



SUPPLEMENTARY EVIDENCE TO THE SCHOOL TEACHERS' REVIEW BODY

January 2025

Community
465c Caledonian Road
London
N7 9GX

01332 372337
www.community-tu.org

Introduction

1. Following publication of the evidence to The Review Body from the Department for Education, our sister unions and other stakeholders, Community feel it is important to draw attention to some potential areas of conflict and to share additional evidence to aid in resolution.
2. For example, since 2021, the starting salary for teachers has risen twice, but still remains some £2,500 shy of comparable graduate roles.¹ Therefore, teacher pay must at least match this in order to remain competitive.
3. And despite teacher pay rises of 18% since 2021, teacher and school leader pay remains around 22% lower in real terms than in 2010 (RPI) meaning the relative pay of teachers and other public sector occupations has fallen further down the pay distribution scale, even when their usually more generous employer pension contributions are taken into account.²
4. It is vital that this damage to teacher and school leader pay and conditions is repaired to fix the recruitment and retention crisis. Community calls on The Review Body to make a 7% uplift to teacher pay rates to begin closing this gap.

Points to Note

5. According to the Department's own evidence to The Review Body, "teacher pay competitiveness is set to improve in 2024/25,"³ however it is our opinion that the proposed pay award of less than 3% will not validate this statement. The pay rise for 2024-25 positions real-terms pay for new teachers at about the same level as 2010, and "roughly matches" recent growth in private sector wages, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies' public sector pay report.⁴ Therefore, in order to *improve* pay competitiveness, we need to see an improved pay offer.
6. And yet the Department's view is that a 2.8% teacher pay award would be appropriate for 2025/26.⁵ We, of course, understand that this is a negotiating figure. However, given the data on the continuing recruitment and retention issues and the statement that "the number of newly qualified teachers becoming available to schools over the next few years ... indicates a challenging period ahead,"⁶ Community do not feel that 2.8% is sufficient to address the issue.
7. The latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that annual growth in employees' average regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 4.9%, covering the period June to August 2024,⁷ and data from the Financial Times states wage growth has hit 5.2%.⁸ So it is reasonable for us to assume that a shortage of teachers and a high

¹ ONS - Average weekly earnings in Great Britain (October 2024)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsingreatbritain/october2024>

² Jasmine Norden in TES. "Experienced teacher pay 9% below 2010 levels despite rise". (2024)

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/experienced-teacher-pay-below-2010-levels-despite-rise>

³ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 5, paragraph 12.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-to-the-strb-2025-pay-award-for-teachers-and-leaders>

⁴ Jonathan Cribb et al. "Pressures on public sector pay", Institute for Fiscal Studies (September 2024)

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/pressures-public-sector-pay>

⁵ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 23, paragraph 90.

⁶ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 12, paragraph 37.

⁷ ONS - Average weekly earnings in Great Britain (October 2024)

⁸ Delphine Strauss and Ian Smith in The Financial Times. "UK wage growth has accelerated to 5.2%". (2024)

<https://www.ft.com/content/80a4e2b5-6008-4974-b92f-ad47b527825a>

attrition rate for school leaders would result in annual growth in excess of the average in order to improve the image and attractiveness of the profession.

8. But it would seem that our assumption is flawed.
9. This offer is less than the current rate of inflation. It is below the rate of recent pay awards in the private sector (the OBR forecast 3%).⁹ It does not recognise the need to retain experience, and lamentably it cements the teaching profession at pay below 2010 levels. Furthermore, the fact that it will not be directly funded by the Department, but is expected to be funded through existing budgets, is worrying, and we fear the Government has underestimated the seriousness of the situation affecting England's schools.
10. We recognise the pressure on the public purse and that funding statistics suggest schools have seen a 35% increase in cash terms over 2010 funding levels. However, once adjusted for inflation, we note the reality, that: funding per pupil was broadly flat between 2010-11 and 2015-16, at around £7,200 in 2023-24 prices, it then fell by 3.9% over 2016-18, before increasing by just 1.2% over 2018-19 and 2019-20. Since then, funding has increased by 7.9% (after adjusting for inflation) over the course of the following five years, reaching £7,570 in 2024-25 (in 2023-24 prices).¹⁰
11. We acknowledge that the core schools' budget will rise by £2.3 billion in 2025-26. This excellent news will put much needed funds into high needs and cover the remaining costs of the 2024 teachers' pay award in mainstream schools, so that the full twelve months of salary costs are fully funded at a national level, but it will not adequately cover future pay awards, and funding must be made available to address the significant ongoing budgetary pressures that schools face.
12. Indeed, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, once the high needs funding is set to one side, this is actually only a 2.8% rise in per-pupil funding, when school costs are estimated to rise by 3.6%.¹¹
13. We are really pleased that per-pupil funding has increased by 11% since 2019, but note this only restores school spending to 2010 levels and does not begin to cover increased costs, including the rapid growth in the number of pupils identified with special educational needs.
14. This all means that, after accounting for planned spending on high needs, according to the IFS, mainstream school funding per pupil only grew by 5% in real terms since 2019.
15. We celebrated the 5.5% award issued in July 2024 as the start of a journey of restoration, and we acknowledge the 18% cumulative pay award over the past three years, but it is vital that we consider this against the significant economic turbulence of the last few years that has meant the cost of living skyrocketing up 21% across that same time period with energy costs up 80%.¹² And higher prices on goods now baked in. Once all this is taken into account, teacher pay rising by 18% since the pandemic does little to address the imbalance and does not improve teacher pay competitiveness at all.

