

---

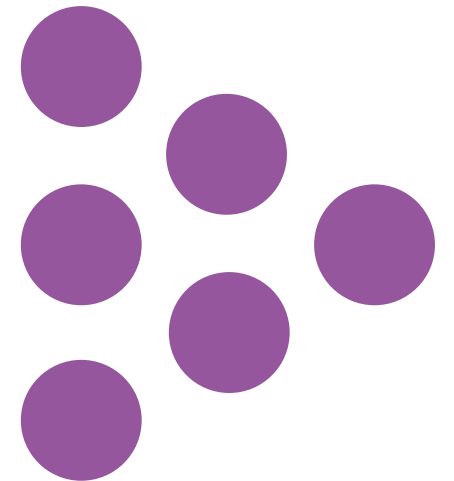
# Evidence to the Teaching Commission

---

13 March 2026

**Jack Worth**

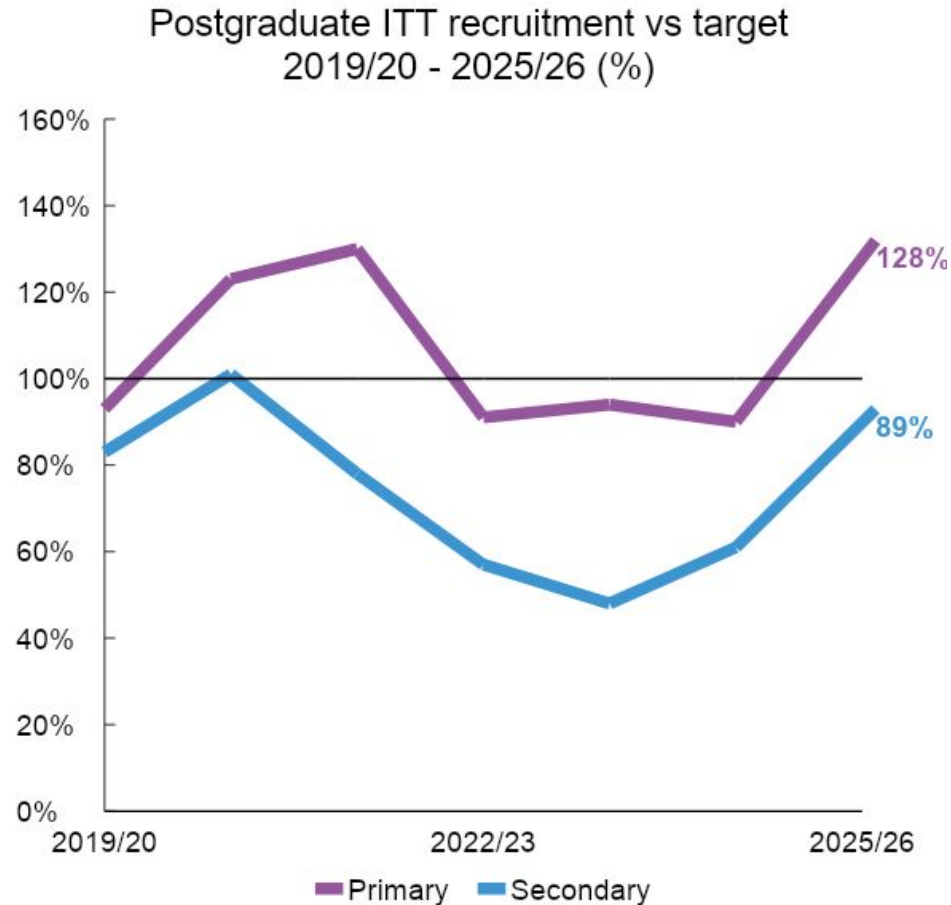
(input from Michael Scott, Juan Manuel Del Pozo Segura and Sarah Tang)



# Overview

- 
- Latest recruitment and retention trends
  - Implications of curriculum and assessment review
  - **Some of this analysis is under embargo for Thursday 19 March**
  - Please come to our launch webinar!
  - **<https://bit.ly/3OPBhRj>**

# ITT recruitment has improved



Recruitment onto ITT courses in 2025/26 was significantly better than in previous years, in absolute terms and relative to target

Primary recruitment above target for the first time in four years.

Secondary recruitment remained below target, but this was best performance since 2020/21

Note: Targets were also lower in 2025/26, due to pupil numbers, retention, returner etc.

# ITT 2025/26 recruitment by subject

**Around half of all subjects below target.**

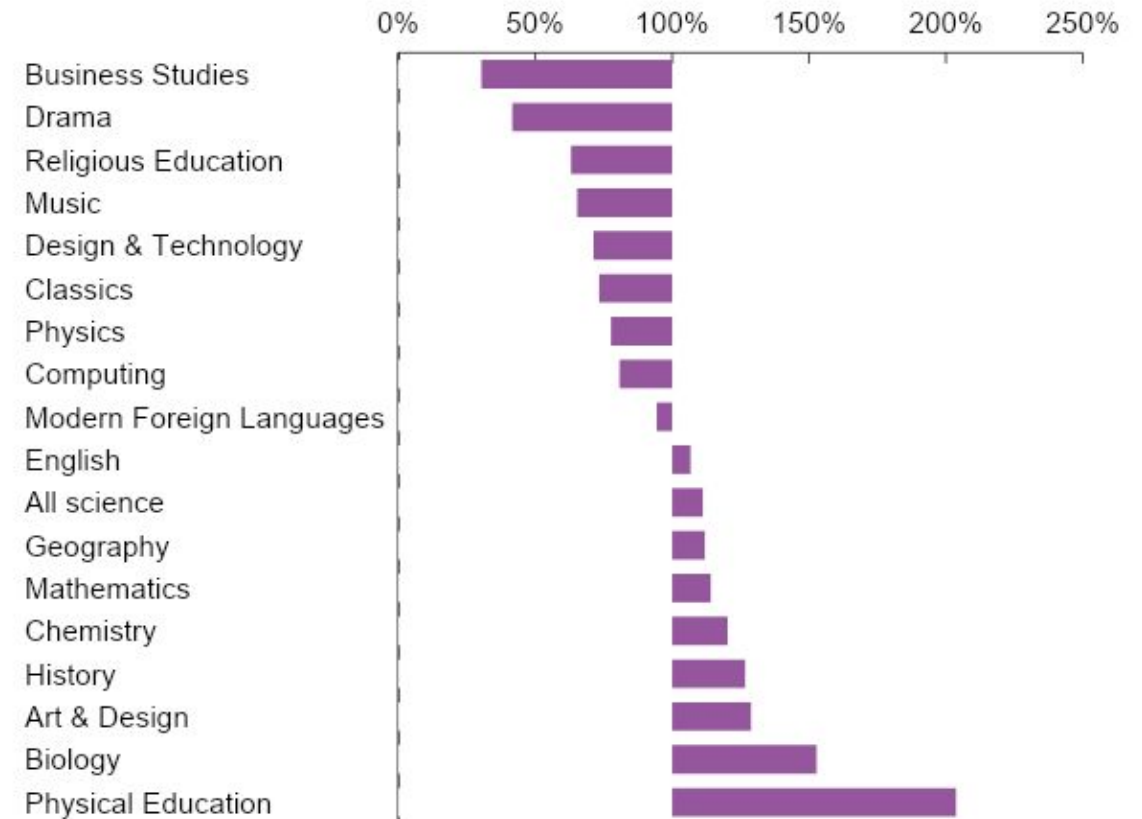
## Some good news stories:

- Maths teacher recruitment above target for first time since at least 2019/20
- Chemistry, English and Geography above target too

## Some less good news:

- Despite a big improvement from 30% in 24/25, physics still below target.
- Similar for Business Studies, computing, design and technology, MFL and music

