independent school to children of staff.

5.4 Workload, pupil behaviour and government initiatives emerged as the three major reasons for giving up teaching. Salary, stress and status/recognition were referred to by over a fifth. There were significant mentions too for career prospects, resources/facilities, school management and difficult parents. The only positive

reasons to be given at all frequently were career prospects, travel, and salary, with five, most moving to independent schools, mentioning a new challenge.

5.5 The reasons given by primary and secondary teachers were broadly similar, but workload (73.9 per cent) and government initiatives (42.1 per cent) featured more prominently in the concerns of primary teachers. Pupil behaviour (15.8 per cent) seemed to loom less large for them, with stress (26.3 per cent) being the third most frequently given reason.

5.6 When these responses were probed in the interviews a consistent and worrying picture of discontent was revealed.

Workload

5.7 Workload was the main reason given for going. Teachers across the age range just felt that teaching was taking up too much of their lives. A young teacher, aged 25-29, with a degree in maths and physics leaving a comprehensive school in the South West to travel said:

> *I will work until a quarter to eight and still bring work home with me. Things like the A-level teaching, there is so much preparation, so much marking. There is the report writing. I find I constantly have to do it in my own time on the weekends or in the evenings. I think I am too young to be staying in every evening. I should be out enjoying myself.*

5.8 A teacher approaching retirement (aged 55-59), leaving her post teaching French at a comprehensive school in the East Midlands, put it this way, *"I cannot envisage carrying on any longer. I feel I have only one life. I work every evening and weekends, it is irrational".*

5.9 Specifically, excessive workload for many of the teachers meant too much paperwork. A female primary teacher, aged 45-49, leaving a school in Yorkshire and Humberside said:

> *I would have stayed in teaching if they had stuck to what they said and kept the paper work down. You can see it is just going to get worse. Tony Blair with his Education, Education, Education did nothing for me over this last four years.*

5.10 Some of the paperwork will have been the preparation and marking of lessons, but usually teachers were referring the numerous changes they have had to absorb with many of the innovations themselves seeming to involve a lot more paperwork. A primary teacher (aged 55-59) in the South East:

> *There is an intolerable burden of paperwork. My time has been taken up with the inauguration of the national curriculum and the initiatives that followed it. So many things have been introduced, not all of them bad, but with insufficient forethought.*

5.11 Class size also comes into it. A male history teacher (aged 55-59) in Outer London:

> *At times I have had seven classes, with 32 pupils. The national curriculum was designed for classes of 25 or fewer. On occasions, I have been the*

only history teacher in the school. The school has a two-form entry and this is the kind of thing that doesn't come into government calculation at all.

5.12 Teacher shortages themselves contributed to the workload. A female food and textile technology teacher aged 25-29 in the South East commented: *"It is pretty constant to lose your non-contact time. I don't get preparation time. I have to do it in the evenings and at weekends."*

Pupil Behaviour

5.13 After workload, pupil behaviour was the reason teachers, particularly those in secondary schools, most frequently gave for leaving the profession. Their comments centred on two aspects. First, there were the particular difficulties caused by the policy of social inclusion. A female teacher of modern languages, aged 30-34, in an East Midlands 11-16 comprehensive explained:

The policy of social inclusion means that every class has several children - in my case seven - who are seriously disruptive. It doesn't help to have children in your class who really should have been in special schools because they have acute learning or behavioural problems. There they would get proper attention and proper help. You can't do them justice and they are making the other children almost impossible.

5.14 Although primary school teachers less often gave pupil behaviour as a reason for going, they also were uncomfortable with the social inclusion policy. A primary teacher aged 55-59 leaving a primary school in Outer London:

For the last two years I've had a very difficult mixture with some very disturbed children and several SENs all in the same room together. They take up so much time and they've got to be watched.

5.15 But for many it is the continual low level bad behaviour, "*constantly calling your bluff*" that many teachers find most wearing. This affects not only secondary schools. A male deputy head, aged 50-54, leaving a primary school in Yorkshire and Humberside said "*We are now getting teenage behaviour from five and six year olds*." According to a male geography teacher, aged 25-29, in Outer London:

The real outbursts – outbursts of violence and really bad behaviour - you can deal with, clear it up and get it out of the way. It is the constant little things, continually having to stop them from doing this or that.

5.16 This is echoed by a male maths and physics teacher, aged 45-49, leaving a comprehensive school in the Eastern Region:

It's having to fight this uphill battle against – if I am allowed to call them that – 'naughty kids'. They get involved in so much low level misbehaviour. And rudeness and the language. It is not so bad in the classroom but around the school. Quite often the parents don't support you. You are battling against it, because parents don't believe their child can be naughty. It's like that in every class and it's got more common. I think a lot of the staff feel that the kids are untouchable.

5.17 A languages teacher aged 55-59 leaving a comprehensive school in the North East summed up the situation as follows:

> *I think more and more the teacher is the person in the middle. We are pressured from above to raise standards, run after pupils who are not producing the goods. Yet when we go into the classroom we are resisted. Pressured at one end, resisted at the other.*

Government Initiatives

5.18 We have already touched on government initiatives when we considered workload, but they were mentioned so frequently we treated them as a category in their own right. As such, they emerged as the third most frequently given reason for going.

5.19 Primary and secondary school teachers alike complained about the pressures of having to continually introduce new schemes which were then themselves subject to extensive modification. A female primary headteacher, aged 50-54, leaving a nursery and infants school in the Eastern Region explained, *"We are forever being told that this initiative has to come on board, it has got to be in place by such a time. It is all the deadlines".*

5.20 A female teacher, aged 55-59, leaving a middle school in the West Midlands expanded the point:

> *Nothing ever seems to get finished, the job satisfaction has gone. I feel like a hamster on a wheel going round and round getting nowhere. There are a lot of positive things about the National Literacy Strategy that we've embraced enthusiastically. But it is relentless; there is always something new.*

5.21 A young teacher (aged under 25) leaving her post teaching English and drama at a comprehensive in the East Midlands to go to an independent school said something very similar:

> *There are always so many changes. In the three years I have been teaching, things are scrapped and then started again. Nothing is consistent. I just get used to doing something and then it is changed. You find yourself questioning the relevance, 'what is the point because nothing stays the same'.*

5.22 There was also the belief that an almost industrial emphasis on productivity had undermined education's essential purpose. A male deputy head, aged 45-49, leaving a comprehensive in Yorkshire and Humberside told us:

> *It has demoralised them. They feel a lot of their time is spent collecting statistics for something they don't feel is appropriate. We are not dealing with an individual student or class nowadays, but a collection of benchmarks and targets. It is the relationship with your students and colleagues that matters and it is now given scant regard.*

