

General Teaching Council for England

2008 Segmentation paper by *length of service*: teachers in their early careers

Data from Survey of Teachers 2007

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1. Introduction

In 2007, the General Teaching Council for England (GTC) commissioned ORC International to conduct an independent survey of teachers required to register with the GTC. This was the fourth such annual survey of teachers commissioned by the GTC, and the general findings from this and previous surveys are available on the GTC website at www.gtce.org.uk/research/tsurvey.

A stratified random sample of 10,000 teachers was drawn from a pool of 428,758 eligible teachers registered with the GTC. In total 2489 teachers completed and returned the 12 page questionnaires, a response rate of 25%. This response rate is very low – considerably lower than that for the 2006 survey (37%). As a result, we cannot be sure that the views and attitudes expressed by the one-quarter of the sample that responded to the survey are similar to, or systematically different from, those of the three-quarters who chose not to reply.

In addition, the achieved sample contains statistically significant non-response biases due to an under-representation of teachers in the age group 30-39 years, men and secondary schools, and over-representation of teachers in the age group 50-59 years, women and primary schools. Hence, any generalisation from the achieved sample to the wider population of teachers cannot be made without many reservations. These limitations should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings described in this paper and, at best, the salient results should be perceived as the basis for hypotheses that warrant further investigation.

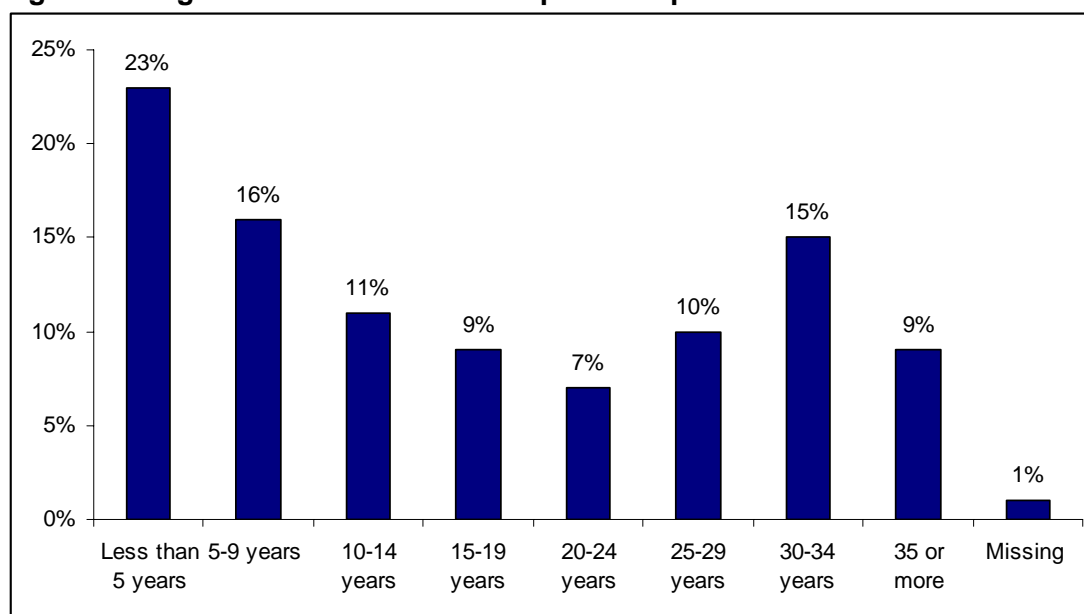
The questionnaire included questions on teachers' career plans, the provision and uptake of professional development opportunities, training on equality issues, as well as a number of items which explored teachers' perceptions of pupil achievement.

This paper, which focuses on the responses of teachers in their early careers, is one of two papers reporting on the outcomes of a segment of the sample of teachers that was surveyed. For the purposes of this short paper, the term, 'teachers in their early careers', is taken to mean teachers who have completed less than five years service. The question numbers given in brackets throughout, refer to the item that appeared in the questionnaire.

2. The profile of respondents who were teachers in their early careers¹

Of the 2489 respondents to the questionnaire, 23% were teachers in their early careers. As shown in Fig. 1, by considerable margins they formed the largest five-year group within the achieved sample.

