



# Working Paper on Teaching Supply

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Irish Primary Principals' Network

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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As the professional body for primary school leaders, IPPN is acutely aware of and concerned about the challenges schools are facing with regard to recruiting their full complement of teachers for the new school year. Schools have been engaged in recruitment campaigns since May and throughout the summer months in an effort to fill their teaching posts, with large numbers of schools reporting that they still have unfilled posts.

The shortfall in the number of teachers is compromising the ability of schools to meet the needs of all pupils, as our members will be forced to ensure that they have teachers for all mainstream classes, meaning they will have a reduced cohort of Special Education Teachers, if any, to work with children with additional needs.

Over the last number of years, IPPN has consistently highlighted the issues our members/ schools face in securing substitute cover for teacher absence. This will prove even more difficult this year, which will add to the challenge of ensuring continuity of provision to children. If schools are finding it difficult to fill permanent and fixed-term mainstream teaching positions, what chance have they of finding teachers to fill part-time or substitute positions or indeed of filling supply panels?

The issue requires immediate, shorter-term solutions to manage the situation that currently presents but it also requires a number of medium and longer-term solutions to break this cycle of teacher under-supply.

This working paper captures the causes of teacher supply and demand issues, as well as proposed solutions to alleviate them. As further proposals surface, this paper will be updated and solutions discussed with stakeholders.

IPPN will continue to collaborate with the education partners and other relevant agencies and departments to ensure progress on this issue, both in terms of managing the circumstances that present currently, as well as working to better ensure that we always have a requisite supply of highly trained competent teachers available to meet the needs of the children in our schools.

## 2 CAUSES OF TEACHER SUPPLY AND DEMAND ISSUES

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IPPN has identified 20 contributory factors to or causes of the current situation, including the following:

1. Demographic/pupil enrolment projections indicated fewer teachers will be needed – less demand for HEI courses. The reduction has not materialised due to immigration and 10,000+ Ukrainian children displaced by war,, but the system had not planned for this or for the projections to be inaccurate and didn't action recommendations to ensure adequate supply
2. Intro of 2-year PME at second level reduced demand for HEI courses
3. Inequitable pay for pre- and post-2011 entrants and other austerity measures e.g. removal of allowances for postgrad qualifications
4. Cost of housing, particularly in urban areas has reduced teacher supply
5. Lack of flexibility and mobility in the sector
6. Unattractive positions – short-term, part-time vacancies – exacerbated by housing supply/cost
7. Attractiveness of overseas offerings, especially in tax-free zones
8. Retirement incentives – surge in retirements in 2019 and 2022
9. Early retirement options for pre-2011 entrants
10. Secondment and career break opportunities
11. Improved Pupil/Teacher Ration has increased demand
12. Improved 'release time' for principals has increased demand through TP Supply Panels
13. Teacher Supply Panels have increased demand for teachers
14. EPV days have increased demand
15. Moratorium on promoted posts lifted
16. High number of categories of leave increases demand for substitute teachers
17. Lack of capacity in HEIs for teacher education courses. This lack of capacity drives points race which means many potential teachers can't train as teachers, impacting supply
18. Increases in Parents' Leave from 5 to 7 weeks (INTO)
19. New Work/Life Balance Act will increase demand for subs (INTO)

20. UK research shows that factors that impact teachers' decision whether to leave the profession are mostly to do with school culture, the quality of school leadership and professional 'agency' (involvement in decision-making, ability to influence, structural supports). Resourcing, pay etc. are important but not as significant as these others. *'Teacher Recruitment, Development and Retention', UCL, July 2023.*

### 3 CHANGES INTRODUCED TO HELP IMPROVE TEACHER SUPPLY

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It must be acknowledged that the Department of Education and education stakeholders have already taken significant steps to address the crisis in teacher supply, both in relation to shorter-term and longer-term vacancies. Among the changes introduced are:

