

Choice and Equity in Teacher Supply

an ippr project

**Report on staffing data and on surveys of headteachers and
teachers in 'vulnerable' and 'matched' schools**

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Acknowledgements

The project Choice and Equity in Teacher Supply was initiated and led by the ippr.

This report focuses only on the quantitative aspects of the project, carried out by the Institute for Policy Studies in Education (IPSE). We acknowledge the many contributions that ippr has made to this research: designing the project; obtaining funding; negotiating agreement with the schools that participated; contributing to the design of the questionnaires; and providing financial support to IPSE to carry out this part of the research. We are particularly grateful to Anna Bush for her hard work, support and encouragement.

A report on the findings of the whole project, and the policy implications arising from these findings, has been prepared by Anna Bush, and is available from ippr.

Executive summary

Aims

The overall aim of this ippr project is to compare the characteristics and perceptions of the teacher workforce of secondary schools in challenging circumstances with those of schools situated in the same localities but not so challenged. The following questions are addressed:

- Is there any justification for the widespread assumption that the quality of the workforce is lower in schools with lower attainment?
- How does the internal market for teachers work? Why are teachers attracted to school X or School Y?
- What role is played in this by pay, school management, pupil behaviour, behaviour management policies, Ofsted reports, etc.?
- What proportion of teachers deliberately choose to work in challenging schools?
- Do staff in such schools feel adequately supported by their initial and continuing professional development activity?

This report attempts to address these questions through analysing existing workforce data together with data from surveys of headteachers and teachers conducted by the Institute for Policy Studies in Education in collaboration with ippr.

Research design

For the purposes of this project we identified 120 schools with consistently low attainment. This group are identified as ‘vulnerable’ schools, in that they are not meeting the government’s floor targets. For each vulnerable school we identified a school that was matched in terms of being in the same travel to work area, and having the same ethos in terms of faith / non-faith, single-sex / mixed, with /without a sixth form. The rationale for this was to eliminate a range of possible reasons why a teacher might prefer working in one school rather than another, and focus on attainment. In every case the matched school had attainment that was significantly higher.

Drawing on schools in this sample, the quantitative aspect of the project had several strands.

- We have analysed aggregated data for these schools from the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers Survey of Resignations and Recruitment. This sheds light on the composition of the teacher workforce, and the number and characteristics of leavers and joiners.
- We sent a short questionnaire to all the schools. Response rates were extremely poor, but this survey nevertheless offers some data that suggests trends of interest.
- We asked ten of the schools (five vulnerable and five matched) to distribute questionnaires to all teachers asking about their career patterns, motivations and job satisfactions. This questionnaire was completed by 179 teachers.

Summary of findings

The findings are summarised under the questions the project set out to answer.

Is there any justification for the widespread assumption that the quality of the workforce is lower in schools with lower attainment?

There were only minor differences between degree classifications of teachers working in vulnerable and matched schools, but the vulnerable schools had a higher proportion of teachers without UK Qualified Teacher Status (though many of these had overseas teaching qualifications). The headteachers of vulnerable schools were more likely to consider some of their teachers to be of poor quality.

How does the internal market for teachers work? Why are teachers attracted to School X or School Y? What role is played in this by pay, school management, pupil behaviour, behaviour management policies, Ofsted reports, etc.?

It appears from our data that a majority of teachers choose to work in ‘good’ schools, where behaviour management is effective. While many teachers believe that pay incentives could solve the recruitment and retention difficulties of vulnerable schools, pay did not generally appear as a key factor motivating teachers’ choices.

The main incentive to stay in any school is relationships with colleagues. A positive and supportive atmosphere among staff appears to be a key factor in teacher retention. The teacher survey showed that teachers in the vulnerable schools were much less likely than those in matched schools to consider that their school management team fosters such an atmosphere or provides the support they need, or to see the management team as effective or as an incentive to stay in the school. Thus, in the vulnerable schools, teachers had less confidence in the school management than in the matched schools, and equally, the headteachers had less confidence in their teachers. But where teachers do see school management in positive terms and believe that the school is improving, they are much more likely to want to work in a school.

Pupil behaviour and workload were identified as the strongest incentives to leave a school. The former was a particular concern for teachers in vulnerable schools.

What proportion of teachers deliberately choose to work in challenging schools?

In our survey, about 20% of all teacher respondents appeared to have a particular motivation to work in vulnerable schools. These teachers indicated not only that they had chosen their current school because it was challenging, but also that they would choose to teach disadvantaged pupils in the future. They were predominantly (but not exclusively) aged under forty, and a disproportionate number of them were from minority ethnic groups. In addition, some older teachers had chosen to work in a challenging environment, but indicated that if they were to move on, they would prefer something a little easier.