Figure 1 Length of service of total sample of respondents



(Base: 2489)

The majority of the responding teachers in their early careers were female (82%), which compares to 80% for the sample as a whole. While the overall sample of respondents included 3% of black and minority ethnic (BME) teachers, the teachers in their early careers sub-sample contained 5% of BME teachers.

Teachers in their early careers were found in all age bands: whereas 56% were between the ages of 20 and 29, 22% were 30-39, 19% were 40-49 and 3% were 50 and over.

In the overall sample, more respondents worked in primary schools (48%) than secondary (40%), with 12% not applicable (e.g. supply teachers, other). Within the teachers in their early careers sub-sample, this trend was reversed slightly: more worked in secondary schools (47%) than primary (43%), with 10% not applicable. Relative to other age groups, teachers in their early careers were the least likely to be working part-time (13% compared to 23% for the sample as a whole) and most likely to be employed full-time (87% versus 77%).

Most (82%) of the responding teachers in their early careers were employed in class or subject teacher roles; 27% with additional responsibilities and 55% without.

¹ For data from the GTC register on the profile of teachers in their early careers, see sections 3, 4 and 5 of the GTC's *Profile of the Teaching Profession: Annual Digest of Statistics*, accessible at: http://www.gtce.org.uk/publications/pub_corporate/?sort=dateDESC

Amongst the remainder, 7% were to be found in head of department, year or stage roles and 5% were working as agency-employed supply teachers.

The high proportion of newly qualified teachers in class or subject teaching roles (without additional responsibilities) is revealed in Table 1, which shows the percentages of teachers with varying lengths of service in different professional roles. Of particular note in this table is that almost half (47%) of class or subject teachers were teachers with under five years of service. The true proportion in the teaching population as a whole may be larger than this because of the over-representation of respondents aged 50-59 in the achieved sample (see the 2007 general report).

Another interesting finding displayed in Table 1 centres on the contrasting percentages of teachers in their early careers in the two supply teacher pools: they comprised one of the smallest groups among LA supply teachers yet the largest among agency supply teachers. Put differently, while teachers with 20 years or more service (59%) made up the largest group among LA supply teachers, those in their early careers (48%) formed the largest group in agency supply teachers.

Table 1 Professional role by length of service (%)

| | Under 5 years % | 5 – 9 years % | 10 – 19 years % | 20 years and over % | N = (100%) |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LA supply | 13 | 9 | 19 | 59 | 138 |
| Agency supply | 48 | 4 | 12 | 36 | 56 |
| Class or subject teacher | 47 | 16 | 13 | 24 | 674 |
| Class or subject teacher with special responsibilities | 29 | 18 | 19 | 34 | 531 |
| Cross-school | 2 | 17 | 22 | 59 | 54 |
| HOD, year, stage | 11 | 27 | 21 | 41 | 360 |
| Advanced Skills Teacher | 5 | 18 | 45 | 32 | 40 |
| Assistant head | 5 | 11 | 24 | 60 | 104 |
| Deputy head | 0 | 12 | 38 | 50 | 135 |
| Head teacher | 0 | 2 | 19 | 79 | 179 |
| SENCO | 7 | 6 | 26 | 61 | 81 |
| Other | 8 | 10 | 22 | 60 | 115 |

3. Career plans of teachers in their early careers²

As shown in Table 2 below, approximately one in six of teachers in their early careers anticipated becoming an Advanced Skills Teacher or acquiring Excellent Teacher Status (17% in both cases) in the next five years. With over double the proportion of other age bands expecting this progression, these were the highest percentages signalling this anticipation. This suggests that the largest pool of teachers envisaging advancement to these positions is to be found amongst teachers in their early careers.

² Note that levels of statistical significance have not been reported due to the small numbers involved.