1. Eased restrictions on teachers in job-sharing and career break arrangements
2. Retired teachers allowed to work as substitute teachers
3. Student teachers in Years 3 and 4 allowed to sub
4. Relaxation of 5-day rule during pandemic
5. HEIs accommodation of timing of placements and examinations to facilitate student teachers substitution work in schools
6. Introduction of 'banked hours' facility for 2020/21 school year - to group unused substitute teaching hours together for use when substitute teachers are available – mostly student teachers and NQTs in May and June
7. Development of Sub Seeker (2019) and the Recruitment Portal (2023)
8. Allowing teachers qualified abroad to register with the Teaching Council
9. Allowing NQTs qualified abroad to complete induction in Ireland
10. Data capture to clarify motivations of retired teachers regarding substitution and other vacancies
11. *Turas Abhaile* initiative (DE and ACCS) to attract teachers from abroad to teaching positions in Ireland (post-primary)
12. Commitment to the EducationPosts.ie Recruitment portal by key stakeholders
13. '*Teaching Transforms*' initiative to promote the profession
14. Funding for 'infrastructure supports' to plan and manage the free books scheme (from 2023), allows teachers to step up to management role with additional pay and substitute cover – promoting shared leadership
15. Increased capacity for HEI teacher education courses at under- and post-graduate levels
16. Additional teaching and administration resources provided to facilitate schools running the Summer Programme (2023).
17. National Coordinator appointed to support special schools' engagement with the Summer Programme (2023)

## 4 PRIORITISED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2023/24 SCHOOL YEAR

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Here, we outline the recommendations proposed by IPPN members and staff, as well as those discussed with education stakeholders. First, we present those we believe to have the most impact in the shortest period of time – the prioritised list.

### 4.1 Allow schools to create full-time posts from DE-sanctioned hours

Allow schools to create full time posts from the hours sanctioned by the Department, as is being piloted by two schools in the Small Schools Clustering Action Research Project. This will allow for the use of EAL hours as well as SET & Principal Release and would create a far more attractive post for prospective teachers, as well as alleviating considerable administrative work for the school.

Any hours that are not utilised by the school can be availed of by the local teacher supply panel.

#### **Projected Cost:**

Cost neutral to DE as already sanctioned.

### 4.2 Allow schools to create fixed-term, full-time posts for maternity/paternity leave

Allow some flexibility for schools to create full time posts from the hours sanctioned by the Department relating to maternity and paternity leave. Any hours that are not utilised by the school can be availed of by the local teacher supply panel and/or Sub Seeker to support schools that require substitute cover.

Maternity and paternity cover posts are among the most challenging for schools to fill where they do not involve full-time, fixed-term posts. This would create a far more attractive post for prospective teachers, as well as alleviating considerable administrative work for the school.

#### **Projected Cost:**

Cost neutral to DE as already sanctioned.

#### 4.3 Introduce 'budgeted substitute hours' system

This proposal allows schools to group unused substitute hours together and offer them (as full-time, short-term posts) to a qualified or part-qualified teacher (NQT or 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year student teacher) when they become available – usually in May and June. This would ensure pupils access the supports they need during the school year and creates attractive full-time short-term post for teachers.

Payment for 3<sup>rd</sup> year students could be at the unqualified rate. Other terms and conditions to be determined with management bodies/unions.

#### **Projected Cost:**

Cost neutral to DE as already budgeted.

#### 4.4 Support schools engaging with the Summer Programme

The additional teaching and administration support provided to schools in 2023 could be extended to all future Summer Programmes. Access to the 'budgeted substitute hours' recommendation referenced above, for special schools registered to run a Summer Programme, would be especially important as a way to alleviate the additional challenges posed in those schools.

Leaders of special schools have highlighted the issues of taking on staff who don't know the children. If they could appoint 3<sup>rd</sup> year students and 4<sup>th</sup> years who have just finished their training full time for the remainder of the school year, including for the summer programme, it would be a more attractive proposition. These substitute teachers could provide cover in May and June for teacher absences, get to know the children and then work on the summer programme in July. This would also give a boost to the special schools trying to recruit for the following school year.

Schools with vacant positions should be encouraged to support the teachers in securing accommodation in their local area for the duration of the post e.g. through schemes such as the Rent-a-Room scheme. This is a particular challenge in urban areas.

