

School Teachers' Review Body 27th Report Damning Indictment of the Westminster Government

On 10 July 2017, after several weeks of holding on to the School Teachers' Review Body (Review Body) 27th Report on teachers' pay for 2017/18, the Secretary of State finally published it along with her response to its recommendations.

The Report is a damning indictment of the Westminster Government's public sector pay cap, which is responsible for the dramatic decline in teachers' pay, which, together with spiralling workload, has led to the teacher shortage now being at crisis level.

The Review Body has sent a clear message to the Westminster Government that the cap on teachers' pay must be lifted if the crisis in teacher supply and morale is to be successfully addressed. Moreover, the Review Body has made it clear that, in the 2017/18 School Year, schools must focus their budgets on rewarding teachers, as this is a prerequisite for maintaining educational standards.

The Review Body recommendations

'We consider that the state of teacher recruitment and retention requires action this year to begin to make teachers' earnings more competitive. The priority is to support recruitment and retention of teachers in the early stages of their career.'

For September 2017, we recommend:

- ***a 2% uplift to the minimum and maximum of the main pay range (MPR);***
- ***a 1% uplift to the minima and maxima of the upper pay range (UPR), the unqualified teacher pay range and the leading practitioner pay range;***
- ***a 1% uplift to the minima and maxima of the leadership group pay range and head teacher group pay ranges; and,***
- ***a 1% uplift to the minima and maxima of the Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) and Special Educational Needs (SEN) allowance ranges.'***

All the recommendations have been accepted by the Secretary of State.

The Review Body recommendations do not require schools to remain within a 1% pay cap when awarding the 2017/18 pay increase to teachers:

'Under the current system of pay and conditions, the overall costs will depend on the decisions made in individual schools and will need to be implemented within the funding that the Government makes available.'¹

The Report draws heavily on the written and oral evidence presented by the NASUWT about the uncompetitive nature of teachers' salaries. The Review Body has quoted the NASUWT's statement that a pay system has developed in England which is *'profoundly demoralising and dispiriting, does not raise standards or reward teachers and does not serve to recruit and retain teachers.'*

Continued overleaf

The Welsh Government gave evidence to the Review Body which stated that it was actively pursuing the devolution of teachers' pay and conditions from September 2018 onwards.

In presenting evidence on the 2017/18 pay award, the Welsh Government indicated that schools would struggle with a pay award of more than 1% because of the level of funding which they will receive.

The Review Body made the following observations about teacher recruitment and retention:

- the number of recruits to ITT in 2016/17 was less than the overall target set by the Department for Education (DfE) for a fifth successive year, and targets for the secondary sector and most individual subjects were not met;
- the overall number of vacancies and temporarily filled posts had risen significantly between 2011 and 2015, doubling during this time;
- a substantial proportion of hours taught in secondary schools in a range of subjects are delivered by teachers who do not hold a relevant post-A-level qualification;
- there is a continuation of the upward trend in the rates of qualified teachers leaving the profession;
- there is a continuing deterioration of retention rates for teachers with between two and five years of service, with the proportion of teachers remaining in the profession after three and five years both falling.

The Review Body has drawn the following conclusions:

*'In our 26th report (July 2016) we said that, based on our assessment of recruitment and retention alone, there was a case for a higher than 1% uplift to the national pay framework. We therefore advised the Department and other consultees that they should help schools to prepare for this. Our analysis of the evidence for the current pay round shows that the trends in recruitment and retention evident last year have continued – teacher retention rates continued to fall, particularly for those in the early stages of their career, and targets for ITT recruitment continue to be missed. We are deeply concerned about the cumulative effect of these trends on teacher supply. We consider that this presents a substantial risk to the functioning of an effective education system.'*²

The Report repeats the Review Body's recommendation that a higher than 1% uplift is necessary to reduce the pay gap between teaching and other graduate professions. However, the Review Body also makes it clear that it is not expecting schools to postpone the implementation of this:

*'We have weighed the competing arguments very carefully. Overall, we believe that the extent of the pressures on teacher recruitment and retention is too significant to defer taking any action for another year.'*³

The Report also makes clear that schools cannot afford not to pay teachers appropriately if they are to maintain standards:

'Pupil achievements are largely dependent on schools maintaining a strong cadre of teachers. This will require school leaders and governing bodies to make best use of their people and give the necessary priority to teachers' pay within their schools' budgets.'

The Report also states that schools should ensure that their pay system acts to reward teachers at all stages of their careers, including when teachers have reached the upper pay range. It does, however, focus this year on uplifting the pay in 2017/18 of teachers paid on the main pay range.

The Review Body's expectation and the expectation of the NASUWT is that schools will act to address the crisis levels of teachers' pay during the 2017/18 School Year. The NASUWT will issue further guidance shortly on how this should be implemented.

1. School Teachers' Review Body 27th Report, 2017, paragraph 5.33

2. Ibid, paragraph 5.23

3. Ibid, paragraph 5.28