However, while there are teachers who choose to work challenging schools, the teacher survey indicates very clearly that they are less contented than those in less challenging schools.

Do staff in such schools feel adequately supported by their initial and continuing professional development activity?

In comparison to their counterparts in matched schools, the teachers in vulnerable schools felt less well-prepared by their initial teacher training and less well-supported by their current professional development activity than those in matched schools. Many of them reported that they were involved in very little professional development activity. They argued that teaching disadvantaged pupils and dealing with their poor behaviour takes up more time than teaching in a less challenging environment, and that as a result there is not sufficient time for professional development. Similarly, headteachers argued that class sizes in challenging schools should be lower, and that timetable loads need to be lighter, in order to compensate for the extra time spent in teaching and managing behaviour.

Introduction

The overall aim of this ippr project is to compare the characteristics and perceptions of the teacher workforce of secondary schools in challenging circumstances with those of schools situated in the same localities but not so challenged. In Martin Johnson's paper initiating this project, presented at an ippr seminar in May 2004, he set out a number of questions which the research should address:

- Is there any justification for the widespread assumption that the quality of the workforce is lower in schools with lower attainment?
- How does the internal market for teachers work? Why are teachers attracted to school X or School Y?
- What role is played in this by pay, school management, pupil behaviour, behaviour management policies, Ofsted reports, etc.?
- What proportion of teachers deliberately choose to work in challenging schools?
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This report attempts to address these questions through analysing existing workforce data and data from surveys of headteachers and teachers conducted by the Institute for Policy Studies in Education in collaboration with ippr.

Research design

There are a number of different ways of defining ‘challenging circumstances’. For the purposes of this project we identified the 120 schools with consistently low attainment which we have generally defined as those with fewer than 25% of the pupils achieving five A*-C grades at GCSE in at least four out of the last five years, including in 2004. This group are identified as ‘vulnerable’ schools, in that they are not meeting the government’s floor targets. We recognise that staffing of London schools is a particular issue, and so were concerned to have a sufficient number of these in the sample. However, only eleven London schools met our original criteria, so in London we boosted the sample by including those with below 25% five A*-Cs in three of the last five years, not necessarily including 2004. (None of them, however, reached 30% in 2004). Thus in London we have identified 24 schools as vulnerable. In this report we have distinguished, where relevant, between London schools and those elsewhere.

The group for comparison consisted of a ‘matched’ school for each of the vulnerable schools. These schools were matched in terms of being in the same travel to work area, and having the same ethos in terms of faith / non-faith, single-sex / mixed, with /without a sixth form. The rationale for this was to eliminate a range of possible reasons why a teacher might prefer working in one school rather than another, and focus on attainment. In every case the matched school had attainment that was significantly higher, though schools with exceptionally high attainment were avoided (Table 1).

Table 1: Mean percentage of 5 A*-C GCSEs 2000-2004 for schools in each group

	5 A* - C 2000	5 A* - C 2001	5 A* - C 2002	5 A* - C 2003	5 A* - C 2004
vulnerable - London (N = 24)	19%	19%	18%	20%	23%
vulnerable - outside London (N = 96)	17%	17%	18%	19%	18%
matched - London (N = 24)	42%	44%	47%	49%	54%
matched - outside London (N = 96)	47%	48%	51%	52%	53%

While all the matched schools were geographically close to the vulnerable schools, DfES statistics show that the characteristics of the pupil intakes differed in relation to factors such as free school meal eligibility and special needs (Table 2).

Table 2: Percentages of pupils eligible for free schools meals, with special educational needs and with first languages other than English

	% eligible for free school meals	% special educational needs with statements	% special educational needs with no statements	% whose first language is other than English
vulnerable - London (N = 20)	42.1	2.9	27.9	34.4
vulnerable - outside London (N = 96)	34.8	3.8	27.8	9.5
matched - London (N = 23)	27.2	3.1	15.8	31.7
matched - outside London (N = 96)	13.9	2.7	12.9	8.0