#### **Projected Cost:**

Cost neutral to DE as already budgeted.



#### 4.5 Allow flexibility for schools to extend vacancy adverts

DE to review the policy and procedures to allow schools to extend a vacancy where there are insufficient applicants for a post and a vacancy needs to be re-advertised. If this were sanctioned, an 'advertisement extension' option would need to be developed for the EducationPosts.ie Portal, to create a simpler process for schools and job-seekers when a vacancy needs to be re-advertised. It would significantly reduce the timeframe involved. Note: This can only happen on the portal due to the robust audit trail available on the system. An added benefit is improved data capture regarding the re-advertising of vacancies, where this is needed (geographically and school and role types).

#### **Projected Cost:**

Provided at a reduced advertised costs to schools – to recoup development and maintenance costs. for IPPN member schools, if the school has posted fewer than three adverts in the school year, it would be free.

#### 4.6 Attract Irish-qualified teachers to return to fill Irish teaching posts

This proposal aims to increase the number of Irish teachers returning to work in Ireland i.e. to reverse the trend of foreign education systems coming to Ireland to attract our highly-trained teachers to work abroad. It would involve the following:

- Encourage those working abroad to become members of the Teaching Council or to retain membership while abroad
- Allow them to accrue increment entitlements based on the length of time spent teaching abroad in relevant roles
- Allow them to pay pension contributions in Ireland
- A promotional campaign in Ireland and in English-speaking jurisdictions overseas highlighting the above
- DE to encourage Interview Boards to facilitate those based abroad to engagement with the recruitment process online
- DE and management bodies to encourage school communities to support new teachers in securing accommodation in their local area for the duration of the post e.g. through schemes such as the Rent-a-Room scheme. This is a particular challenge in urban areas.

This recommendation could be combined with the proposed Irish teaching careers fair in English-speaking countries listed in *Table 1* below and could be put in place for both primary and post-primary vacancies.

#### 4.7 Attract foreign-qualified teachers to shorter-term Irish teaching posts

This proposal aims to increase the number of teachers who qualified outside Ireland to consider shorter-term teaching posts, such as maternity and paternity leave positions, which are particularly challenging to fill. This could be combined with the proposals re. creating fixed-term, full-time post and the establishment of Irish teaching careers fair in English-speaking countries listed in *Table 1* below. Note: This could be put in place for both primary and post-primary vacancies.

How this would work:

1. Teaching Council to create a new registration path, similar to Route 5 for Irish student teachers in years 3 and 4 of ITE courses. This would allow foreign-qualified (or part-qualified) teachers to register and obtain a TC Registration Number, to facilitate them applying for certain teaching posts.
2. It is envisaged that this would work only for shorter-term vacancies such as maternity and paternity leave positions, which are particularly challenging to fill.
3. HEIs to create a new course to upskill these foreign-qualified or part-qualified teachers to meet the standards required of Irish-qualified teachers.
4. Teachers who meet a school's criteria for a short-term position are automatically registered on this new HEI course and given a certain timeframe to successfully complete the course.
5. HEIs/other body to link these teachers with schools, using EducationPosts recruitment portal, which would need to be developed to ensure the various requirements are met
6. Payment for these full-time, short-term posts could be at the unqualified rate. Other terms and conditions to be determined with management bodies/unions. Schools with vacant positions would be required to arrange accommodation via Rent-a-Room or similar scheme in their local area.
7. Once put in place, an extensive promotion campaign would be initiated with the Department of Education, the Department of Foreign Affairs and using IPPN's network of contacts globally, through the International Confederation of Principals and national professional bodies for school leaders. See point above re. Careers Fair.

#### **Projected Cost:**

TBC

#### 4.8 Extend the flexibility introduced during Covid

This includes a relaxation of notice periods, allows teachers availing of job-sharing and career breaks to work as substitute teachers as well as a relaxation of the 5-day rule for student teachers etc.

## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS: SHORT/MEDIUM/LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

This section provides a complete overview of the proposed solutions, and indicates whether it will have an impact in the short, medium or long term, as well as the type of impact.