2025/26 postgraduate ITT recruitment vs target, by subject



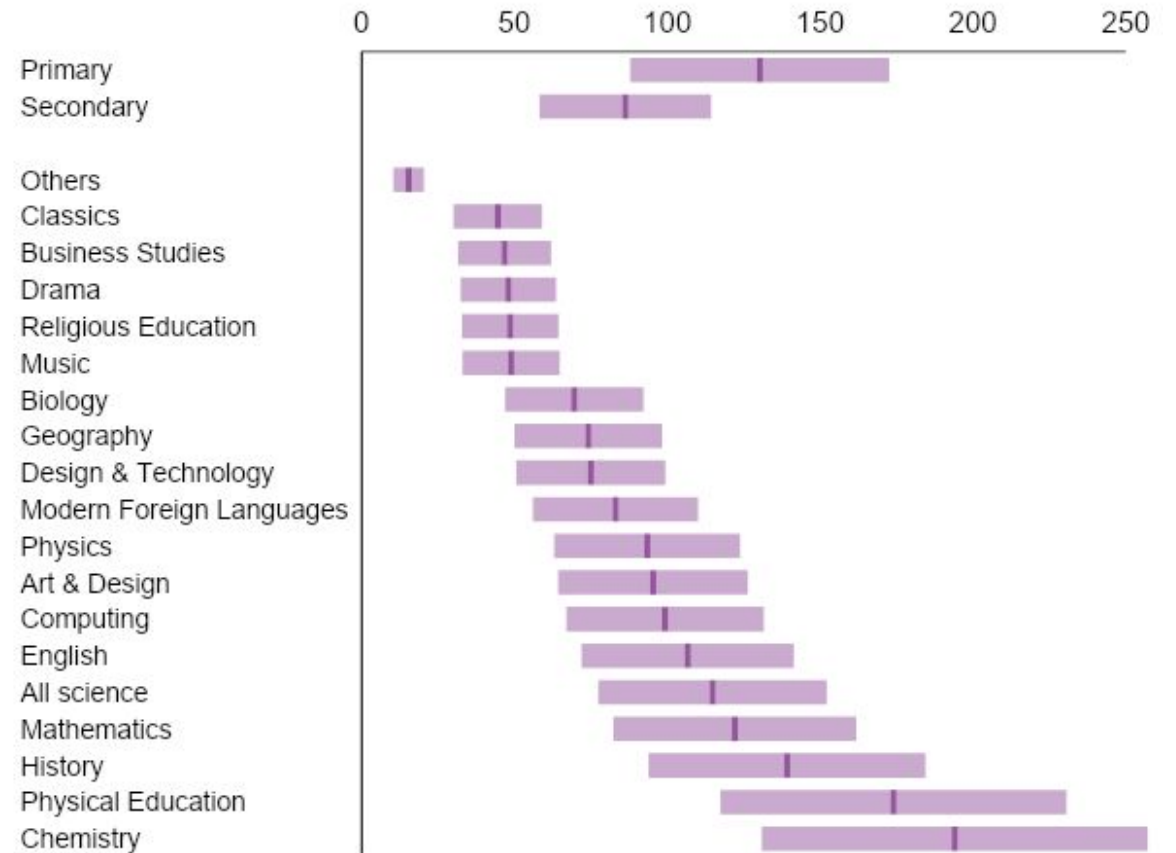
# ITT 2026/27 Forecast

Early forecast of 2026/27 recruitment suggests 8 out of 17 subjects below target, but somewhat uncertain at this stage.

Chemistry and PE forecast to be above target.

Note: based on last year's targets as this year's will be published next month

Forecast of 2026/27 ITT Census recruitment vs target, based on applications up to Feb 2026 (%)



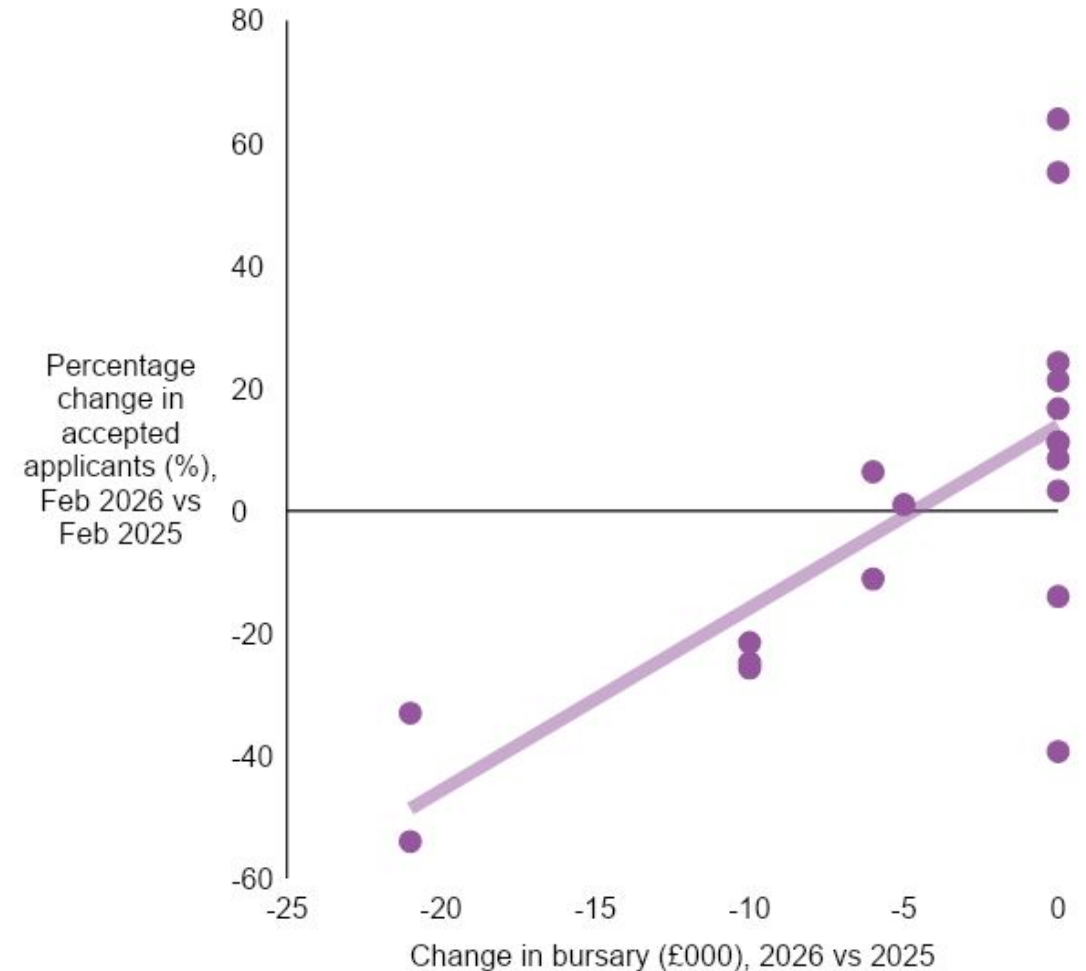
# Impact of bursaries

For 2026/27 ITT, DfE cut bursaries for some secondary subjects

No subjects had bursary increases relative to the previous year. Geography and biology saw bursaries fall by £21k.

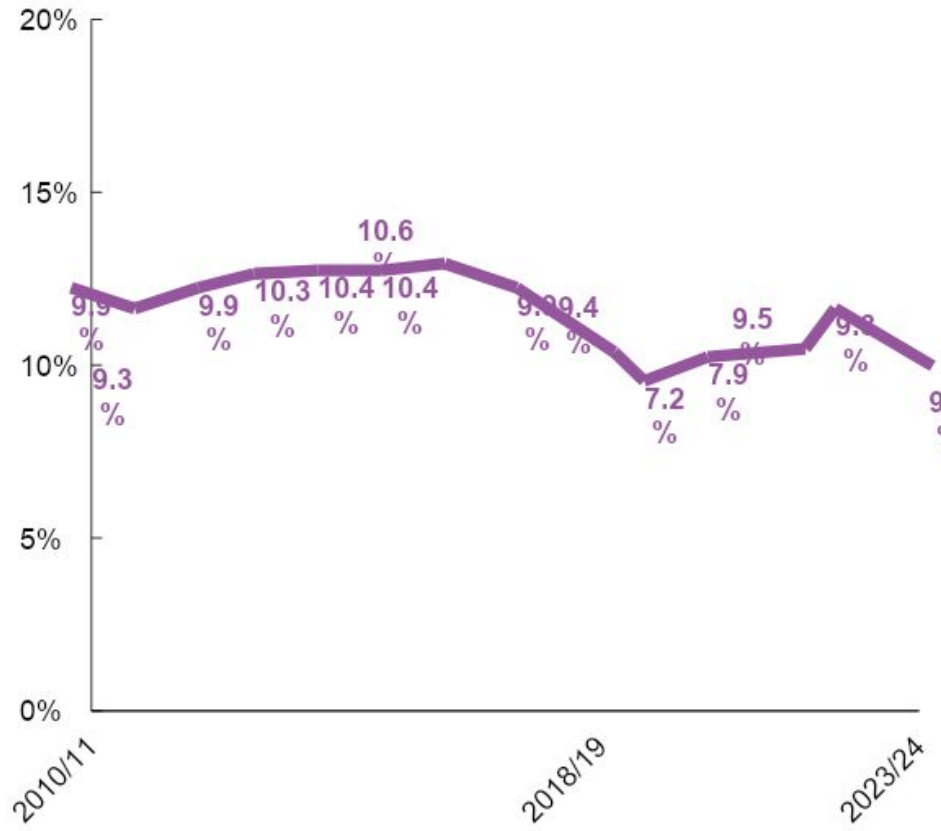
Relationship between bursary cuts and drops in accepted applications for those subjects.

