



THE UNIVERSITY
of **LIVERPOOL**

Talking Heads

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A. INTRODUCTION

- A.1 This is a companion volume to our report, *Coping With Teacher Shortages*, which examines the paradox at the heart of teacher supply: that while there have been severe shortfalls to teacher training, schools seemingly have been able to fill the posts that have fallen vacant. As part of our attempt to understand how this could be, we have talked at length to the headteachers of 50 primary schools and 57 secondary schools experiencing difficulty, but chosen so as to be representative by type of school and by region. We also talked to the headteachers of 21 independent schools, again from different types of school and spread throughout the country, to hear the views from the private sector.
- A.2 What the headteachers said graphically portrays the current state of our schools. It is also a substantial part of the evidence on which the argument of *Coping With Teacher Shortages* is based. We at first tried to incorporate it into the chapters of the report itself, but that severely limited what could be included. We also felt that what the headteachers were saying was so important that they should have the means of expressing it in their own words.
- A.3 *Talking Heads* is therefore just that: extracts from the interviews brought together around a number of themes. The first three chapters have headteachers talking about their various coping strategies. Chapter B offers some general indication of the state of applications and the steps headteachers are taking to find staff. Chapter C focuses on the various ‘people strategies’ that are being adopted to cover full-time permanent posts when a straightforward appointment is not possible. Chapter D provides accounts of the other side of coping strategies, the organisational adjustments headteachers are making in the face of teacher shortages.
- A.4 Chapters E and F illustrate the variations and differences, first, with region, location and type of school, and, secondly, with subject and post. The various attempts to square the circle are leading to a number of stresses and strains on the headteachers themselves and the classroom teachers. Chapter G contains extracts from interviews revealing the full impact on both.
- A.5 In Chapter H we hear the views of the independent schools which many assume are largely immune from the full effects of the teacher crisis. In particular, the heads talk about movements from the maintained sector, the attractions of working in independent schools, who they are seeking, what they make of the current supply situation, and differences between schools.
- A.6 These chapters complement chapters 3-10 in *Coping With Teacher Shortages*, and have the same titles. Referencing to the quotations there is by paragraph number in this report. The extracts not only provide evidence and illustrations for the main report, however, they also tell a story in their own right.
- A.7 It is one of teacher shortage in nearly 50 per cent of schools. The headteachers are coping, but sometimes only just. Among the ways they are managing to get by is:

- actively seeking out the staff who are available through networking, pre-emptive appointments, stealing a march on colleagues, using student placements to headhunt, appointing without seeing, and not being too specific in requirements;
- using part-time, temporary and supply appointments to paper over the cracks, and also sometimes as an unofficial probationary period;
- relying on overseas staff particularly from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada;
- modifying the curriculum to fit the staff available;
- raising class and group sizes;
- reducing non-contact time;
- increasing the amount of teaching staff are asked to take outside their subject, thereby reducing the match of skills to job;
- on occasions using technicians and Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (formerly Section 11) staff to teach;
- training up their own staff.

A.8 There are variations with region and subject, but it is not just London and the South East, and the so-called shortage subjects, that are experiencing difficulty. Some seemingly very attractive and relatively low cost parts of the country are finding it hard to appoint staff. Most subjects, with the possible exceptions of history, PE and art, gave rise to difficulties. Problems in appointing deputy heads and co-ordinators to primary schools were widespread. The schools most badly affected tended to be those in the most disadvantaged areas.

A.9 The continual juggling required to staff the classrooms is taking its toll of the heads and the teachers. Heads frequently referred to the tension of not knowing whether they would have enough teachers. Often, they found they had to cover for absent colleagues and, sometimes, even part-fill posts themselves. In the case of the teachers, the effects of the shortages showed up in a variety of ways, ranging from shouting at the children to, in some cases, quitting the maintained sector or teaching altogether.

A.10 It all tended to look rather different in the independent sector where the leading schools pitched their starting and career salaries at sufficiently attractive levels to bring in well-qualified graduates. In areas of high cost housing they could often provide accommodation. But, again and again, they emphasized that their aim was to provide an environment in which teaching was a pleasure.

A.11 Nevertheless, some independent schools were noticing the effects of teacher shortages. Some were losing more staff than usual to independent schools with more pulling power. They were also taking more staff from the maintained sector. Small boarding schools, prep schools and those with salaries pegged to the maintained scale were perhaps experiencing difficulties themselves. Even

the leading schools could sometimes have to delay an appointment until someone came along who met their exacting standards.

A.12 This is the story which, in the following chapters, the headteachers tell in their own words. It is a very powerful statement. Whatever the bald vacancy figures may suggest the training shortages are biting in schools and biting hard.

B. SEARCHING OUT STAFF

Applications

- B.1 I see recruitment for newly qualified staff as a bomb waiting to explode. You have only got to look in the TES at the number of teacher agencies there are. They didn't exist a few years back, and if they weren't there now, most of us would be in dire straits for regular staff, not just cover.

(County, Junior 7-11, Eastern)

- B.2 Over the last five years we've found it difficult to fill posts. We've advertised nationally, but we've had only two or three responses. We've advertised through the local colleges and in the local bulletin. The response to these has been a bit better because obviously there are students in the area. What we've found is, if we make ten contacts three come for interview. Twice we've selected somebody and they've said no.

(Community, Junior 7-11, East Midlands)

- B.3 In the old days we could expect twenty or more applications, we'd short-list four and appoint one. But in the last two interviews there's been only one candidate. For a standard English teacher we invited three; one turned up. For physics we actually had nine applicants, we invited two but only one came. The quality is also disappointing.

(Community, Grammar, Boys', South West)

- B.4 We advertised for a newly qualified teacher and got 17 applicants. We short-listed seven and sent out the interview dates. It was a quick turnaround with only four days between the closing date and the actual interviewing. Even in that time they were getting jobs and it came down to just two candidates who were available to come for interview which narrows the choice quite dramatically. But I think it also says something about the quality of the small pool we are fishing in.

(Community, Primary 4-11, North West)

- B.5 It's gone in waves. In the early nineties it was difficult. Then in the mid-nineties it became a little easier. In the last two years it has started to become more difficult again. Once more I am having to cut corners. When I receive an application the first-thing that goes through my mind is that there will be another 15 people receiving this. I've got to get hold of him pretty quickly.

(Foundation, Grammar, Boys', Eastern)

Timing

- B.6 The response is determined when you can get to the marketplace. We advertised for a new English teacher about three weeks before Easter and only got three applicants. We have re-advertised and we now have a much better field, but you have to get your timing exactly right. I hadn't regarded English as a shortfall area and we are really advantaged here because people are attracted to the area.

(Community, Comp 13-18, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

- B.7 If you can actually establish your staffing and get in early then you can actually appoint. The people who come for interview often have had the offer of interviews every day that week and are picking and choosing. With our reputation luckily most come here, but we do lose some. We've got a couple of adverts going in, but we have very definitely missed the boat, so I can see we'll be struggling on that.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, North West)

Seizing the Moment

- B.8 When we were appointing the head of mathematics I got an application one morning from a Cambridge 2.1, a superb chap. I invited him down here straightway. For the English job I went to the Russell Hotel in London to interview this chap in order to sign him up before somebody got him in the afternoon. I booked a room, we had the interview, I took the papers with me and that was that.

(Foundation, Grammar, Boys', Eastern)

- B.9 I interviewed a physicist on a Saturday morning knowing that he was being interviewed elsewhere on the Monday. That's why I got him, saw him on the Saturday, and offered him the job. You have got to be quite aggressive about this. I try to keep my options open with things like closing dates. I will interview as close to those days as I possibly can. To be honest with you, if I get someone who is gold dust, I would not hang around. You can't do it.

(VA, Grammar, Boys', South East)

Networking

- B.10 It's not unusual to get an e-mail once a week from other schools saying: can you help, we've advertised...

(Community, Primary, 4-11, Eastern)

- B.11 A local school I knew was interviewing for modern languages. I wanted modern languages as well and said what are your candidates like. They said the one who came second seemed to be very good and she's still here. I said put her in a taxi, we'll pay. She came round and I appointed her.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, South East)

Pre-emptive Advertising or Appointments

- B.12 The science situation arose because we had a teacher who was experiencing difficulties. I decided to put her on competency procedures. She decided to resign. I did what we do as heads round here; I didn't wait for the advert. I heard about a teacher from another head, rang him at home and asked him if he'd like to apply. When he said he would, I said put a letter in the post. The science department put him through his paces and I got him within 24 hours. Meanwhile the advert had gone in and we did get some response.

(VA, Comp 11-16, Coed, West Midlands)

B.13 Taking maths, we had two vacancies. On a national advert we got eight applicants. Some were barking mad — ‘I’ve been driving buses all my life and dealing with money and now I feel I’d like to teach maths’. But three looked okay. We interviewed them and decided to appoint all three. Filling the two vacancies would have been spot on, but tight, so we decided to take the risk and create another post.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, South East)

B.14 We advertised for RE. We were amazed that we actually got a good application. In fact, what we did, although we only had one vacancy, because we know how rare RE teachers are, we appointed two. They were both good people so we grabbed while we could.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

Stealing a March

B.15 But for maths all my principles are collapsing around me. One of the candidates was said to be the outstanding student at the university. So I agreed with the head of maths we’d see him early - never mind about the others. Blow me he withdraws. So we phoned four more candidates to come in at short notice, because I knew several other schools round here were also looking. We offered the appointment to one who had already turned down the chance of a key stage 3 co-ordinator’s post in another school and she had only been teaching two terms. There was a knock on my door and she said she would like to withdraw her application. I talked her round but I still won’t believe she is coming here until I see her name on that bit of paper.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Wales)

B.16 An English teacher from here who had been promoted to another school said he had a very enthusiastic nice young man in his department. I invited him across to visit us and he is up for interview next week.

(Foundation, Comp 11-16, Coed, Eastern)

Student Placements

B.17 I got proactive in that I tried to get students into the school, and that’s worked. Now several of the local training institutions use us. Our name has spread and we are getting good students who enjoy it and they go back and say it is wonderful. I’m not exaggerating. I make notes on who might be suitable and for next September I have two NQTs coming who were students here two years ago and now they’re finishing I’ve headhunted them.

(Community, Primary 3-11, West Midlands)

Appointing Without Seeing

B.18 At the start of the year we had two classes and 67 pupils. The governors agreed we could go to a three-form entry and we looked from November to April and couldn’t find anybody at all - and we’re offering a class of only 22 children. I had colleagues who had picked up Australians, a mixed bunch, some of whom didn’t last and some who were great. I was in great danger of losing the teachers

of the other two classes due to stress and violence (we've had a lot of problems with violence this year) so we took this lady on after a twenty-minute interview on the phone to Australia. It was an act of faith.