*Table 1*

| <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>Short/Medium/<br/>Long-term Impact</b> | <b>Potential Impact</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Introduce 'budgeted substitute hours' system to group unused substitute hours together and offer them to a qualified or part-qualified teacher                               | Short                                     | Pupils access the supports they need; attractive full-time short-term post for teachers |
| 2. Allow schools to create full-time posts for TP release time, SET, EAL posts  | Short                                     | Attractiveness of teaching roles  |
| 3. Allow schools to create full-time fixed-term posts from maternity and paternity leave posts.   | Short                                     | Attractiveness of teaching roles  |
| 4. Clarify to schools the reinstatement of flexibility introduced during Covid – relaxation of notice periods, job-sharing, career breaks, 5-day rule for student teachers etc. | Short                                     | Increases availability of qualified substitute teachers                                 |
| 5. Timing of HEI exams – during school closures   | Short                                     | Facilitates student teacher availability for substitute/short-term vacancies            |
| 6. Funding of post-graduate HEI courses   | Short                                     | Attractiveness of teaching studies  |
| 7. Subsidisation of housing for student teachers and key workers at the early stage of their career   | Short                                     | Attractiveness of teaching studies;   |

|  |       |  |
|--|-------|--|
|  |       | Availability of student teachers for substitute/short-term vacancies in urban areas which are most impacted by shortages                                       |
| 8. Support schools engaging with the Summer Programme by allowing them to create fixed-term full-time posts  | Short | Full-time roles more attractive to applicants  |
| 9. Encourage foreign-qualified NQTs to apply for longer-term substitute positions e.g. cluster posts for TP release time (as suggested by INTO)  | Short |  |
| 10. Extend Supply Panel to cover the 400 schools not currently supported (INTO)  | Short |  |
| 11. Allow NQTs taking up cluster posts for TP release time to complete Droichead (INTO).   | Short |  |
| 12. Clarify to schools that online interviews are not only appropriate but more equitable– Circular 44/2019 – with the advent of low cost online meeting technologies, it is not appropriate to expect candidates to travel from abroad to attend interviews | Short | Facilitates recruitment process for teachers based abroad/ on leave  |
| 13. Extend arrangements to allow teachers qualified abroad to register with the Teaching Council and for NQTs to complete induction through Droichead (INTO)   | Short | Increased number of qualified teachers available for all vacancies. Allowing NQTs trained overseas to avail of Droichead provides a quality assurance process. |

|   |              |  |
|---|--------------|--|
| 14. Attract Irish-qualified teachers to return to fill Irish teaching posts by facilitating entitlement to increments and payment of pension contributions  | Short/medium | Remove some barriers to teachers returning   |
| 15. Identify any bottlenecks in the process of registering teachers who qualified abroad and review where additional capacity may be required e.g. in HEIs to validate documentation  | Short/medium | Will bring more teachers on stream more quickly  |
| 16. Develop and promote the potential for data collection through EducationPosts.ie and the recruitment portal – insight into trends – by encouraging as many schools as possible to use the Portal   | Short/medium | More robust information leading to better for Teacher Supply analysis and projections  |
| 17. Strengthen leadership capacity and competence to achieve the aims of DE circular 70/2018  | Medium       | Sharing of leadership and management, teacher upskilling   |
| 18. Focus on supports for school leaders as a key impact on teacher retention   | Medium       | More 'doable' role, leaders can support teachers more effectively as part of their core purpose  |
| 19. DE to review the policy and procedures to allow schools to extend a vacancy where there are insufficient applicants for a post and a vacancy needs to be re-advertised. Note: This can only happen on the portal due to the robust audit trail available on the system. | Medium       | Simpler process for schools and job-seekers, reduced timeframe, improved data capture re. re-advertising of vacancies, where this is needed (geographically and school and role types) |