Table 2 Teachers' perceptions of how their careers are likely to develop over the next five years by length of service

(Item 4: How do you envisage your career developing in the next five years?)

| | Per cent of sub-samples indicating 'highly likely' or 'likely' | | | |
|--|--|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| | Under 5 years | 5 – 9 years | 10 – 19 years | 20 years and over |
| I anticipate that I will | | | | |
| a) continue to develop in (current) role | 85 | 84 | 81 | 81 |
| b) become an Advanced Skills Teacher | 17 | 8 | 6 | 3 |
| c) gain Excellent Teacher Status | 17 | 8 | 7 | 5 |
| d) move into leadership/ management post other than headship | 38 | 39 | 33 | 17 |
| e) take the NPQH | 7 | 14 | 15 | 6 |
| f) become a head teacher | 3 | 7 | 10 | 6 |
| g) move to employment outside teaching | 12 | 14 | 13 | 21 |
| h) take a career break | 14 | 15 | 9 | 11 |
| i) retire | 1 | 1 | 14 | 56 |
| TOTALS (N=) | 334-542 | 253-358 | 300-426 | 464-790 |

Not surprisingly, the sub-sample of teachers in their early careers had lower than average percentages intending to take the NPQH or gain promotion to headship.

It may be noteworthy that the percentages of teachers in their early careers planning to move to employment outside of teaching (12%) or take a career break (14%) were broadly in line with the proportions of the full sample (15% and 12% respectively) signalling this prospect.

4. Professional development needs

In item 5 of the questionnaire, teachers were asked: '*in the last 12 months do you feel that your professional development needs were met?*' Table 3 shows that, when compared to other age bands, teachers in their early careers returned the highest percentage (87%) that registered a positive response ('yes fully' or 'yes, to some extent'). Accordingly, this sub-sample also had the lowest percentage (13%) that indicated that their professional development needs had not been met.

Table 3 Teachers' perceptions of whether their professional development needs were met in the last 12 months by length of service (%)

(Item 4: In the last 12 months, do you feel that your professional development needs were met?)

| In the last 12 months, do you feel that your professional development needs were met? | Under 5 years % | 5 – 9 years % | 10 – 19 years % | 20 years and over % | Total sample % |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes, fully | 32 | 29 | 24 | 33 | 30 |
| Yes, to some extent | 55 | 53 | 56 | 51 | 53 |
| No | 13 | 18 | 20 | 16 | 17 |
| TOTALS (N=) | 570 | 385 | 485 | 997 | 2437 |

5. Training in equality issues

As shown in Table 4, the participation rates of teachers with fewer than five years of service in training for the equality issue of disability approximated that of teachers in the 5-9 years and 10-19 years bands, though in common with these latter groups, they had lower levels of participation compared to colleagues with over 20 years of service.

A similar picture emerged for the issue of gender, though here teachers in their early careers had marginally higher levels of involvement than the 5-9 years and 10-19 years bands and the increased participation rate of those with over 20 years experience was less pronounced (see Table 4).

With regard to training in race and ethnicity, teachers with under five years of service had higher levels of participation than the next two age bands and also matched the rate of participation registered by teachers with 20 or more years of service.

Table 4 Teachers indicating that they had participated in training on equality issues by length of service (%)

(Item 18: Have you participated in training addressing each aspect of equality listed?)

| | Per cent of sub-samples indicating 'yes' | | | | |
|--------------------|--|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| | Under 5 years % | 5 – 9 years % | 10 – 19 years % | 20 years and over % | Total sample % |
| Disability | 38 | 40 | 37 | 56 | 45 |
| Gender | 38 | 35 | 35 | 43 | 39 |
| Race/ ethnicity | 42 | 31 | 33 | 44 | 39 |
| Religion/ belief | 30 | 23 | 23 | 30 | 28 |
| Sexual orientation | 13 | 11 | 9 | 14 | 12 |
| Social class | 19 | 10 | 9 | 15 | 14 |
| TOTALS (N=) | 554-560 | 380-381 | 477-481 | 968-993 | 2380-2412 |

Similarly with training in the equality issue of religion and belief: teachers in their early careers showed higher levels of participation than those in the 5-9 years and 10-19 years bands and the same rates as the most experienced teachers (see Table 4).

Participation in training on the equality issue of sexual orientation was low for all age bands and the sub-sample of teachers in their early careers was no exception.

Although levels of involvement in social class training were generally limited, teachers in their early careers had the highest participation rate of any age band, with almost one in five registering participation.