5.23 Perhaps the most succinct comment of all came from a teacher of English, aged 40-45, leaving a comprehensive school in Wales, *"I do wish the Labrador, rather than its owner, had been Secretary of State".*

Salary, Stress and Status

5.24 The teachers we interviewed also reiterated some of the widely acknowledged reasons for leaving. **Salary** was highlighted by a quarter of the interviewees. *"I've got friends working in industry for fewer hours, not under as much stress and getting paid more. That's one of the reasons I applied for the job I'm getting now – I will be on more money."* (male, aged 25-29, leaving geography post in a comprehensive school in the West Midlands to be a personal adviser with Connexions). **Stress** was raised by about a fifth. *"My doctor said get rid of it or it will get rid of you."* (female, 50-54, leaving a primary school in the Eastern region). **Status** was also mentioned by a fifth of the leavers. *"Teachers like my partner and me are leaving because we are not rewarded. The media image of teachers is an absolute disgrace. Everybody is slagging us off saying that we don't deserve more money because we have such good holidays, which is a fallacy. Being maligned so much is disgusting."* (female, aged 30-34, teaching English and media studies at a girls' 11-16 comprehensive in Outer London).

Management, Conditions and Parents

5.25 Other reasons emerged more strongly during probing in the interviews than in the response to the open-ended question. An example is **school management**. The character of the head seemed to be an important factor in some decisions to leave. *"I am going in part because of a horrible head teacher. She can be very intimidating – some might say a bully in terms of man-management. Somebody I have to say that I could neither trust nor respect"* (female, aged 45-49, leaving languages post at a girls' 11-18 comprehensive in the North East). *"My decision has been precipitated by considerable mis-management. If I had been working in a different environment we almost certainly wouldn't be having this conversation. A lot of the management training for headteachers is based on systems and processes not on people skills"* (male, aged 35-39, leaving a history and humanities post at a technology college in the South West).

5.26 Sometimes it was school management more generally. A male, aged under 25, who teaches geography and PE, and is leaving a 11-16 comprehensive in the Eastern region to teach in an independent school abroad said:

> *They have to some extent pushed me away. I feel in this school they have tried to mould me into a teacher who is very similar to the head of department rather than let me develop my own teaching style. The pupils have responded very well, but unfortunately the older staff seemed to be having a go at every opportunity. The senior management team do not give newly-qualified teachers enough support and the year after you get even less.*

5.27 **Facilities and resources** could also be the final straw. *"The sheer fabric of the school is not very pleasant these days. You go to the toilet and the hand basin isn't working, there's no paper in there, the hand dryer doesn't work – and this is the*

staff toilets" (male, aged 25-29, leaving geography post in Outer London). *"My classroom has mold on the ceiling. The other day when the class was cooking biscuits the room got to 35°C as only two windows open and the fans don't work"* (female, aged 25-29, leaving food and textile technology post at 11-16 comprehensive in South East).

5.28 As well as the fabric, the lack of books and materials could be very frustrating. *"It has been difficult getting basic things like photocopying – it's rationed. Also textbooks, only a few sets. Key Stage 3 resources here are quite pitiful"* (male, aged 30-34, leaving a biology and general science post at a 11-16 comprehensive in Outer London, looking for IT work). *"In this school there are droves of classroom assistants, but not much in the way of books or resources"* (female, aged 45-49, leaving primary school in Inner London with nowhere else in mind).

5.29 The interviews also revealed some strong feelings about the role of **parents**. *"I have been threatened once or twice, but mainly it is verbally. We have a pupil at the moment who has been told by his parents 'If a teacher shouts at you - shout back'. Much of this starts at home, there is no respect"* (a female, aged 25-29, leaving modern languages post at an 11-16 comprehensive in Yorkshire and Humberside). *"At first Ofsted thought we had problems with behaviour, but then they went outside and observed and came back and said they had changed their minds. We were doing an excellent job. They said they were horrified at the behaviour of the children when in the care of their parents"* (female, aged 50-54, leaving headship of a primary school in Eastern region).

5.30 Teachers also feel vulnerable to a blame culture. *"We have middle class parents who could quote the national curriculum at you. They want to know why their daughter isn't getting an A instead of a C. It is your fault, not the fact that their daughter couldn't achieve an A"* (female, 30-34, leaving English and media studies post in a girls' 11-16 comprehensive in Outer London). *"If a child falls over in the playground these days it is never an accident, someone must have been negligent. You worry about them on school trips for fear of recrimination if anything goes wrong, even if you've got every safety aspect covered"* (female, 30-34, leaving a primary school in Outer London).

Positive Reasons

5.31 As we noted, relatively few of the teachers leaving indicated it was because of the attractions of something else. In the next chapter we shall see that many of the teachers were, in fact, leaving with nothing else in mind. Two of the positive reasons - salary and career prospects - were the other side of coin from teaching. The two that were in a sense distinctive were travel and a new challenge.

5.32 **Travel** could involve moving to a school abroad, but some young teachers were just wanting to see a bit of the world. A female, 25-29, who was leaving a post teaching maths in a comprehensive school in the South West was typical:

> *I had always wanted to do some travelling and it seemed the ideal time to go. But I am not sure whether I'll come back to teaching. I am currently in what is considered a good school and yet there are still lots of*

problems. I suppose I don't really feel that the behaviour of children and the pressure on teachers is getting any better.

5.33 For several the **new challenge** involved moving to an independent school. *"There is the opportunity to start something from scratch. I'll be working with students who are highly motivated. I will also have a huge amount of parental support"* (female, 35-39, special needs teacher from comprehensive in South East). *"Hopefully, it will be an opportunity to get my enthusiasm back. It will give me a chance to teach A-levels again. I also feel that parental expectations will be high because it is a private school. The exam results are really good"* (female, 35-39, biology teacher at 11-16 comprehensive in South East).

Comment

5.34 In some ways it is a depressing picture. Resignation seems to be to escape rather than to do something else. The reasons given for going offer some important clues to government if it is serious about making teaching a more attractive profession.

5.35 We have already considered, in Chapter 2, where the leavers were going in terms of the broad categories of mover, leaver and retiree. In the next chapter, we look at the intended destinations in more detail.

6. DESTINATIONS

6.1 Unpacking the broad categories of mover, leaver and retirers, we can see in Chart 6.1 that just over half the resignees in our summer 2001 survey (52.3 per cent) were transferring to other maintained schools. This is consistent with the increases detected in recent Employer Organisation surveys and probably reflects the greater scope for moving on that exists in an under-staffed system.

6.2 In addition, 1l.5 per cent were moving elsewhere in education, either to other teaching, for example in an independent school, or to an associated post such as an adviser. Only a small proportion (5.5 per cent) were taking employment outside education. Four-fifths of the retirers were going early. Nearly 4.0 per cent of the resignations were taking a break for maternity or family reasons. But there was also a relatively large group (11.2 per cent) whose destinations were apparently unknown.

