



2018-0018520POSoS

Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State

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14 MAY 2018

Dear Ms Hollis,

Thank you for your letter of 17 April, about teacher shortages, recruitment and training. I would be grateful if you could share a copy of this reply with your co-signatories.

Teacher recruitment and retention is a key priority for this Government, and I welcome your support and proposed measures to tackle these important issues.

Overall, teaching remains an attractive and rewarding career with numbers at an all-time high. Over 457,000 FTE teachers are in state-funded schools throughout England – 15,500 more than in 2010. In addition, an increasing number of former teachers are returning to the profession. In 2015/16, 14,200 teachers came back to the classroom - an 8% improvement on 2011. Furthermore, the overall vacancy rate continues to be low, at only 0.3% of all teachers.

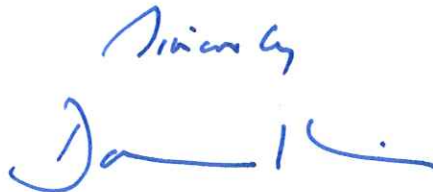
I am aware, however, that recruitment and retention remains a key challenge for schools. We need to go further to continue to attract and retain high-quality teachers in our schools, which is why I have announced the development of a strategy to drive recruitment and boost retention of teachers.

This strategy will include a clear and attractive offer to teachers and potential recruits. We will examine the issues that discourage people from going into teaching or make them consider leaving – such as excessive workload. The strategy will build on the existing work we have done to support schools and will involve introducing a period of stability, clarifying the roles of actors within the accountability system, and providing evidence-based solutions to strip away workload that does not add value. We will take a systematic look at how we support specific groups of teachers, including those that are under-represented.

I was very interested to read your suggestions on funding for trainee teachers, professional development, clarifying the routes into teaching, the application process, and the skills test. I was particularly grateful to you for enclosing your explanation of the routes into teaching. We have been developing our own thinking on how to more simply articulate the routes into teaching and improve our communications. I understand my officials have discussed this issue with you and we appear to be consistent in our approach. We would like to continue to work closely with you as we develop the strategy.

I was grateful to receive your kind request for a meeting to discuss these issues further. Whilst unfortunately diary pressures preclude such a meeting in the immediate future, the Minister of State for School Standards, Nick Gibb MP, would be pleased to meet you. Please contact his office at: Gibb-DIARY.PS@education.gov.uk.

Once again, thank you for writing. I very much looking forward to continuing to work with you on these important matters.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Damian Hinds', written in a cursive style.

Damian Hinds
Secretary of State for Education