⁹ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 23, paragraph 92.

¹⁰ DfE School Funding Statistics (2024)

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-funding-statistics>

¹¹ Rhi Storer in Schools Week. "We Can't Go On Like This", (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/we-cant-go-on-like-this-costs-will-outstrip-school-funding-rises-again-says-ifs>

¹² House of Commons Library, "Domestic energy prices", (2024)

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9491/>

Recruitment and Retention

16. Community agree with the Department that teaching is a valued and skilled profession. And we are pleased that the Department has committed to ensuring that new teachers entering the classroom have, or are working towards, Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) because we too believe that students will benefit from having professionally qualified, well-trained teachers.¹³ But status, on its own, is insufficient to attract and retain the number of teachers needed.
17. Maintaining a sufficient and high-quality primary workforce, including via improved retention, remains vitally important and yet, over the last decade, teacher supply has struggled to keep pace with the growth in pupil numbers.¹⁴ This problem has been concentrated in secondary schools, which have seen pupil:teacher ratios rise and acute challenges within particular subjects.¹⁵ Secondary PGITT recruitment in 2024/25 was 62% of target, with recruitment low in absolute terms.¹⁶
18. The previous Government made much of raising the starting salary of teachers to £30,000 in an effort to improve the recruitment of new entrants into the profession, but they did so at the expense of experience, with almost half a million teachers leaving since 2010 and 40% of teachers leaving the profession within ten years of qualifying.
19. And although the evidence from the Department makes much of the increase in teacher returners or those new to the state-funded sector, noting that this is the highest since the School Workforce Census began,¹⁷ it is vital to note that this is currently a one-off event, with no understanding as to why it has occurred. Therefore, pinning hopes that this may be the beginning of a trend is somewhat misguided. Indeed, we also note that evidence shows the leaver rates for teachers in their second year, and years 3 to 5, have rebounded, to the highest level since the SWC began.¹⁸
20. Put simply, we must focus much more effort on retaining teachers through a combination of better pay, improved autonomy and reduced workload. The single biggest group leaving teaching is women in their 30s¹⁹ and although many report that they did not want to leave, they felt they had no choice due to workload, striking a balance between teaching and family, and inadequate maternity provision. Some academy trusts²⁰ are exploring how they can make teaching more appealing to mothers and parents, and Community recommend that The Review Body investigate these experiments to see what recommendations can be implemented nationally.

Supporting Workers in the Classroom

21. Young jobseekers care about money, but according to *What do students want?* “Money isn’t everything”, they also want to hear about the wider opportunities that organisations will provide them with, the likely work-life balance, and the ethical and environmental positioning of organisations. And, as noted above, it is not just young job seekers who want improvements to their workload and conditions.

¹³ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 18, paragraph 71.

¹⁴ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 5, paragraph 9.

¹⁵ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 5, paragraph 8.

¹⁶ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 10, paragraph 29.

¹⁷ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 12, paragraph 42.

¹⁸ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 19, paragraph 74.

¹⁹ “Missing Mothers” *The New Britain Project* (2024) Page 6.

²⁰ <https://www.newbritain.org.uk/missing-mothers>

²⁰ Dixons Academies Trust has said it wants to offer a nine-day fortnight for teachers in its 17 schools across the north of England.