Chart 6.1: Destinations, Summer 2001

Destination	Primary		Secondary	
	N[1]	Per Cent	N[1]	Per Cent
Teaching in Maintained School	9,364	51.5	9,718	53.1
Other Teaching	1,436	7.9	1,776	9.7
Other Education	218	1.2	750	4.1
Alternative Employment	764	4.2	1,244	6.8
Retirement	3,363	18.5	2,324	12.7
Maternity/Family	764	4.2	659	3.6
Other/ Not Known	2,273	12.5	1,830	10.0
Total	18,182	100.0	18,301	10.2

1. Grossed up from sample

6.3 These were included among our interviewees and it is evident that many were leaving with no immediate plans. Their intention is just to get out of teaching and see what turns up.

No Immediate Plans

6.4 Teachers across the age ranges seem to be leaving without having settled on what to do next. A number of the young teachers were disillusioned. A female languages teacher aged 25-29 leaving a technology school in the South East said:

> *I want a change, because I want to know whether it is me or the job. I still want to work with people, I know that. That's why I don't want to go into translation. People say try another school, but I see the kids in the street. They are all the same aren't they and if you don't have backup from parents you are fighting a losing battle.*

6.5 The concern with pupil behaviour was echoed by other young leavers. Another languages teacher, aged 25-29, from an 11-16 comprehensive in Yorkshire and

Humberside said, *"I have no other job to go to as yet. All I know is that I don't want another job in the maintained sector. Teaching has become the secondary aim of lessons, it is crowd control first"*. An English teacher from Outer London, *"I have had to take time off work for stress after just four years. I am going to spend some time doing what I enjoy which is painting and writing. I may do a little bit of supply or marketing work."*

6.6 In primary schools initiative overload was more likely to be the issue. A young teacher leaving a primary school in the Eastern region told us, *"I'm getting out and going to travel round the world. It's a shame. I'm such a motivated person and I really wanted to do this job, but I have been made to feel so negative after such a short time. They keep changing little bits and adding bits, it's all piling on, and it's all so superficial."*

6.7 More experienced teachers were also taking the plunge. *"I'm 52 years of age and I'm just packing it all in. I've had enough of this social inclusion policy. My partner and I are going to America for a year"* (male PE teacher from 11-18 comprehensive in Yorkshire and Humberside). *"I am utterly disillusioned. I am tired of the long hours. I am tired of being treated like the enemy by the children. I am tired of the government's fantastic new ideas which make the job more difficult by the day. I am going to have a rest and then - I know it sounds funny - I would like to work in a garden centre"* (female, aged 30-34, leaving languages post in 11-16 comprehensive in East Midlands).

6.8 Supply teaching was sometimes seen as a means of tiding things over. *"Behaviour has deteriorated with the inclusive policy of the LEA and the arrival of a new headteacher. I realised there was more to life. My husband and I are hoping to set up a business, but at the moment we are waiting to sell our house, then we can make plans properly. In the meantime it is going to be supply to keep the wolf from the door"* (female, aged 40-44, leaving modern languages post at 11-16 comprehensive in Inner London). *"I started getting these headaches and feeling stressed. The LEA has frozen the pension because I am 53 and I won't touch that till I'm 65. Being a car mechanic and a good craft person, I'm doing odd jobs for people, joinery and so on. If the work dries up you can always phone up schools and say is there any supply work this week"* (male technology teacher from a 11-18 comprehensive in Wales).

6.9 Some were leaving for specific reasons. For a male teacher, aged 45-49, leaving a science post at an 11-18 comprehensive in the North East it was performance related pay:

> *I didn't get the threshold which I thought was barmy because I do a good job. The system is divisive. Some got the threshold because they are friends of the head or because of free masonry I think. I've got no concrete plans. I may go back to teaching part-time or supply. But I'm not going back to what I call the grind of full-time teaching. It will have to be on a far more casual basis.*

6.10 A female teacher, aged 40-44, leaving a post teaching English and drama at a 11-18 comprehensive in Wales didn't like what had happened to her school:

I've had a gutful of being in what has become a sink school. In 1990, 23 per cent came in with dysfunctional reading, now with preferred placement allowed it is over 50 per cent. I have absolutely no idea of what I am going to do. One of the ideas I am toying with is to devise a single workshop at first to see if schools will actually buy me in.

6.11 Stress and exhaustion seemed to be the main reasons for just giving up in primary schools. *"I'm just exhausted with teaching at the moment. I have given so much of myself and I just need a break. In the last 18 months my workload has become intolerable. I feel an enormous weight has been lifted off my shoulders"* (female, aged 45-49, leaving primary school in South East). *"I've started feeling better already. Physically it's made the world of difference. I'm amazed that just making a decision like that could make so much difference"* (female, aged 50-54, leaving primary school in Eastern region). *"My stress levels are relieved. I am very happy to be leaving. No regrets"* (female, aged 45-49, leaving primary school in Yorkshire and Humberside).

New Education Posts

6.12 Our survey also showed that a number of teachers were moving to other education posts some of which have recently been created as part of government initiatives. The massive changes in education are not only causing some teachers to re-think their futures in schools, but are also providing a way out. The array of posts that has grown up around school teaching is taking a number of teachers away from the classroom and is itself adding to the teacher shortage. We have already seen in Chapter 4 that Lubna was going to leave to train classroom assistants. In addition, our interview sample included teachers leaving to work as

Drugs Training Co-ordinator

I have lost some of my passion for my subjects and it is an issue for me. I am pleased to have got my new job in that it keeps me within education and the secure environment that comes with it. (A female languages teacher, aged 40-44, leaving 11-16 comprehensive in the North East).

Literacy Consultant with LEA

I was looking at the next step and I didn't want to be a headteacher. I have real ability. In my opinion the teaching of literacy in the LEA is not fantastic. I feel personally I can make a difference. (female, aged 30-34, leaving primary school in Outer London).

Connexions Adviser

I've looked for a position where I didn't have to take a drop in salary because I am still paying off my student loan. Connexions is a government initiative basically to prevent some of the exclusions from schools and to improve on attendance figures. It's a varied role which will use some of the skills I've got. I always felt I got more from working with kids on a one-to-one-basis, less pressure. (male, aged 25-29, leaving geography post in technology school in West Midlands).

Policy and Development Unit at LEA

I was asked if I'd like to join the Policy and Development Unit at County Hall. I will be going to schools to help them with their Asset Management Plan. I was attracted to the post because it has a single focus rather than a multiple focus and 27 days holiday a year instead of school holidays, but perhaps I'll get them! (female deputy-head, aged 50-54, leaving 11-18 comprehensive in Yorkshire and Humberside).

