



Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2025:

Summary for school leaders

As a school leader, you will be acutely aware of the continuing challenges in teacher recruitment and retention and the risks these can pose to the quality of education.

Based on our 2025 Teacher Labour Market Report, this summary for school leaders highlights key trends and evidence-based actions you can take to support teacher retention, with a particular focus on workload reduction and flexible working - two areas where your leadership can make a real impact.

Key findings - part 1



Recruitment challenges persist

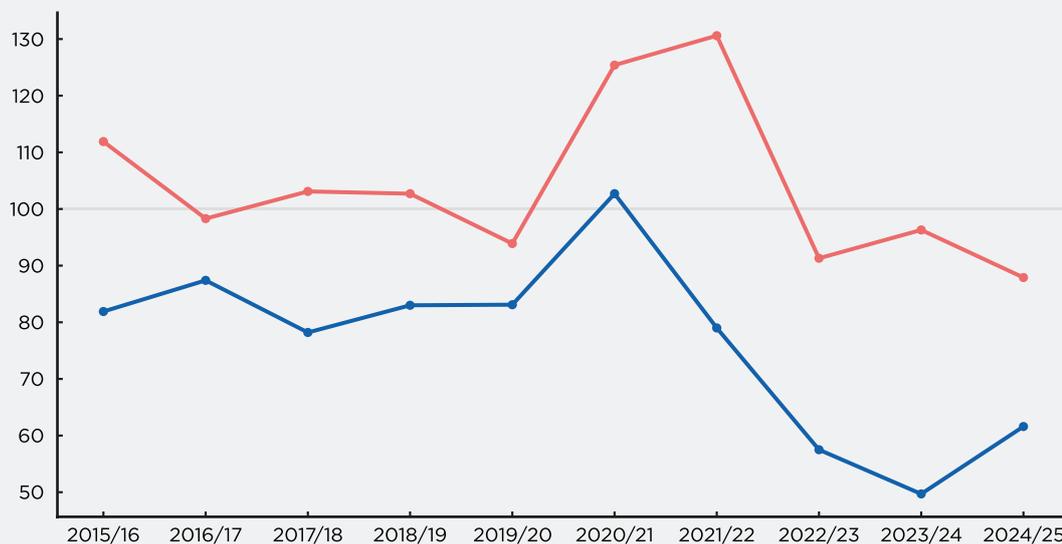
Secondary recruitment in 2024/25 was nearly 40% below target, and primary recruitment fell short for the third consecutive year. Projections suggest under-recruitment is likely to continue into 2025/26.



Teacher leaving rates remain high

In 2022/23, 9.6% of teachers left state-funded teaching, slightly above prepandemic levels. Early-career teachers continue to leave at higher rates, despite the national roll-out of the Early Career Framework. (Chart 1)

Postgraduate ITT recruitment vs target 2015/16 - 2024/25 (%)



In 2022/23
9.6%
of teachers
left state funded
teaching

● Primary
● Secondary

Key findings - part 2



Workload remains a major issue affecting retention

Teachers continue to work significantly longer hours than similar graduates in other jobs. While some small reductions in working hours have been observed over the last decade, high workload remains the most common reason for leaving the profession.



Flexible working remains limited

Hybrid working continues to be a prevalent and attractive feature of graduate jobs outside teaching that schools cannot offer. While more teachers are working part-time or using flexible arrangements, many teachers believe flexible working is not compatible with career progression in schools.



Pupil behaviour appears to have worsened

Teachers and leaders report that pupil behaviour in their school has been getting worse in recent years, and dealing with it is a growing burden on their workload. *90% of teachers considering leaving teaching in 2023/24 cited high workload as a factor, with pupil behaviour becoming one of the fastest-growing contributors to workload since the pandemic.*

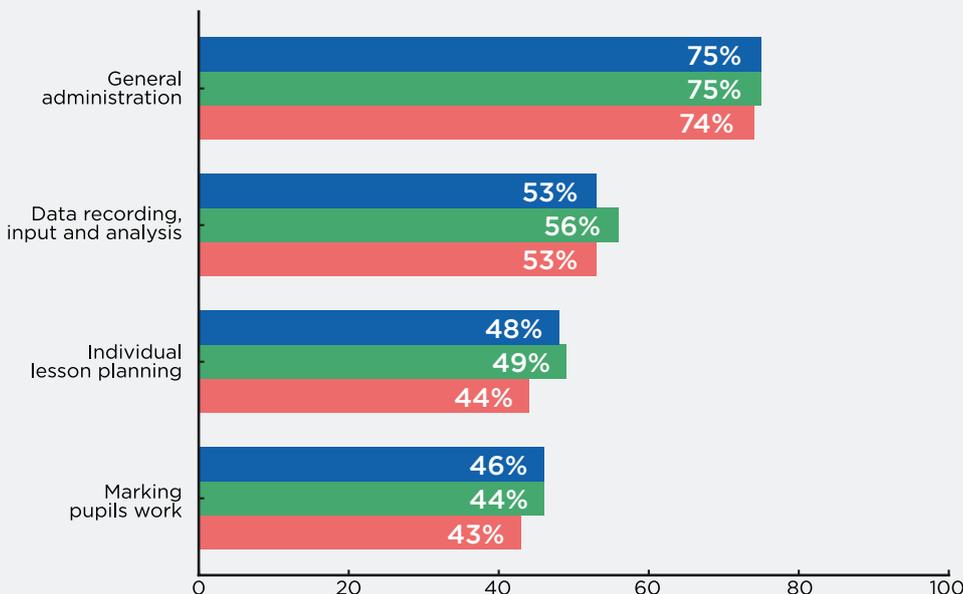


In 2023/24, only **1 in 5** teachers and leaders agree that they would feel confident requesting flexible working arrangements.