(Community, Primary 4-11, Eastern)

Not Being Too Specific

B.19 As a result of the difficulties in making appointments, I now have to be very careful about the specification of subject expertise - to be not too specific in fact in order not to put any potential applicants off.

(Community, Primary 3-11, South East)

B.20 In fact when we've advertised we've made it clear that our main criterion is classroom practice, a quality teacher. We'll mix and match the subjects if we can't get both the things - teaching is the priority.

(Community, Middle 9-12, South East)

B.21 You advertise a plus 2 saying 'tell me what you can offer'. We've hardly ever been able to advertise and interview for a subject; we've had to go for the best teacher. We do have teachers here who have picked up a subject from scratch and run with it. All the subjects are covered in terms of people, but some of the staff are struggling to keep up with the class. The QCA Schemes of Work are coming out and helping.

(Community, Primary 4-11, Eastern)

Training Up

B.22 We have a vacancy for a physicist. I think it will be a question of bringing in some other scientist and training them up to do physics.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, North West)

B.23 One of the things about being a foundation school is that we are our own employers so we can do things that other people aren't allowed to – or politically don't want to. I had this IT technician who I was paying basic wages, and when I saw how he reacted with children and in the computer rooms I said it is about time someone sorted you out. He'd no qualifications from school, but he had an HNC, and I managed to persuade the local university to take him on. We put him on licensed status, paid him a pittance of £11,000 and put him through his degree while he was working here. He did all of that and got his degree in January and he gets his honours this year.

(Foundation, Comp 11-16, Coed, West Midlands)

Seller's Market

B.24 When I worked in London if good teachers went, we used to say we'll get another one. I am not going to bribe anyone if I can help it. It has been suggested to me last week that I want to bribe a physics teacher, but it is not money he wants.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Wales)

B.25 In view of our earlier experience since one of the candidates was obviously better than the others we felt she should be offered the job at interview. Her response was that she'd already had an interview and was awaiting the outcome next morning. I talked to her about it for a long time and asked her to go and think about it and ring me. She rang later in the day to say she was going to wait so I had to withdraw the offer of a place. So there is still a vacancy.

(VC, Primary 4-11, South East)

C. BRIDGING THE GAP

Need To Have Somebody

- C.1 When push comes to shove you've got to put a body in front of the class. So long as you know they are not going to kill a child or maim them - what choices do we have? If you're stuck what are you supposed to do. We've made two appointments to senior posts which were less than satisfactory because of a complete lack of choice. We have to take anybody rather than nobody or a series of supply teachers.

(Community, Middle 9-13, Coed, Eastern)

- C.2 When faced with a candidate who 'will do', but is not outstanding, what would you do? You'd say I'll appoint because I need a teacher. Otherwise the very least I would have to do is to re-advertise, may be get a worse trawl, especially at this time of the year because you are right up against the fence now with the notice dates. Also there is a very strong move from the Authority not to give temporary appointments because of the legislation. That causes problems, because you're then into disciplinary proceedings or dropping a strong hint without falling foul of the law. Another issue, of course, is parents whose expectations are that you will have a permanent teacher in front of that class.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, West Midlands)

Fixed-Term Contracts

Postpone Appointment

- C.3 At that time we were looking to appoint two English teachers. We received about a dozen applications and interviewed five, but we felt we could only make one appointment from that calibre of field. For the other post, the decision was to appoint a temporary teacher for a year and re-advertise this year.

(Foundation, Comp 11-18, Coed, East Midlands)

- C.4 We advertised three posts - for science, technology and RE - nationally. The RE post had been advertised three times. We then made a permanent appointment from a very thin short-list. A very, very thin short-list. But we weren't able to find suitable candidates for the other two posts. Temporary appointments were then made at the end of the summer term.

(VA, Comp 11-16, Coed, North West)

Safeguard

- C.5 I originally appointed a teacher on a temporary contract. At the interview I liked her presentation and she was cheery and smiley, but her references from the college said she could be lazy. I told her straight and she promised she would work very hard. She has done and I have made her contract permanent. But I don't like doing that. I just wasn't sure and I wouldn't have appointed any of the others.

(Foundation, Comp 11-16, West Midlands)

- C.6 The science vacancies came very late, two of the three more or less on the last date possible. No NQTs applied because they'd all got jobs. We did have one

person who had done a term's supply for us to cover for a long-term sickness. But we had some concerns about him. He was a very good classroom teacher but had weaknesses in his record keeping and in some of his written expression. We put him on a short-term contract to see if with support from the school we could help him develop those skills to become a competent teacher. In fact, we have been able to do that and after about half a term we've put him on a permanent contract.

(Community, Sec Modern 11-18, Girls', South East)

- C.7 We had two applicants for the English and Theatre Studies post, neither of whom we felt was particularly suitable. We interviewed one and offered her a temporary contract. This is not something we normally do but there were particular reasons to do with her employment history and a period of ill-health that she had had. She proved to be fine and has been made permanent.

(Community, Grammar, Girls', South East)

- C.8 I had doubts because of the references and I offered it to her on a one-year contract which she accepted. As the year wore on I became more and more grateful that I'd listened to that small voice. I think that is an issue – people who are not up to scratch are gaining employment when they wouldn't if there were reasonable choice.

(Community, Middle 9-13, Coed, Eastern)

- C.9 This Welsh teacher, there was nobody else. Because she wasn't selected from a group and we were not that confident she was going to last we said we'll give you a one-year's contract and see how it goes. She resigned at the end of April.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Wales)

Flexibility

- C.10 My NQTs are all on one-year contracts, so that I can see that they live up to my expectations. Also because of mobility in the area, I can never be certain of my numbers. I have to have flexibility there instead of having to do redundancies.

(Community, Primary 3-11, West Midlands)

- C.11 I never have a policy of appointing people temporarily to try them out. Some people do, I don't agree with that. I don't think you are going to get the right kind of person - they won't look at that sort of advert first. We did make a temporary appointment to drama to cover maternity leave and that has now become permanent because the person who was on maternity has opted to go part-time.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, North West)

Part-Time Appointments

Filling In

- C.12 The school found it impossible to fill the other maths post. We have been coping by the temporary employment of a recently retired science teacher from the school and the local Baptist minister who job share. We advertised the post again this year along with another post. They have already been advertised twice and received only two applications, neither of which was regarded as suitable even

for interview and consequently the school will be filling the post with teachers from supply agencies.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Outer London)

Job Share

- C.13 A student who had seen my advert rang through. She had completed her training a year ago and had a baby so she was looking to work part-time. She said that if anybody else came forward for a job share she would be interested in the other half. Then one of my regular supply teachers said she was only interested in doing part time. So they share Year 2 and have taken the SATs between them.

(Community, Infant 3-7, South East)

Sharing Load

- C.14 Maths has been giving us extreme difficulty. We haven't been able to make an appointment since last summer. It has meant that our maths department have been over-contracted this year. We found a retired head of maths from a nearby school, who had a problem and we had to approach him to leave. We replaced him part-time with another retired maths teacher and the rest we have had to cut up and over-burden other teachers.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Merseyside)

Retention

- C.15 What has changed dramatically is the number of full-time teachers falling as a proportion of the whole staff. We now have 23 part-timers. Teachers are getting fed up and we don't want to lose them so we let them go on a contract of three or four days a week for a couple of years while their children grow up. In my time here over ten years the number of part-timers has doubled. That is basically because we want to keep them, but it presents all sorts of problems over things like continuity of form teachers, shared classes and it makes a significant difference.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

Specific Tasks

- C.16 I do temporary part-time contracts for specific reasons. I have a contract, for example, for a special educational needs teacher to look at a group of year 9 children who weren't disaffected, but they were of low ability and low maturity and it came out as disaffection.

(Foundation, Comp 11-16, Coed West Midlands)

Supply Staff

- C.17 The supply issue seems to keep everything ticking over, but at a level that is less than desirable.

(VA, Primary 4-11, North West)

- C.18 It is the recruitment issue that is the problem for us. In maths, science and technology we are having severe recruitment problems and I think for the first time ever we have a problem with drama. In the last two or three years, the supply of good agency teachers has been such that it hasn't really impacted on

the curriculum. The worry that we now have is that some students may find themselves with four, five or even six supply teachers.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Inner London)

C.19 Some of it is day-to-day cover for sickness. There is also covering vacancies. I am out at the moment trying to recruit and you can't recruit at all. We probably have four or five long term supply every year and we try to hold them for a year, but since Christmas it has collapsed with the agency. We spend well over £150,000 a year on cover.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Inner London)

Availability

C.20 The biggest growth industry in London is supply teachers. Four or five years ago there was just one agency; now there are loads of them. We just go round them. We have already put in our request for an English teacher, a science teacher, and I hope I get them. I will do anything I can within the law to get the best teachers for this school and if that means playing one against the other I will. I shouldn't have to do that. I am actually a reasonable boss and a reasonable teacher, but I have become a wheeler dealer; it is terrible but that is what I am.

(VA, Comp 11-18, Girls', Inner London)

C.21 Since the development of the early implementation post (government money to reduce infants' classes below 30), the situation has got worse. Any supply staff that are good have been taken into schools on that basis. I am happy to take teachers outside their specialism just to get somebody in front of the class. If they say to me I'll have a go and rm desperate then I'll take them.

(Community, Primary 3-11, South East)

C.22 It is difficult to get supply cover, but even more so when the school is like this is, for example with my Year 6, knowing how difficult all the year 6 classes are. If they know it is for a year 6 class they won't take it. I am very unhappy with supply. I am sitting on the edge of my seat now, thinking what's going on over there because it is rare that a supply teacher will be able to cope with our children.

(Community, Junior 7-11, Yorks & Humb)

C.23 I'll tell you what I'd really like and that is our own appointed supply people who could slot in and take anything and have an annual contract. But I can't afford to do that obviously.

(Foundation, Comp 12-16, Coed, Eastern)

Quality

C.24 In theory, they're vetted by the agency and LEA before they go on the supply list in terms of their qualifications, police clearance and quality. We've had both very good and absolutely dreadful supply teachers. A number of times I would have been better putting one of our classroom assistants in charge of a class. It's been worse with the agency. With the local authority word gets round from school to school that somebody is either good or not very good. With the agency

we've always got the option. I have used it in the last couple of months saying I want this person removed from my school, I'm not prepared to keep them for the whole day, let alone the week we wanted them for.