Hostel for Homeless

I am going to teach in a hostel for the homeless. Children live there with their parents and they are supposed to go to local schools, but some of them have either been excluded or have just moved to the area and are awaiting placement. For some of them it is because their parents don't bother to get up in the morning and the children miss school. My new salary will be less and I will get fewer holidays. I'm doing it because the children from one of these places came to a holiday club I was helping to run in the summer. They were very difficult but lovely. I feel if I teach them self-confidence and basic skills they will get a lot better. I also found that as biology teacher the curriculum was too prescriptive and I was having to jump through too many hoops. (female, aged 25-29, leaving post teaching biology at 11-18 comprehensive in Wales).

Independent Schools

6.13 Several of the leavers we interviewed were going to work in sixth-form colleges or further or higher education (in one case training teachers), but most of those continuing as teachers but not in LEA schools were going to the independent sector.

6.14 Their reasons provide clues as to how teaching in maintained schools could be made more attractive. A female maths teacher, aged 50-54, leaving an 11-18 comprehensive in the South West explained, *"Because I felt I would be able to do what I wanted – teach! Not spend half the time trying to get good behaviour and hand out bits of paper, pencils, exercise book etc because children just won't bring them to the lessons. I really feel I should not be doing this because I don't agree with the state paying for me to be trained and now I'm going to a non-state school."*

6.15 Salary wasn't usually decisive, though it was an attraction and some, like Carol in our case studies, said they would find it difficult to move back into the maintained sector for that reason alone. But two of the teachers were taking a temporary drop in salary. One who is going to be head of German in a girls' day school, leaving her languages post at an 11-18 comprehensive school in the South West said, *"I still enjoy teaching but the circumstances have changed with the standard of behaviour deteriorating markedly. I had never been in an independent school in my life and was attracted by the calmness and lack of noise. The learning environment is good and there is very low turnover of staff".* Another who going to teach biology at a girls' day school from an 11-16 comprehensive in the South East commented, *"In fact, at first I will be losing money. I will, however, be teaching A-level again. They also wanted somebody to run their Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. I also like the fact that it was out of government powers and has smaller class sizes. I feel I will be getting back to teaching for pleasure again".*

6.16 The main reasons for moving seemed to be to escape from the maintained sector. *"I was just getting sick of the constant battle day in and day out with the attitudes and pupil behaviour"* (female, aged 30-34, leaving art and design post in North West to teach textiles in the art department of an independent school). Or the attractions of independent education which were summarised for us by a male physics teacher, aged 45-49, leaving a physics and maths post at an 11-18 comprehensive in the Eastern region to teach in an independent school *"A. It is more academic. B. The class sizes are smaller. C. The teaching time is less".*

Teaching Abroad

6.17 Some of the leavers were giving up to travel and some were transferring to independent schools, but some were doing both by taking a post overseas. Seeing something of the world was obviously a factor, but their reasons for departing the maintained sector were depressingly similar to those of other leavers – workload, behaviour, government initiatives and income.

6.18 A female biology teacher, aged 30-34, from an 11-16 comprehensive school in Yorkshire and Humberside who is going to teach in an international school in Europe said,

> *I have always wanted to go abroad and originally the idea was do VSO, but I found that I couldn't afford to do it at that stage of my career. So I was hitting 30 and I decided I needed to go and have an adventure. I was spurred into action by the poor working conditions, stress at work and pupil behaviour. So I just started to apply for adverts in the TES and it went on from there.*

6.19 A male geography teacher, aged 25-29, from an 11-18 comprehensive school in Outer London who is going to teach at an independent school in the Far East explained, *"It is an opportunity to travel with my wife. Also, I can't afford to live in London anymore and pupil behaviour is deteriorating to the point where I can't teach the way I would like".*

6.20 Some of the teachers were intending to return to teach in this country. A female English teacher, aged 25-29, leaving an 11-18 comprehensive in the North West who is going to teach at an independent school in the Canary Islands said, "*This is mainly because of a desire to live abroad for a while, but partly as a respite from the attitude and behaviour of many of the children. I will also be glad to be away from the continuous new initiatives in British education. Having said that, I do intend to return to teaching in this country within a few years".*

Overview

6.21 What emerges from the interviews is that the main motivation for many seems to be to get out of teaching in state schools. How they do this depends on age. Those over 55 are taking early retirement, those in their middle years are leaving without anything particular in mind, and the younger ones are giving up to travel. Language teachers seemed particularly prone to quit and it is possible that they have a rougher ride given the disinclination of the English to learn foreign tongues.

6.22 Those resigning to take other employment usually are moving to independent schools, or to one of the numerous posts that have grown up in recent years around teaching. Very few were taking established posts outside education. We saw in Chapter 4 that Donald was becoming a pharmaceutical rep, but he was something of an exception. A female, aged 25-29, was leaving a post teaching food technology at an 11-16 comprehensive in the South East to join the Public Trust Office, *"I happened to see it in the paper and thought – I can do that!"* But many of the others were inventing their own alternative employment. A primary teacher, aged 50-54, from the North East is going to the Hebrides to dye natural fibres, a male science teacher, aged 30-34, from Outer London is planning to go into IT development, and a female English teacher, aged, 45-49, from the South East is wanting to become a writer.

6.23 Not all the resignees were leaving irrevocably. It is likely that those taking time out to travel will return to this country, probably to teach, but it is by no means certain that this will be in the maintained sector. Others taking a break or working elsewhere could conceivably be induced to return. What it would take to tempt them back we explore in the next chapter.

7. WILLING TO RETURN?

7.1 During the interviews with the 102 leavers we asked them to name three things that could be done to bring them back into teaching. Nearly fifth, 20, including 12 early retirees and eight others said nothing would tempt them back and refused even to contemplate the question. The other 82 between them put forward 12 changes they would like to see, with reduced workload, the most frequently mentioned, coming up 29 times. These are listed in rank order in Chart 7.1.

Chart 7.1: Tempting Teachers Back

Change	N	Per Cent
Reduced Workload	29	35.4
Improved Pupil Behaviour	22	26.8
Better Salary	20	24.4
Improved Status/Recognition	14	17.1
Fewer Initiatives	13	15.9
Better School Management	12	14.6
Smaller Class Sizes	12	14.6
More Non-contact Time	8	9.8
Curriculum and Assessment	8	9.8
Other[1]	6	7.3
Total	144	100.0

1. 4 better facilities, 1 more money in education, 1 more academic school

7.2 In many ways the list that emerges is the mirror image of the reasons given for going (Chapter 5). Workload again tops the list, closely followed by pupil behaviour. The two factors weighed almost equally for secondary school teachers, but the regularity with which primary teachers mentioned workload put it ahead. Workload was often identified in the round, but particular aspects that were singled out included less paperwork (specified by seven) and a limit on working hours (specified by three). Twelve mentioned smaller classes and eight more non-contact time, but these were sufficiently distinctive to be treated as separate categories.

