

RESPONSE

Educational Excellence Everywhere White Paper

Pam Tatlow 5 July 2016

SUMMARY

1. MillionPlus, the Association for Modern Universities, hosts a Deans of Education Network for the many modern universities that are long-standing providers of initial teacher training (ITT) for both primary and secondary phases. These universities are centres of excellence in initial teacher training, pedagogical research, subject expertise and continuous professional development for teachers.
2. In the immediate aftermath of the publication on 17th March 2016 of the White Paper *Educational Excellence Everywhere*¹, much comment was triggered by the White Paper's assertion that in England "by the end of 2020, all schools will be academies or in the process of becoming academies"². Subsequently Nicky Morgan MP, the Secretary of State for Education, announced on 6th May that these objectives would be moderated although in reality the brief given to Regional Schools Commissioners will result in many schools becoming academies – a position described by some commentators as a Z rather than a U-turn³.
3. In addition to changes to school organisation and significant changes to the role Local Authorities which, among other things, will lose any responsibility for school improvement, the White Paper sets out plans to progress further reforms to teacher education and qualifications. This response focuses on this aspect of the White Paper which we believe also deserves much greater parliamentary scrutiny.

REFORMS TO INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING, TEACHER SUPPLY AND QUALIFICATIONS - THE PRE-WHITE PAPER STORY

4. The functions of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) which was an arms-length body with responsibility for teacher workforce planning and allocations of initial teacher training places in England, were brought in-house by the government in 2010 in advance of the [2011 Education Act](#). The latter formalised the TDA's abolition with day-to-day responsibility for the interpretation of Ministerial policy, associated planning and ITT allocations undertaken by the National College of Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) which was also taken in-house into DfE with an amended remit.
5. In 2010 Michael Gove MP, the then Secretary of State for Education, issued a White Paper⁴ supporting reforms to ITT that were designed to transfer the latter from being 'university-led' to being 'school-led'

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508447/Educational_Excellence_Everywhere.pdf

² Ibid, page 55

³ <http://schoolsweek.co.uk/morgans-academy-u-turn-is-a-z-turn/>

⁴ The importance of teaching White Paper was published in November 2010

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf

notwithstanding the fact that university programmes for ITT were delivered in partnership with schools. School Direct was introduced and promoted to offer new recruitment routes into teacher education. While School Direct has links with universities which currently accredit professional as well as academic qualifications, allocations for initial teacher training places have been changed on an annual basis since 2011 with more and more places, particularly at postgraduate entry level, transferred to School Direct for recruitment directly by schools.

6. In 2012 Ministers changed the regulations to remove the requirement for teachers in academy schools to be qualified. The number of unqualified teachers in England has risen from 16,000 to 20,300 in state funded schools⁵. At the same time the government has increased the time that trainee teachers are required to spend in school during their training.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS: THE WHITE PAPER'S PROPOSALS

7. Specifically the White Paper states that the government intends to

'c) Continue to move to an increasingly school-led ITT system which recruits enough great teachers in every part of the country, so that the best schools and leaders control which teachers are recruited and how they are trained

d) Introduce new quality criteria for ITT providers and allocate training places accordingly, providing greater certainty to the best providers – both school and university-led – by giving allocations over several years

e) Replace Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) 'with a stronger, more challenging accreditation based on a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom, as judged by great schools. This new accreditation will raise the quality and status of the teaching profession, better recognising advanced subject knowledge and pedagogy that is rooted in up-to-date evidence'

8. However, the National Audit Office (NAO)⁶ and the Public Accounts Committee⁷ have independently criticised the DfE's approach to the reform of teacher education pointing out that the School Direct programme has never been evaluated. Moreover, the reforms to ITT and the abolition of the TDA have coincided with increasing problems of teacher supply and teacher shortage.
9. MillionPlus is particularly concerned that the reforms to teacher education and professional accreditation outlined in the White Paper are not supported by a robust evidence or research base, are unlikely to deliver regional and national teacher supply and have been tabled notwithstanding that the NAO has pointed out that there has been no independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the DfE's programme to date.

INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING: A THREE TIER SYSTEM

10. At first sight, the White Paper's proposal to allocate initial teacher training places over several years might be considered a step in the right direction bearing in mind that the process and methodology for allocating ITT places has changed annually since 2011. There is an urgent need for all universities to have

⁵ School Workforce Census

⁶ NAO, *Training new teachers*, <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Training-new-teachers.pdf>

⁷ House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, *Training new teachers*, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubacc/73/73.pdf>

more stability and an increased number of ITT places to enable them to plan strategically and staff appropriately including in subject specialisms.

11. However, this is not what the White Paper proposes. Instead the White Paper outlines an intention to accelerate the move to a system of entirely school-based initial teacher training while designating some universities as centres of excellence on the basis of criteria that are opaque and potentially not fit for purpose. It is defunct to understand how the 'best schools and school leaders' can possibly make decisions in different parts of the country to deliver a national system of teacher supply which also meets regional needs in all subjects and modes.
12. As far as ITT allocations are concerned, there is every possibility that a three-tier system will emerge, with a handful of universities receiving longer-term allocations based on a designation as a centre of excellence, thus enabling them to invest and plan and secure their position, with the rest operating increasingly short-term strategies while the majority of ITT places are transferred to School Centred ITT provision.
13. Although not referenced in the White Paper, NCTL has also suggested that some School Centres of Initial Teaching Training (SCITTs) will be designated centres of excellence. The potential criteria and process for such designation have not been published.
14. If progressed these proposals have the potential to reduce and even remove the role of important university providers and jeopardise the support that universities provide to schools and to continuous professional development outside of the classroom at the same time as the responsibilities of Local Authorities for school improvement are being removed.
15. The National Audit Office's report pointed out that the government had adopted a short-term approach to ITT provision which had not been informed by an adequate understanding of local and regional recruitment issues and recommended that further work was undertaken to examine the benefits of different training routes in order to develop a better understanding of recruitment landscapes at the local and regional level.⁸ MillionPlus concurs with this view and believes that the ITT proposals in the White Paper should be deferred pending this research being undertaken.

CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE: QUESTIONS OF TIMING AND CONSULTATION

16. It has become clear that Ministers intend to progress the White Paper's proposals for teacher education for the 2017-18 admissions year for which universities and school providers will commence recruitment in September / October 2016. Accordingly the intention of Ministers is to make an announcement about the universities and SCITTs that they have designated 'centres of excellence' early in the 2016-17 academic year i.e. circa September 2016.
17. It is worth noting that shortly after the Department for Education tabled its White Paper, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published a separate HE White Paper⁹, HE and Research Bill¹⁰ and a technical consultation on the application of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in universities. There

⁸ <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/training-new-teachers/>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-white-paper>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/higher-education-and-research-bill>

does not appear to have been any substantial discussion between DfE and BIS as to the potential impact or relationship between these two sets of proposals.

18. NCTL has conducted some roundtable discussions with university and school ITT providers and has suggested that designations of centres of excellence may be 'data-driven' for 2017-18 but that this may change in future years. However, the data currently available will not have been collected for this purpose and NCTL is unable to advise how long designations will be for and whether, for example, there will be any rights of appeal including in respect of the interpretation of any data or criteria used.
19. The White Paper was published in March 2016 but the DfE has not yet published a formal consultation document on the purpose, the criteria and the procedures by which centres of excellence will be designated for the 2017-18 admissions, or subsequent admissions, years.
20. Designations of centres of excellence will have reputational and financial impacts on university providers in particular because the White Paper states that such centres are likely to be privileged with a guarantee of several years' ITT allocations.
21. MillionPlus believes that the principle and purpose of centres of excellence, their remit and the criteria and conditions of their designation should be subject to a formal and transparent consultation process. Pending this consultation, the designation of centres of excellence should be deferred. It would also be helpful if the Education Select Committee scrutinised the proposals.