This is consistent with evidence that bursaries help recruitment.

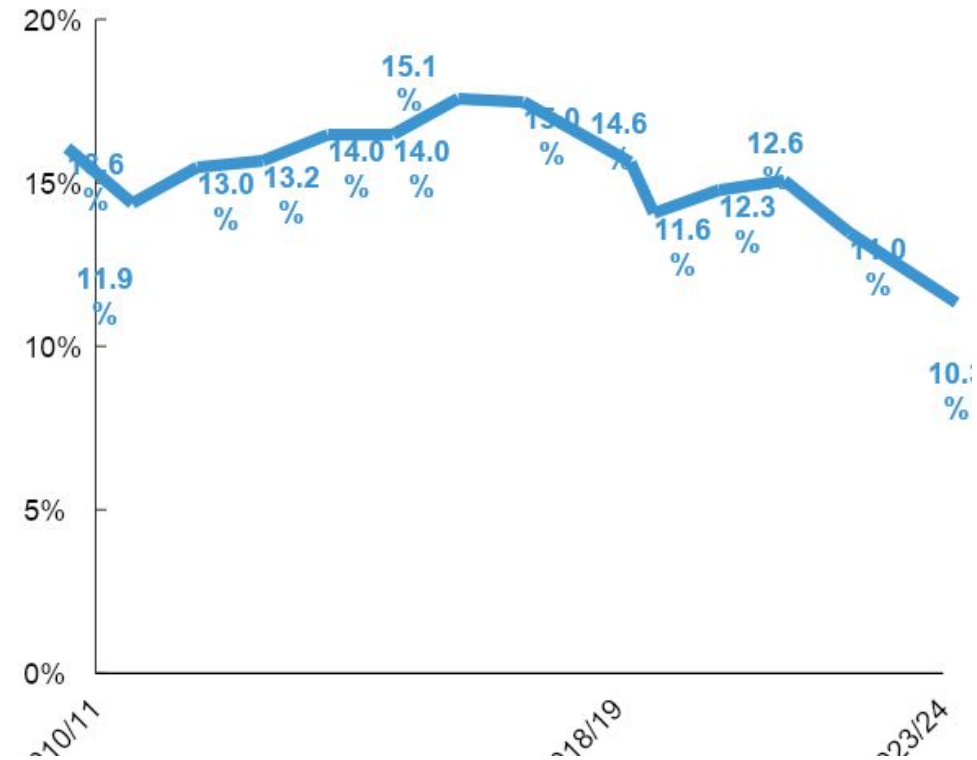


# Retention in teaching has improved recently

Proportion of teachers who left teaching in the next year



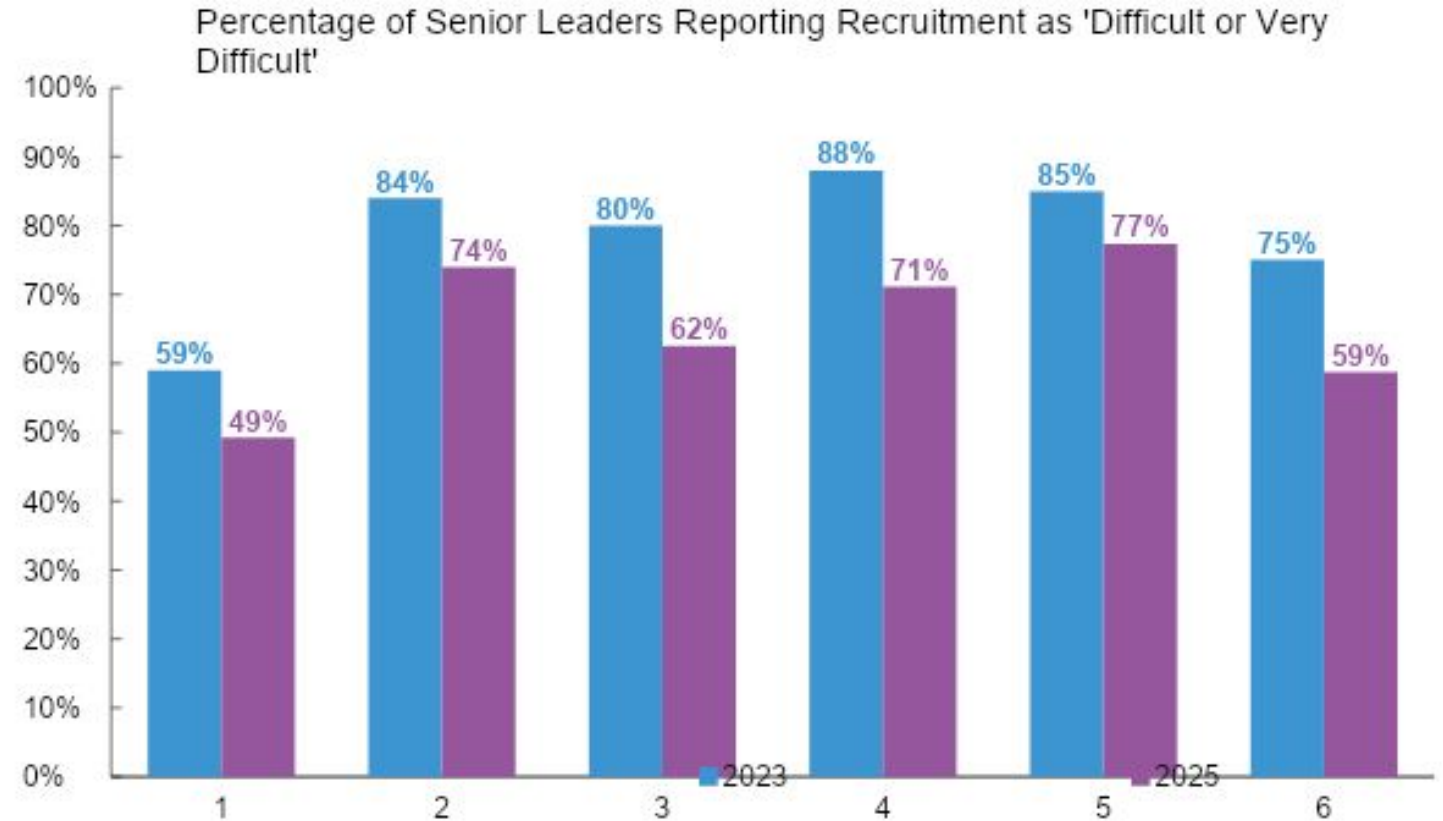
Proportion of first year ECTs who had left teaching within one year of entry



# Why does this matter for schools and pupils?

NFER surveyed schools in 2023 and 2025

71% of secondary schools find teacher recruitment difficult. Some signs of improvement but still a large proportion

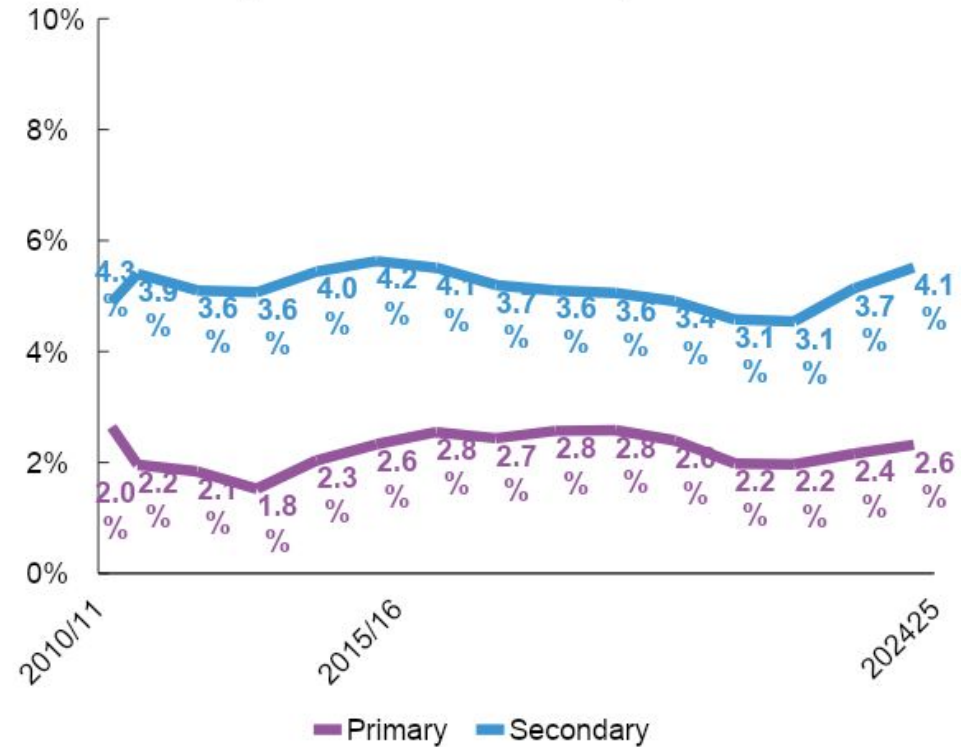


# Why does this matter for schools and pupils?

Vacancy rate (per 1,000 teachers in service)