(Community, Primary 3-11, North East)

C.25 The post for second in charge of technology was advertised for September. The person gave in his notice at the very last minute saying he could not afford the high cost of housing and he wanted some sixth-form teaching. We advertised extensively and didn't have a response. My preferred option was to drop technology and do some extra maths and English. I was persuaded against my better judgement by the senior management team. A supply teacher was appointed who proved absolutely dreadful - couldn't control classes, just quite awful.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, South East)

C.26 It is very variable. Which is why I tend to concentrate on using just one agency with whom I have established a relationship. To become a cherished customer because my needs are ongoing. Today if you take casual and non-casual supply I have got six. I would say at best we are talking about one in four being any good. I have had some very dangerous people.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Outer London)

Retirees

C.27 We've got a few regulars who are absolute gold. They're often retired and often retired from here. They are people who took the last exit to Brooklyn and on whom we can rely. You are talking about people who can come in, handle a class, but who may not have a class in their subject. You just know that they're jolly good at coming in.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, West Midlands)

C.28 It got to the stage where I got a lady geared up. I interviewed her here on a Sunday morning to start a week later. She then came to see me a day or two before she was due to start and said sorry but she had a major problem with her eye and was going into hospital for an operation. I had to get a friend of the school to come out of retirement to take that class.

(Community, Primary 4-11, Eastern)

Overseas Recruitment

C.29 Nearly all the agency staff come from abroad - Australia, Canada, South Africa. At the beginning of this year the agencies have been phoning to say that they cannot get long-term supply either. I went to three or four agencies and they were all having the same difficulties. They just could not get them because of the millennium celebrations.

(Community, Primary 3-11, Inner London)

C.30 They all went back for the millennium. Also it is the cost of living here, it's phenomenal. I think the Sydney Olympics has had an impact as well. There are also big recruitment drives in Canada. It has certainly got critically worse since

Christmas. I think it is going to be one heck of a bumpy ride. I do envisage where we will not teach things and send kids home.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Outer London)

C.31 Overseas teachers are absolutely crucial to us. If we took out the Australians I don't know what we would do. I really don't. When I am planning the curriculum, I say to myself okay that's Australians. I have got this bit of a plug I can call in. When I say Australians, I also mean New Zealanders and South Africans.

(VA, Comp 11-18, Girls', Inner London)

C.32 Overseas recruitment really took off about four years ago - it ties in with the staffing problem. We are very keen on Australians and New Zealanders, they tend to be very good quality teachers. The idea of having a good New Zealander for a year can be great for the school. It is a stop-gap, but it is effective.

(Foundation, Comp 11-16, Coed, Eastern)

C.33 If I had to choose between an Australian supply or a British supply I would go for the Australian. They have the nous to get up and go. They have got an independence of spirit, they are registered in their own right and have got their own jobs. If the British supply were any good they would have been snapped up years ago.

(VA, Comp 11-18, Girls', Inner London)

C.34 You can't employ the Australians as teachers, only as instructors. The nature of that is that you can only employ them one year at a time.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Eastern)

C.35 The other two science posts we wanted to put on permanent contracts, but we were not able to because they were from South Africa. They are two very, very good teachers, South African trained, well trained. We wanted to treat them as NQTs, but the DfEE refused to accept their qualifications. So we could only employ them as instructors and we had huge problems with their visas – they were on student visas.

(Community, Sec Modern 11-18, Girls', South East)

C.36 The supply situation is variable because you have got people from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and they have no idea of the English educational system, and they have no idea of what GCSEs are, let alone the national curriculum. Some want long term employment here and want to take on the job and learn.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Outer London)

C.37 The new food technology teacher we have just appointed, her qualification, indeed her first ten years of teaching were in Sierra Leone. A business studies teacher has an Indian qualification and we have a teacher from the West Indies and we are talking about another in relation to the maths vacancy. In my diary I have the e-mail address of a man who is acting as an agent for teachers displaced

from their posts in South Africa who are looking for posts overseas, particularly in this country.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Outer London)

C.38 We have a German national, but she has lived here for twenty odd years. I've had applications from French nationals, but they were not appointable. They had no experience of the English system and couldn't offer German.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Eastern)

Using Other School Staff

C.39 We have got one person who is really a technician, and she fits that well. She teaches technology. She's not qualified, but she's very effective. It is interesting that we never pick up behavioural problems from her classes.

(Community, Middle 9-13, Coed, Eastern)

C.40 We are having to do more what I call fixing. I don't know if you are aware that schools have a range of non-teachers working in them which are basically funded under Section II. What we are finding, and although some of this is dodgy and we have to be careful what we say, we are using these people to actually teach because they are often highly qualified and graduates who will turn their hand to the subject.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

D. TAILORING THE TIMETABLE

Modifications to the Curriculum

Modern Foreign Languages

- D.1 In modern languages we have decided to take advantage of the disapplication regulations and are therefore disapplying a number of youngsters from languages at key stage 4. It is for their benefit. I know it is so because of the nature of the youngsters, and we were a school that had gone to 100 per cent languages at key stage 4. Although we are withdrawing from the position for the right reasons, it is nevertheless with a sigh of relief that it releases us from a vacancy we cannot seem to fill.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Outer London)

- D.2 The way we covered the lack of a modern languages teacher was to call the parents in. We said to them we didn't comply with the national curriculum, especially in year 9, because we know that some of the children wouldn't want to go on to do modern languages. So we were giving them extra skills lessons, maths and English to prepare them for the SATS. Lower down the school one of the support teachers has taken charge of them - and that is an unqualified teacher. It hasn't been easy, but we have made the best of a bad job.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Wales)

- D.3 What we have had to do is to make some modifications in modern languages with the bottom ability groups. If we gave the same amount of MFL as we give the top groups at key stage 3, which philosophically we would prefer to do in some ways, we would need an extra day a week of MFL teaching. Not being able to fill the part-time post we have actually modified the curriculum.

(Community, Sec Mod 11-18, Girls', South East)

Technology

- D.4 I was in a catch-22 situation at that time, because I wasn't prepared to invest in technology unless I had the staff to deliver the necessary curriculum. Since I arrived I have been trying to get a decent technology department together. I'm hoping that from September I have achieved this and one of the ways round it is not to make technology compulsory. This is against statutory requirements, but I am hoping that by having better teaching at key stage 3 it will boost the option choices at key stage 4 and hopefully get better examination results as well.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, South East)

- D.5 We are going to disengage food technology because we won't have a food technologist. We are offering points but it is not a money issue. Three or four points will not make a difference.

(Community, Sec Modern 11-18, Girls', South East)

- D.6 I am happy to see technology go because I haven't got the teachers to close the gap. If Ofsted want to come in and slap me on the wrist, fine. I think teachers have been covering up the holes too much, they care too much about the kids, and I think we have to let people know what is going on.

(VA, Comp 11-18, Girls', Inner London)

ICT

- D.7 I have a far greater demand to do IT in the school than I can provide for even though my deputy head is teaching a group and that is not his specialist area at all. So because I don't have enough IT teachers I have had to cut down the number of groups who actually do IT. I have to say there was a real shortage when I looked for an IT teacher. I wanted a head of IT but just didn't get the applicants.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, North West)

Music

- D.8 We have just made a decision not to offer GCSE Music next year. This will be the first year we have not offered it in five or six. It is because we have a problem vacancy in music and no immediate prospect of filling it. We are already working on the man from the agency who seems promising to see if he is interested in something in the longer term.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Outer London)

- D.9 We are finding it difficult to teach music. Some teachers are doing things they don't particularly want to in music. Everyone does their bit, but there is no one who is positively pushing it. Music has therefore been withering on the vine and, of course, people now have the perfect excuse with the curriculum being overcrowded.

(Community, Junior 7-11, South West)

Welsh

- D.10 We have got the expansion of compulsory Welsh. I have got the prospect of losing one of my most effective members of staff and nobody out there to recruit. The school round the corner lost a Welsh teacher last week. They are now interviewing my member of staff right on the deadline and I'll be surprised if she doesn't get it. I have gone to the Chair of Governors and said I might have to break the law. The alternative is even worse. This woman who came in as a mature entrant and was unsuitable for teaching - we have got classes that have been destroyed by contact with her. I think the Welsh Assembly has totally underestimated how many teachers of Welsh they need.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Wales)

Mathematics

- D.11 I am delivering the curriculum but in some areas like maths I am barely doing it, because maths is not being taught at a level I would consider satisfactory within the school. I have got two or three weak teachers who occupy an awful lot of our time and it is not a strong enough department. I think one person will be going shortly through capability procedures, but I am fairly pessimistic about being able to find a good replacement. They are just not there; good mathematicians are a very, very scarce commodity.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Wales)

Increasing Class or Group Sizes

D.12 Tutor group sizes have gone from 25 to 28 at key stage 3, even in technology where they say there should be a maximum of 20 for safety. It is all hidden. You would never talk about any of that simply because if it got into the local newspapers it would be seen as quite damning. So you put on this cheery glow and say, 'As an 11-18 school we attract good academic graduates who are gagging to come here.' Meanwhile my deputy is sat behind me thinking what is he talking about? The man's mad!

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, South East)

D.13 We'd like to have smaller classes but there aren't the people to teach them. So you stick to the number of classes and bump the size up a bit. In turn this puts pressure on the teachers you've got which may well mean more turnover, but that's a longer term problem. The shorter term one is: David Blunkett says use the £50,000 to extend the number of teachers at key stage 3 or whatever. What teachers at key stage 3, where are they, because they are not banging on our door? Then you've got the financial business for next year when you might not get the money. It hurts; they are not there, they are just not there.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, South East)

D.14 I lost the person naturally earlier than expected. There was a big knock-on effect. It meant that I had to bring three year 6 classes down to two. It was a big decision to make because I either had to teach them to keep things going and commit myself for the rest of that term or I had to write home to parents and explain what I was doing. There was no way I could get anybody else to fill that gap.

(Community, Primary 7-11, Eastern)

D.15 I have successfully avoided restricting the number of choices at key stage 4, but I have had to increase class sizes in some subject areas like English and Humanities in key stage 3.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Outer London)

D.16 We've had to join years 12 and 13 in areas like technology; we have just not had the staff to cover it. In science we have stuck with the specialist courses, but we have reintroduced the separate sciences in years 10 and 11 because it has just been an impossible load on some science teachers teaching at that level. They are young and have been promoted quickly because that is what we have to do to keep them, and sometimes they don't have the depth of professional ability to take forward students who are often brighter than they are at A-level.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, South East)

Reducing Non-Contact Time

D.17 In the debate there are different views about Whether we should keep contact ratios steady and allow class sizes to go up or whether we should go the other way. We have tended more to keep contact ratios steady and allow the class sizes to grow.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

D.18 We couldn't make an appointment in January for English. Eleven people had to give up some of their non-contact time. I had one English teacher who did some history as a second subject so I put him to all English. I had another teacher who is RE/English...it just went on like this. We had one or two parents wanting to know why their son or daughter had that teacher at a crucial time for their GCSEs - it's not fair. They could see it, but they couldn't see it.

