Teachers' Experiences of their Second Year in Post

Findings from Phase IV of the
Becoming a Teacher project

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department for
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Sponsors

Abbreviations

AST – Advanced Skills Teacher

BA/BSc – Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science

BaT – Becoming a Teacher

BEd – Bachelor of Education

BME – Black and Minority ethnic

BTec – Business and Technology Education Council

CEDP – Career Entry and Development Profile

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

DCSF – Department for Children, Schools and Families

DfES – Department for Education and Skills

D&T – Design and Technology

EAL – English as an Additional Language

ECM – Every Child Matters

FE – Further Education

GORs – Government Office Regions

GTC – General Teaching Council for England

GRTP – Graduate and Registered Teacher Programme

GTP – Graduate Teacher Programme

HEI – Higher Education Institution

HMI – Her Majesty's Inspectorate

HoD – Head of Department

ICT – Information Communications Technology

ITE – Initial Teacher Education

ITP – Initial Teacher Preparation

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

LA – Local Authority

LEA – Local Education Authority

LSA – Learning Support Assistants

MFL – Modern Foreign Languages

NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher

PE – Physical Education

PGCE – Postgraduate Certificate of Education

PPA – Planning, Preparation and Assessment

Executive Summary

Introduction

The *Becoming a Teacher* (BaT) study is a six-year longitudinal research project (2003-2009) exploring beginner teachers' experiences of initial teacher training (ITT), Induction and early professional development in England. This report presents findings relating to beginner teachers' experiences of their second year in post. Collectively, this phase of the project is referred to as 'Wave 4' of the BaT study.

Key findings

Nature of employment status during the second year of teaching

Two years after completing their ITT, the vast majority of respondents to the Wave 4 survey (95%) were working as teachers and the majority (78% of the total sample) were in permanent posts, with 13 per cent of respondents employed in fixed-term posts and four per cent working as supply teachers. There was some variation in teachers' employment status by region. For example:

- teachers working in the East of England and Inner London were more likely and those working in the North East less likely than those working in other regions of England to be in permanent posts.

The majority of survey respondents who reported having a permanent or fixed-term post were also working full-time (94%), with 6 per cent working part-time.

Interestingly, teachers working in primary schools were more likely than those working in secondary schools to report working in fixed-term and supply posts. For example:

- twelve per cent of those who worked in primary schools had held supply posts during their second year of teaching compared to five per cent of those working in secondary schools.

There was also found to be significant variation between respondents' employment patterns according to the ITT route followed. For example:

- 83 per cent of teachers who followed primary SCITT programmes reported having had a full-time permanent post, compared to 68 per cent of those who had gained a primary phase BEd degree; and
- 15 per cent of secondary school teachers who had completed GRTP programmes and 13 per cent of those following Flexible PGCE programmes had held part-time posts, compared to, for example, only three per cent of those who had followed the BA/BSc QTS route and five per cent of those who had followed SCITT programmes.

Across both (primary and secondary) phases, the majority of respondents (85%) were working in the same school as they had been working in at the end of their first

year of teaching. The remaining 15 per cent of respondents had moved to a post at a different school.

- Teachers who did move to a post at a different school after their first year in teaching were more likely than those who did not to have been in fixed-term or supply posts, or to have reported working in a school they perceived to be '*in difficulties*', and less likely to have reported receiving any additional training or professional development opportunities during their first year of teaching.

The nature of the work undertaken by second year teachers

Primary school teachers were less likely to report teaching Year 6 classes (the year group associated with the Key Stage 2 National Tests) than other year groups within the primary phase (15% were teaching Year 6 compared to at least 23% teaching pupils in other year groups).

In contrast, the percentage teaching Year 11 (i.e. the GCSE year) was the largest across the secondary phase (92% compared to no more than 87% teaching other year groups). This is an increase from the 80 per cent of respondents working in secondary schools who reported teaching Year 11 classes during their first year of teaching.

The vast majority (93%) of survey respondents who were teaching (or had taught) in secondary schools reported that they had taught at least one of their stated specialist subjects, with almost two-thirds (63%) reporting that they had taught *only* those subjects that they had previously indicated (on completion of their ITT) as their subject specialisms.

Around a third (29%) of second year teachers working in secondary schools reported that they had been teaching at least one non-specialist subject, and seven per cent reported that they had *exclusively* taught subjects other than those that they had indicated were their subject specialisms.