Proportion of teachers unqualified



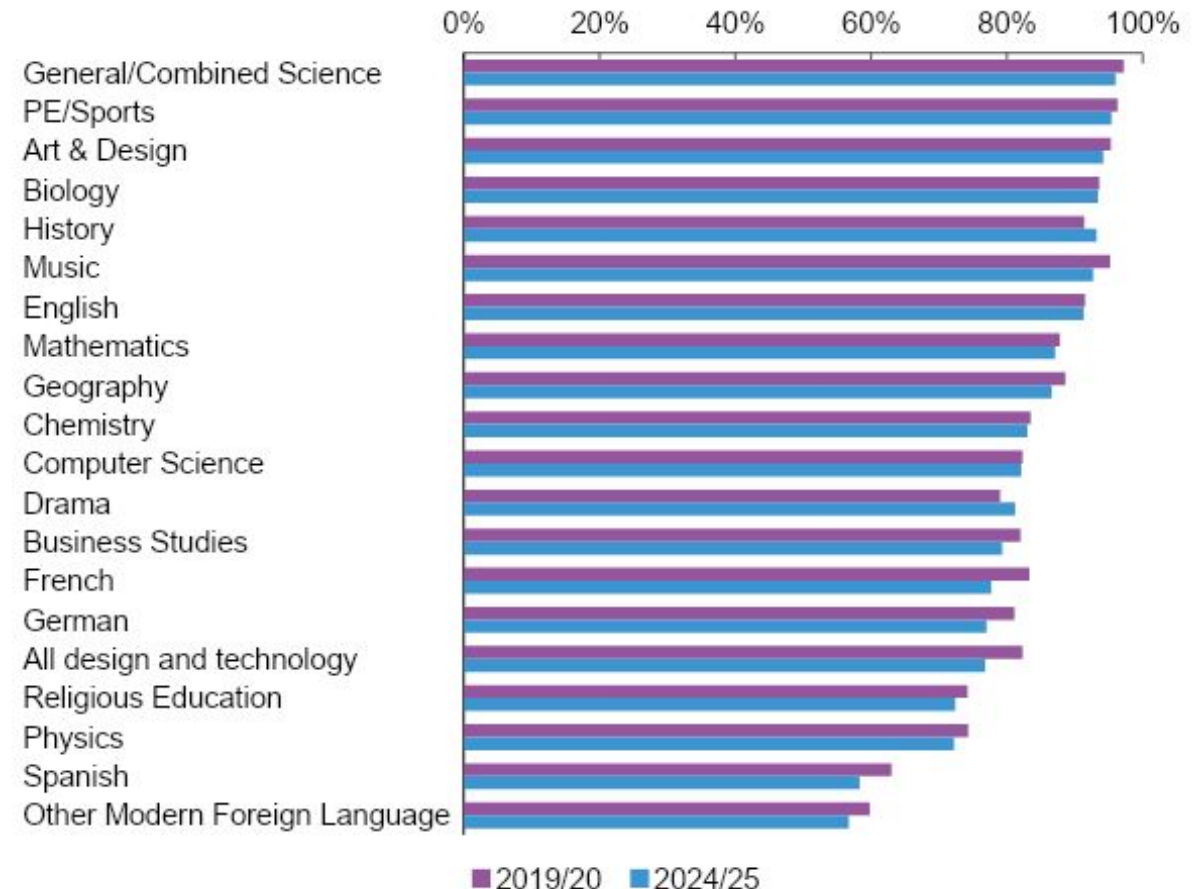
# Why does this matter for schools and pupils?

Most subjects have seen a fall in the proportion of teaching delivered by subject specialists

Across all secondary subjects, teaching by a subject specialist fell from 87.8% of all teaching hours in 2019/20, to 86.9% in 2024/25.

The figures also show that Y7-Y9 students receive less teaching by subject specialists, compared to older year groups

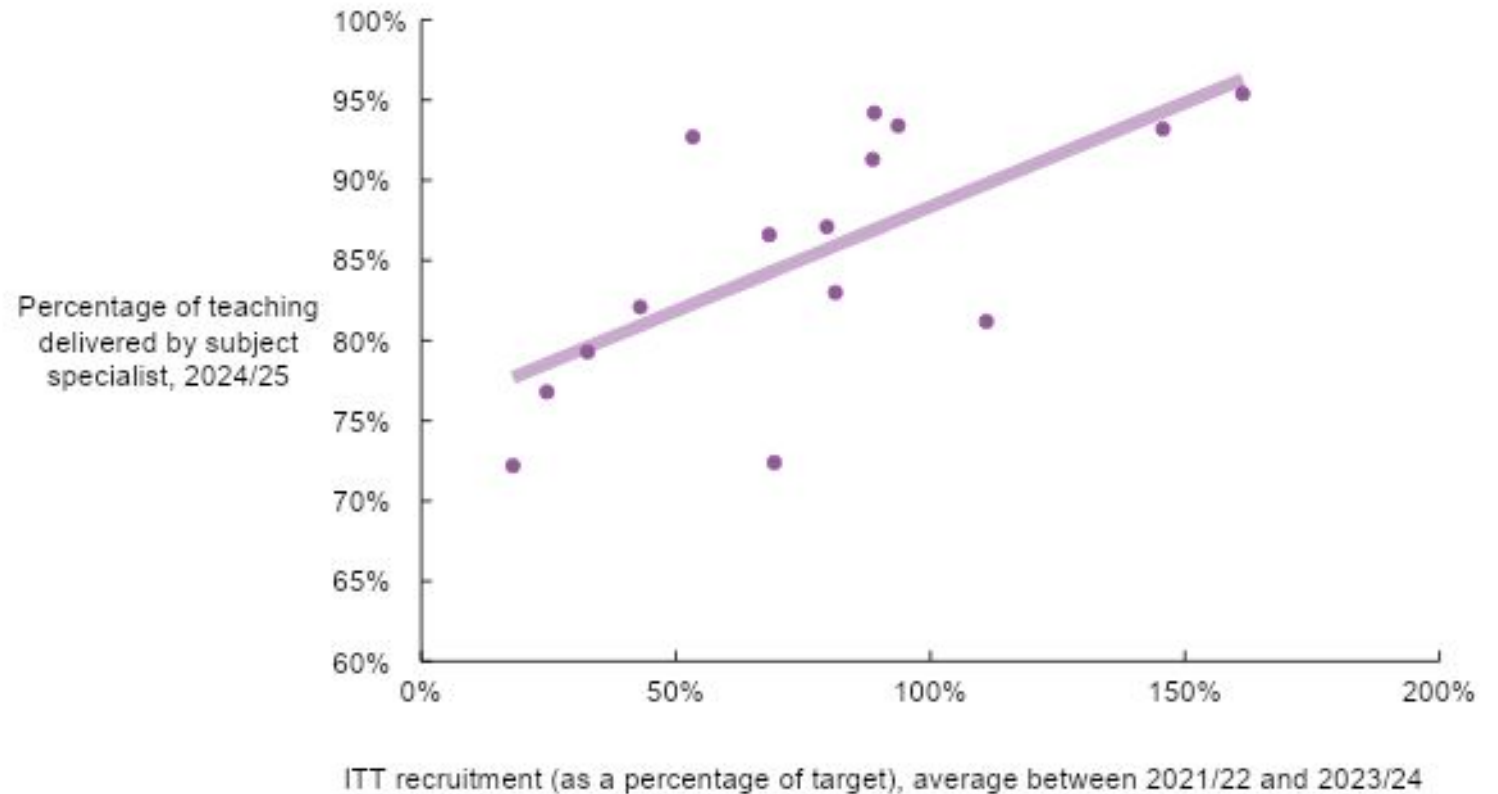
Proportion teaching hours taught by subject specialists, by subject



# Why does this matter for schools and pupils?

Subjects experiencing perennial under-recruitment are less likely to be taught by specialist teachers