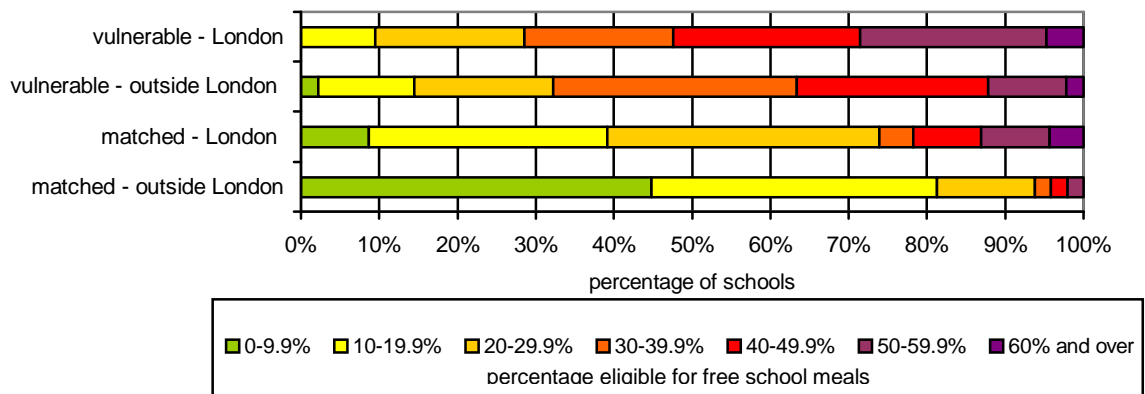
We were not, then, attempting to find out what enables pupils to achieve better in one school rather than another: the focus was on teacher choices of where to work, and the patterns of teaching workforce that result from these choices.

Table 2 shows that, on average, the vulnerable schools had a higher percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals than the matched schools. Within each group (vulnerable and matched) the London schools had higher eligibility. The vulnerable schools also had twice as many pupils with unstatemented special educational needs, though similar proportions of statemented pupils. The proportion of pupils whose first language was not English was higher in London, but did not vary between vulnerable and matched schools.

However, while the average figures for free school meals and special needs were higher in the vulnerable schools, there was wide variation across the schools in each group; Figure 1 illustrates this for free school meals.

When we compare each vulnerable school with its matched pair, in the vast majority of cases the vulnerable school had a substantially higher free school meals figure, indicating a more disadvantaged intake, though a similar location and travel to work zone. In just six pairs (two in London, four elsewhere) the relationship was reversed, with the matched school having the higher free school meals figure, though also having much higher GCSE attainment.

Figure 1: Free school meals: percentage of schools with different free school meals figures in each group



Drawing on schools in this sample, the quantitative aspect of the project had two strands. First, we attempted to collect and compare data at school level, by sending out a short questionnaire. To reduce the burden on schools, we asked them to send us a copy of the data they had submitted for Form 618g (data on staffing collected annually for the DfES); this would have been collected by their LEAs in the previous month. We also asked schools for permission to use data entered in the annual survey conducted by the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) of teacher resignations and recruitment. In addition we asked the schools for information to supplement these two data sources, including responses to advertised vacancies, and we asked them to fill in a short questionnaire giving their views about attracting and retaining staff.

The response to this questionnaire was extremely disappointing: only 20 schools sent in returns. Even this level of response was achieved only after sending a second copy of the questionnaire to each school, and a telephone chase to try and obtain responses from the schools matching those that had already responded. On reflection, we can suggest reasons for this very low response. One possibility is that we were asking for two sorts of data which may have needed the involvement of two different people in the school. We asked for a copy of the 618g data, which involved printing out or photocopying the form (adding to workload), and for other data on staffing which was clearly within the remit of an administrator. But we also asked the headteacher to respond to questions about attracting and retaining staff. This meant that the questionnaire had to be passed from one person to another, with all the potential for getting mislaid en route. It is also possible that the vulnerable schools, being under particular pressure, are less likely to fill in questionnaires; however, the response rate was equally poor from the matched schools.

In the light of this failure, we have turned to the data collected by NEOST to give us an overview of staffing in our two groups of schools. Our original intention had been for schools to give permission for us to access the data relating to that school. This would have enabled us to link the data from different sources. However, in view of the low response, we have instead used aggregated data supplied by NEOST for all the schools in our sample that responded to their survey. This is sorted into four groups, vulnerable schools in London and elsewhere, and matched schools in London and elsewhere.

The second strand of the quantitative research involved a survey of all teachers in five challenging and five matching schools, in order to achieve a broad overview of their career patterns, motivations and job satisfactions. Again, this has not been straightforward, and despite achieving agreement from ten schools, and a high level of communication between ippr personnel and the schools, responses have been slow to reach us, and in some of the schools very small numbers responded. This report is based on 179 responses from 8 schools (4 matched pairs).

In this analysis of the quantitative data, we report first on the NEOST aggregated data, secondly on the small number of school questionnaires that were returned, and finally on the survey of teaching staff.

Employers Organisation Survey data

This section draws on data collected in the annual survey of the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST). This allows us to compare turnover and wastage rates in vulnerable and matched schools, and to review the characteristics of leavers and recruits in the two groups.