Roles and responsibilities undertaken

Over two-thirds (68%) of primary school teachers reported being a subject co-ordinator during their second year of teaching. Those teachers who held this role were, on average, younger than those who did not.

A quarter of teachers working in secondary schools reported acting as a form tutor during their second year of teaching and nine per cent as head of department. There were no significant differences by age between those who reported taking on these roles in secondary schools and those who did not.

However:

- teachers working in schools perceived to be '*in difficulties*' were more likely to report taking on the roles of form tutor and head of department than those not working in such schools; and

- a higher proportion of respondents working in secondary schools who had followed Flexible PGCE programmes than of those who had followed other routes reported acting as a form tutor.

Secondary school teachers were more likely than primary school teachers to report having '*covered classes*' for other teachers, to have taken part in '*extra-curricular activities*' and to have '*taught pupils with challenging behaviour*' during the school year. Primary school teachers were more likely than those working in secondary schools to report '*taking pupils on school trips as part of the curriculum*'.

Overall, those teachers who reported '*covering classes*' were, on average, older than those who did not do so and those who took part in '*extra-curricular activities*' and took pupils on '*school trips as part of the curriculum*' were younger than those who did not do so. In addition, male teachers were more likely than their female counterparts to report having 'undertaken extra-curricular activities' during their second year of teaching.

The majority of second year teachers (86%) reported being involved in the '*discussion of goals and policies within their school and/or department*' and around two-thirds had been involved in '*curriculum development or course design*' (69%), '*formal discussions on any whole-school issues with the head teacher*' (62%), and '*contributing to the development and training of other teachers*' (61%). However, there were variations in these responses when analysed by the phase in which respondents were teaching:

- those teachers working in secondary schools were more likely than those working in primary schools to report being involved in '*curriculum development/course design*' and '*contributing to the development and training of other teachers*' but less likely to report being involved in '*formal discussions about the allocation of financial resources*'.
- younger teachers were more likely than older teachers to report being involved in '*discussions about the goals and policies of your school/department*', '*formal discussions about the allocation of financial resources*' and '*formal discussions on any whole-school issues with the head teacher*'.

Over half of the case study interviewees (36 out of 64) reported having extra roles and responsibilities during their second year of teaching. Of these the majority were subject co-ordinators (16 respondents, all of whom were teaching in primary schools). While 13 interviewees were very positive about these changes, seven were not so positive, with five of the latter group referring to the burden of the additional workload associated with their new roles.

Workload

Just under a third of teachers (30%) reported working up to ten hours per week on top of their (timetabled) school day, a third (32%) between 11 and 15 additional hours, and over a third (37%) 16 or more additional hours. Further,

- teachers working in primary schools indicated that they were working, on average, approximately an hour and a half additional hours per week more than teachers working in secondary schools.

However, across the full set of respondents, the mean number of additional hours worked per week in the second year of teaching was over five hours less than that reported in the first year of teaching.

That said, 14 out of the 25 case study teachers who compared their workload with that in the previous year reported that they felt it had increased, with the majority of these (8 interviewees) reporting that this was due to their additional responsibilities.

Over a third of respondents (38%) reported being given two hours or less of non-contact time per week, nearly half (46%) reported receiving between three and four hours of non-contact time and over 15 per cent reported five or more hours of non-contact time per week.

- teachers working in secondary schools indicated that they received, on average, approximately 50 per cent more non-contact time per week than those working in primary schools.

Second year teachers' perceptions of their strengths and effectiveness as teachers

When survey respondents were asked (without prompting) what they considered to be their strengths as teachers, the most common responses were: (i) the '*ability to develop productive relationships with pupils*' (25% of respondents); (ii) '*my organisational skills*' (23%); (iii) the '*ability to maintain discipline in the classroom*' (20%); and (iv) '*knowledge about my teaching subject(s)*' (18%).

The vast majority of teachers (99%) regarded themselves as either '*very*' or '*fairly*' effective teachers. However:

- teachers working in schools reported as '*high in the league tables*' were more likely than those not working in such schools to rate themselves as '*very effective*' teachers (54% and 42% respectively).

The majority of case study teachers who discussed their efficacy in the face-to-face interviews indicated that they felt more effective in their second year of teaching than they had in the previous year.