Relationship between ITT recruitment and specialist teaching

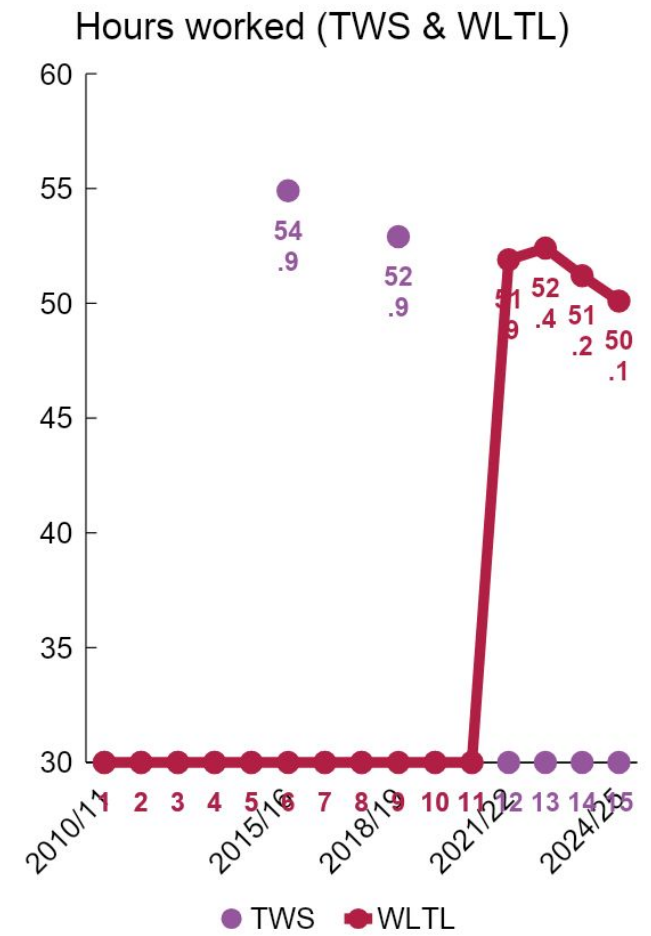
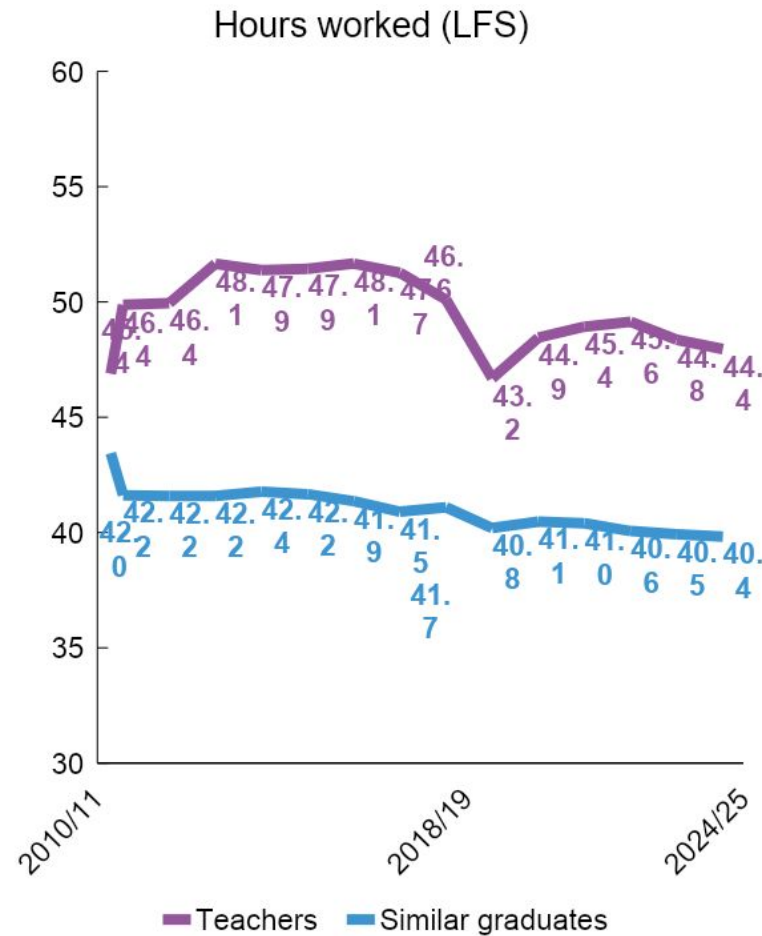


# Working hours are steadily falling

The average number of hours worked by a full-time teacher continues to slowly fall.

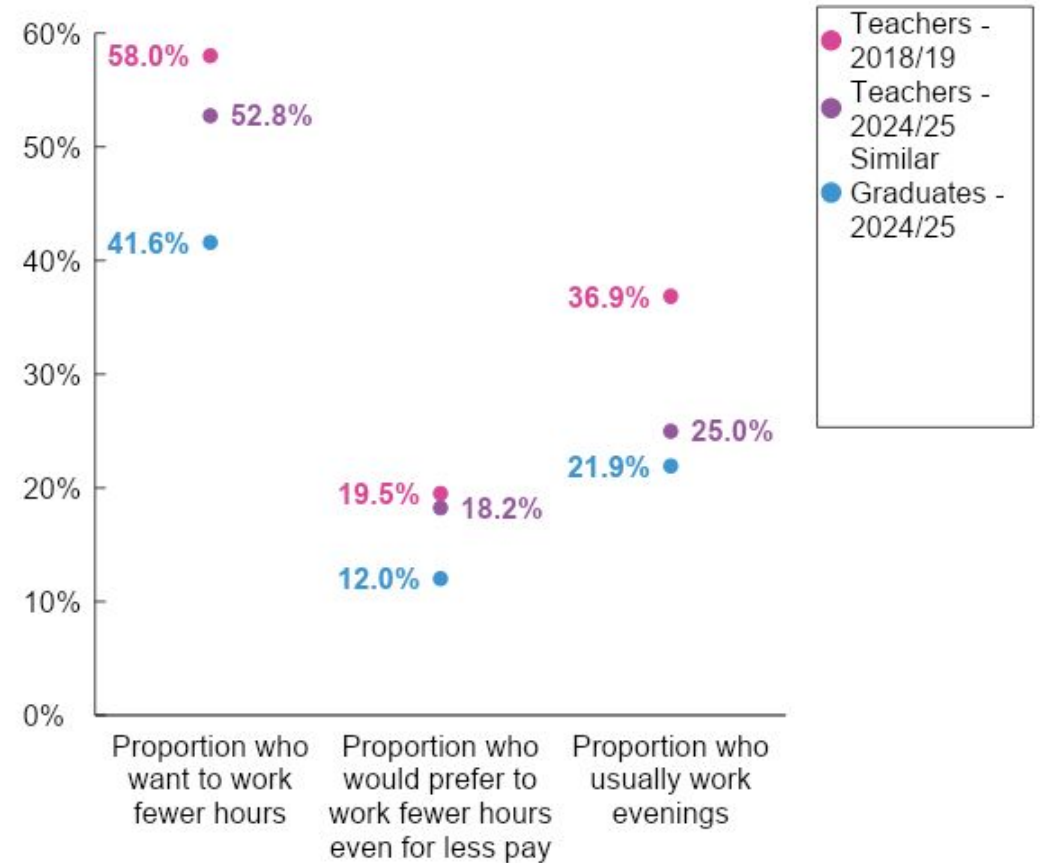
This is true in both the LFS and the WLTL survey

For a long time, teachers have worked longer hours than similar graduates (during term time). That gap continues.



# Perception of teachers' workload and working hours also improving

School teachers' perceptions of their working hours have slowly improved over time, but remain worse than similar graduates' perceptions and worse than teachers who leave