(VA, Comp 11-16, Coed, West Midlands)

D.19 Not being able to fill the technology vacancy we have substantially reduced the non-contact time. It is iniquitous. It has actually caused us some difficulty with moderation. The staff are stressed; they are tired. Development has gone by the board. They are just hanging in there to deliver technology. Not having this person has made an appreciable difference.

(Foundation, Comp 11-16, Coed, West Midlands)

D.20 We currently have mainstream teachers teaching 27 out of 30 periods at the top end.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

D.21 The whole project is at risk if we cannot appoint high quality people, who can hit the ground running, with support but not masses of support. With reductions in the school's budget, class sizes are larger and there is less and less non-contact time. For example, as a school with 1000 pupils we have five fewer teachers than in September 1995. You can translate that into non-contact time.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, South East)

Increased Teaching Outside Subject

D.22 It's inevitable. We have got technologists who teach art. In history and geography we are fine, though even there we will have a bit round the edges where PE staff can teach a bit of maths, a bit of geography. They tend to be the subjects PE staff will go for, so it is a matter of how much you can drag out of them. Is eight periods out of 22 teaching geography reasonable? The maths teachers, when we appointed the three, we had to say 'you'll be teaching a bit of science, is that all right?' just hoping that they did not say 'on your bike'. The other area is English/Drama/Theatre Studies/Media Studies where you can get an English teacher sometimes. It is not the most difficult subject, but to get drama and those other specialisms outside English is very difficult.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, South East)

D.23 We have got a SEN teacher who teaches textiles and we have got a textiles teacher who has been teaching a bit of food. So the idea might be to remove the SEN teacher to teach her textiles timetable and get the textiles teacher to do fully food. There could be that kind of jumbling if you have to run food, but we honestly might have to say we don't have a food specialist and we can't do it. That is a decision that has to be made.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Outer London)

Senior Staff

D.24 So I have senior staff teaching RE. I found myself as a scientist having to teach childcare a couple of years ago to fit in with the shortage. We are having to make all kinds of adjustments. Though We do try and look for, where we have not been able to advertise for people with flexibility, senior staff to take those kinds of responsibility on.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

D.25 We are an NGfL school with a completely new network arriving in September. I called three people for interview for the ICT post. One didn't arrive because the day before they had been appointed to another school. So we had two people, one of whom was unappointable. The other was young and with considerable potential and coincidentally was a trained business studies teacher. I have appointed him to take responsibility for business studies at key stage 3 and IT, and during the course of the year we will decide whether he has the ability to take on ICT full-blown. That decision loops back to another problem. Our only trained business studies teacher has been on long term sickness – he has only taught four or five weeks in the past 12 months. For a term I could find no one to replace him. So I as a geographer, having some knowledge of business studies at GCSE but none at A-level, had to take over some of the teaching.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, South East)

D.26 We couldn't get a D&T specialist because they are so thin on the ground. I have no knowledge of it whatsoever and I am actually having to pick it up as I go along in terms of books etc. The government is also trying to introduce foreign languages. The local vicar comes in on a Wednesday dinnertime to do year 6 for us.

(VC, Primary 4-11, North West)

E. REGION, LOCATION AND SCHOOL

Region

E.1 In the last three years it has become increasingly difficult to fill vacancies because there are so few applicants. The reason we had two NQTS last year - which wouldn't have been my preference because of the rigorous induction programme and non-contact time required - was because we couldn't recruit anybody else. I only found one of them through a friend of a friend and I approached him personally. I invited him round to see the school and said, 'what do you think?' and he liked it. He did actually have a formal interview, but it was luck we got him. It helped the gender balance which is very poor, three males out of a staff of 17. Once you have one or two men it is an incentive for others to come to the school. I want to address the gender issue in making appointments, but I am constrained by the low number of applicants. In this part of London the difficulties are compounded by the cost of housing. No teacher can afford to buy even a flat on the salary. We are not on any tube line so it is not easy to get to the school - it is either bus or car. Nobody can live near because it is so expensive. The LEA has had a bad press recently - that hasn't helped; also it doesn't have a good reputation for supporting teachers in schools.

(Community, Primary 3-11, Inner London)

E.2 When we advertised people would see the area we were in and we can't even get them to come and visit us. When people see the name, it is not an area where you actually look for jobs in. For the deputy-head's position we got one applicant after advertising twice.

(VA, Primary 3-11, Outer London)

E.3 In all probability if I have a full or part-time job available I would expect at least 80 applicants. I think where we are getting a problem in all authorities is that we aren't getting so many applications for deputy or headships. That is where the problem lays - because of the responsibility, people don't want that.

(Community, Primary 3-11, Wales)

E.4 A friend in a junior school was saying to me that he has had more than two hundred applications for one job and that seems to be par for the course round here. The area seems to generate a lot of teachers.

(Community, Primary 4-11, Wales)

E.5 I think the pattern is that being an inner-city school local teachers know how difficult it is and they put the word round, don't go to that place. It's usually teachers who haven't been in the school for many years and don't know how much it has improved, but there is a mythology which exists in the city so we tend to advertise in a neighbouring city to get away from this. We go out of the authority, but not nationally.

(Community, Primary 3-11, North East)

E.6 We have had a very stable staff here, but because in recent years we have been expanding we've needed to make new appointments. In the last two years I have

appointed three new staff and I don't think we had more than five applications for any of them. This year in order to reduce class sizes the government has provided extra money for a teacher for a year. The school was unable to make an appointment because the quality of the applicants was not good enough. As a result I decided to put in two supply teachers on a job share basis. They were employed for a term and then in the spring term a teacher who had not had her contract renewed in her previous school because of competency issues was appointed. She was known to us and we decided to take the risk. It illustrates the recruitment issue. We had to resort to this type of appointment even though the money was available.

(Community, Primary 3-11, South East)

- E.7 Maths is very difficult. Physics is very difficult. Welsh is impossible, it is utterly ridiculous. Technology is quite difficult and modern languages are quite difficult. There are a lot of French nationals, but not many British. It is important that you don't get an over-burdening of French nationals, because you are then seen as a foreign poacher rather than something British people should and do do.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Wales)

Location

Attractiveness of the Area

- E.8 We have a nice catchment area. We do have our difficulties, but we are perceived as a more attractive school. I don't think, however, it is as easy as it was to recruit staff and I am thinking particularly about NQTs.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Yorks & Humb)

- E.9 I think there are problems in the west end of the city. It has had lots of negative publicity with social problems in the area. Falling rolls are making jobs uncertain and that may be is part of the problem. Another is that a lot of teachers are reluctant to come and work in this school in an area where they don't feel safe. There are also other complications to the job, as they see it, like a large proportion of children for whom English is not the home language, and a very high pupil turnover in terms of children coming in and out of the school throughout the year.

(Community, Primary 3-11, North East)

House Prices

- E.10 I think one of the difficulties is that it so expensive to come and live in Oxfordshire because of the house prices. It is getting more difficult to recruit - the cost of living, the fact that fewer people are going into teaching or seem to be. I think if a person is settled in another part of the country they are not prepared to move for promotion.

(VC, Primary 4-11, South East)

- E.11 Nobody moves into the area from outside beyond main scale. We can attract NQTs because they're near London and they haven't started thinking about buying a house. But as soon as we're into promoted posts there is a problem. I

had only two enquiries for a deputy head of English a month ago in spite of our excellent exam results and the really positive Ofsted report.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Eastern)

E.12 I don't think it is house prices, none of us can work it out what it is because the town is expanding. It is not particularly expensive around here. I would say it is a generalised teacher shortage. From speaking to people in other schools everybody is experiencing difficulties.

(Community, Comp 13-18, Girls', East Midlands)

Remoteness

E.13 We had to advertise the post of head of music twice before we could attract anyone suitable. Ultimately the person we got, I think the governors settled for, because it was so difficult to appoint. I don't know whether Cornwall is just too far away although I would think it's a rather more attractive proposition than an awful lot of other places.

(Community, Comp 11-18, South West)

E.14 Unless people come to the village specifically we can't get the staff. The young people simply don't want the jobs. They go to the big city. We advertised, we have faxed every school, faxed every college, we were paying money out for no response at all.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Wales)

School

Standards

E.15 What I am looking for above all else in people I appoint here is academic ability. I have to start with that: a good teacher fine, but they have got to teach Oxbridge pupils and therefore one is looking for someone with perhaps a good A-level as well as a good degree. You are going to have to ask these people to teach the very best student, and I am not prepared to take that sort of risk. We have got special problems here and are in a special position.

(VA, Grammar, Boys' (Girls in Sixth), South East)

E.16 I'm interested recruiting brains into this school. This is a grammar school and my first requirement is that I have somebody who has secure knowledge of an academic discipline, a genuine interest in it and a capacity to put that across to other people. We've taken several in recent years who don't have a PGCE and we've put them through different routes in order for them to get it, simply because they've had that subject expertise.

(Foundation, Grammar, Boys', Eastern)

E.17 I can't afford to employ someone to teach something they are not going to be confident of to whatever level the appointment is, and normally that is to A-level. If someone applied to teach, say, French to A-level and that is all they'd got, I probably wouldn't even take up references. I am not so desperate that I've got to appoint somebody who isn't really qualified for the job. But in the good old days we could expect a 2.1 and an A in the A-level to be taught, but

nowadays forget it. More likely it is third-class honours. For example, my maths teacher has a degree in engineering.

(Community, Grammar, Boys', South West)

Lack of Sixth Form

E.18 We struggle. We don't have a sixth form and we are twenty miles from the city. Other heads in the area don't seem to have a problem so for us it could be that those features come into play. We're going to have to work very hard to demonstrate to new entrants what we can offer in terms of staff development possibilities and that we are not as remote as all that. A hard, but honest sell. We've suddenly got three vacancies. It will be very interesting.

(Foundation, Comp 12-18, Coed, Eastern)

Special Measures

E.19 I think we would have had problems anyway in maths, but I am sure some teachers wouldn't touch the school with a barge pole because it was in special measures.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Merseyside)

E.20 A lot of schools in this neck of the woods have been in special measures, and a lot of us have had problems in recruiting. On the odd occasion, it has had an impact the other way in that people will say 'it is a challenge, let me have a go at this'. But certainly as a place we have had a lot of problems. If you know someone who has been at a school in special measures you will know how much extra the work is. Yes that has had an impact on staffing.

(Community, Primary 7-11, Eastern)

E.21 The school is in intensive support with the local authority. We do feel very vulnerable. The attainment in the school is low; also it is an inner city school. These are counter-productive in terms of attracting staff and raising standards. When we send out an applicant's enquiry pack, we do include performance, there's no point in hiding it. I think it puts people off. If they were to work here they know they would be under very close scrutiny in terms of achievement.

(VC, Primary 3-11, South East)

Denomination

E.22 Being a Catholic school, I think generally we are regarded as a good school. Catholics tend to be attracted to teach here. But there are a number of occasions where non-Catholics are invited for interview and it is the non-Catholic who gets the job.