22. In 2021, 82% of surveyed leaders (in schools that offer flexible working) agreed that flexible working helped retain teachers and leaders who might otherwise have left, and 85% of leaders agreed that flexible working had a positive impact on teacher and leader wellbeing.²¹
23. Enabling flexible working can remove barriers to a successful teaching career for many groups, including disabled people, people with caring responsibilities, and teachers within particular age groups. And yet, despite government guidance and support for both flexible working and taking preparation, planning and assessment (PPA) time at home, it seems that too many schools continue to deny teachers these flexibilities.²²
24. It is clear things need to change in order to make teaching more attractive to graduates and “the shift to hybrid work remains pivotal.” The work of trusts, such as Dixons, in exploring what this might mean in schools will be closely watched by the whole sector to understand the appeal, take up and possible impact across the sector.

PPA Time

25. Time is what is needed to support teachers to remain in the profession. And yet England’s teachers are recorded as working between 50 and 53 hours each week.²³ Given that directed time is limited to 1,265 hours, a working week of between 50 and 53 hours equates to an additional 17 hours each week throughout the school year.²⁴
26. When PPA time and other non-contact time is allowed for, it is clear that teachers in England spend more time in the classroom compared with other high-performing countries such as Japan (511-615 hours per year) and Finland (551-677 hours per year) or even against the OECD average (672-772 hours per year), and even more time working outside of the classroom.²⁵ They spend more time planning, preparing and resourcing, and delivering lessons and, when combined with high-stakes testing and an unforgiving accountability regime, is another driver for teachers leaving the profession.
27. And it is not only the number of hours that is the problem, but the intensity of the work. “Research from Thomas et al. (University of Birmingham, 2003) found that teachers’ working weeks were much more intensive than those of other professions and that despite teachers seemingly having so many holidays, a large proportion of these are used to complete work that they didn’t manage to cram into the previous term or to undertake preparation for the next term.”²⁶
28. As mentioned earlier, we are pleased that the Department has clarified the position on PPA time, so schools are clear that they can allow teachers to use this time more flexibly, at home and in one chunk of time, where operationally feasible²⁷, however there are too many times when PPA time is poorly scheduled so that teachers cannot take it off-site,

²¹ School and College Panel: December 2021, IFF Research (2021), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-panel-omnibus-surveys-for-2021-to-2022>

²² NASUWT, “Flexible Working Survey” (2023) <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/static/44c65415-8095-4917-81d661e22fb70e12/eefcd53f-9633-4b01-ae49edaa09a5df1c/Flexible-Working-Survey-Report-2023-England.pdf>

²³ Prof. John Jerrim and Sam Sims, “The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018” (2019) Page 75. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f6484c2e90e075a01d2f4ce/TALIS_2018_research.pdf

²⁴ 50 hours per week for 39 weeks of term time is 1,950 hours. This is 685 hours above directed time, or 17 additional hours per week.

²⁵ OECD, “teaching Hours Indicator” <https://data.oecd.org/teachers/teaching-hours.htm>

²⁶ Haili Hughes, “Preserving Positivity”, John Catt Educational (2020), Page 40.

²⁷ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 35, paragraph 146.

even if they were to make that request, and many more instances where it is not permitted.

29. This is especially the case in small schools where PPA time cannot be guaranteed and too many teachers forego their full entitlement to PPA time, with it being siphoned off for meetings, catch-ups and other extraneous activities.
30. As we have called for in previous submissions, Community continue the clarion for an increase to the basic amount of PPA time for classroom teachers from 10% to 20%. This does not have to be a wholesale jump, but could be increased incrementally over the next few years as the availability of teachers increases.
31. Flexibility also needs to extend to TLRs. Teaching and Learning Responsibility and Special Educational Needs Allowances currently apply to the whole of a teacher's salary and are pro-rated if that individual works part time. It could be assumed that the duties are the responsibility of someone else during that teacher's absence, but increasingly, teachers are assuming whole school duties for which they are the sole person responsible, whilst also working part time. Jack Dyson notes in *Schools Week: The STPCD restrictions have contributed to "unhealthy flexible working arrangements where people haven't been fairly remunerated for the job they're doing"*.²⁸ In short, teachers are being discriminated against because of their chosen working pattern.
32. Some multi-academy trusts have taken action to address this and are deviating from national pay and conditions to more "fairly" reward part-time teachers for extra leadership and management responsibilities. Community would support changes to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document to allow the full value of a TLR to be paid to a teacher who has sole responsibility regardless of their working time.
33. Removing the mandatory pro-rating of TLRs for part-time teachers could have a positive effect on women (76% of the workforce) who are more likely to work part time (29% of women work part time compared to 9% of men). Considering 14% of part-time teachers are in receipt of a TLR, compared to 21% of full-time teachers, enabling the full TLR payment to be made to part-time teachers (where appropriate) could reduce barriers to part-time teachers moving into middle leadership roles, and reduce the risk of responsibilities being removed from teachers returning from parental leave.²⁹
34. It will be important that some consideration is given to how this might be achieved to protect the staff member themselves and to ensure that vital roles remain sufficiently covered for the benefit of colleagues and children. And, where staff work part-time and have a TLR, ensuring that part-time working protections apply to them so that they are not expected to work outside of their contracted days and times, and that they will not be expected to attend school on any non-working day.
35. This is especially the case for those who work part-days, who particularly need to be protected from trapped time. Trapped time occurs when training or school events happen in the evening, but a staff member finishes their work some time earlier, often at lunchtime, but are expected to attend the evening activity. Similarly, it is vital that training opportunities and mandatory updates are widely available, not just in after-school sessions, to ensure that the entitlement to professional development is maintained and not expected to be completed in a staff member's PPA or own time.