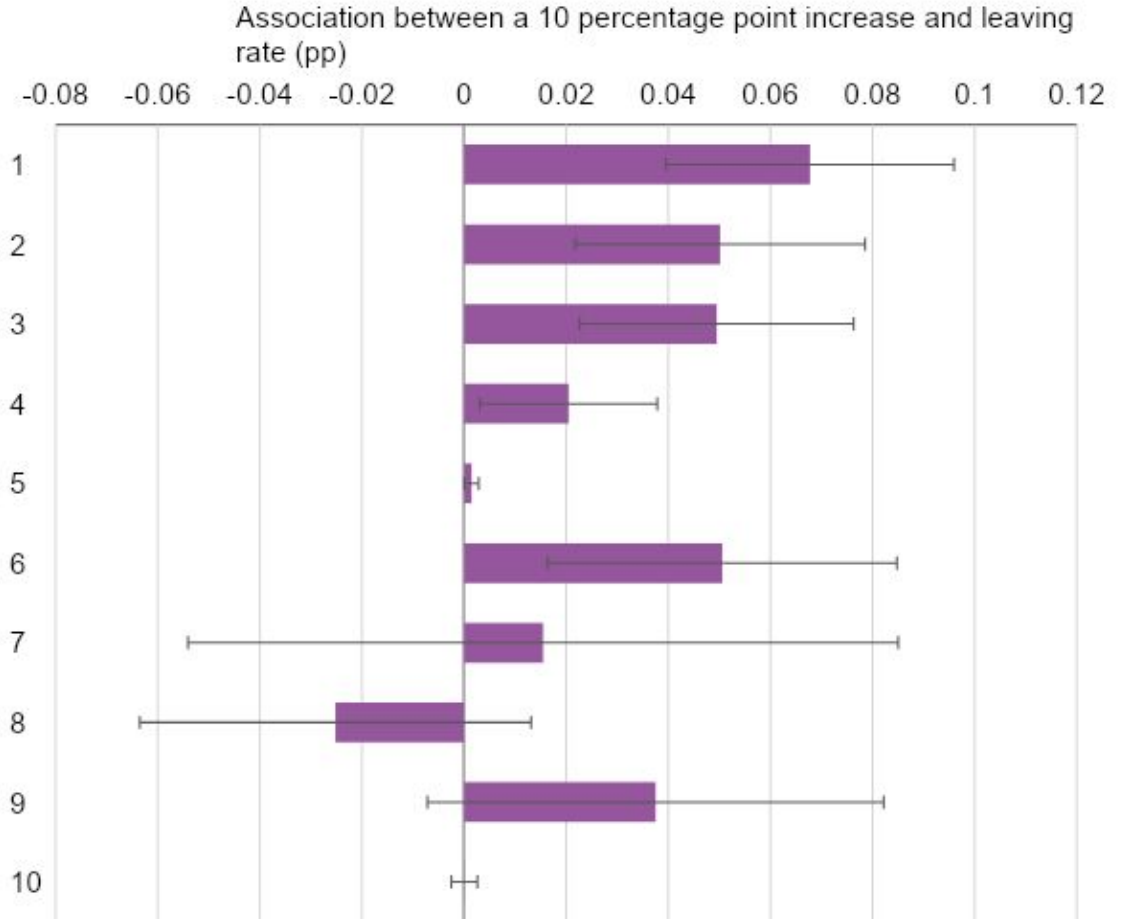
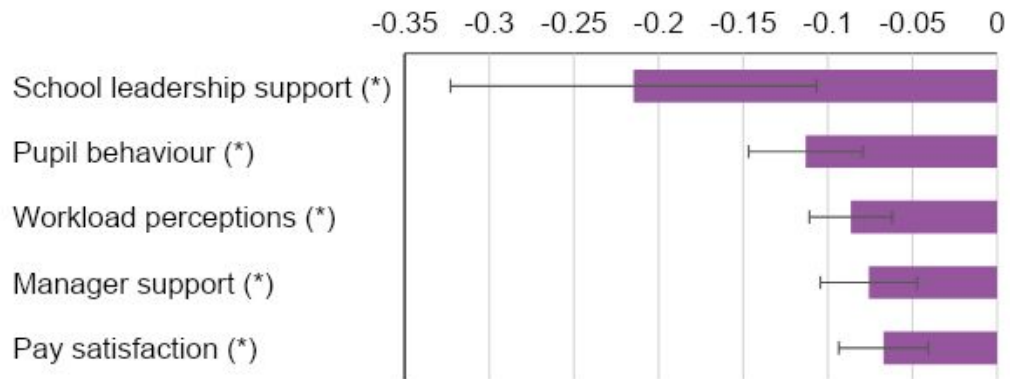


# What factors matter for retention?

- **Considering leaving**
- **Job satisfaction**
- **Wellbeing**
- **Impact of CPD**

## • **Bullying and harassment**

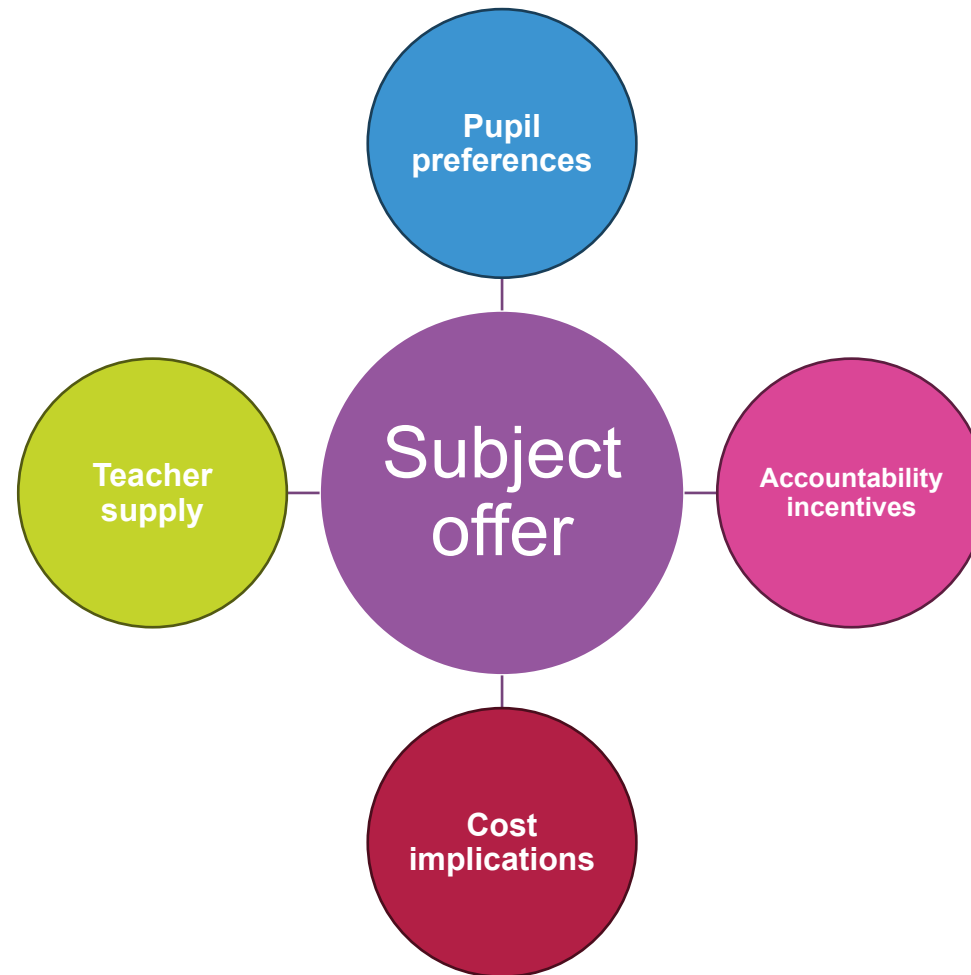
Association between a 10 percentage point increase in all underlying items and leaving rate (pp)



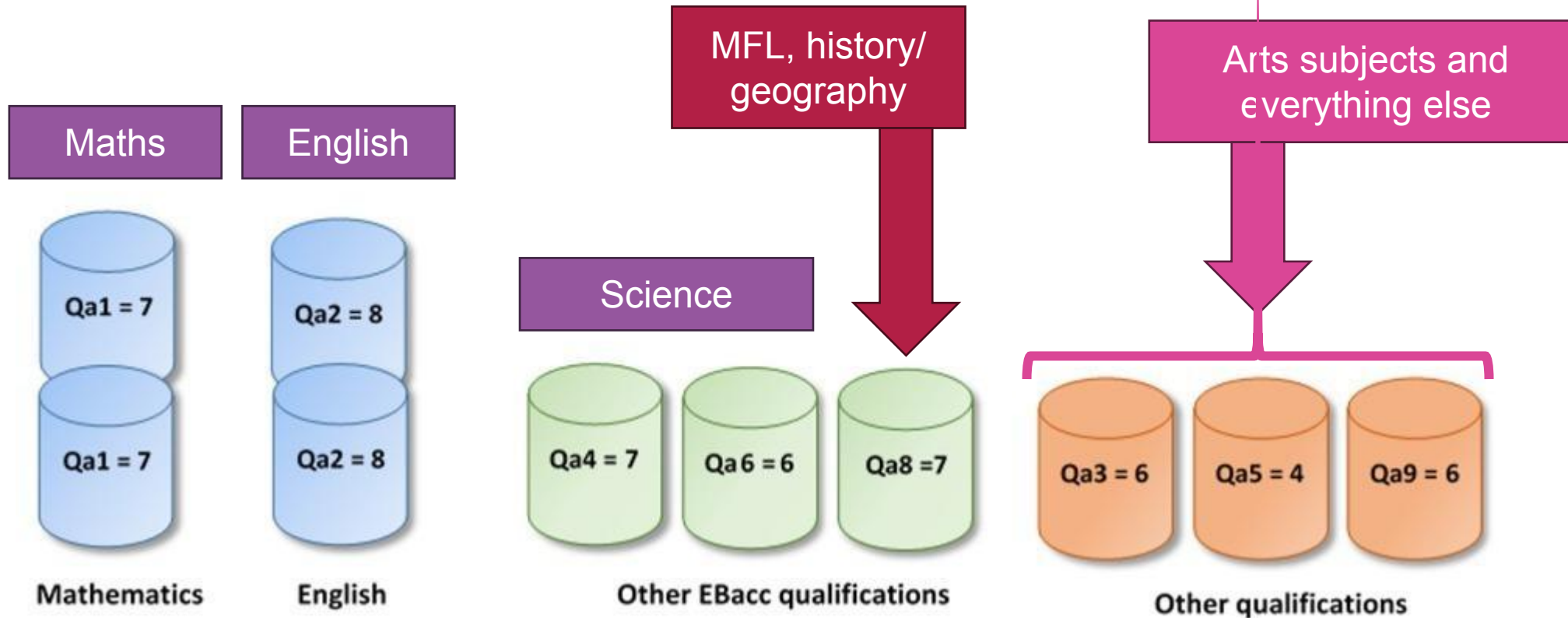
# Curriculum review and teacher supply

- 
- **Implications of accountability changes for teacher demand**
  - **Implications for teacher workload**