NEOST has allowed us to use the data returned by schools in our sample to their annual Survey of Resignations and Recruitment for the calendar year 2003. This forms the basis of their report published in 2004. The 2003 data reflect the pay structures at that time, and while this may reflect a different situation from the current one, it is clearly relevant given that we are concerned with schools that have had low attainment over a five year period. The data provided distinguish our four groups of schools: London ‘vulnerable’, matched London schools, ‘vulnerable’ schools outside London, and the matched schools. While the four groups are identified, individual schools are not.

The survey achieved a return rate from all secondary schools of 58%. The return rate for the schools in our sample was considerably lower, as shown below, particularly among the ‘vulnerable’ London schools, of which only a third of our sample had sent in returns (Table 3). This data must therefore be viewed with considerable caution. The survey was also less thoroughly completed by the vulnerable schools. For example, they indicated more often than the matched schools that the origin of recruits or the destination of leavers was not known.

Table 3: NEOST Survey data about the schools in our sample

	no of schools in sample	no. of these with NEOST survey data	% of sample with NEOST data
vulnerable - London	24	8	33.3
vulnerable - outside London	96	43	44.8
matched - London	24	11	45.8
matched - outside London	96	50	52.1
TOTAL	240	112	46.7

The survey asks schools to give numbers of male and female full-time and part-time teaching staff, distinguishing permanent and fixed-term / temporary contracts. It then asks for details of each member of staff who resigned or was recruited during the calendar year 2003, indicating type of contract, sex, age, salary scale, main teaching subject, origin or destination, and for leavers, length of service in the school. These data offer, then, some indications of whether turnover of teaching staff is higher in ‘vulnerable’ schools, and of the characteristics of the staff they are able to recruit.

While London schools on average had more teachers than the schools outside London, in each location the vulnerable schools had fewer staff than the matched schools (Table 4). This could be a result of the policy to allow ‘successful’ schools to grow, and less successful to decline in that they do not attract pupils. Alternatively, it could suggest that there is an optimum size for secondary schools, and that those which are smaller are less likely to be successful.

Table 4: Mean number of teachers per school by type of contract (headcount)

	permanent full-time	permanent part-time	temporary full-time	temporary part-time	total
vulnerable - London	53.1	5.5	2.4	0.6	61.6
vulnerable - outside London	43.3	3.7	2.4	1.1	50.6
matched - London	64.0	7.2	2.9	0.3	74.4
matched - outside London	50.8	6.4	1.9	1.2	60.3

Source: NEOST survey

Recognising that the NEOST survey data did not include all the schools in our original sample, we checked the number of pupils in all the schools in the full sample from DfES data. Table 5 shows that across the whole sample, the matched schools were substantially larger than the vulnerable schools.

Table 5: Mean number of pupils: vulnerable and matched schools in whole sample

	vulnerable	matched
London	839	1074
outside London	796	1140

Source: DfES statistics

The NEOST survey data indicate that the vulnerable schools had a slightly lower proportion of part-time teachers than the matched schools – 9.7% of all teachers (headcount) compared with 12.1% in matched schools.

It might be expected that the vulnerable schools would have higher numbers of staff on temporary contracts, and this was the case. In fact this difference is not large: in the vulnerable schools, 6.5% of all teachers were on temporary contracts, compared with 4.9% in the matched schools. However, the NEOST survey does not include supply or occasional teachers, who play a substantial role in some vulnerable schools.

Nationally DfES statistics show that 55.2% of secondary teachers are women; in both the vulnerable and matched schools, the proportion was about the same as this, with no clear difference between the two groups.

Turnover ‘moveage’ and wastage

We examined the Employers’ Organisation survey data to see whether the turnover rate was higher in the vulnerable schools, as previous research has suggested. While some teacher movement is necessary and healthy, Ofsted have estimated that annual turnover in excess of 12% creates difficulties, and Johnson, in the paper introducing this project, argued that pupils in such schools have an extra need for stability.

Turnover of staff is variously defined: here we take it to be the number of teachers leaving a school as a percentage of the total staff numbers. Turnover rates can be calculated for any specific group, such as full-time teachers, those on permanent contracts, and so on.

There have been some indications in the literature that turnover is higher in challenging schools. Smithers and Robinson (2004) found that turnover is

significantly related (inversely) to performance at GCSE, though wastage is not – i.e. teachers in low-achieving schools are more likely to move to other schools but not to move out of the profession. Similarly, turnover is higher in schools with higher numbers of pupils eligible for free schools meals or with special educational needs. This pattern is different from that in primary schools, where the various measures of disadvantage and low attainment are not related to turnover or wastage.