For full findings and recommendations, you can read this year's Teacher Labour Market in England - Annual Report 2025 on our website.

Proportion of teachers who feel they spend too much time on



During term time in **2023/24**, the average teacher worked five hours per week longer than similar graduates in other jobs

- 2021/22
- 2022/23
- 2023/24

Focus areas for school leaders

When you're considering actions that will support improving recruitment and retention within your own school, findings continue to point to two key areas that have the greatest potential for impact. We have set out actions, based on evidence from recent NFER research, for you to consider.

Consider adopting a wider range of flexible working practices

Improving the availability of flexible working in teaching could improve retention and make teaching more attractive as a profession. While it's unrealistic that teachers will work remotely to the extent that some graduates in other jobs can, schools can take steps to improve teachers' flexible working options.

Actions to consider:



Allow teachers to use PPA time flexibly at home

Allowing teachers to use their PPA time off-site can provide much-needed flexibility while maintaining teaching quality. Clear guidance and trust in staff can help embed this practice effectively.



Promote a culture of flexibility

Regularly communicate available flexible working options, encourage staff to request arrangements without fear of career impact, and share success stories from colleagues.



Offer structured but adaptable solutions

Where possible, explore options such as job shares, part-time roles, or ad-hoc flexibility (e.g., late starts or early finishes). Making these options more accessible can help retain experienced teachers who might otherwise leave the profession.

Teachers using ChatGPT spent **31% less time** on lesson planning, saving an average of **25.3 minutes per week**.

NFER and EEF, 2024

Addressing workload to improve retention

Reducing workload is a key priority to improve teacher retention and job satisfaction. While external factors such as funding constraints exist, there are steps school leaders can take to ease workload pressures.

Actions to consider:



Streamline administrative tasks

Review the impact of marking policies, lesson planning expectations and data collection processes. Reduce unnecessary bureaucracy where possible.



Introduce smarter lesson planning approaches

Evidence suggests that tools like AI can help teachers cut lesson planning time without compromising quality.



Review behaviour policies

With behaviour management emerging as one of the key drivers of workload, consider reviewing policies to ensure they're clear, effective and supportive of staff and are consistently applied.



Explain plans for workload reduction

Workload reduction measures may take time to yield results. Ensure staff understand the rationale behind changes and feel supported through implementation.



Our recommendations for policy makers

The recommendations in last year's report played a significant role in shaping discussions on teacher pay and workload, with evidence being cited in policy debates, by MPs and the pay review body. However, major systemic issues remain unresolved, and further action is needed to secure a strong and sustainable teaching workforce.

Addressing the issues raised in this year's report requires urgent and decisive action. To support school leaders in tackling these challenges, NFER is recommending the following policy measures:



Develop a teacher workload reduction strategy that integrates with wider education reforms.



Increase investment in support services (including mental health and SEND) to ensure schools have access to specialist support.



Enhance teacher pay competitiveness to improve recruitment and retention.



Develop a new approach for supporting schools to improve pupil behaviour to improve teacher workload.

Your voice matters

We rely on the input of teachers and leaders to gather robust evidence that is a true reflection of school life. Findings from our Teacher Voice Survey helped inform this year's Teacher Labour Market Report. Join our Survey Panel to add your voice nfer.ac.uk/jointeachervoices

Thank you to all the teachers and school leaders who continue to contribute to NFER research on key issues within education.

The Teacher Labour Market Annual Report

For seven years, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has produced the Teacher Labour Market Report, offering a comprehensive overview of teacher supply and practical solutions to key challenges. This year's findings show that, despite some small improvements, significant challenges remain.

By tracking trends in recruitment, retention, pay, and working conditions, this annual report provides policymakers and school leaders with valuable insights and recommendations.

How we source data for our Teacher Labour Market reports

- We use Department for Education (DfE) data on teacher training applications and registrations to show how last year's Initial Teacher Training (ITT) recruitment compared to target and what recruitment is likely to look like this year. We also explore trends in teacher retention, using data from the DfE's School Workforce Census (SWC).
- Trends in recruitment and retention are driven by changes in the competitiveness of pay and working conditions in teaching compared to other jobs. We therefore analyse trends in teacher pay and conditions primarily using findings from the DfE's Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders (WLTL) survey, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)
- Further details about the data sources used and definitions are in a methodology appendix separate to the main report.



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