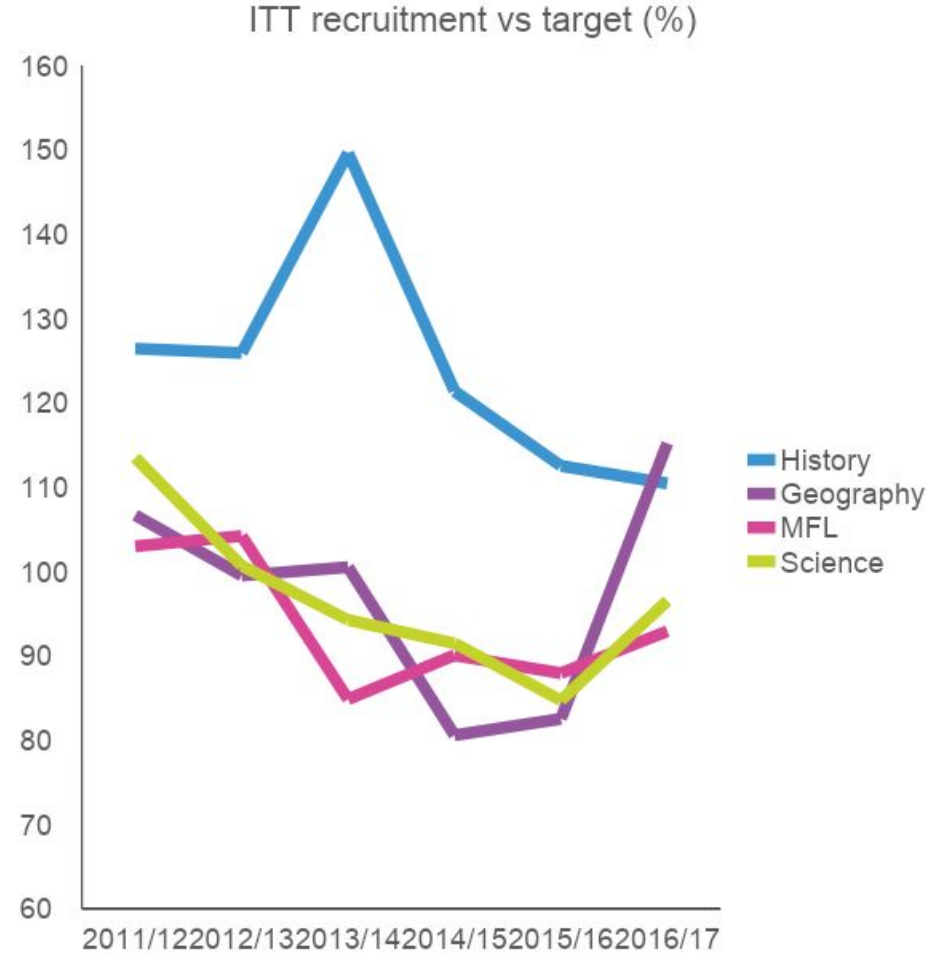
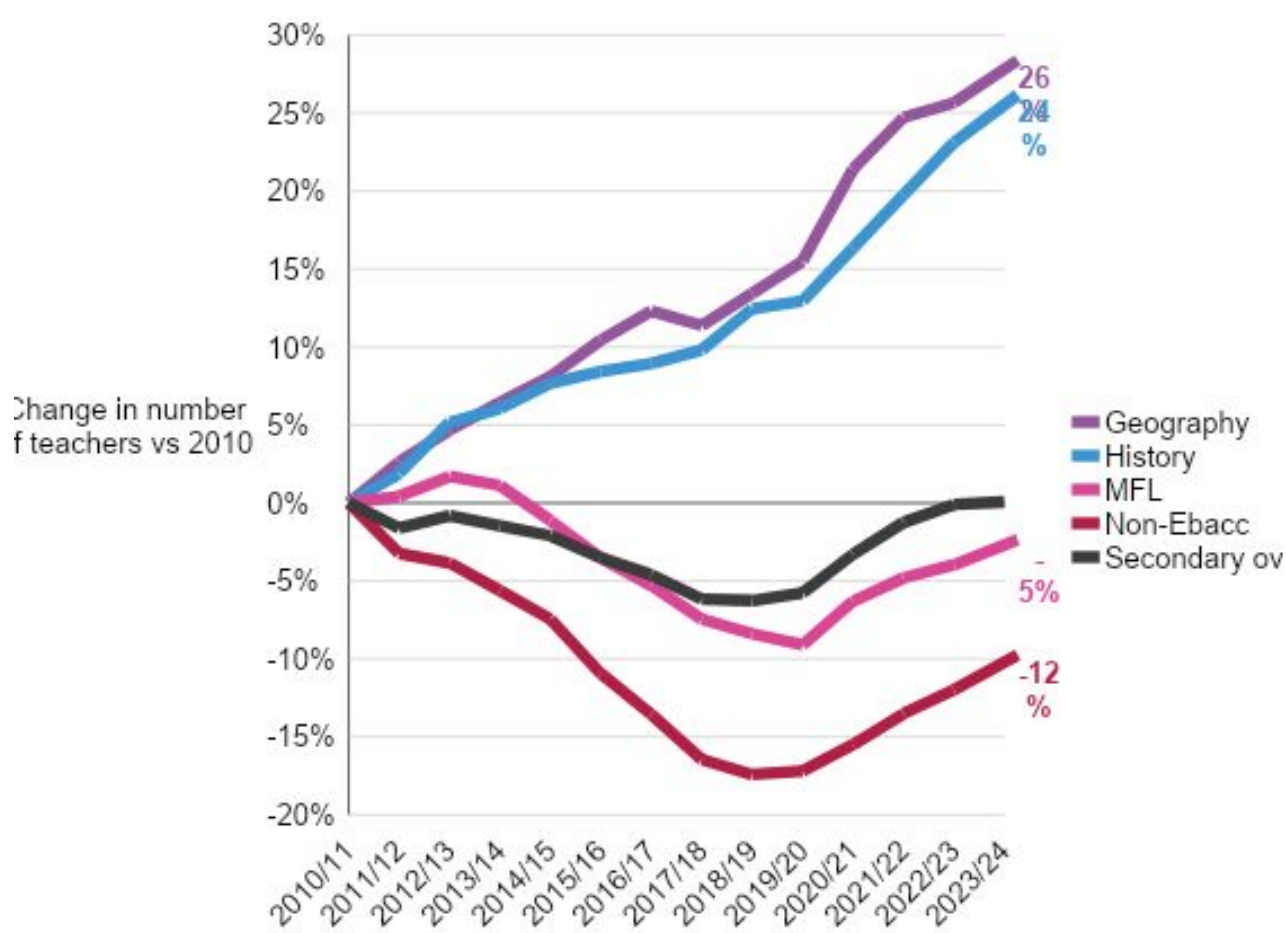
# Many factors inform schools' GCSE subject offer