We focus first on turnover rates for full-time permanent teachers. In this survey turnover rates are calculated as the number of resignations among a particular group of staff (e.g. full-time permanent) from the school during the calendar year expressed as a percentage of the number of that group employed in January the following year; this does not include moves within schools. NEOST (2004) found the overall turnover of full-time permanent teachers in secondary schools to be 11.5%; it was higher in Greater London (13.5%). The figures for the groups in our research are shown on Table 6.

Table 6: Full time permanent staff turnover

	vulnerable %	matched %
London	16.2	17.6
outside London	14.2	10.9
TOTAL	14.6	12.4

As Smithers and Robinson (2004) show, the turnover rate varies depending on how it is calculated. In Table 6 we have used the total number of resignations in a group of schools divided by the total number of staff. An alternative method is to calculate the turnover rate for each school in the sample, and then take the average of these rates for all the schools in a group. This method arrives at a slightly different picture (Table 7).

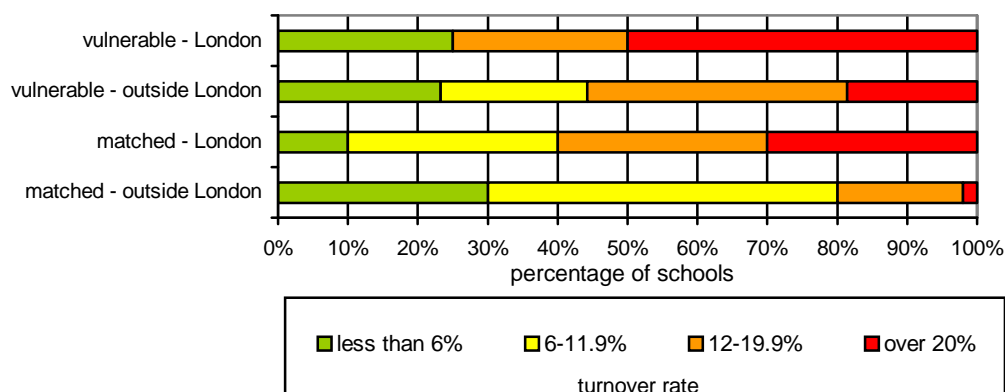
Table 7: Full time permanent staff turnover, calculated as the average of turnover rates of individual schools

	vulnerable %	matched %
London	16.2	16.0
outside London	14.2	9.3

Either method shows that that the turnover rates for full-time permanent teachers in the London schools are higher than those for schools outside London, and that in London, there was little difference between the vulnerable and matched schools (though it should be noted that the sample included only nineteen London schools, and they may not be representative). However, outside London the vulnerable schools had, on average, a higher turnover of full-time permanent staff than the matched group.

These figures, however, conceal a considerable diversity; for example, among the vulnerable schools, turnover rates ranged from 2.5% to 32.6%. In London, half the vulnerable schools had turnover exceeding 20%. At the opposite extreme, only one of the matched schools outside London had turnover exceeding 20%. Figure 2 illustrates the range.

Figure 2: Percentage of schools in sample with different turnover rates for full-time permanent teachers



Turnover is made up of wastage (the proportion leaving teaching in the maintained school sector) and ‘moveage’, a new term coined by Smithers and Robinson (2005) to indicate the proportion of teachers that move from one school to another. The Employers Survey includes data on destinations, and thus allows us to calculate moveage and wastage rates. The focus here is still on full-time teachers on permanent contracts.

Table 8: Turnover, wastage and moveage rates for full-time permanent teaching staff in vulnerable and matched schools

	turnover	wastage	moveage
vulnerable	14.6	7.5	7.1
matched	12.4	6.4	6.0
all secondary schools*	11.5	6.6	4.9

* NEOST 2004

Table 8 shows that turnover is higher in both vulnerable and matched schools than the national figure. Both wastage and moveage are higher in vulnerable schools than in matched schools. This differs from Smithers and Robinson’s (2004) finding that in challenging schools turnover is higher but wastage is not.

However the data on destinations collected in the NEOST survey is incomplete, as shown on Table 9, with more destinations recorded as ‘not known’ in the vulnerable schools; it is therefore difficult to draw any clear conclusions from these data.

Table 9: Components of wastage

	retirements	destination not		total wastage
		known	other wastage	
vulnerable	1.1	3.0	3.4	7.5
matched	1.6	1.5	3.2	6.4

Other wastage includes work outside the maintained schools sector, maternity and ‘other’ destinations.

Thus far we have focused on full-time permanent teachers. Turnover rates appear much higher when those on temporary contracts are also included, and this is a particular issue in many vulnerable schools.