(VA, Comp 11-16, Coed, West Midlands)

E.23 We've also had another problem because we are a Catholic school. The head and deputy have to be Catholics. Luckily the one person who applied for the deputy's post was exceptionally good and we appointed her. We didn't have any choice, but we were lucky in that appointment.

(VA, Primary 3-11, Outer London)

E.24 The whole area is having problems with recruitment. But our status as a Catholic school tends I think to put people off. I tell them not to worry. They need to be able to support the ethos of the school and it is not just a Catholic ethos.

(VA, Primary 3-11, West Midlands)

F. SUBJECTS AND POSTS

Subject

Mathematics

- F.1 For the maths teacher we had two applicants. If there had been a bigger field they wouldn't have been short-listed. It was forced on us and we interviewed them, but at interview they were even more appalling than they were on the application forms.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Outer London)

- F.2 Maths has been absolute murder. Incredibly difficult. You put in an advert and you may get one or two, so you re-advertise, and you get the one or two you had and a couple more. For this particular post, I got a primary school teacher who had been redeployed up north, a middle school teacher and a couple of others mainly older people who had done engineering coming into the profession. I didn't appoint again. So I had to readvertise.

(Foundation, Comp 11-16, Coed, West Midlands)

Science

- F.3 We particularly needed someone who was capable of teaching A-level chemistry. Our experience has been that whenever you advertise a science post you get lots of biologists, but very few people who are capable of doing physics and chemistry up to a high level. So we really needed a chemist, because the person we lost was a chemist, but at the end of the day we appointed a biologist.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Girls', South East)

- F.4 We have got a physics teacher here and if she goes we are in trouble big time. Two other schools have been trying to get physicists and can't get one. I have already told my head of science that he himself is to do A-level physics so that when the crunch comes and she goes, and we can't recruit, we'll have some sort of back-up.

(VA, Comp 11-18, Girls', Inner London)

Modern Foreign Languages

- F.5 MFL has been a vacancy for more than a year. We advertised twice at the end of the last academic year to get somebody for this academic year, but with no success. I think we had one applicant who wasn't suitable. We're fortunate that we've got a supply teacher, a gifted linguist, but he doesn't want permanent full-time work. We'd be very lucky to keep him for a second year, so we've had two more goes at advertising.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, North East)

- F.6 Two years ago I would have said modern foreign languages was a difficult area, but now I would say it is practically impossible.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

- F.7 French started off with what looked like a good field and we had five people that we were going to interview. But by the interview we had one left and we appointed her.

(Community, Comp 13-18, Girls', East Midlands)

Design and Technology

- F.8 We had no applicants for the D&T post last year and in the end it was filled because our deputy-head's daughter knew somebody who only had a temporary job for one term and so we managed to get hold of him. We have advertised two posts this year, nationally and locally. We had one applicant both times – the same one. That was for food technology and she was a teacher four years off retirement, but we have appointed her. For the other one we re now having to upgrade the post and we are looking for a senior member of staff for D&T.

(Community, Comp 13-18, Girls', East Midlands)

- F.9 The design and technology post has gone to national advertising, local advertising, and various agencies. We want to increase the number of D&T teachers from 1.6 to 2. That doesn't seem a lot, but it means going from a part-timer to a full-timer. We have had two applicants - one of whom is a mature gentleman who left teaching to set up his own business which has fallen flat and he wants to get back into the profession. So, although he is qualified, you have to ask if he is up-to-date. The obvious answer is 'No'.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, South East)

ICT

- F.10 Because of the short first half of this term and because the gentlemen took a job at the start of this term, we've had no time to advertise properly so I've been through the NQT database and asked for an ICT. I got a copy of that faxed back within an hour or two and I got on the telephone. Out of that whole ICT database I got one qualified person who is coming round to look at the school next week, but they could well be employed by the time they come next Thursday.

(Foundation, Primary 4-11, Eastern)

- F.11 We have had the head of ICT advertised and nobody applied for a whole year. The internal candidate who applied didn't get it. So we ended up creating two posts. We gave part of it to the internal candidate and wanted to recruit a young teacher because we couldn't afford to pay that much. We then got someone to be a kind of network manager for the school. So we solved it by breaking the post up and getting an admin person to support them. But we still need an ICT teacher and we haven't got a hope in hell on that.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Outer London)

English

- F.12 We've appointed an English teacher this week. There were ten expressions of interest, nine applications of whom we short-listed five with some reserves, but we managed to get only three candidates to interview because the others had picked up jobs. We were just about able to make an appointment.

(Community, Comp 11-19, Coed, East Midlands)

F.13 We seem to have a problem getting English teachers. We have a problem getting English, maths and science teachers, but English particularly, which seems odd. We have a good reputation in the area and have been identified as an improving school. Without that we would have been struggling because even with it we find it quite hard. We had an English vacancy due to early retirement on health grounds and had five candidates to interview. We had allowed about five days between the invitation and the interview (with two of those days being a weekend and one a bank holiday). But by the day of the interview we had only one candidate because all the others had got jobs in the meantime.

(Community, Sec Mod 11-18, Girls', South East)

Drama

F.14 We've recently advertised for a full-time drama teacher and received one application. It's the number of applications coming through. Two or three years ago we would have had double figures.

(Foundation, Comp 11-18, Coed, East Midlands)

English as Another Language

F.15 The EAL was impossible. I actually got the applicant from another short-list and rang her. We had six applications, none of whom was qualified. We had advertised an history-RE post immediately previously and I remembered there was an applicant who we did not short-list because she was only history. Her application however said she was well versed in English as a foreign language as well. So I went through those 28 applications and fished out those that might be interested. I think we interviewed two in the end.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

Music

F.16 The music post was vacant from September last year and in the end we had only one application for that. We advertised nationally and through the bulletin and I think we only got five or six applications. For interview we ended up with just two because the people that had responded had been offered jobs before our interview date. Only one of those came.

(Foundation, Primary 4-11, Eastern)

RE

F.17 RE has always been a big problem. For the past three or four years we have had to persuade. and it has been to persuade, several colleagues to come back and cover. In some cases we have tried to advertise and been unsuccessful and in others we have not advertised because we thought we would not get anybody.

(Community Comp 11-18, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

F.18 My understanding from the Diocesan Schools commission is that the number of specialist RE teachers is not high. The number being trained is not high and you know they are posts difficult to fill.

(VA, Comp 11-16, Coed, North West)

No Problem

- F.19 There are plenty of art teachers, you can't stop them. History is not so bad. There are subjects where there are plenty of people who want to work in schools. But as soon as you come to science, maths and technology - out of season - then you have major headaches finding enough people out of whom you can find four or five worth looking at.
(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Wales)
- F.20 History has no problems, loads of applicants all of good calibre. In history, alongside PE and art, there's loads of people around.
(VA, Comp 11-18, Coed, Outer London)
- F.21 We had absolutely no difficulty in making the PE appointment. There are far more people looking for PE jobs than there are jobs available.
(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, North West)
- F.22 Some subjects that may be difficult elsewhere don't seem to be a problem round here. We can always get plenty of D&T applicants. A lot of them have been in the mining and engineering industry and have retrained later in life.
(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

Post

Deputy Headship

- F.23 Whether perhaps really dedicated people don't want deputy headships, because it is a tough position in school now. They just don't want the extra responsibility. Sometimes it is not the right people that put in for the job, but someone who just fancies a bit more money.
(Community, Nursery-Infant 3-7, Outer London)
- F.24 On our first trawl we were unsuccessful. The advertisement attracted about half a dozen applicants from whom we chose four, one of whom dropped out. At the interview there was one we thought outstanding, but who turned us down. We did not think the other two were up to it so we started the process again. This time we attracted nine applicants. Again we made a short-list of four, interviewed early on and made a successful appointment. I am happy with the progress he is making, but I was not impressed with the overall quality of those people I interviewed. In at least two of the cases we would not have appointed, and the third only maybe. The difficulty of appointing a deputy in this school says something about the national situation.
(Community, Junior 7-11, South West)

Co-ordinators

- F.25 It is getting more difficult to appoint people to enhanced posts. Just looking at the response to the three posts which were advertised last Friday. I have sent out about 18 sets of forms for the classroom teacher. I have had no one inquire about the assessment post and I have had three for the deputy-headship so far which is interesting.
(Community, Infant 4-7, East Midlands)

F.26 We went through a very bad patch. I lost my SENCO and at the same time my key stage 2 co-ordinator to promotion. Inevitably in a small school these people have several responsibilities so my SENCO was also my science co-ordinator. I had three and a half applications for the SENCO post - half because it was so poorly written I could barely read it. I've never seen such a poor application and the others were not strong enough for special needs. So I was SENCO for a second term. Science you can let slip, SENCO you can't.

(Community, Primary 4-11, Eastern)

F.27 In the past few years three very significant roles in this school have come up - Head of Humanities, Head of English, Head of Modern Languages. In each case there has been only one viable applicant. We have not been able to call in a field at all.

(Foundation, Comp 12-16, Coed, Eastern)

F.28 The government has a policy whereby the head may in certain circumstances leave. That has been massively taken up round here.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

G.IMPACT ON STAFF

Headteachers and Senior Staff

Stress

- G.1 Stress levels risen tremendously. I feel more stressed out. It does affect stress levels being in school when you are ill and if you are away feeling guilty. Feeling guilty about going on courses and putting work on to colleagues.
(VA, Primary 4-11, West Midlands)

Time

- G.2 Recruiting good teachers is taking up a lot of my time at the moment - you can imagine with four vacancies. Having to think about where to go, screening them, phoning up for references and interviewing them. It's taking up a lot of time and I've got a million other things to do this term.
(Community, Nursery-Infant 3-7, Outer London)

Quality

- G.3 The biggest tension is the quality of teachers because it affects everything you do in the school. I am not a negative person, but I find that the hardest.
(Community, Primary 3-11, Outer London)
- G.4 If you are appointing staff who are not of the calibre you would like then you have a series of knock-on problems. They will need more support. If they are not performing as you would want them to then that is unsettling to the class and it gives the next teacher a more difficult task. Senior staff are also pulled away from their more strategic roles and are not there to give the support that I need at the moment.
(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, South East)

Extra Duties

- G.5 I was unable to get anyone of adequate quality for the early years/home-school liaison post so I decided to take it on for two terms and re-advertise for September. My day now starts at six in the morning doing the preparation for the class, because at the other side of teaching I have to do everything else. Now I feel because of the sort of person I am that I have to teach as well as, if not better, than my colleagues. So I have been saving money, but the cost has been to me work wise and also to my admin officer.
(VC, Infants 4-7, Yorks & Humb)
- G.6 The recruitment situation is very difficult. I have just lost my science co-ordinator and cannot replace her. I am having to do that job. My RE, art and history co-ordinator is up for another post and if she gets it and I can't fill it I will have to do that too. On average, I teach about half the week at present. Sometimes it might be for the whole week, sometimes less - whatever it takes to cover over the cracks.
(VC, Primary 3-11, Outer London)

G.7 I currently teach 14 hours a fortnight and my deputy 20 hours. We have been teaching above expectation and part of that has been to keep the ship afloat. It's cheaper, but it causes more stress.