Second year teachers' reported enjoyment of working as teachers and their ratings of their work-based relationships

The vast majority of teachers surveyed (94%) reported that they enjoyed working as teachers. Just four per cent of survey respondents disagreed with the proposition that they had enjoyed working as teachers, with half of these '*strongly*' disagreeing.

Case study teachers' enjoyment of their role often came from a developing sense of their professional autonomy (mentioned by 20 out of 45 ejournal participants) and seeing their pupils achieve (mentioned by 8 out of 22 interviewees).

The vast majority of survey respondents also reported '*good*' or '*very good*' relationships with pupils (98%), teaching colleagues (97%), non-teaching staff (97%), parents (92%), and head teachers (80%). Case study data indicate that, whilst good relationships were a source of emotional 'highs' for our interviewees, bad relationships resulted in emotional 'lows'. More participants in the ejournal exchanges referred to negative incidents or relationships with colleagues than mentioned positive incidents or relationships.

Factors which helped second year teachers' professional development

When survey respondents were asked who or what, if anything, had helped them in their development as a teacher during the year, four out of the five most common responses all related to specific individuals/groups of people. These were:

- '*colleagues at school/college*' (mentioned by 49% of respondents);
- '*head of department*' (14%);
- '*contact with other teachers with a similar amount of experience*' (10%); and
- '*head teacher/principal*' (10%).

The fifth most frequently mentioned response was receiving '*additional training*' (10%).

Factors which hindered second year teachers' professional development

When survey respondents were asked what, if anything, had hindered them in their development as a teacher during their second year of teaching, the two most frequently mentioned factors were a '*lack of support from colleagues*' (17%) and their '*workload*' (15%). Nearly two-thirds of respondents (60%), however, indicated that they felt that nothing had hindered their development in the course of the year.

Professional development opportunities

Ninety per cent of survey respondents (who had completed their Induction during their first year of teaching) indicated that during their second year of teaching they had had an opportunity to review and plan their professional development. The most frequently reported activities relating to this were '*using the appraisal system to review progress and development*' (mentioned by 64% of respondents) and '*planning courses to meet identified needs*' (63%). Half of all respondents (50%) reported receiving opportunities to use their career entry and development profile during their second year of teaching, and just over half of those stated that their CEDP had been used effectively in assisting their development as a teacher.

Eighty-eight per cent of survey respondents reported receiving formal professional development opportunities during their second year of teaching. These included '*training related to teaching and learning approaches*' and '*subject-specific training*' (each reported by 34% of respondents). Teachers working in primary schools were more likely to report receiving formal professional development opportunities than those working in secondary schools.

Fourteen (out of 64) case study interviewees mentioned formal CPD activities which they felt had been of value to them during their second year of teaching, while 13 mentioned less satisfactory experiences of CPD. Seven interviewees reported that a lack of access to formal CPD was a hindrance to their professional development as teachers. Twenty-nine case study teachers talked about their involvement in collaborative activities with colleagues which might have offered informal professional development opportunities, including team teaching and curriculum development activities.

The majority of survey respondents (99%) had reported taking part in some form of collaborative professional development activity during the school year, including the '*sharing of teaching resources*' (92%) and '*joint Inset days with colleagues from other departments/key stages/year groups*' (86%).

Mentoring support for second year teachers

Only a third (34%) of teachers reported having a (post-Induction) mentor during their second year of teaching. Of these, over three-quarters (77%) stated that the mentor was allocated to them by their school and nearly two-thirds had the same mentor that they had during their Induction year.

The vast majority (94%) of those survey respondents who had a post-Induction mentor reported '*very good*' or '*good*' relationships with those people, while those second year teachers who had a mentor were more likely than those who did not to report that they '*strongly agreed*' with the statement '*I enjoy teaching*' (77% compared to 70%).

Case study data indicate that teachers without a formal mentor often received support from a colleague who had adopted an unofficial mentoring role.

Second year teachers' ratings of the support received

Over three-quarters (76%) of survey respondents rated the support they had received during their second year of teaching as '*very good*' or '*good*', whilst seven per cent rated the support as '*poor*' or '*very poor*'.

Whilst some case study interviewees indicated that the support they received was less than that they had experienced during their first year of teaching, they also indicated that they felt less need for support than they had during their Induction year.