Of those working full-time on temporary or fixed term contracts, 75% left posts in vulnerable schools, compared to only 47% in matched schools. If turnover is calculated including full-time teachers leaving from temporary or fixed term contracts as well as permanent contracts, (i.e. the definition used in Smithers and Robinson's reports), the turnover figures are rather higher than those we have been considering thus far, 17.6% in vulnerable schools and 13.7% in matched schools (Table 10). The figures for the matched schools are only slightly higher than Smithers and Robinson's national figures, but those for vulnerable schools are substantially higher. Smithers and Robinson (2005) reported higher figures for moveage in the more challenged schools ; those schools with high eligibility for free school meals had a moveage rate of 7.8% in their 2003 survey, which is similar to the 8.1% from the NEOST data for our sample of vulnerable schools in the same year.

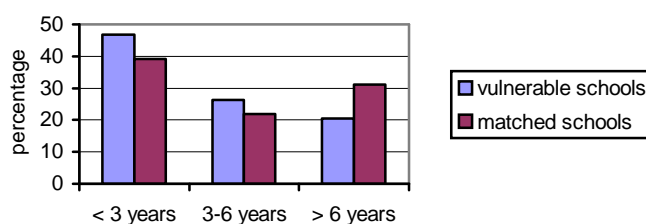
Table 10: Turnover, wastage and moveage rates for all full-time teaching staff in vulnerable and matched schools

	turnover	wastage	moveage
vulnerable	17.6	9.5	8.1
matched	13.7	7.5	6.2
secondary schools *	12.8	7.2	5.6

* Smithers and Robinson (2005), reporting on 2003 data

The higher turnover rate in vulnerable schools is also indicated in data about the length of time those leaving posts had worked in the school. Those leaving vulnerable schools had, on average, spent less time working in these schools (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Full-time permanent resignations – percentage of staff leaving with different lengths of service in the school



While the proportion of female teachers in the sample approximates to the national proportion, this was not reflected in the sex balance among those leaving permanent full-time posts; 57% of those leaving the vulnerable schools were male, but only 45% in the matched schools. Thus the sex balance among those leaving the matched schools is similar to the sex balance among the teaching staff as whole, the vulnerable schools appear to be losing disproportionate numbers of male teachers.

There were no differences between the two groups of schools relating to age of those leaving or to subject taught. The proportions of leavers on the various salary scales were similar between the two groups, with one exception: a higher proportion of the full-time teachers leaving vulnerable schools were without Qualified Teacher Status

(QTS) (7.2%, compared to 3.0% in the matched schools), suggesting a higher use of unqualified teachers.

In general, the data about destinations was similar between the two groups; similar proportions were moving to other teaching posts, and taking other jobs. A higher proportion of retirements was reported in the matched schools (13.2% of all those leaving permanent full-time posts, compared with 6.2% in the vulnerable schools). This seems somewhat surprising in view of the similarity of the age profiles of the leavers. However, a higher proportion in the vulnerable schools were reported as destination not known.

Recruits

The NEOST found that the recruitment rate (number of joiners as a percentage of existing staff) for full-time permanent posts in secondary schools was 12.5% and for part-time posts 6.7%. Rates for our sample are shown in Table 11.

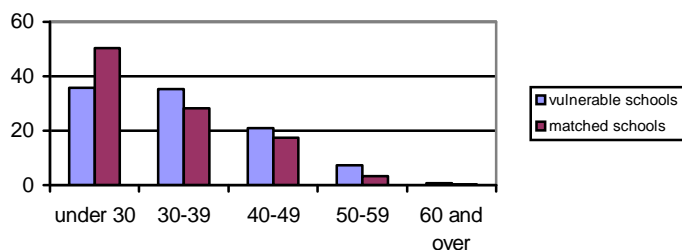
Table 11: Recruitment to permanent contracts as a percentage of total staff in each category

	full-time	part-time
vulnerable London	18.1	9.1
vulnerable outside London	12.8	5.6
matched London	16.3	3.8
matched outside London	13.7	3.4

As with resignations, the recruitment rate was far higher in the London schools than in those elsewhere, but overall there was little difference between recruitment rates in the vulnerable and the matched schools.

We examined the profile of those recruited in each group of schools (Figure 4).

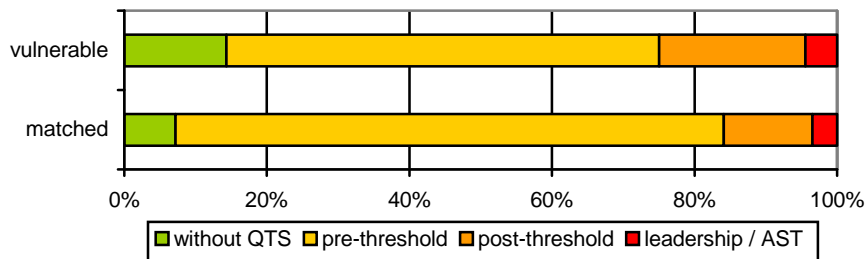
Figure 4: Recruits to permanent full-time posts in vulnerable and matched schools by age group



Those recruited to the vulnerable schools were generally older. In the London schools this pattern was even more marked.