(Foundation, Comp 11-16, Coed, South West)

G.8 One of the assistant heads has had to take on a very heavy commitment with exam classes in both maths and science.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Merseyside)

G.9 I've done 60 covers since September. There aren't many supply teachers out there any more. If you ring the day before there is a chance you will get general supply. But if you ring on the morning of crisis you often don't get anyone. I am the highest paid supply teacher in the world.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Outer London)

G.10 I do maths covers on occasions. There are times when the only way for me to operate is to take four classes in the gym. And we do do that. We usually do it on a planned basis so that if, for example, we know that someone is going out for moderation and we know we aren't able to get supply staff. Because faculty know what is going to happen they are able to set a written test. Rather than trying to get four supply teachers we put them all together in the hall.

(Community, Comp 11-19, Coed, South East)

G.11 We've put three classes in the hall today with the deputy head. That is one of the most expensive supply teachers you can get. If you are going to have a deputy head give them a deputy head's job. But if you want supply then get rid of the deputy head and get two permanent supply. It is just papering over the cracks isn't it?

(VA, Comp 11-18, Girls', Inner London)

Morale

G.12 A member of staff, who is in her second year, came to see me recently and said she wanted to move to the outer suburbs. I asked her why and she did eventually say it was because she was tired of struggling with constantly being monitored and target scrutinised by the LEA. We've been told our key stage 2 results are not good enough and we must do better. But the teachers involved know how hard they are working. What a struggle it is to raise standards with these disadvantaged children. This particular teacher is doing her best and can't work any harder. She is fed up with being blamed and accused of it being her fault. I am constantly having to pick my staff up and tell them they are doing a brilliant job in difficult circumstances.

(VC, Primary 3-11, South East)

G.13 Senior managers and senior teachers have a great responsibility for staff morale. Teachers are feeling great stress in terms of accountability for their own job, paperwork, form filling, expectations within the classroom. It undoubtedly falls at your door, but I think that there are quite a lot of external factors that are well rehearsed, what baggage children are bringing with them to school these days.

(Community, Comp 11-16, Coed, North East)

Initiatives

G.14 I do believe vehemently and probably quite militantly that the previous government and the present government have burdened the profession - ludicrously so with innovation after innovation, vast amounts of expectation and paperwork. My own middle age stress levels are going through the roof because a hell of a lot of it falls on me.

(Foundation, Comp 11-16, Coed, South West)

G.15 Let's face it we are in competition with local schools. So when I go to a heads' meeting which is supposed to be my support, I am not going to tell my colleagues some of the things that are going on. With the DfEE there is a them-and-us feeling. You get a letter from David Blunkett saying I am writing this letter to you personally because I am worried that you might be over-loaded and over-stressed. Then you get a letter saying you have got to improve your teacher absences by 20 per cent and it is because of bad management. Yes I know it is wrong that the true picture hasn't been fed back, but I think the very nature of teachers and people in education is that we will make it work. Like Boxer in Animal Farm, if something is going wrong, I will work harder, I will work harder, I will make this work.

(Community, Middle 9-13, Coed, Eastern)

G.16 There must be four or five schools in this authority with serious vacancies for teachers, but we got a written reply from a minister saying there is not a recruitment problem. There appears no acceptance that these things are intrinsic to the way we work. Frankly, and please excuse my French, it irritates the hell out of me when you hear people in government talk about the need to introduce languages at key stage 2 when you cannot get the necessary teachers already at key stage 3 and 4. We need to feel involved as part of a team.

(Community, Junior 7-11, South West)

Departures

G.17 Because the more initiatives that you have, the more immediate need there is for these general posts and the more you need really good teachers to do them. All just at a time when you are having problems with recruitment. You can't stop the staff going because it's their own professional development, but it can hit you particularly badly as when we lost two important key staff. Pinched by the LEA this year - that is not the right word but I'm sure you know what I mean.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

G.18 The Director came in to see me a few months ago and said 'look we need you at the centre'. I had not considered that at all, but then I have to look at myself and say am I going to see the age of 60. The government sends me parcel loads of 'bumf' by the week; it has reached nonsensical proportions. I have to try and filter all that, but I can only do so by working 70 hours a week and working here during the holidays. Can I do the job in the way that the teachers and the children deserve, and still do it well? I've now actually accepted the post at the centre, not that I want to get out of school, but I have to. I can't keep up the pace. You

ought to be able to do and continue to do a good job until the age of 60. There are too many teachers burnt out.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Eastern)

G.19 The government has a policy whereby the head may in certain circumstances leave. That has been massively taken up round here. Five or six headships have already been advertised and two or three have already been readvertised because they have let their heads go and nobody wants to take the job.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Yorks & Humb)

Classroom Teachers

Shouting at Children

G.20 When I first arrived in this school the ethos was very much the quiet word with the child. I am seeing more yelling in corridors this year. I am seeing more haranguing of groups of children and I have to admit I have done it in the whole school assembly. There is a more desperate tone to it.

(Community, Middle 9-13, Coed, Eastern)

Tiredness, Headaches and Withdrawal

G.21 Staff are very stretched. People are having times with migraines and such which is difficult and they are very tired. We feel like hamsters on wheels, going really fast and staying in one place.

(Community, Middle 4-12, South East)

G.22 I have seen very good, very conscientious teachers almost going under. These are the ones who write on the children's work what they have done well and what they can do to improve. They are spending hours marking, more than they have in the past. I have got one very capable head of department who I have seen becoming less sociable in the staff room. She is almost withdrawing. I've got one who applied for the second in languages, but told me yesterday that she is withdrawing because of the extra work entailed. She is an excellent teacher, a good organiser and could do the job, but she doesn't want to know. Certainly there is more stress around. There was my senior teacher who was very good at the money side and the timetable, and suddenly she'd had enough, she couldn't face coming in.

(Community, Grammar, Girls', South East)

Absences

G.23 My attendance is getting worse even though I have introduced attendance monitoring processes so the staff are aware of how much they are absent. I am finding attendance is actually getting worse in spite of it and I am finding that very good teachers - teachers for whom I have a very considerable regard - are finding it harder to sustain themselves. They are not the people who go off because they think they are going to have a headache that day. They come in when they shouldn't and you have to say 'go home you will only make yourself worse'. Those people even are finding they are having to take more time off and that is very sad.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, Wales)

G.24 I've got someone absent now who has been off for a week, our maths co-ordinator. I know she is worn out and has worked her socks off. She has run around classes giving resources and ideas to people and seeing reps, and she is physically stressed. There is definitely a feeling of being on the edge.

(Foundation, Primary 4-11, Eastern)

Illnesses

G.25 The people who have been and are off with stress-related problems have been seriously bad, so there is no way you can say they are just being Wimps. When you talk to them and look at them, they are not well.

(Community, Comp 11-18, Coed, South East)

G.26 There was an illness last term that was, I think, caused directly by stress. My deputy had chest pains and they put it down to stress.

(Community, Infant 5-7, South East)

Resignation

G.27 The fun has gone out of teaching. It has gone out of a lot of jobs, but in teaching there is so much pressure. I know many people who if the right opportunity came up, they would go, particularly that group in their fifties, they'd go tomorrow. I've just lost a first class English teacher, really inspiring. She has just resigned and taken up a position in a prep school where she is going to be teaching classes of ten to thirteen. She has been torn about this decision because she loves her classroom teaching, she loves the kids here, she loves the work she is doing. She hates the marking. She is 54 and feels she deserves some quality of life. I entirely agree with her.

(VA, Grammar, Boys', South East)

H. INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Movements

From Maintained Sector

- H.1 We're having a record loss at the end of this year. Eight people are leaving which is incredibly high for this school and all but one are going to the independent sector. Staff from here are known to be academically sound and to be coming from a good school. In the independent schools they can get a better salary and a better life style. There has been a loss over a number of years, but it has been growing. There are people going who would not previously have got in. This seems to say something about the whole of education because if the independent sector with its greater resources is struggling to find staff of the calibre it seeks, then that is a sign of a desperate shortage.

(VA, Grammar, Boys', South East)

To Independent Sector

- H.2 I appointed the head of biology from a nearby grammar school. I was uneasy about that, so the first time round I didn't interview her, but in the end but she was the only one who had any credibility really. Those with degrees from the new universities wouldn't have survived I don't think. She has got a 2.1 from a top university, and again it was such a relief to interview someone who seemed to know some biology.

(Boys', Day/Boarding, Eastern)

- H.3 I have certainly recruited a number from the state schools in the past few years. I think the attraction has to be a beautiful estate, class size of 16 maximum, supported by parents, the children tend to behave themselves. We look after our staff, we have lots of 'jollies' and we feed them and water them well, so there are a .lot of attractions. I think the one great blight in inducing staff has got to be the lack of accommodation in my school. I can't give them houses. I can give half a dozen of them apartments, but can't give them houses because we haven't got them. We do pay them above the odds, we are quite generous with our salaries, but at the end of the day a 32-33 year old chap with a wife and two kiddies earning £25k as a teacher - it is not a great salary is it?

(Prep, South East)

From Independent Sector

- H.4 Retirement or preferment elsewhere I think would account for about eighty per cent. A completely sideways move from us is relatively rare and when it has happened it has usually been thought through as a means of varying experience at a day school or a mixed school. The majority of staff appointed do stay for quite some time and if they leave it is usually for headship of department.

(Boys', Boarding, South East)

To Maintained Sector

- H.5 Of those who are going to move on at the moment, one of them who is about 30 and a very capable young sports teacher is talking about going into the maintained sector. He would make a good career for himself wherever. He is

one of the residential boarding staff who actually is involved in a serious way in boarding. I think a factor might be fatigue, or perhaps over commitment – he wants to get married.

(Coed, Day/Boarding, South West)

- H.6 I have actually had one who moved into the state sector this year, which was an interesting move and was the right one for him. He was a D&T teacher and needed to work as part of a larger team. He was actually secondary trained and of course was working at a much more sophisticated level than we go to – the age of 13 – so he wanted to work with secondary.

(Prep, South East)

Attractions

- H.7 I think there is a view that the quality of the teaching life here is better. I always get slightly nervous when people from state schools tell me this at interview because the last thing this place is a retreat. It's hard work here, but on the whole it's work that is rewarding, not necessarily financially.