Future professional development needs

In response to an open-ended survey question which asked what additional professional development participants would like to receive in their third year of teaching, the most frequent responses given were:

- '*knowledge about my teaching subject(s)*' (mentioned by 15% of respondents);

- '*staff supervision/management skills*' (13%);
- '*subject co-ordination*' (9%); and
- '*ability to work with pupils with special educational needs (SEN)/ inclusion*' (9%).

Teachers' expected employment status for the following school year

The vast majority (94%) of those who, at the time of the Wave 4 telephone survey, were currently teaching (or who were looking for a teaching post in the 'present' academic year), indicated that they planned to be (or to remain) teaching at the start of the following academic year.

- Eighty-one per cent of these expected to be employed in their current (permanent or fixed-term) teaching post in the same school or college.

Ten per cent of survey respondents expected to move to a post in a different school the following term. The main reasons given by these teachers for moving or wanting to move schools were:

- '*career development*' (23%);
- a wish to move to another part of the country (17%);
- the opportunity for promotion (11%); and
- poor relationships with '*staff at my current school/college*' (11%).

Half of all case study respondents who stated that they intended to move to a post at a different school the following academic year (6 out of 12 interviewees) also stated that the reason they intended to do so was for career development.

Teachers' medium-term career plans

Ninety-two per cent of survey respondents stated that they intended to be teaching in three years' time. Three per cent stated that they *did not* expect to be in teaching in four years' time, while the remaining five per cent were unsure.

Beginner teacher retention

Amongst those respondents who left teaching during their second year since completion of ITT, the most common reasons given for this action were the '*behaviour of pupils/pupil discipline*' (19%), and *'family reasons/ commitments*' (also given by 19% of respondents), followed by '*being unable to find a job*' (14%), and the '*belief that they would not be able to manage the workload*' (12%). By way of contrast, those survey respondents still teaching but who did not expect to be in the teaching profession in three years' time most frequently stated that the reason for planning to leave the profession was to be '*in a career with a better work-life balance*' (23% of those who intended to leave the profession in the following three years), followed by '*I plan to be in a better paid career*' (21%).

Conclusions

The majority of teachers who took part in Phase IV of the BaT study were positive about their work and experiences during their second year in post and for many this can be seen as a time of consolidation, with beginner teachers becoming more confident and more trusted, both in and outside the classroom. For other teachers, however, the experiences proved more challenging, with some reporting heavy workloads and poor levels of support during the year. The importance of relationships remains a key theme in this research, not least for participants' enjoyment of their work. This was particularly pertinent for those teachers whose NQT induction was now completed and for whom little formal CPD provision was now in place.

By the second year of teaching the differences between teachers who had followed different ITT pathways had decreased from those reported in earlier stages of the *Becoming a Teacher* project (Hobson *et al.*, 2006; Hobson *et al.*, 2007). In contrast, age does appear to be a factor in differentiating second year teachers' experiences with younger teachers being more likely than teachers from older age groups to have been given additional roles and responsibilities during their second year and older teachers reporting lower levels of support than their younger counterparts.

The vast majority of survey respondents expected to be teaching the following term (which, for most, would be the beginning of their third year in post) and in three years' time. The main reasons why some beginner teachers intended to leave the profession included pupil behaviour, school management styles, work-life balance and salary.

Research design

The findings presented in this report were produced from the analysis of data generated primarily from:

- (i) in-depth face-to-face interviews with 64 second year teachers;

- (ii) email exchanges ('ejournals') with 45 second year teachers; and

- (iii) a telephone survey of 1,973 second year teachers.

The survey and interviews were conducted close to the end of participant teachers' second year of teaching since completing their ITT, mostly in June-July 2006. The ejournal exchanges took place at regular (half-termly) intervals during the academic year 2005-2006.

Second year teachers who participated in the telephone survey, face-to-face interviews and the ejournal exchanges at Wave 4 had also taken part in earlier phases of the project which focused on:
- (i) their motivations for undertaking ITT and their expectations and prior conceptions of teaching and ITT (Wave 1);
- (ii) their experiences of ITT (Wave 2); and
- (iii) their experiences of Induction and the first year of teaching (Wave 3).[1]

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[1] Findings from these three phases of the project were presented in earlier reports (Hobson & Malderez, 2005, Hobson *et al.*, 2006, and Hobson *et al.*, 2007).

Some of the data generated in Wave 4 were analysed in conjunction with data generated in earlier waves of the study in order to examine, for example, the extent to which second year teachers' experiences were related to their earlier experiences of becoming a teacher.