A higher proportion of those recruited to vulnerable schools were post-threshold or being recruited to AST or leadership positions (Figure 5); 34.5% of them were awarded management points (compared with 25.1% of recruits to matched schools). A lower proportion of recruits to the vulnerable schools were NQTs (23.7% compared to 33.3% in the matched schools).

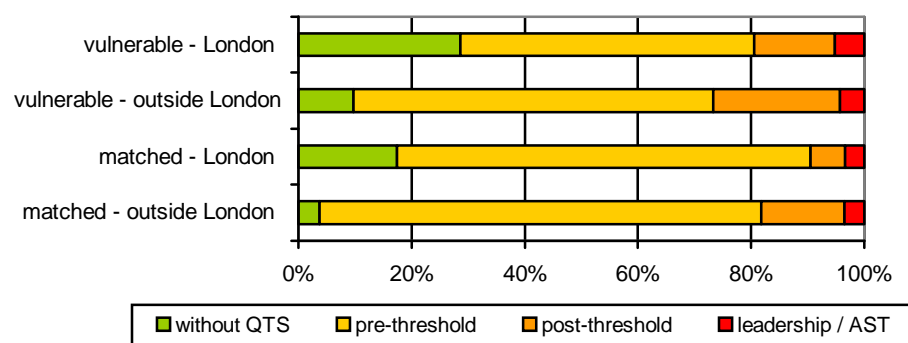
Figure 5: Recruits to permanent full-time posts in vulnerable and matched schools by salary scale



There are several possible explanations for these findings. First, they may reflect the higher turnover rates of vulnerable schools: they may not retain staff long enough to promote them into leadership and management positions, while the matched schools may fill many of their promoted posts internally. Smithers and Robinson (2005) noted that developing staff and filling management posts through internal promotion was a key retention strategy for some of the secondary schools in their case studies. Secondly, the use of management points in vulnerable schools may reflect a retention strategy using pay as an incentive. In this respect it is worth noting that 9.1% of the recruits to the vulnerable schools were paid recruitment and retention points, compared to 6.1% in the matched schools. Thirdly, some of the vulnerable schools are in special measures and therefore not able to recruit NQTs unless they have written agreement from HMI or the NQT was recruited before the school entered special measures. This may result in such schools recruiting fewer young staff. Again, Smithers and Robinson’s case studies emphasise the positive effect on recruitment of involvement in teacher training, which again is not an option for schools in special measures.

While Figure 5 presents the overall picture of recruitment at different levels, it is worth noting that the situation appears to be rather different in London (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Recruits to permanent full-time posts in vulnerable and matched schools by salary scale



Here both vulnerable and matched schools recruit considerable numbers of teachers without QTS – 28.6% of all full-time permanent recruits in vulnerable schools, and 17.4% in matched schools. These figures are very much higher than for schools outside London (9.6% and 3.7% respectively), and higher than the comparable figure for the whole NEOST survey, 7.5%.

In the sample as a whole, 23% of full-time recruits were to temporary or fixed term contracts. This was similar across all groups with the exception of the London

vulnerable schools, where the proportion was far lower, only 9.4%. However, agency teachers may not be included in the NEOST survey as they are not employed by the school. It seems possible, or even likely, that the London schools may use more agency staff on a long-term basis, rather than recruiting teachers to fixed term contracts. Of those recruited on temporary / fixed term contracts, around 38% did not have QTS. This was the same in vulnerable and matched schools.

The NEOST survey offers, then, an overview of teacher movement, and confirms that vulnerable schools have higher turnover on average, though London schools have the highest turnover, whether vulnerable or matched. We turn now to the small amount of data collected in the school survey.

The school survey

As we have indicated, the number of returns to the school survey was extremely disappointing, and cannot therefore be used to draw any general conclusions. However, the responses that were made to questions asking headteachers for their views on staffing and attainment are of some interest, and may suggest directions for future research. Of the 20 returns, half were from vulnerable and half from matched schools. However, some headteachers left some questions unanswered: between 16 and 20 completed each question in the survey.

