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Jim Knight MP

Minister of State for Schools and 14-19 Learners

Graham Holley
Chief Executive
Training and Development Agency for Schools
151 Buckingham Palace Road
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4th June 2007

Dear Graham

The anticipated fall in numbers of pupils in both primary and secondary schools over the next few years has already led us to start reducing the number of places for initial teacher training. This coupled with the success the Agency has had in recruiting more people into teaching and the situation where vacancies on a national level are only around half a percent of posts, means that we must reassess how we distribute financial incentives to attract new recruits into teaching. This is not of course to say that we have all of the teachers we need. There are still shortages in maths and science, in London and in representation by ethnic minorities, and your Grant Letter for the current year asks you to continue working towards addressing this.

However, in general I do not think it is right that in these circumstances we should continue to provide financial incentives in cases where they are no longer necessary.

In the last five years we have seen strong recruitment to English and to primary and healthy competition for training places and for jobs in schools. We must reflect changing circumstances and always seek value for money, and I have therefore decided to make two changes in the arrangements for paying PGCE training bursaries from 2008/09. Primary rolls are generally falling and we already have more good quality applicants for primary ITT than we can offer places to. I therefore plan to reduce the primary bursary from £6,000 to £4,000. English has been classed as a priority subject for some years and, while it remains a vitally important one, there is now a large supply of graduates able to train to teach it. I therefore plan to cease to regard it as a priority subject and it will attract a bursary of £6,000 rather than the current £9,000 and golden hello of £2,500. I should be grateful if you would inform the ITT sector of these changes which will operate from 2008/09.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

We also need to review the use we make of golden hellos and how they are targeted, and will be discussing this with the Agency later. You will know that Alan Johnson has recently agreed to remove the anomaly which currently prevents teachers who trained in Scotland or Northern Ireland but teach shortage subjects in England from receiving golden hellos, and the details of how this will be arranged for 2008 will be communicated shortly. We will also need to consider how these should be paid in the longer term as part of a wider review of the eligibility for golden hellos.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jim Knight'. The signature is stylized, with a large 'J' and 'K'.

JIM KNIGHT