'QUALITY' CRITERIA AND ITT PROVISION

22. The White Paper alludes to criteria by which 'quality' ITT providers might be identified and centres of excellence designated. These include the quality of training programmes, the effectiveness of providers in recruiting 'high quality' trainees, and the impact of those trainees on standards on teaching in schools, while 'centres of excellence' would draw on subject knowledge and research. There are significant problems with these proposals particularly if they are then linked with allocations as proposed.
23. For example, the quality of a programme cannot be easily or reliably compared on the basis of an Ofsted rating since several changes to the Ofsted framework for the inspection of university ITT providers have been introduced since 2009-10. As a result the grading of some universities relate to a framework that has been replaced. Meanwhile SCITTs and schools are not inspected at all for their delivery of ITT. In evidence to the Education Select Committee on 29th June, Amanda Spielman, the next Chief Inspector of Ofsted, indicated that the merit of applying an 'outstanding' rating in Ofsted school inspections might be subject to review.
24. All providers focus on recruiting high quality trainees. However, degree outcomes do not necessarily correlate with professional effectiveness and in any case only relate to postgraduate entry when 40% of ITT is currently linked with undergraduate provision.¹¹ Some entrants to the profession, including experts from other fields such as the arts, may not present with traditional entry qualifications and there are potential implications for widening participation of narrow definitions of quality since universities quite properly take into account potential as well as pre-entry qualifications when they recruit students to undergraduate and postgraduate ITT programmes.

¹¹ Undergraduate programmes accounted for just over 40% of all new entrants to primary teaching routes in 2014/15, *ITT teacher training: trainee number census* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2015-to-2016>

25. The reference in the White Paper to 4* research as a potential determinant of the designation of a university centre of excellence is also misplaced. Research ratings relate to the assessment of the quality of university research under the Research Excellence Framework (REF) – a process that takes place every 5 years. However, the REF does not capture the whole picture of an institution’s research profile and may well not include the pedagogical or practice-based research that inform learning and teaching. Research ratings do not equate with depth of experience and capacity to teach particular subjects in school settings.
26. The suggestion that quality criteria should relate in some way to the impact that a teacher has on the standard of teaching in schools is also fraught with problems. The impact of teachers on standards (however the latter are defined) is dependent on a wide range of factors outside of most providers’ control including the circumstances of the school and the differing roles that teachers undertake.
27. Finally, any examination of an institution’s track record of recruitment would need to take account of the variable allocations, methodologies and interventions that have been deployed by NCTL since 2010, all of which have favoured school-run and SCITT programmes. Universities differ in terms of the ITT provision that they offer and have had to operate in an unstable and uneven policy landscape which is also influenced by region and locality.

INCREASING SCHOOL-BASED INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

28. The proposals to further shift more ITT allocations to SCITTs also raise questions about economies of scale including for primary education routes but also for the viability of secondary courses that draw on the expertise of a variety of specialists. The continued drive to transfer allocations and control of the system to schools and some Headteachers also fails to recognise the extensive relationships and partnerships that universities have with schools. Six modern universities alone (Canterbury Christ Church, Liverpool Hope, Bath Spa, Wolverhampton, London South Bank and Staffordshire) supported 2084 partnerships with schools, including 229 partnerships with lead schools for School Direct.
29. Further to this, an accelerated move towards SCITTs would jeopardise the supply of teachers in key areas. The latest published figures show modern universities provided over half of all final year postgraduate trainees awarded QTS¹².
30. In 2014/15 70% of men entering postgraduate primary ITT programmes did so at modern universities and over half of those entering postgraduate ITT programmes in STEM subjects studied at modern universities including 78% in Design & Technology, 52% in Mathematics and 79% of Computer Science.¹³
31. These figures do not take into account those entering and graduating from undergraduate initial teacher training that provided 6,445 final year trainees in 2013/14 of which, 91% were at modern universities.

REPLACING QTS WITH ACCREDITATION

32. The proposals to replace Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) with a system of school-based accreditation, and a move away from the involvement of universities in judgements on teacher qualification, will result in an increasing range of interpretations of the teacher standards. NCTL has suggested that universities will still be engaged in awarding an initial professional qualification. However, the proposals to make Headteachers responsible for the award of QTS will lead to major issues in terms of oversight, parity and

¹² Initial Teacher Training Performance Profiles: 2013 to 2014 academic year

¹³ Initial Teacher Training Census 2014/15

quality and create additional burdens in schools where Ministers have already acknowledged existing problems of workload.¹⁴

33. MillionPlus believes that proposals for new accreditation routes should be the subject of formal consultation and that such accreditation should be able to demonstrate rigorous quality assurance, be nationally moderated and awarded by universities (in partnership with schools) and have the capacity to provide oversight and the sharing of effective practice through national quality assurance organisations.