7.3 Salary comes higher up the list of inducements to return than it does on the reasons for going. This seems to be because the interviewees were suggesting that it would take a higher salary for them to come back and put up with all the hassle.

7.4 Prominent among the causes of the hassle were government initiatives and curriculum changes. Several said they would consider coming back if there were no more government changes and others said they would like to see the social inclusion policy ended. Under curriculum and assessment the aspect that came up most frequently was less emphasis on testing and examinations, though more flexibility and better vocational education at key stage 4 were also wanted by several.

7.5 Among the other changes the leavers would like to see are more recognition and status for teachers. Several specifically mentioned trusting teachers more as professionals. Better management of schools came up frequently. But the teachers

were not thinking of it in the almost industrial sense it is conceptualised today, but as showing more understanding of people and being more supportive.

Reasons for Becoming Teachers

7.6 Since these incentives are largely pragmatic, the other side of the coin from what caused them to leave, it is interesting to consider what drew our leavers to teaching in the first place. Chart 7.2 summarises the content analysis. In all, our 102 interviewees identified 11 attractions, with helping children and love of subject predominating.

Chart 7.2: First Attractions

Attraction	N	Per Cent
Working with Children/People	59	57.8
Love of Subject	37	36.3
Working with People	15	14.7
Influence of Parents etc	15	14.7
Classroom Autonomy	11	12.7
Own School Experience/ Inspiring Teacher	11	10.8
No Clear Intentions	9	8.8
Holidays	8	7.8
Fitted in with Family Life	8	7.8
Other[1]	3	2.9
Total	178	100.0

1. 2 opportunity to travel, fees paid for training (South African).

7.7 What seems to have drawn our leavers to teaching was overwhelmingly the prospect of intrinsic satisfactions. The most important reason, accounting for about a third of all responses, was 'working with children/young people'. This was particularly the case for primary teachers who gave this as a reason. About half the secondary teachers did so. Some teachers expanded the point as *"the pleasure of seeing children learn", "wanting to do something useful",* or *"wanting to make a difference".* They had entered teaching with a strong sense of vocation.

7.8 Love of subject - the desire to convey the knowledge, the excitement and pleasure of the subject to young people – came second, being put forward by over a third of the interviewees. For secondary teachers it ranked in importance alongside working with children (44.6 per cent), but it was not specifically mentioned by the primary interviewees.

7.9 Leavers from both primary and secondary had been attracted into teaching by the opportunity of 'working with people' and 'working in a team' (14.7 per cent). The people-oriented aspect of teaching is brought home in the comments of those with experience of working in other jobs. Surprisingly, these were not a tiny minority. One-third, primary and secondary leavers alike, had had other employment in business and commerce before becoming teachers, and not just student holiday jobs either. The fields of employment ranged from management consultancy, laboratory work, publishing, marketing to computer programming, engineering, and design.

Our leavers seemed to have had positively chosen teaching, not just drifted into it. They had turned to it to work with people and get away from the sterility of targets and the 'bottom line'. Some of the recent developments in teaching must have been something of a shock to them.

7.10 Personal example also emerged as important in considering teaching as a career. In some cases, parents or relatives had been teachers (although this could also make you think twice); in others elder brothers or sisters had given the lead. Enjoyment of own schooldays was also important, particularly if there had been an inspiring teacher.

7.11 Some of our leavers (12.7 per cent) had been attracted to teaching because of the personal autonomy the classroom appeared to offer. It was seen as being stimulating, offering the opportunity to be creative, and providing a chance to do "your own thing". Again it is perhaps not surprising that this group should have been unsettled to the point of leaving.

7.12 Less than ten per cent of the interviewees admitted they had no clear intention to become a teacher, but they had somehow just ended up in the job. Across both phases there was some mention, but relatively little, of the supposed attraction of teaching in terms of the holidays (7.8 per cent) and fitting in with domestic circumstances (7.8 per cent). No one mentioned money.

Conclusion

7.13 The great majority of the leavers we interviewed had actively chosen teaching for what they thought it had to offer. They did not end up in it as a soft option or last resort. They had started out with high expectations and commitment. They had been looking for opportunities to pass on their understanding to children, to enjoy freedom in the classroom and to do something more satisfying than the soulless pursuit of targets and bottom lines. They were leaving because they perceived these satisfactions to have been eroded.

7.14 Some of them could be tempted back into teaching. Better salaries would have a part to play. But even more important would be a reduction in workload and the means of improving pupil behaviour. We have here further clues for the government.

8. STAFFING OUR SCHOOLS

8.1 Having accepted, with some hesitation and reluctance, that there could be difficulties in finding enough teachers to staff our schools, the first Blair government adopted a two-pronged strategy. From 1999 onwards it has sought to increase new supply through training incentives and make teaching more attractive through what it calls 'modernising' the profession. In essence, this has involved adding a second salary tier which can be reached by crossing an assessment threshold and a more differentiated career structure attached to appraisal and performance management.

8.2 Although we are only into the third year of that strategy, the data of this study raise considerable doubts about whether it is working. First, because of the wastefulness of the training process it appears that whatever incentives might do for applications, they yield relatively few extra teachers for schools. Secondly, far from the changes to the profession improving the retention of existing staff, teacher loss has increased substantially over the past two years. Let us examine these two charges in more detail.

Teacher Training

8.3 The most encouraging news for the government, and something which it has regularly publicised, is that 'golden hellos' and training salaries have boosted applications to teacher training. In Chapter 3 we noted increases in the shortage subjects and a general rise. The lifting of applications has not, however, led to commensurate increases in trainees. While in September of the latest round secondary applications had been raised by 17.5 per cent, admissions were up by only 5.5 percent (GTTR, 2001b).

8.4 Even modest increases are welcome if they lead to more teachers. But what has hitherto not been fully appreciated is how few of the trainees actually make it to the classroom. Not all the trainees successfully complete their training, but some drop-out is to be expected and a loss of 12 per cent from the final year does not seem unreasonable. But what is startling and unexplained is the huge exodus after completing training.

8.5 The Department for Education and Skills' own figures (annual *Statistics of Education: Teachers England and Wales*) show that regularly over 30 per cent of the successful completers do not take either full-time or part-time, permanent or fixed-term, posts in maintained schools. And it is not as if they are teaching elsewhere in independent schools or in further and higher education. Taking other teaching into account - about 4.0 per cent – still nearly a third of those successfully completing the courses go missing. We are here talking substantial numbers, some 8,000 newly trained teachers a year.