In a follow up item teachers were asked, '*do you understand the implications for classroom practice in relation to each aspect of equality listed?*' Allowing for a tendency for those with higher participation to display slightly elevated levels of self-reported understanding, the frequencies indicating positive responses were broadly constant across the different age groups.

6. Teachers' beliefs about pupil achievement

As displayed in Table 5, the levels of teachers' support for all of the various versions of achievement presented to respondents tended to increase slightly with length of service. Accordingly, teachers in their early careers often returned the lowest percentages (though still majorities) registering support ('reflects completely' and 'reflects quite closely') for many of the statements (e.g. '*achievement across the whole curriculum*', '*capacity to work collaboratively with others*', '*capacity to work creatively to find solutions to real-life problems*'). The two exceptions to this trend were '*progression to the next stage of education and training*' and '*good results in key stage subject and skill areas that are nationally tested*' where the responses of teachers in their early careers were more in line with those of other age groups.

Table 5 Teachers' beliefs about pupil achievement by length of service (%)
(Item 7: How closely do the following statements reflect your personal beliefs about pupil achievement?)

| | Per cent of sub-samples indicating 'reflects completely' or 'reflects quite closely' | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | Under 5 years | 5 – 9 years | 10 – 19 years | 20 years and over |
| Achievement across the whole curriculum | 72 | 75 | 78 | 79 |
| Capacity to be active citizens | 76 | 80 | 80 | 82 |
| Becoming life-long learners | 79 | 80 | 85 | 84 |
| Progression to the next stage of education or training | 67 | 63 | 67 | 71 |
| Capacity to work collaboratively with others | 83 | 85 | 87 | 86 |
| Capacity to work creatively to find solutions to real-life problems | 82 | 87 | 88 | 85 |
| Learning to learn | 80 | 83 | 86 | 84 |
| Good results in key stage subjects and skill areas that are nationally tested | 30 | 28 | 24 | 29 |
| TOTALS (N=) | 570-572 | 379-381 | 479-484 | 990-999 |

Furthermore, (though not shown in the table) compared to their colleagues in the 5-9 year (32%) and 10-19 year (35%) bands, a lower proportion of teachers with less than five years of service (26%) considered that '*achievement across the whole curriculum*' was given insufficient priority. A similar though less marked trend was evident for '*learning to learn*'.

7. Teachers' views on teaching and learning strategies

In item 9 teachers were asked whether they had found four specified teaching and learning strategies effective in supporting different areas of pupil achievement.

With regard to thinking skills/ cognitive acceleration for most versions of achievement, the responses of teachers in their early careers corresponded fairly closely to their colleagues in other length of service brackets, particularly those with 5-9 and 10-19 years. One slight deviation to this trend is noteworthy:

- teachers with under five years of service (64%) were marginally more likely than teachers with 5-9 (59%) or 10-19 (57%) years to consider that thinking skills/ cognitive acceleration was effective in supporting pupils' '*progression to the next stage of education or training*'.

Similar proportions of teachers in their early careers rated the contribution of assessment for learning to raising achievement as their colleagues in other length of service groups. There were, however, two versions of achievement that attracted higher levels of support for assessment for learning from teachers with under five years of service:

- teachers in their early careers had the highest percentage of the four length of service bands indicating that assessment for learning was effective in supporting '*progression to the next stage of education or training*' (73%

compared to 61% for the 5-9 years, 69% for the 10-19 years and 72% for those with over 20 years);

- whereas either 76% or 77% of other length of service groups rated assessment for learning to support '*achievement across the whole curriculum*', 83% of teachers in their early careers did so.

These results may reflect greater exposure to training in assessment for learning for newly qualified teachers.

The results for structured group discussion and pupils as researchers showed that the ratings of teachers in their early careers generally approximated those of their colleagues with more years of service.

8. Impact of policies on supporting achievement

In item 14, teachers' views were sought on 16 current national policies and initiatives. They were asked '*in your experience, what impact have the following policies had on supporting achievement?*' The frequencies for 'positive impact' and 'no experience' disaggregated by length of service are set out in Table 6.