THE ROLE OF TEACHER EDUCATORS BEYOND ITT: CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

34. The separation of responsibilities for initial qualification and QTS in the way proposed has the potential to undermine rather than deliver a coherent framework of professional development. Expert teacher educators working in universities with expert teacher educators in schools are essential to the development and retention of excellent teachers. However the role of teacher educators has not been referenced in any DfE publication since 2010 or in the 2016 White Paper. This approach stands in sharp contrast to that adopted in countries like Finland where teacher educators in universities and in schools work in partnership to support initial teacher education and professional development on a career-long basis.
35. It is equally disappointing that the White Paper misses the opportunity to properly address the need for high quality continuous professional development (CPD) which:
 - changes classroom practices for the better
 - makes teachers feel valued
 - matches the needs of teachers and schools
 - re-energises teachers
36. Instead the White Paper perpetuates the ideological shift in the way that teachers are trained in England towards an apprenticeship model rather than one which develops autonomous professionals. As a result of the reforms introduced since 2010, most Initial Teacher Education is now brief. Routes into teaching have become increasingly varied and 'would-be' teachers no longer have an entitlement to a minimum length of training.
37. The danger of insufficient initial training and continuous professional development is that teaching can become superficial and performative, leading teachers to focus on knowledge-based learning rather than conceptual understanding. Currently much CPD is focused on addressing extensive changes to policy and the curriculum which have been, and continue to be, introduced in time-frames that are too short.
38. For teachers, CPD should be both a professional entitlement and a responsibility. A national flexible framework would be a step towards ensuring that all teachers are 'up to speed' and excited about their teaching. Teachers and schools should be able to make decisions on professional development needs, based not on simply what may be available, but from high quality CPD options provided by excellent teacher educators including in universities and by subject organisations.
39. While there are currently professional development opportunities for teachers, these are neither consistently provided nor sustained. Like other professions, teachers need opportunities for CPD away from the classroom and the school in which they are working.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workload-challenge-for-schools-government-response>

40. To address this there should be a National Framework of Entitlement beyond ITT so that all teachers can engage with research in their field, both on how to improve teaching and subject knowledge.
41. To make this a reality the educational environment in which schools are working will need to be adjusted. Headteachers are under enormous pressure from changes in the curriculum, the examination system, DfE requirements and Ofsted inspections and may be concerned that a National Framework of Entitlement will take staff away from the classroom and potentially undermine school and student performance. These concerns need to be addressed holistically.
42. Schools should be funded to enable such entitlements to become a reality and expectations, including in respect of inspection regimes, should be adjusted to support access to a system of Professional Development Entitlements for teachers.
43. In principle England should be in a strong position to ensure its teachers and teacher educators can work in partnership to educate the next generation of pupils and students. However, in comparison to other countries the role of expert teacher educators and university education departments in working with schools on the delivery of academic and professional qualifications, initial teacher education and continuous professional development has been increasingly de-valued since 2011. This is likely to continue unless the proposals for further reform outlined in the March 2016 Education White Paper are adjusted.

CURRICULUM

44. The White Paper continues to focus on a 'knowledge-based' curriculum and the expectation that the vast majority of pupils will study the EBacc. This narrow range of subjects alongside new school performance measures will amend school behaviour and restrict pupils' options at the expense of a broad and balanced curriculum particularly in respect of subjects leading to careers in the creative industries.
45. Similarly, any strategy to improve careers advice should ensure that the broadest possible range of skills, interests and potential careers are promoted and take into account the creative industries.

CONCLUSION

46. Modern universities are centres of excellence in teacher education and experienced innovators in the design, accreditation and delivery of high quality professional development. They are key to the future supply of the teaching workforce and its retention and currently support thousands of partnerships with schools, including over 500 partnerships with lead schools for School Direct. In the academic year 2013/14 modern universities made up 60% of all final year teacher trainees, 53% of final year postgraduate trainees and 91% of final year undergraduate trainees.
47. In their present form, it is therefore difficult to see how the White Paper's proposals for teacher education will enhance the supply and the retention of high quality teachers that schools need and pupils deserve.

For more information:

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