

Welsh Government
Review of Initial Teacher Training in Wales
1 March 2013

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence on the Review of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in Wales.
2. The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Wales and the UK representing teachers and school leaders.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. In July 2011, the NASUWT submitted a response to the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to a consultation on *Training our next generation of outstanding teachers: An improvement strategy for discussion*.
4. Although that response was specific to a situation in England that is not being proposed in Wales, the fact that the Westminster Government retains control over the conditions of service of teachers in Wales and England, and that there is a great deal of portability of newly qualified teachers between Wales and England, makes the response germane to this Review.
5. The response provides clarity on the position of the NASUWT on ITT and the importance of teacher professionalism.
6. The NASUWT commends the response, as essential reading, to this Review (a copy of the response can be found at Annex A) as it addresses issues in relation to Teach First and the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) programme introduced by the previous Westminster administration.

7. In England, both programmes suffered under the current Westminster administration but for contrasting reasons. The MTL was no longer supported and Teach First was extended on the basis of political ideology and expedience, rather than on the basis of a clear and evidence-based assessment of the contribution that the scheme could make to enhancing the diversity of routes through which ITT in England can be undertaken.
8. Similar initiatives have been introduced in Wales. The Welsh Government pressed ahead with an Additional Training Graduate Programme (ATGP), despite the concerns expressed by the NASUWT at the consultation stage, and the MTL has been introduced as a Master in Education Practice (MEP) on the whim of the Education Minister (a copy of the NASUWT response to the consultation on the ATGP, and a press release in relation to the MEP, can be found at Annexes B and C respectively).
9. The Union does not believe that it is necessary to rehearse here the views expressed in the response to the DfE, other than to identify ten key principles which should underpin ITT. The NASUWT maintains that systems of ITT must recognise that:
- a high-quality system of ITT is central to the enhancement and development of a skilled teaching workforce, able to make purposeful use of its professional knowledge, expertise and judgement to secure the best possible rates of pupil progress and achievement;
 - there is a fundamental relationship between the nature of ITT and its role in sustaining and enhancing the professional status and expertise of teachers;
 - good practice models of ITT demonstrate a respect for the professional nature of the role of teachers and provide experiences of teacher formation that work to develop corresponding skills, knowledge and understanding on the part of trainees;

- systems of ITT education work to support the ability of teachers in training to begin to establish the skills and attributes associated with professional practice, and to use their professional judgement to select and apply approaches to teaching and learning that best meet the needs of learners;
- effective approaches to ITT must, of necessity, involve trainee teachers being given the opportunity to build on the understanding gained through their degree-level study to develop a secure knowledge of the subjects and curriculum areas in which they intend to practice;
- all routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) must give teachers in training the ability to apply their developing skills and expertise in a range of practical contexts over an extended period in which they can work alongside established teachers to observe applied approaches to teaching and learning, and thereby consolidate and extend their developing skills and expertise;
- secure subject knowledge and practical experience, while important, are insufficient to ensure that teachers in training are prepared for the full range of responsibilities that they will be required to discharge on entry to the profession;
- the establishment of effective, coherent and mutually supportive relationships between schools participating in supporting the initial training of teachers and higher education institutions (HEIs) is critical to ensuring the quality of trainees' experience and to supporting those members of school-based staff involved in delivering ITT;
- the continued recruitment of high-quality trainee teachers depends critically on the establishment and maintenance of effective arrangements for the financial support of trainees and for the programmes on which they are enrolled;

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- respect for the professionalism of teachers is a hallmark of an education system genuinely committed to raising standards and extending educational opportunities for all pupils.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

10. The NASUWT offers the additional comments that follow in relation to the areas under consideration. However, given that the focus of the Review is within the context of teacher training provided at undergraduate and postgraduate level, which is provided by HEIs and distance-learning courses provided by Open University, and employment-based teacher training under the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), the Union is clear that these additional comments supplement the views expressed as general comments and should be received as such.

The quality and consistency of teaching, training and assessment in ITT

In 2010, the NASUWT produced a study across Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland that examined how ITT and in-school support prepares teachers for their careers. The document, entitled *Sink or Swim? Learning Lessons from Newly Qualified and Recently Qualified Teachers* (a copy of the study can be found at Annex D) identified the following key concerns that the Union maintains should be considered by this Review:

- poor management practice within schools has a significant impact on teachers' experiences and retention in the profession;
- the absence of school-wide behaviour management policies;
- the use of in-school referral systems for reporting behavioural issues being viewed negatively by senior management that, in turn, results in anxiety amongst student teachers and teachers who believe their use

of referral systems will encourage a view that they are unable to cope with indiscipline;

- the training received on behaviour management both on ITT and in school is insufficient and doesn't prepare teachers for dealing with behavioural issues in the classroom.

Aside from this study, in Wales, the views of the NASUWT on the quality and consistency of teaching, training and assessment in ITT are informed through casework and the seminars that the Union provides for newly qualified teachers.

As a result, the NASUWT is pleased to note that the incidence of casework relating to student teacher members remains relatively low and it has become evident at the newly qualified teacher seminars that the training that student teachers are receiving in the management of pupil behaviour and indiscipline has shown a marked improvement.

Casework relating to student teachers usually involves the possibility of a failure to complete the training course and/or the failure to achieve the standards required for QTS. Consequently, the issues in question will be scrutinised forensically by NASUWT officials in order to provide appropriate support and guidance to the member involved. The fact that the incidence of casework in this area in Wales is low suggests that the quality of teaching, training and assessment in ITT is relatively high.

ITT course structure and coverage of issues in ITT

The study conducted in 2010 indicated that those taking part in the research felt that the training they received as trainee and/or tyro teachers was lacking in the following areas:

- managing workload;
- managing special educational needs;

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- behaviour management;
- dealing with parents;
- the delivery of non specialist subjects;
- being able to identify and support children with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.

The NASUWT will not be surprised if this Review identifies similar shortfalls in terms of course structures and coverage of issues.

In terms of the structure of the GTP, the NASUWT maintains that GTP posts must be established outside school core-teaching staffing structures.

The NASUWT supports the principle that newly qualified teachers should be guaranteed employment in posts within which they can complete their induction immediately upon completion of their ITT. However, the Union is clear that the creation of such posts must not result in the redundancy of existing teachers.

The NASUWT maintains that access to all ITT routes and the course structures and coverage of issues provided must subscribe to equalities legislation to ensure that the needs of the range of trainee teachers, and potential trainee teachers, are met fully.



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