Promoting Quality in Teacher Education

ucet
Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers

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13 June 2018

Nadim Zahawi MP
Minister for Children and Families
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Dear Minister,

Early years education workforce strategy

The purpose of this letter is to enquire about progress made towards implementing the government's Early Years Workforce strategy and to make some constructive suggestions that could help to make the strategy a success.

UCET, as the membership body for universities and others involved in the initial training and development of the early years workforce, welcomes many of the policies and aspirations outlined in the strategy. We are however concerned that a shortage of teachers in the sector, and insufficient numbers applying for training, will undermine its potential.

To help address the problems we would suggest that:

- The recruitment of students studying for both EYT and QTS early years programmes is taken into account in the DFE's new teacher recruitment and retention strategy. While we very much welcome the development of the new strategy, we are concerned that the needs of the early years sector might be overlooked. Recruitment and retention measures, including the content of any new marketing material, should encompass the early years and not focus disproportionately on the secondary sector.
- The development of an early career framework for NQTs, another policy which we are pleased to support, should encompass teachers in the early years, and any funding available for professional development should be available to EYTs as well as to those holding QTS.
- The ITE requirements, which prescribe the core structure and content of all QTS programmes, should be amended to allow programmes focussed on the birth-seven age range (although we are not arguing for the award of QTS to be restricted to particular age-phases).
- Teachers holding early years professional status should be recognised as being qualified to lead education in all early years settings.

We do of course recognise existing budgetary constraints. However, in the light of the forthcoming review of public expenditure, we would point to research that suggests that investment in early childhood education leads to significant savings, by for example removing the need for subsequent intervention, by a factor as much as seven to one.

Yours sincerely,

James Noble-Rogers
Executive Director
UCET

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Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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James Noble-Rogers
Executive Director, UCET
9-11 Endsleigh Gardens
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24th June 2018

Dear James,

Thank you for your letter of 13 June, about the Early Years Workforce Strategy and your proposals to encourage recruitment to the early years workforce.

I know that a well-qualified early years workforce is crucial to children's outcomes in their later education and life chances. We recognise that specialist early years graduates can bring valuable skills and knowledge to the sector. We are committed to supporting the ambitions of those that want to progress to graduate-level early years qualifications.

As you know, one of the commitments in the workforce strategy is to improve early years careers advice. To address this, we are working with an expert group to develop an early years careers progression map. The map will also include entry routes into the profession and will be available over the summer period.

With the ambitions set out in the social mobility strategy, our focus is on supporting professional development activity that strengthens pedagogy and practice in the early years workforce. We are currently considering a range of approaches to early years workforce quality, including specialist graduates.

Thank you again for writing to me on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Familie