|   |               |  |
|---|---------------|--|
| <p>20. Establish Irish teaching jobs fairs in the UK, Netherlands, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Australia and New Zealand (and other jurisdictions with strong English-language skills such as Nordic countries)</p>   | <p>Medium</p> | <p>Attract more qualified teachers to consider roles in Ireland</p>  |
| <p>21. Proactively use EducationPosts to advertise the availability of teachers from other jurisdictions who are interested in securing short term subbing and fixed term positions in Ireland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop a notice board like the summer programme as part of EducationPosts</li> <li>b. Promote the use of virtual interviews for those schools interested in connecting with these teachers.</li> <li>c. Allow the schools wishing to take on these teachers for short term / fixed term contracts to liaise directly with the teaching council to secure a specified time bound registration route.</li> <li>d. Encourage participating schools to source accommodation through their own school community for these visiting teachers through the rent a room scheme</li> <li>e. Consider a tax credit for the visiting teacher to cover some of the relocation costs such as travel / rent etc.</li> </ul> | <p>Medium</p> | <p>Makes these roles viable for returning/foreign-qualified teachers</p>                                     |
| <p>22. Comprehensive CPD for school leaders on developing a culture of shared leadership in school, to implement and embed the aims of the</p>  | <p>Medium</p> | <p>Strengthens leadership competence &amp; capacity, a key factor in teacher retention &amp; recruitment</p> |

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| 23. Further increase capacity for HEI teacher education courses at under- and post-graduate levels  | Medium to long-term | Increased number of student teachers and graduates coming on stream  |
| 24. Development of subsidised high-quality housing for young professionals in the public sector such as newly-qualified teachers, nurses, doctors, gardaí in urban areas e.g. through incentives to developers  | Medium to long-term | Incentivise development of accommodation   |
| 25. Consider whether the current patron-based panel system is the most appropriate and effective approach to redeployment of skilled and experienced teachers, SNAs and school leaders. Consider an approach whereby they can be redeployed to any school, anywhere, subject to certain criteria e.g. Gaeilge competency to teach in a Gaelscoil. | Medium to long-term | Allows for movement of teachers geographically and across patron bodies, and facilitates more teachers to apply for senior leadership roles. |
| 26. Research how other jurisdictions provide for young professionals embarking on a career in the public sector (as teacher, nurse, doctor, police officer etc. i.e. with fixed income)   | Medium to long-term | Remove barriers to teachers accepting good roles   |

## Appendix 1: DE Circular 70/2018

DE Circular 70/2018 sets out a positive and comprehensive vision of leadership and management in schools, including the sharing of leadership with post-holders and all teachers. While many schools and leaders have embraced and embedded this culture of shared leadership, many others have not known where to start, as the circular was not backed up with comprehensive CPD for the principal, the in-school management team or for teaching staff. Comprehensive CPD for school leaders on developing a culture of shared leadership in school, to implement and embed the aims of the [DE Circular 70/2018](#) is required, to strengthen leadership in the school, a key factor in teacher retention and recruitment.

### **C70/2018 - LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

*“The primary purpose of school leadership and management is to create and sustain an environment that underpins high quality pupil care, learning and teaching.*

*School leaders play a key role in improving educational outcomes by creating a positive school climate and environment as well as motivating and empowering educators and learners within their school community.*

*Leadership in a school context, creates a vision for development leading to improvements in outcomes for learners, and is based on shared values and robust evaluation of evidence of current practice and outcomes. In this way leadership is distributed throughout the school as a key support for pupil learning.*

*Flexibility in identifying and prioritising the evolving leadership and management needs of the school, and in assigning and re-assigning post holders to specific roles and responsibilities to meet the evolving needs of a school, is an essential feature of this school leadership model.*

*The Quality Framework for Leadership and Management in Irish schools, set out in LOOKING AT OUR SCHOOLS 2016 - a Quality Framework, provides a common understanding and language around the organisation and practice of leadership and management roles in Irish schools. It identifies the key leadership and management areas in a school (domains), and these are then further divided into various content standards for each domain.*



*The term 'school leaders' typically refers to formal leadership roles including teachers with posts of responsibility and others who carry out roles and responsibilities integral to the administration, management and leadership of the school. Therefore, both leadership and management roles are considered at all times as serving the school's core work: learning and teaching. Every teacher has a leadership role within the school community and in relation to pupil learning.*