²⁸ Jack Dyson in Schools Week. "The trailblazer schools already flexing TLR payments" (2024) <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teacher-pay-the-trailblazer-schools-already-flexing-tlr-payments/>

²⁹ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 38, paragraph 156.

Community would recommend that consideration is given to how these situations can be addressed through the pay and conditions framework.

Other Considerations

36. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, energy prices rose rapidly across the UK. The Government implemented price caps on domestic tariffs, but these did not apply to schools and other education premises. Other Government support for energy, such as through specially negotiated tariffs, does not apply to many schools, especially those in rural areas who cannot access mains gas and rely instead on oil or wood pellets for heating.³⁰ These systems were recommended to schools as energy efficient systems which would lower carbon emissions, and yet they are, in some cases, now proving more expensive.
37. It would not be appropriate for us as a trade union to comment further about fuel costs, however desk-based research shows the steep price increases that oil³¹ and wood pellets have sustained over the past three years.³²

³⁰ Oil-fired heating is not covered under the Government contracts.
<https://bepart.co.uk/trending-in-education/heating-oil-costs-in-education/>

³¹ ONS "Heating Oil Prices"
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/kj5u/mm23>

³² Erin Voegelé in Biomass Magazine. "UK imports expected to reach record high in 2024" (2024)
<https://biomassmagazine.com/articles/uk-pellet-imports-expected-to-reach-record-high-in-2024>

Conclusion

38. Community are very much in favour of some of the proposals being made by the Department. In particular, we have previously been frustrated by deliberate delays to the publication of the pay award, causing consternation to teachers, senior leaders and finance teams as budgets have to be redrawn over summer closure periods and the payment of the uplift is not able to be made until Christmas. Therefore, we are very much in support of the re-alignment of the pay process so that pay announcements can be received in a timely manner and properly budgeted for.
39. We are also very much in favour of the proposed changes within the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill which mean that all schools and academies will be required to adhere to the STPCD. In particular, we would like to see the reintroduction of mandatory pay scales as a minimum statutory provision in all schools, to ensure a level playing field across the whole school sector.
40. We have made the case before that a truly independent Review Body must feel empowered to make the recommendations needed to reverse the real-terms pay cuts since 2010, restore pay competitiveness and tackle the workload problems. It is then for Government to make, and be accountable for, the political choices on the investment needed to repair the damage to pay, conditions and supply.
41. Therefore, the pay award for 2025, and subsequent years, must be sufficient to attract and retain the brightest and best. The pay awards must be sustained in order to make a difference to retention, because it is not just about attracting and developing new teachers, but ensuring we maintain the breadth and depth of experience within the sector.
42. One of the reasons that experience is being lost is that, in too many schools, teachers are being denied progression on both the Main and Upper Pay Scales. Despite the Department's own evidence recently stating: "High quality teaching is the within-school factor that makes the biggest difference to young people's outcomes."³³ But if the funding is not there to support the recruitment and retention of teachers, there can be no high-quality teaching.
43. And this is a key point. Nothing will improve if the pay award is not properly funded by government. Any claim that schools can fund the pay award from existing budgets will significantly misjudge the situation in England's schools.
44. The relative value of teachers (and support staff) must be addressed. We are under no illusion that this is a big ask, but it is desperately needed to redress the losses sustained over the past fifteen years and to deliver on improvements to recruitment and retention. This is why Community are asking for an uplift of 7% to continue the journey started last year to make teaching a more attractive proposition.
45. Finally, we need to ensure that teacher pay and conditions address the matter of workload, which remains the single biggest issue affecting the workforce.

³³ Government Evidence to the STRB (2024) Page 26, paragraph 103.