(Coed, Day/Boarding, South West)

- H.8 I think they were looking for a more academic environment and obviously the terms and conditions. One of them in particular, the chemist, is in the North East in quite a difficult school and coping very well, but there are quite a lot of disciplinary problems. The mathematician is teaching in an inner city and has got excellent reports and is doing wonderful things with achievers, but he is a very bright man. He has got a first and A's at every public examination he has taken and he is looking to teach brighter children as well. I have struggled to ensure the salary scale is above that in the maintained sector, and it is, but not significantly so. Staff are expected to work very hard because they are doing extra curricular activities, but it is a very good working atmosphere.

(Coed, Day/Boarding, North West)

- H.9 Certainly one of the science appointments that I have put in took a drop in salary. He was working in a sixth-form college and felt that, with the increasing financial pressures there, what he was expected to do, especially the size of classes, was increasingly unsustainable. He applied for a standard chemist post and we were very pleased to offer it to a very experienced man. The other thing which has to be weighed in the balance, is that our standard contact time is 30 out of 40 periods, which leaves people with a lot more energy to do the individual coaching at lunchtime, or do the clubs, or the activities, or anything else. And I think that, plus highly motivated students by and large – although we have our moments – makes it an attractive working environment. We have a lot of staff facilities, everybody has their own desk, their own work space, their own cupboards and shelves, which again makes an attractive environment to work in.

(Girls', Day, Yorks & Humb)

Pleasure of Teaching

H.10 I think the over-riding message that comes across is that it is a nice environment to teach children. We also pay above the state sector and offer various other benefits such as discounted education for sons and daughters, and health insurance. People are happy to relocate to the city, I think its tarnished image has gone, but I think the biggest problem we have is that when people get here they can have difficulty in finding appropriate accommodation. They do sometimes experience problems which can blacken their attitude.

(Coed, Day, Merseyside)

H.11 Better working conditions, I think. Certainly the thing they will give most often at interviews as their reason is the fact that they want to get on with the teaching and not crowd control. And I think also in a selective school if they are bright academic people themselves there is an attraction to teaching the top end of the ability range.

(Girls', Day/Boarding, South East)

Salary

H.12 I have always gone for a very attractive starting salary. In September our starting salary will be about £22,500, which for a young person is good, and I should hope that helps.

(Boys', Boarding, South East)

H.13 We pay our own scale which is higher than in many independent schools. Our starting salary is about £21,000 and heads of department get about £38,000. I would say we are a comfortable £5,000 - £6,000 above anyone in the state system in an equivalent position.

(Girls', Day, London)

H.14 We pay an enhanced rate of salary. We basically pay the maintained scale plus two points. We have a new pay scale out in September which integrates PRP. The average member of staff is paid about 14 per cent more than they would be getting in a state school. It is collegial system with very few special allowances.

(Boys', Day, North West)

H.15 What we do is we offer basically is the common pay spine, plus 4.5 per cent. On top of that we have our own allowance structure through responsibilities, for a head of department, or responsibility for running a Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme, or whatever. We are considering our position on threshold pay. If you research across the independent sector you will find everything from schools which pay exactly the state scale. I can even think of one or two that pay less than it does. The majority either have their own extended spine, so you would start perhaps at the same point as you would in a state school, but have the opportunity to progress further. Some offer state, plus a flat fee of £800 or something of that order. So there is no uniformity.

(Girls', Day, Yorks & Humb)

H.16 Our salary scales are based loosely on the state system although not following it very strictly. We pay the national salary scales plus outer London plus a supplement of two thousand a year.

(Coed, Day, Outer London)

H.17 We pay a flat £1,900 above the national scale. And as we speak we are trying to rewrite that to take PRP on board. We would sell our school on the basis of the environment. I would sell it as well on the basis of promotion.

(Coed, Day, Eastern)

H.18 I find out what they are paid and I will try and pay them more, or at least match their London salary if that is where they are coming from. There is a certain inequality in what people are paid. But I reserve that as my right. What you are hoping is that they are not all going to sit together and say 'I am on this, what are you on?'

(Coed, Day, South East)

H.19 Salaries in SHMIS schools are a complete spectrum. Some will follow the national scales. Nobody would be earning less than they would in an equivalent post in the maintained sector, that is one of the conditions of membership of the association. So I suspect that the vast majority would be earning slightly more either because they are on a higher point or because there is a more generous scale. But there is a big variety of schools within SHMIS, and broadly, as you know, they are not the big schools in the independent sector and they are not by and large the most wealthy.

(Coed, Boarding, South East)

H.20 We are totally tied to the maintained sector scale.

(Girls', Day/Boarding, South East)

H.21 We are in the country, we have nice grounds, squash courts they can use, free food and the children are nice. There are enough advantages to teaching in a school like this that I don't think I have to pay vast amounts for. But I suppose if push came to shove I would.

(Girls', Boarding, South East)

H.22 Any prep school has to pay not less than the state, that is part of the association rules, that salaries have to be at least as good as the state sector. The school pays its own scale which goes two points above the scale where they would reach a ceiling in a primary school. There are various allowances on top of that for heads of department doing pastoral duties and doing boarding duties and so on and probably in company with a number of other prep schools we actually have a certain amount of staff housing available.

(Prep, South East)

H.23 We used to pursue the maintained scheme with a 2.5 per cent inflation. With the changes that are about to happen this September we have gone on to our own

scale and it bears little resemblance to the national scale, but it is a bit more generous.

(Prep, South East)

Housing

H.24 It is very expensive. We have retained about half dozen of what we call starter flats, and that actually is a big selling point. Those who are coming in as young marrieds will tend to rent for six months in one of the surrounding villages, then buy later. And again, it is very different where you come from. A new Deputy Head three years ago who came out of West London could not believe his luck, but those coming from other places can struggle. The accommodation for young ones is crucial; I don't think pay is.

(Coed, Day, Eastern)

H.25 I was just seeing in the local newspaper this morning my colleague down the road, at the grammar school, at his prize day, bemoaning the difficulty of attracting appropriate members of staff because of the cost of housing around here. We, like most boarding schools, offer housing and the great majority of those who join us do go into school housing and we find ourselves buying or renting properties. I think it is a crucial element in attracting the right quality of staff.

(Boys', Boarding, South East)

H.26 We have a number of ways in which we help those who are say twenty-three, new graduates, and nowhere to live. We can help them out to start off with and there are one or two people who are happy to take in lodgers and have someone living with them. We've got one school house occupied by a couple of members of staff. It gets more difficult when you are five years older, you are newly married and needing to buy a house, that becomes an expensive time.

(Coed, Day, Outer London)

H.27 Probably the biggest issue in people moving here is the accommodation one. We do have a very small number of school-owned flats and we can offer youngsters accommodation to start with in some instances, but it has been an issue. One of the applicants for the head of maths post was a man in his late 30s from Lincolnshire who described having a house with a couple of acres and five bedrooms, which he thought he could sell for £150,000 and went into the estate agents and it wouldn't buy a one-bedroomed flat.

(Girls', Day, London)

H.28 We have got some staff accommodation, but it is about four or five houses and flats which we can use. We give a discounted rent for six months and then on to a market rent, but it is pretty low market rent if you see what I mean, normally for a year or at most two to help people find their feet. If someone comes and I can't accommodate them and they would have liked accommodation, I give them, for six months, a financial package which is the difference between the market rent and the discounted rent so they are not out of pocket. We also give relocation expenses as well.

(Boys', Day/Boarding, Eastern)

H.29 We can handle a few individuals living in return for boarding duties, but those who live out don't and it is very expensive here.

(Prep, South East)

H.30 We give people up to about £700 if they ask, and then they are on their own.

(Coed, Day/Boarding, South East)

Working Conditions

H.31 There is often a sense of appreciation of how lucky one is with resources, children and class sizes, and discipline. Some of the more sensitive people, and some of the more intellectual people will find teaching in a comprehensive dispiriting, particularly if it is only to 16. A very good physicist that I have just appointed was in an 11 to 16 comprehensive. He has got a very good first-class degree and he so appreciative. It makes the old hands realise how lucky they are, as indeed they are.

(Coed, Day/Boarding, South East)

H.32 I think many in this part of the world are fed up with teaching large classes, still around 30. Partly I would suspect that they think the children would be better behaved, which on the whole they are because we have inevitably very supportive parents. I think they are surprised when they come about how hard the work is and the hours involved, but I think they are pleasantly surprised by the keen and co-operative children, and on the whole probably a narrower range of ability too.

(Prep, South East)

Contact Time and Class Sizes

H.33 Out of the sixty teaching periods in a ten-day cycle the average ordinary member of staff, not a head of department or housemaster, would probably be teaching about forty-five.

(Boys', Boarding, South East)

H.34 It's a 44 period week and 35 minute periods. They teach 30 of those 44. In the main body of the school the class sizes are 20 or less. By GCSE because we often run the same subject two or three times so that it can go into different combinations it could be as low as 14, and for minority subjects even smaller than that.

(Girls', Day/Boarding, South East)

H.35 We do a 45 period week which includes things like CCF and Games. We expect people who have no other responsibilities to do up to 32 periods a week. In addition to that I would expect them to do up to 6 other periods of contact time, so that their whole commitment would be no more than 38 periods. These are 35-minute periods. I did a calculation recently: even allowing for the fact that we have this long day, we do a shorter teaching year, and it's something like 80 hours a year less teaching than in the state sector. That of course doesn't take into account the classroom atmosphere which is utterly different, it's dynamic.

(Coed, Day, East Midlands)

Requirements

H.36 There is no single qualification you need but there are a whole series of things which would commend somebody. I think we look for good named universities. I know that one is not supposed to say that these days, but I think that some of the prejudices that we have in where we send our pupils reflects on where we are likely to get them from. People who have been to North Staffordshire or somewhere are not likely to be as highly rated as people who have been elsewhere. It clearly depends on what they are because you've also got A-level results and other academic strands to see. Because we are an academic and pretty selective school we would want people who would be capable of dealing with the brightest of A level students really. It is therefore partly a question of class of degree and it's partly a question of A-levels, where they've been and all of those sorts of things.

(Coed, Day, Outer London)

H.37 They have got to be able to cope with the demands of this place particularly. I have never gone into appointments so thoroughly as we do here. Not only are the girls very demanding, their parents are too. Subject, good skills as a teacher, robust enough to cope with highly intelligent young women questioning the whole time, willing to give something extra in the way of extra curricular activities. Notionally, at least a 2.1 from a good university, but it does not always work out like that because experience can outweigh qualifications and we do tend to recruit on their track record in other schools.

(Girls', Day, London)

H.38 I am looking for good knowledge and interest in their direct subject. I am looking for wider intellectual interests too because we believe strongly in encouraging people to teach beyond their subjects as far as possible. I am looking for a commitment to boarding, of course, because of the special nature of the school and I have got to feel happy that they are going to fit in and enjoy it and get on with people. A PGCE is not necessary. I think we have probably got the highest proportion of non-accredited teachers in the country.