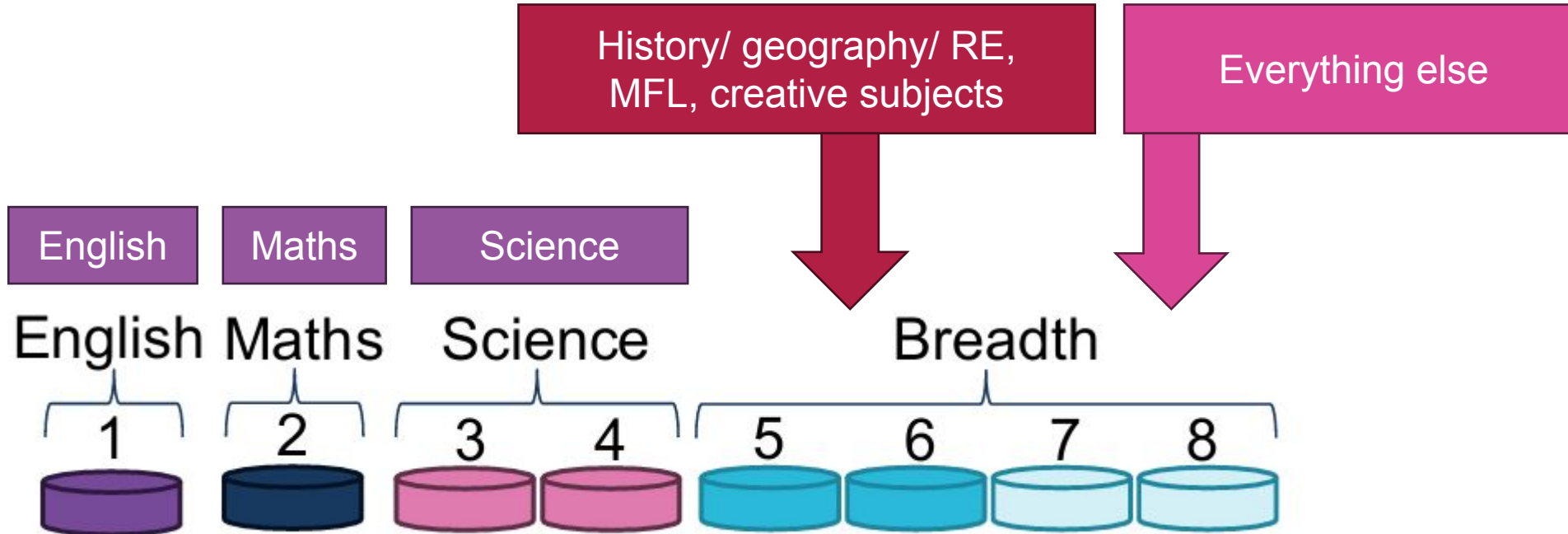
# Move to Attainment 8 incentivised EBacc subject entry



# But not all EBacc subjects saw teacher number increases



# New Attainment 8 changes incentives for MFL and creative subjects



**Given current system, biggest incentive changes are for MFL and creative subjects**

<https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2025/11/what-difference-will-the-proposed-changes-to-attainment-8-and-progress-8-make/>

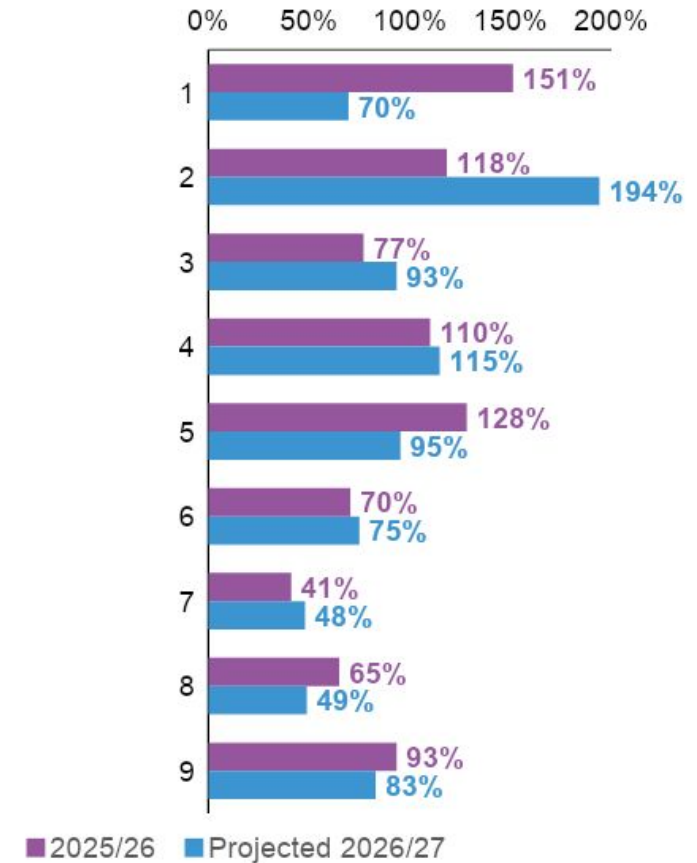
# Curriculum and Assessment Review

Reminder: ITT recruitment target estimates requirement to maintain status quo

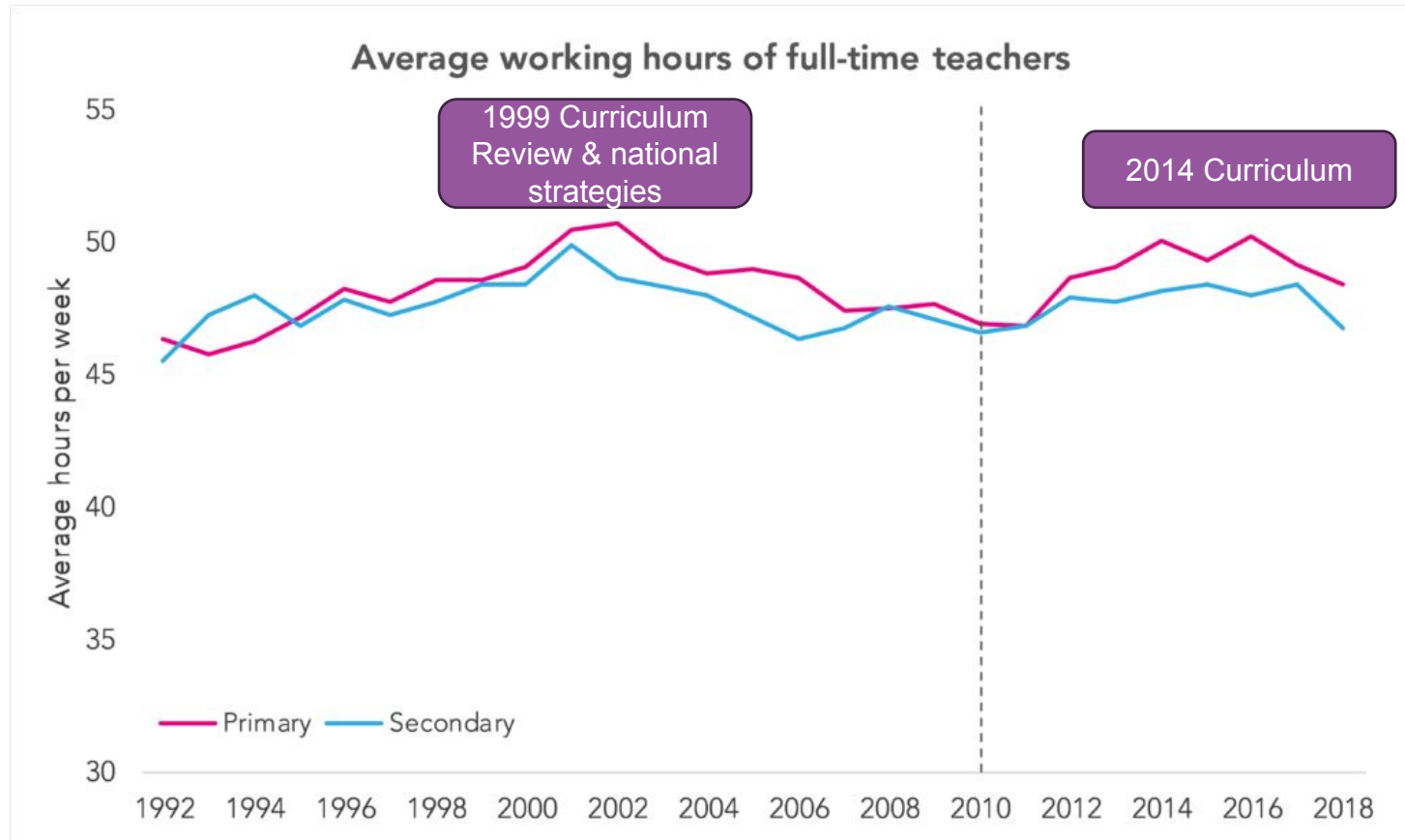
Key points from CAR with implications for teacher demand:

- Offer triple science to all
- Attainment 8 bucket changes: MFL and creative subjects

ITT recruitment as a proportion of the target



# Increases in working hours have historically coincided with curriculum changes



A break in the series has been indicated in 2010 with a dashed line. Prior to 2010, headteachers were included in the definition of primary/secondary teachers. This changed in 2010, with headteachers separated into a different category.

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey

# Thank you! Questions?



**<<< Find more of NFER's education  
workforce research**

