

Results of the newly qualified teacher survey 2008

Executive summary

Introduction

From February to April 2008, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) surveyed newly qualified teachers (NQTs) who had successfully completed their initial teacher training (ITT) in England during the 2006/07 academic year.

The survey questionnaire (appendix 1) was mailed to approximately 32,000¹ NQTs registered with the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) and asked them to:

- assess the quality of their training in a number of areas
- identify any pre-ITT activities they took part in and evaluate their importance in helping them make an informed decision about becoming a teacher
- tell us about their current employment circumstances, and
- tell us about their training experience if they had an impairment, disability, learning difficulty or mental health difficulty².

A summary of the key findings is included in this report. A full, detailed analysis of NQT survey results is available online at <http://dataprovision.tda.gov.uk/public>. Provider level reports will also be available on this site from September 2008.

Over 14,000 NQTs completed and returned their questionnaires, a response rate of 44 per cent. This was a significant increase on last year's response rate (36 per cent). The NQTs who responded were broadly representative of the total NQT population (approximately 38,800 NQTs) who were awarded qualified teacher status (QTS) in 2006/07, although a higher proportion of primary³ NQTs responded, a higher proportion of NQTs from minority ethnic (ME) backgrounds responded, a lower proportion of males responded, and a lower proportion of NQTs aged under 25 responded.

¹ Not all NQTs are registered with the GTCE. NQTs teaching in a maintained school in England must register with the GTCE.

² A detailed analysis of the disability questionnaire is available in a separate report.

³ Throughout the report, the term 'primary NQTs' refers to respondent NQTs who were trained on primary ITT courses, ie. it does not necessarily reflect the phase they are teaching.

Key findings

In the primary sector

- Eighty-five per cent of primary NQTs gave a very good or good rating when asked about the overall quality of their training, compared with 87 per cent last year (the highest rating so far).
- For most questions, ratings reached their highest levels to date in 2007, and 2008 responses represented a decrease.
- The key areas where NQTs' ratings were lower than in previous years were understanding the National Curriculum and the primary national strategy (including the literacy and mathematics elements) – primary NQTs' ratings in these areas showed a continued downward trend.
- The key areas of improvement in NQTs' ratings were preparation to teach reading including phonics and comprehension, understanding the foundation stage and understanding Every Child Matters – primary NQTs' ratings in these areas continued to improve.
- Undergraduate courses were rated more highly than postgraduate courses.
- For almost all questions, school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provision achieved the highest ratings.
- Female NQTs tended to give slightly better ratings than male NQTs, as did younger NQTs and NQTs of black or Asian ethnicity.

In the secondary sector

- Eighty-six per cent of secondary⁴ NQTs gave a very good or good rating when asked about the overall quality of their training, compared with 87 per cent last year.
- For 15 of the 25 questions, ratings reached their highest levels to date in 2007, and 2008 responses either equalled⁵ or represented an improvement on the 2007 rating.
- The biggest improvements were in the following areas - the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching, teaching ME learners and learners with English as an additional language (EAL), use of the career entry development profile (CEDP), sharing responsibility for continuing professional development (CPD) and understanding Every Child Matters.
- The key areas where NQTs' ratings were lower than in previous years were planning teaching, monitoring and reporting learners' progress and working with teaching colleagues.
- SCITT provision received the highest ratings in 12 of the 25 questions.
- Female NQTs tended to give slightly better ratings than male NQTs, as did younger NQTs and NQTs of black or Asian ethnicity.

⁴ Throughout the report, the term 'secondary NQTs' refers to respondent NQTs who were trained on secondary or key stage 2/3 ITT courses, ie. it does not necessarily reflect the phase they are teaching.

⁵ If a change in rating between 2007 and 2008 is not statistically significant, this is considered an equal rating. Statistically significant changes are denoted by an 'S' on the graphs in this report.

NQTs' current employment circumstances

- Ninety-five per cent of primary NQTs and 96 per cent of secondary NQTs were employed in teaching
- The pattern of employment of primary NQTs was different from the secondary NQTs - a higher proportion of primary NQTs had fixed-term employment contracts or were engaged in supply teaching, while a higher proportion of secondary NQTs had permanent teaching contracts.
- Primary NQTs made on average 7.5 job applications compared with 3.85 for secondary NQTs.
- Primary NQTs had on average 2.25 interviews before taking up their current position, compared with 1.95 interviews for secondary NQTs.
- The pattern of employment for primary NQTs showed large regional variations.

Pre-ITT activities

- Over 90 per cent of NQTs who spoke to a teaching advocate said this activity was very important or important in helping them make an informed decision about beginning ITT.
- Almost 90 per cent of NQTs who did a subject knowledge booster course said this activity was very important or important in preparing them to begin ITT.