As with the supply teachers sub-sample, the most consistent finding was that, compared to all other length of service groups, teachers in their early careers had the largest group signalling that they had no experience of most of the national policies. Only two policy areas had other groups with larger proportions indicating 'no experience': personalised learning and assessment for learning. This may suggest that newly qualified teachers had covered these themes more in their initial teacher training or at least in their induction. In view of the high proportion of the profession in their early years at any one time, it may be worth considering how early career teachers could gain experience of a wider range of policy initiatives than these two.

Table 6 Teachers' experience of national policies on supporting achievement by length of service

(Item 14: in your experience, what impact have the following policies had on supporting achievement?)

| | Per cent of sub-samples indicating 'positive impact' with 'no experience' in brackets | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| | Under 5 years | 5 – 9 years | 10 – 19 years | 20 years and over | Total sample |
| Every Child Matters | 61 (10) | 65 (4) | 62 (6) | 63 (7) | 63 (7) |
| Extended school provision | 43 (30) | 40 (24) | 35 (25) | 37 (26) | 39 (26) |
| Personalised learning | 59 (21) | 49 (24) | 54 (21) | 59 (19) | 57 (20) |
| Assessment for learning | 78 (7) | 79 (5) | 75 (8) | 71 (9) | 75 (8) |
| Equalities legislation | 44 (21) | 40 (17) | 37 (15) | 41 (13) | 41 (16) |
| Enhancing teacher development | 68 (20) | 69 (14) | 70 (13) | 74 (10) | 71 (13) |
| Development of school leadership | 55 (25) | 61 (12) | 63 (12) | 67 (10) | 63 (14) |
| Changes to teachers' duties | 32 (19) | 39 (7) | 38 (10) | 37 (9) | 36 (11) |
| Performance management | 41 (11) | 39 (1) | 39 (3) | 39 (4) | 40 (5) |
| School inspection | 32 (13) | 35 (2) | 34 (3) | 31 (3) | 33 (5) |
| Performance tables | 14 (10) | 12 (3) | 11 (3) | 13 (4) | 13 (5) |
| Diversifying types of schools | 17 (45) | 15 (44) | 12 (44) | 14 (39) | 14 (42) |
| Extending parental choice | 19 (41) | 16 (30) | 16 (26) | 14 (21) | 16 (28) |
| Collaboration & networking between schools | 66 (18) | 65 (14) | 64 (15) | 63 (16) | 64 (16) |
| New school buildings | 54 (33) | 61 (24) | 60 (29) | 61 (25) | 59 (28) |
| Investment in ICT | 80 (8) | 85 (2) | 82 (4) | 77 (6) | 80 (6) |
| TOTALS (N=) | 547-561 | 365-376 | 462-477 | 957-982 | 2336-2392 |

Given that almost a third (30%) of teachers with under five years' service indicated that they had no experience of extended school provision, it is interesting to note that the teachers in their early careers sub-sample still returned the largest proportion (43%) who registered a positive impact for this policy. Clearly, a high percentage of those with under five years' experience who had encountered this strategy considered that extended school provision was making a positive contribution on raising achievement.

9. Addressing underachievement: local action

In item 11, teachers were asked how important each of a range of local support factors had been in their experience in addressing underachievement.

For most of the factors, the ratings of the teachers in their early careers were very similar to their colleagues with longer service. One minor variation to this trend centred on a slightly higher proportion of teachers in their early careers (67%) rating out of hours school provision as 'very' or 'fairly important' compared to 63% of colleagues with 5-9 years service and 53% of those with 10-19 years and above 20 years service. Another slender variation related to an increased likelihood of teachers with less than five years service indicating 'no experience' of local strategies/situations, e.g.:

- support from non-education professionals 10% versus 6% for those with 5-9 years service
- access to educational expertise from outside the school 5% versus 2% for those with 5-9 years service).

10. Helping parents and carers to support their child's achievement

Item 17 invited teachers to indicate from their experience the impact of various ways to help parents/carers support their child's achievement. Apart from some variation in the proportions indicating 'no experience' for some statements, the responses of teachers in their early careers followed the same patterns as those with more years of service. The local strategies/situations that attracted higher levels of 'no experience' from teachers in their early careers were providing opportunities for parents/carers to develop their own subject matter knowledge, providing opportunities for parents/carers to learn about learning so they can help their child achieve, holding informal and social events for parents/carers in school and ensuring buildings are physically accessible to parents/carers.