8.6 Where they are going is something of a mystery, but the wastage does not appear to be a statistical aberration. Each year the Employers' Organisation collects recruitment statistics from the LEAs (Employers' Organisation, 2001). In the turnover of 27,730 full-time permanent posts in 1999, the latest year for which the findings have been published, new entrants took remarkably few of these posts - only about 9,900. What is also surprising in the statistics is the large number of new

entrants on fixed-term or temporary contracts – some 6,300 or 40 per cent of the new appointments. But even when they are added in we can account only for just over 16,000 of the newly trained, which is of the same order as the DfES's figures. Neither is the loss due to entry being postponed. The Employers' Organisation's figures include as new entrants those who have deferred in previous years - about ten per cent of those taking first employment.

8.7 Taking into account both wastage during and immediately following teacher training courses it looks as though out of every 100 final-year trainees (there will have been further drop-out during the first three years of BEd courses) 40 do not take up teaching posts in maintained schools. If we were able to hold on to these newly-trained teachers we would be well on our way to solving the teacher shortage. As it is, about £100 million a year seems to be wasted on their training.

8.8 The government should investigate why there should be this apparent huge post-training drop-out. Some of its more recent training incentives only become fully payable on taking up teaching posts and it is possible that this will serve to reduce wastage in the future. It could, however, merely put back the problem to the early years of teaching. The flows need to be carefully monitored.

Rising Resignations

8.9 Our survey found 36,483 teachers resigning from full-time permanent contracts in maintained schools in England and Wales in summer 2001 and a further 12,880 leaving fixed-term and part-time posts. These scale up, respectively, to 52,100 and 18,400 for the whole year suggesting that 70,500 people moved on 2001-01. Interestingly, turnover was lower in Wales than elsewhere. Employers' Organisation (EO, 2001) data indicate that this is regularly the case. It would be well worth trying to discover what Wales is doing right.

8.10 Our survey confirms the rising trend apparent in the Employers' Organisation's time course data which show 25,645 resignations from full-time permanent posts in 1998, 34,444 in 1999 and 43,890 in 2000 (private communication). The increase from 1998 (admittedly affected by the rush to retire in 1997) to 2000 is an astonishing 41.6 per cent. Our survey indicates that the level has now reached 52,100.

8.11 Not all those resignations are to leave the profession; about half are movers within it. Both movers and leavers have increased in recent years suggesting considerable churning of the system. Existing staff have become more mobile as they seek to take advantage of vacancies by trading up. But what is worrying for the government is that attempts to make teaching more attractive do not appear to be staunching the flow from the profession. In fact, rather the reverse.

8.12 In Chapter 2, we saw that the resignation rate is highest among the youngest teachers. In part this is because they are more likely to move between schools, but there is also greater wastage. Some 18 per cent of the teachers leave during their first three years. If this is added to the training loss, it seems that nearly 60 per cent of the trainees do not survive in teaching beyond three years.

8.13 The losses mean that teaching is not renewing itself. The largest cohorts, nearly double the present size, are rapidly approaching retirement age and are already being

affected by ill-health retirement. The problem is not insurmountable, however, as we shall be seeing. The key to the problem is to hang on to more of those who have wanted to be teachers, both the newly-trained and experienced. This involves a better understanding of why the teachers are going and what would bring them back.

Reasons for Leaving

8.14 What is striking about the leavers is just how many were resigning to get away from teaching rather than being positively attracted to something else. Among our interviewees about half were leaving with nowhere else in mind, either just giving up, taking early retirement or signing up for supply in the hope that something would turn up. Even some of the positive moves offer a comment on the attractiveness of teaching. The half leaving to do something else were mainly going to work in independent schools, in education posts around teaching, or to travel. There was little sign of them being poached by other employers.

8.15 The teachers' wish to escape is especially sad when we see, as in Chapter 7, what brought them into the profession in the first place. They nearly all came with high ideals wanting to work with children and pass on their understanding. But they are going, with potentially many more years of useful service in them, mainly because of:

- Workload;
- Pupil Behaviour;
- Government Initiatives.

8.16 Workload was the reason most frequently given. For many, there just seemed too much to do. Holding down the job seemed to take over the best part of the evenings and weekends. "Leaving to get a life" was how it was commonly explained to us. When pressed to be more specific the teachers referred to the large amount of paperwork involved in the recording, reporting, appraisals and inspections. This is in addition to the preparation and marking which could become excessive in large classes. The teachers also complained how their time at school was eaten into by covering for shortages and absences, so most of the work around teaching had to be done in the evenings and at weekends.

8.17 The government itself has generated much of this increased workload through its attempted reforms. Adjusting to changes takes time and effort so some transitional increase in workload could have been anticipated. But, in the view of the teachers we interviewed, too much has been attempted at once and a lot of what has been introduced has been ill-thought out and subject to continual modification. It is also true that the greater emphasis on accountability of itself increases the paperwork.

8.18 Issues to do with workload and government initiatives have already been highlighted, but the teachers' concerns with pupil behaviour have received less attention. Potentially this could be more serious because what the teachers seem to be encountering are the latest manifestations of a long-term and deep-seated change in our society away from self-control and respect for others. In the classroom this can result, as our teachers said, "in a constant uphill battle". In this they feel unsupported by parents and also sometimes by the headteacher.

8.19 It is this constant low-level struggle which is causing many teachers to re-think their futures rather than particular episodes of violence and really bad behaviour. They saw the government's policy of social inclusion as contributing to the difficulties because it can lead to several seriously disruptive children being in the same class (one teacher mentioned seven). A major factor in the teachers switching to the independent sector - which could involve a struggle with their principles - was the opportunity to teach rather than being engaged in crowd control. As one put, "I feel I will be getting back to teaching for pleasure again".

8.20 As we saw in Chapter 5, a number of other reasons for going were also mentioned. Stress came up frequently - "Get rid of it before it gets rid of you" - presumably a consequence of excessive workload, difficult pupil behaviour and other dissatisfactions. Salary, recognition, and resources and facilities all came into play, but the key concerns for the government to address are workload, pupil behaviour and its own policies.

Willing to Return?

8.21 This is borne out by the responses to a question we asked about what would tempt the leavers to return (see Chapter 7). Some, of course, said nothing whatsoever. But among those willing to contemplate the question improvements to workload and pupil behaviour emerged again at the head of the list.

8.22 But in third place this time was salary. Though salary had not been the principal factor in deciding to go, they said it would take a higher salary to bring them back. In part, they saw this as compensation for the changes being made to education. No longer was it a vocation, in their view, but work tied to targets, test results and qualifications. If it was to be more akin to industry they wanted to be paid nearer the going rate.

Policy Pointers

8.23 The findings of this study offer some pointers as to what might be done to ameliorate and ultimately reverse the growing teacher shortage. Essentially, these are:

- Reduce the very high levels of wastage from the training process;
- Improve the retention of teachers by addressing their concerns.