*This circular encompasses the roles and responsibilities of those leaders who hold designated posts of Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal I and Assistant Principal II, under the new leadership and management structure of the school. It specifically refers to the allocation and appointment of Deputy Principal posts and Assistant Principal posts.”*

## Appendix 2 - Teaching Council: Teacher Supply Final Report

### Striking the Balance July 2017

#### 1. Conclusions and recommendations

- a. Data collection and analysis - of all schools, primary, post-primary and ETB
- b. Standing Group to be established to review the future supply needs of Irish schools
- c. The Standing Group should meet with stakeholders every year
- d. Resources should be approved and allocated to allow the DES and the Teaching Council to develop further the working model and to support the initial years of development
- e. **Future policy on teacher supply should incorporate the placing of a strong priority on the stability of supply and on the collaboration between all providers of ITE**
- f. **HEIs be invited to consult with the DES and the HEA as to what actions they can take in the short term to begin to alleviate imbalances in supply**

#### 2. Specific issues in primary schools

- a. **The current substitute teacher system be reviewed with a view to improving its efficiency for schools and for teachers**
- b. **Work to introduce a primary supply model be further developed**
- c. **Supply and demand data provided to be subjected to robust and continuing scrutiny before any significant changes are made on account of its findings.** In particular, there should be a formal peer review of the final model before its use as a planning tool.

## Appendix 3 - UCL: Teacher Recruitment, Development and Retention (July 2023)

*David Laws, Education Policy Institute*

- Workload and flexibility are of higher importance than pay and other terms & conditions, in terms of **teacher retention**
- Other occupations can offer flexibility to teaching graduates that schools can't match
- Particularly challenging to source qualified and experienced teachers in **disadvantaged areas**
- Teachers in struggling schools take 50% more sick leave, compounding the issue
- **The impact of high quality leadership in schools is key.** [Nuffield Foundation](#) report due out soon.
- Considering grouping schools to deploy staff where needed.

*Peter Kent, ICP*

- Leaders and teachers feeling **burnt out**
- *'Principal Health Barometer'* research by Prof Phil Riley tells a common story across countries
- Informal and personal support and networking to nurture leaders is crucial.

*Qing Gu, UCL*

- **40% of qualified teachers have left the profession**
- **The work environment, resources and support – the local support – is hugely influential**
- Dunford, 2016? – **Retention first, recruitment second** – due to the cost and loss associated with a teacher leaving who may not have left...
- Researching why some teachers continue despite the challenges when others don't
- **Wellbeing, an in-school learning culture and self-efficacy correlate with retention** - Johnson, 2004, 2019
- **Impact of school leadership on teacher retention – focus on supports for school leaders.**

*Mary Bousted, author of 'Teacher Retention Crisis – Support, not Surveillance'*

England, teaching:

- **Vacancies have risen five-fold since 2010**
- **1 in 5 teaching outside subject area**
- Pay related to average earnings has declined
- Little or no flexible working
- Average time in the classroom very high

- **40% experience extreme stress in work**
- ‘Surveillance approach’ by OFSTED (Mary very negative about the Inspectorate!)
- **Professional agency is key to retention** – ability to deploy skills to make choices about what you do; involvement in decision-making, support by principals
- British Skills and Employment Survey, done every 5 years since 1992. Since 2012:
  - **work intensity has soared**
  - decline in discretion permitted from 45% to 20%
  - **teachers twice as likely to work under high strain compared to other professionals**
  - England worse than Wales and Scotland

*Panel Discussion – What can policy do?*

- Structural reform in schools can only do so much where there are systemic issues such as OFSTED and pay issues.
- **Pay helps attract entrants but does not address retention**
- [Teacher Shortages in England: Analysis and Pay Options, EPI 2020](#) – persistently poor children are two years behind the rest of the population
- Mental health issues very severe – very vulnerable children offered virtual sessions that don’t work
- Demise of SEN supports
- Growth in child poverty physically stunting children’s growth – teachers feeding children from own salaries.