(Boys', Boarding, South East)

H.39 It would be wrong to say that the university and the class of degree don't come into it, because I know I have got a fairly high achieving bunch of pupils here. And I know I need somebody who is intellectually on the ball or they are going to eat them alive. But having said that, I have had appointments where a person has proved their track record later. Their first degree might not have been particularly impressive, but they have then gone on to do other things, which I feel indicated that they have got that level of academic clout that I would expect them to have. So I certainly don't rule them out automatically because they don't have an Oxbridge degree, because they have only got a 2.2.

(Girls', Day/Boarding, South East)

H.40 I look at someone's A-levels; class of degree is pretty uninteresting to me. I couldn't care less about a PGCE. I look at where they took their degree, and I am very interested in where they have taught. By and large, when one has been to an independent school one is going to understand more of the kind of commitment that these kinds of schools have. I have to have people that are not just going to be very good teachers, but also very good contributors, and also very good people in terms of being able to work hard.

(Coed, Day, South East)

H.41 We're a mixed boarding and day school so the full life of the school is a major consideration. I need people to run extra-curricular activities. If there is somebody who is interested in being resident, that's helpful although it's not a critical factor. I'm looking for people who I think are bright as opposed to people who are just going into teaching, sadly, because they think it's one thing they can do. I'm looking for people who've done something more than just going through a school career and a university career doing the routine things. I'm looking for people who have done something for themselves which would, one hopes, have an impact on the people they are working with, children in particular. That might mean something outside the educational field. I'm always interested if I see someone with a gold D or E in their CV. Somebody who has taken some leading role in whatever, it almost doesn't matter, as long as I'm getting someone with some personality coming through in the application.

(Coed, Day/Boarding, South West)

Recruitment

H.42 The interesting feature for me is that the high proportion of well-established independent schools which are appointing people from a school like this which hasn't got a history of being a supplier in any numbers. I think it's pretty evident, there aren't the teachers in the quantity nor necessarily the quality one would like. I would imagine that the better known schools are having to draw increasingly from those who perhaps aren't in the same, shall we say, league table divisions, in order to find people perhaps they wouldn't have found elsewhere. We're drawing from people who might or might not have gone to the state sector, but certainly aren't going there now. I've had to settle for lower-seconds. Also we are taking from other than the traditional universities.

(Coed, Day, East Midlands)

H.43 We have not experienced any difficulties here. We ran an advert for a modern languages post and got about 45 responses. For history we had 132. We have no problems whatsoever I would say.

(Coed, Day, Merseyside)

H.44 It varies, as you know, according to subjects. I had to appoint two geographers, a modern linguist, a chaplain now that's really difficult - a head of history, which is relatively easy, two biologists, two mathematicians, a head of drama and a head of science. The difficult areas which we found, and have found in the past, are most particularly modern languages. I guess from conversations with other

independent heads that this is quite common. We were very lucky with the modern languages post and had about twenty applicants and we managed to appoint a very good person who joined us from one of the local selective grammar schools, somewhat to their loss.

(Boys', Boarding, South East)

H.45 We advertised for a mathematician and didn't do very well. In the end my head of maths headhunted. He rang a university contact and got someone who proved to be very good. I also had to look around for the chemistry post. I got someone from industry with a 2.1 from an old university and a PhD but no PGCE.

(Boys', Day/Boarding, Eastern)

H.46 We advertised twice for a head of maths this year and even then didn't get the field we would have expected for a school like this. If we are having trouble, others are too. I would say the field for linguists is less strong than it was. When I first came here we were awash with really good quality linguists and that made us feel we had got the right person for the job. The last time we advertised for physics we actually had two appointable candidates. Religious studies and English give me some anxiety because there are so many bad applicants. We are seeing good 2.1s and good teachers, but not the interesting, verging on the eccentric, of a few years ago.

(Girls', Day, London)

H.47 The geography appointment was a nightmare. My predecessor appointed a young geographer on a one-year contract, which I didn't renew because I wasn't happy with the standard. It then took me two or three goes to get a good geographer. And, like all these things, you have to have the courage of your convictions and keep going until you get somebody you are happy with, which I am now. But we got to the point of circulating university departments, and doing all sorts of things. Finally I think I advertised locally again and picked up somebody who was moving from another independent school.

(Girls', Day, Yorks & Hamb)

H.48 On an average we would expect to receive between 50 and 80 applications for each post. I would expect to interview six. But the serious short-list would be in the region of 10. In a surprising number of the cases there is only one candidate with whom I am truly happy, and thank the Good Lord that they have all said yes so far.

(Boys', Day, North West)

H.49 I think the general picture is that I have no difficulty in filling the posts with the exception of IT and design technology. Both are very difficult areas. I have managed, but only just. Those are two areas where, I think, even in the independent sector, or at least as far as we are concerned, there are not many good applicants. I think the general pattern is that there are fewer applicants writing in the first instance. So there is less sifting to do. I think there aren't enough women, and I speak as head of a co-educational school. Even when I advertise externally for a head of department post there are very few, if any,

women who apply. I am not saying no women apply, and certainly for most posts there are some women, I am all right on that front, but I wish more women wanted to teach at a high level and become heads of department. I think the particular difficulty for women is the long hours at a boarding school. I think teaching suits women very well. At a day school they can be with their family and do their marking later in the evening. Whereas here we have meetings at 6 o'clock or 8 o'clock, or we're on duty at the house from 6.30 till 11.00 at night. My clear impression is that there are fewer really good people from whom to draw up a short-list.

(Coed, Boarding, West Midlands)

H.50 We have been looking for a head of IT for a long while. But because we are very choosy we haven't made an appointment yet. That is the one area of considerable difficulty.

(Boys', Boarding, South East)

H.51 I've had a bigger recruitment drive this year than I have had for many years. We are very small; I have only got 30 staff here. Normally I get perhaps one or two a year, barely ten per cent actually. But this year I have had about four or five positions going. The number of applicants I get seems to be holding up, but I am a bit dubious about the quality of the people coming through. For instance, in IT I was really pushed. The only person I think I could have appointed was the one I did, and there was a bit of a discussion with him about his salary. But had he turned me down I think I would have been stuck.

(Coed, Boarding, Wales)

H.52 I could not say I have had problems recruiting. Linguists, a very strong field, but very difficult to find a man. We have now got an all-female languages department. We have appointed a biologist and a chemist and there were pretty strong fields although they tend to be biased toward people who are perhaps in their forties and fifties. If you want all-singing-all-dancing rugby players there aren't many of those around. The one we have a real problem with is business studies and, in fact, we have gone for someone who has come out of business and we are going to be linked up with the TTA and we will train him on the job.

(Coed, Day, Eastern)

H.53 The school is rather different to a lot of schools because it is very isolated and therefore you are attracting a certain type of person. It is absolutely beautiful and there are a lot of opportunities for outdoor pursuits and venture training, but it is quite a big move. The numbers applying have been disappointing and this isn't just because of our location because I know it has happened in other schools. The quality of the applicants, particularly in the sciences, where we had to appoint a chemist and we had to advertise three times before we could get somebody of the right calibre, and that is somebody who is coming over from the state system into the independent sector. For our biologist we are also appointing from the state sector, which is great. Very few newly qualified teachers are applying.

(Coed, Day/Boarding, North West)

H.54 Recruitment of staff is patchy. It depends where you live. It is extremely difficult to recruit staff in areas where housing is very expensive. It is a major difficulty for some schools that are in, say, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire where there is a big demand for day school prep education. To find staff who can afford to live in those sorts of area and pay the ludicrous house prices is difficult. Otherwise I don't think things have changed very much. The staff who are always in short supply are modern linguists. It's pretty hard to find good modern linguists in a prep school; it's hard to find good modern linguists anywhere I think. To find good science teachers is also a struggle. I think for things like English, history and geography it's no more difficult to find good staff than ever it was.

(Prep, South East)

H.55 My main concern is the retirement time bomb that is ticking away. If I look at the age profile of my staff, it is horrendous. In about six year's time, over a span of about three years, I think I will lose through retirement, something like a third of staff. We are an ageing profession, and we are not replacing with young people coming in.

(Girls', Day, Yorks & Humb)

H.56 When we lost the assisted places scheme, three years ago, the school has really gone into a period when I think it's going to drop from about 700 down to 550 over seven years. During that time losing the odd member of staff is almost welcome. I'm not doing a great deal of recruitment.

(Coed, Day/Boarding, South West)

Differences

Boarding

H.57 I have detected an increased reluctance to be involved as the boarding house tutor, but in all fairness, I am still able to find people, they get free accommodation and meals in return for duties, but people are less ready to become boarding house masters. It used to be a very accepted route to headship, I think that is less so these days, I think the academic route for HoDs is probably something that governors perhaps recognise as having equal if not greater validity.

(Boys', Day/Boarding, Eastern)

H.58 One thing I should say is one recent post I had, I had some difficulties with younger teachers worried about what they perceived we wanted from them in terms of a time commitment. It seems to be a common thing - you are going to want my every hour. Boarding these days is more difficult because although the money's good people do want free time.

(Coed, Day/Boarding, South West)

H.59 Another thing that is perhaps applicable to boarding schools more than day schools, though not entirely so, is that it is more difficult now to find good all-rounders who are able to teach their subject and then to coach games. I am thinking particularly of games here, and not just music or drama, or whatever. But people who will teach two or three sports in their year and be good teachers.
(Coed, Boarding, West Midlands)

Prep Schools

H.60 It can be a problem attracting subject specialists. You have got to be committed to this age group to be perfectly honest. There are far greater opportunities for a career-minded teacher if they go into the secondary level. We are a pretty small school really and quite often I get career-minded staff who want to step up the ladder and of course I can't accommodate them here so they have to move on.
(Prep, South East)

H.61 Mathematicians are particularly difficult. I have just had a superb maths job going. Luckily I have filled it. I interviewed one chap who had been overseas for two years and wanted to get back, and he was perfect. He missed prep school life. But otherwise the field was very poor. Other than that, historians are growing on trees; there are dozens of them. English - I have found experienced English teachers hard to come by. We had a head of English going not long since and that wasn't a good field.
(Prep, South East)

H.62 No, I've never adjusted the curriculum, that's a very dangerous path to take. I think what we have had to do is just the opposite of that - maintain the curriculum and sometimes fudge the teaching - maybe ask the mathematician to do a bit of history and so on and so forth. A lot of that tends to fall on senior managers with a slightly lighter teaching load and I have got to say to them look we are stuck for a couple of terms of history how are you fixed, but I wouldn't change the curriculum.
(Prep, South East)