8.24 Much is already underway. The DfES, for example, has commissioned a major independent study of teacher working practice and workload from PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2001), which it is to be hoped will provide a basis for the negotiation of a more balanced working life for teachers. The Audit Commission (2001) is about to undertake a major study of recruitment and retention into local public services. The DfES, itself, is about to commission research into teacher retention. Salary levels come under review each year through the School Teachers' Review Body.

8.25 But the specific areas we would identify from this research which so far perhaps haven't received sufficient attention are Training Waste, Pupil Behaviour and Initiative Overload.

Training Waste

8.26 We were frankly astonished to find how few of the trainees actually enter teaching. The training targets that the providers struggle to meet are forty per cent higher than they would need to be with a better retention rate. As far as we know, this massive drop-out is not understood. It may even be an illusion. But it should be investigated to find out what is happening and whether it can be reduced. When there were only a few universities teacher training came to be regarded as an alternative form of higher education with no real obligation to teach. It is possible that some of that attitude persists today. School-based training generally has a higher throughput and it could be expanded.

Pupil Behaviour

8.27 Schools are at the sharp end of changes in society and there is no panacea. But there are at least three steps that could be taken. First, more effort should be directed to teaching appropriate behaviour during the years of early schooling. Secondly, the balance of teachers' rights and pupils' rights should be more clearly defined so that teachers are fully aware of, and are comfortable with, the means available to them to reinforce good behaviour. Too often teachers now feel that "the kids are untouchable".

8.28 Thirdly, education must be looked at from the point of view of the children and the basic question asked: what is the justification for requiring them to be in school in the first place. The answer ought to lead to a reconsideration of what is available in upper secondary schooling to ensure that there is something there which genuinely adds to the lives of all young people. It is possible that the recently published White Paper (DfES, 2001) will provide the opportunity to do that.

Government Initiatives

8.29 Here the ball would seem to be firmly in the government's court. For what to it must have seemed very good reasons it has pressed on with numerous disparate initiatives. As Alec, one of our case studies put it, "lots of ideas, all in separate boxes, pouring down different tubes, but all landing in one place – on us!"

8.30 The government claims to have a big picture for education, but we wonder how much analysis it has conducted of the system's capacity to assimilate change. Even now it is not too late to carry out such an analysis and prioritise future developments accordingly. Otherwise the transformation it is attempting will be counterproductive. As more and more teachers are unsettled and leave, it will become harder to deliver even what was being achieved before. Without good and committed teachers, education policies are so many castles in the air.

A Solvable Problem?

8.31 Is teacher shortage solvable? Since it seems endemic and worldwide in successful economies radical solutions are being advocated. Lord Puttnam (Griffiths, 2001), Chairman of the General Teachers Council, is canvassing the idea of a relatively small number of teachers supported by numerous assistants. Others, like David Hargreaves (1997), Chief Executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, have argued that information and communications technology will ultimately take over many of the teacher's functions.

8.32 But the requirement for teachers may not be so easily got round. Teaching is essentially an interpersonal activity, the essentials of which have not much changed in more than two millennia. The upside of the present study, however, is that the teacher shortage does not look a problem beyond reach. Our survey of resignations in summer 2001 suggests that schools will have been seeking to replace 24,400 leavers and retirers for September. In addition, we estimate an extra 8,100 posts will have been created making some 32,500 in all.

8.33 At first sight, it seems as if the 30,000 final-year trainees would meet most of this demand. But, as we have seen, only about 60 per cent make it to the classroom and nearly 20 per cent more leave during the first three years. If retention could be improved we would be close to a solution.

8.34 As it is, we are left with a gap of about 14,000. Returners to the profession could be expected to fill half these places (DfES figures suggest more, but its definition of returners includes those moving from part-time to full time which we have already taken into account). Teacher shortage in September 2001, therefore, amounts to 7,000 posts and it is these that headteachers will have been struggling to fill by all the means we described in *Coping With Teacher Shortages* (Smithers and Robinson, 2001), including extensive recruiting abroad.

8.35 Interestingly, the gap of 7,000 appointment is not so very different from the extra posts that schools have been creating in response to rising secondary numbers and the Chancellor's direct payments to schools. In this sense it is a failure of planning.

8.36 We would argue that current levels of teacher shortage are potentially solvable by conventional means. In our view, the strategy should be less about trying to get more to apply to teacher training than of holding on to the people who have trained. We have suggested that this will involve reducing the excessive dropout from teacher training and making teaching more attractive by responding to the concerns of teachers. Some of the levers are in the government's hands, like workload and the impact of its own initiatives, but others, such as the changing attitudes and behaviour within society, are less tractable. But there is nothing which is impossible; nothing which better understanding and genuine commitment on the part of the government could not secure.

8.37 Without decisive intervention, however, the situation will get worse. The large number of teachers recruited during the seventies, and who for long have been the backbone of the profession, are fast approaching retirement. An important factor in the recruitment and retention of those teachers was the recommendations of an independent review, the Houghton Report (1974). It could be that an independent inquiry would be the way forward for the present government also.

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APPENDIX

A.1 The survey consisted of data collection at three levels: (1) a questionnaire survey of a representative sample of primary and secondary (including middle) maintained schools in England and Wales; (2) a questionnaire survey of teachers leaving those schools and (3) interviews with a sub-sample drawn from the returned teacher questionnaires.

Sample

A.2 In each of the 170 LEAs in England and Wales (leaving aside the City of London and Isles of Scilly, which have very few schools) four schools, two primary and two secondary, were chosen randomly and sent questionnaires in mid-June 2001. In all 680 questionnaires were sent out representing 1.7 per cent of primary and 9.0 per cent of secondary schools. 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 have been added region, category, type and sex of school.

A.3 In total, 428 questionnaires were returned - 224 from primary (65.9 per cent) and 204 from secondary schools (60.0 per cent). From these responses a final working sample of 170 primary and 165 secondary schools were chosen to represent, as far as possible, at least one primary and one secondary school in each LEA. The sample responses were aggregated by LEA to the ten Government Office Regions of England, plus Wales.

TABLE A1: Representation of LEAs by Region

Region	National[1]	Sample			
		Primary LEAs		Secondary LEAs	
		N	%	N	%
Eastern	10	6	60.0	7	70.0
East Midlands	9	8	88.9	7	77.8
Inner London	13	11	84.6	7	53.8
Outer London	19	17	89.5	15	78.9
North East	12	9	75.0	12	100.0
North West	22	22	100.0	17	77.3
South East	19	16	84.2	15	78.9
South West	15	14	93.3	10	66.7
West Midlands	14	9	64.3	10	71.4
Yorks & Humber	15	12	80.0	12	80.0
Wales	22	18	81.8	20	90.9
Total	170	142	83.5	132	77.6

1. Excluding City of London and Isles of Scilly.

A.4 Table A1 shows that in the final sample of primary schools 142 out of 170 LEAs (83.5 per cent) were represented. In the sample of secondary schools 132 out of 170 (77.6 per cent) were included. There was some variation with region. The response rate, in the case of primary schools, ranged from 100 per cent of the LEAs in the

North West down to 60 per cent of those in the Eastern region. For secondary schools the range was from 100 per cent of the LEAs in the North East down to 53.8 per cent for Inner London.

A.5 Tables A2 and A3 show that the primary and secondary samples were representative in terms of the categorisation of schools into community, foundation and voluntary.

TABLE A2: Primary Schools by Category

Status of School	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Community	114	67.1	12,792	64.6
Foundation	4	2.4	363	1.8
Voluntary Aided	29	17.1	3869	19.5
Voluntary Controlled	23	13.5	2,778	14.0

TABLE A3: Secondary Schools by Category

Status of School	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Community	109	66.1	2,574	68.1
Foundation	20	12.1	508	13.4
Voluntary Aided	32	19.4	562	14.9
Voluntary Controlled	4	2.4	134	3.5

A.6 Tables A4 shows that, for the secondary sample, girls' schools were slightly over-represented. When the schools were classified by type, as in TableA5, secondary modern and middle schools deemed secondary were somewhat under-represented.

TABLE A4: Secondary School Sample by Sex of School

Sex of School	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Boys'	7	4.2	188	5.0
Girls'	14	8.5	227	6.0
Coed	144	87.3	3,363	89.0

TABLE A5: Secondary School Sample by Type of School

Type of School	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Comprehensive	139	84.2	3,050	80.7
Grammar	9	5.5	162	4.3
Secondary Modern	6	3.6	148	3.9
Technical/Other	-	-	41	1.1
Middle deemed Secondary	11	6.7	377	10.0

A.7 Tables A6 and A7 show the distributions of schools by age range. Infant-junior schools (ages 5-11) were slightly under-represented in the primary phase. In the secondary phase, fewer middle schools (ages 9-13) responded than to be expected.

TABLE A6: Primary Schools by Age Range

Age Range	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Infant – First (4-9)	34	20.0	3,990	20.1
Infant – Junior (5-11)	108	63.5	13,447	67.9
Junior (7-11)	25	14.7	2,207	11.1
Middle (8-12)	3	1.8	158	0.8

TABLE A7: Secondary Schools by Age Range

Age Range	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Up to 16 years	71	43.0	1,451	38.4
Up to 18 years	83	50.3	1,950	51.6
Middle 9-13 years	11	6.7	377	10.0

A.8 Tables A8 and A9 show that both primary and secondary schools were representative in relation to size of school. There was some tendency for more of the larger primary schools to respond.

TABLE A8: Primary Schools by Size

Number of Pupils	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Up to 100	18	10.6	3,198	16.1
101 – 200	40	23.5	5,775	29.1
201 – 300	56	32.9	6,265	31.6
301 – 400	38	22.4	2,562	14.5
401 – 500	12	7.1	1,325	6.7
501 or more	6	3.5	377	1.9

TABLE A9: Secondary Schools by Size[1]

Number of Pupils	Sample		National	
	N	%	N	%
Up to 400	11	7.7	293	8.3
401 – 700	37	25.9	813	22.9
701 to 1000	44	30.8	1,116	31.4
1001 to 1300	32	22.4	840	23.7
1301 to 1600	15	10.5	374	10.5
1601 or more	4	2.8	114	3.2

1. England only.

A.9 The proportion of Beacon Schools in the primary sample, 1.2 per cent was somewhat less than the national proportion of 2.0 per cent. The secondary sample contained 6.1 per cent of Beacon Schools compared to 5.0 per cent nationally, and 12.1 per cent of Specialist Schools compared to 15.1 per cent nationally.

Survey

School Questionnaire

A.10 The headteachers of the representative sample of schools were sent a brief questionnaire in June 2001 asking for details of any resignations which had been given by the due date of the 31 May 2001. For each person going they were asked to indicate the type of post and the destination of the teacher resigning. One hundred and one out of 170 primary schools (59.4 per cent) reported a total of 224 resignations. Of the secondary schools, 159 out of 165 (96.4 per cent) provided information on 1,008 people going. In addition to the quantitative details, 38.2 per cent of primary and 43.6 per cent of secondary schools offered a qualitative comment on how resignations were affecting them.

Teacher Questionnaire

A.11 Head teachers in the sample were also asked to pass on a teacher questionnaire to each teacher known to be resigning. This was to be returned by the teachers themselves to protect the confidentiality of their comments. The questionnaire asked for some background information, details of current post, destination and willingness to be interviewed.

Interviews

A.12 From the returned questionnaires 105 were identified for interview. The target was 100 (80 secondary, since the circumstances are more varied, and 20 primary), with 5 per cent over-sampling to allow for mishaps. In the event 102 of the interviews were usable 83 secondary and 19 primary. They were conducted mainly in a two-week period in mid-July.

TABLE A10: Interview Sample by Age Range

Age Range	Sample		National[1]
	N	%	%
Under 25	3	2.9	6.1
25-29	21	20.6	23.8
30-34	11	10.8	17.0
35-39	11	10.8	11.0
40-49	21	20.6	21.2
50-59	31	30.4	17.0
60 Plus	4	3.9	3.9
Total	102	100.0	100.0

1. Employers' Organisation's 2000 survey.

A.13 In addition to the researchers themselves, the interviews were carried out by two former teachers who had held senior positions in the maintained sector. The

interviews were by telephone and all bar three involved talking to the teacher at home. Each interview lasted about half an hour and was taped. A team of three assistants transcribed the interviews.

A.14 The interview schedule was semi-structured and designed to explore in depth the reasons for resigning and where the leavers were going. Additional questions focussed on what had attracted them to teaching in the first place and what, if anything, would tempt them back.

TABLE A11: Interview Sample by Gender

Age Range	Sample		National[1]
	N	%	%
Primary			
Female	15	78.9	82.6
Male	4	21.1	17.4
Secondary			
Female	60	72.3	56.6
Male	23	27.7	43.5

1. Employers' Organisation' 2000 survey.

A.15 Tables A10 and A11 compare the interview sample with the national distribution of resignations by age and gender as recorded in the Employers' Organisation's 2000 survey. It is the best available comparison even though it contains movers and those taking a break for maternity who were not included in our sample (since their reasons for going might be thought to be obvious). There is some indication in the tables that younger leavers and males giving up secondary posts were less likely to come forward for interview. But it is also clear that the interview sample is a good cross-section of the teachers leaving.