We asked headteachers to rank eleven strategies that might contribute to raising pupil attainment. There were clear differences between the vulnerable and the matched schools in their responses. The most highly ranked five for the vulnerable schools were:

1. Training and developing existing teaching staff
2. Making the curriculum more relevant to the needs and interests of pupils in this school
3. Having more teaching staff
4. Having different teaching staff
5. Training and supporting existing support staff

‘Having different teaching staff’ attracted very wide ranging responses; three out of nine vulnerable school headteachers ranked this very low, but the other six ranked it in the top three strategies. In contrast, this was the lowest ranked strategy in the whole list among the matched schools, with none of them considering it important. This indicates that some heads of vulnerable schools are not happy with the quality of their existing staff. Obviously we cannot assume that this judgement is necessarily correct; there may also be some element of the tendency for a workman to blame his tools.

The headteachers of matched schools, like those in vulnerable schools, thought that having more teaching staff would help to raise attainment. They also shared the desire for a more relevant curriculum. But they gave higher rankings to some different strategies; their five most highly ranked were:

1. Having more teaching staff
2. Employing more support staff
3. Changing the local secondary schools admission system
4. Having more money to spend on resources
5. Making the curriculum more relevant to the needs and interests of pupils in this school

In contrast to the vulnerable schools, training and developing either teachers or support staff was not included in the top five; the emphasis was rather on increasing staff numbers. This could mean that the matched schools already feel that their staff are well trained, or that they feel they already provide good training and development opportunities. The lowest rankings were given by both groups to

Improving the building or having a new building

Improving the quality of the school leadership team

Collaborative working with other schools in the area.

This is not to suggest that they are dismissing any of these as totally unimportant, but they were undoubtedly seen as less important than staffing issues and curriculum.

A second indication that the headteachers of some vulnerable schools may be less happy than those in the matched schools about the quality of their teaching staff came from a question in which they were asked to indicate the percentage of the teaching staff falling into each quadrant on the grid below:

		TEACHING EXPERIENCE	
		less than 3 years	more than 3 years
ENTHUSIASM TO LEARN AND DEVELOP AS A TEACHER	high	%	%
	limited	%	%

The vulnerable schools overall indicated that a fifth of their recently qualified teachers and almost half of those with more than three years teaching experience were not enthusiastic to learn and develop as teachers. However, it should be noted that there was a considerable diversity in these responses. In contrast, the average figures for the matched schools were 5% of recently qualified and a fifth of the more experienced teachers.

We asked headteachers what policies the government should adopt in relation to staffing in order to improve attainment. The responses were very full, and the same strategies were repeatedly identified. Many of the headteachers thought that what was needed was additional funding for recruitment and retention incentives for teachers:

Further support for the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers in schools facing challenging circumstances (SFCC), schools in special measures. Additional funding for such schools specifically for recruitment and retention, not being fenced through other grants and dictated or levelled through other Heads e.g. LIG funding. (*vulnerable school*)

Provide thoughtful incentives for teachers to work in challenging schools. For example, the original fast-track scheme required a placement in a challenging school. (*vulnerable school*)

Greater flexibility to reward good performance. (*vulnerable school*)

Other funding was also seen as necessary:

Direct funding to schools in order to deploy additional staff such as counsellors, nurses, EWOs. (*matched school*)

Fund workload agreement and post threshold payments properly - both are undermined; fund new STRB recommendations properly. (*vulnerable school*)

Improve teacher salaries - reduce the differential between outer and inner London allowance. (*vulnerable school*)

Give schools enough funding to allow staff the time and capacity to 'coach' and work alongside each other and their pupils and to respond to the plethora of initiatives and changes still being expected of schools; provide properly refurbished new buildings including social spaces to allow the environment to 'inspire' and accommodate personalised learning approaches ... and personal and group space. (*matched school*)

Two heads of vulnerable schools suggested that the requirement for teacher trainees to pass tests in ICT, literacy and numeracy should be removed. There were several demands for more teachers, smaller class sizes and more support staff in challenging schools.

Suggestions relating to professional development included:

Centrally run courses on challenges of teaching in inner cities for overseas trained teachers. (*vulnerable school*)

Insist upon some part of summer holiday being used for staff training. (*matched school*)

A number of responses suggested relaxing regulation:

Permit schools in special measures to employ NQTs. (*vulnerable school*)

STOP INSPECTING SCHOOLS – who have over and over again proved they know how to lead and raise achievement – let us get on with our work and get away from the choking and inhibiting accountability of meaningless and inaccurate measures as currently used which REDUCE the degree of enterprise which schools facing difficult circumstances feel able to take. (*matched school*)

Another heart-felt plea was:

Abolish the selective system. (*vulnerable school*)

The second section of the questionnaire focused on attracting and retaining staff. First, we tried to get an overview of whether the schools were able to attract staff. We asked headteachers to complete a table showing, for the last three posts advertised, how many applications were received, whether it was possible to short list and whether an appointment was made. Hutchings *et al.* (2000) found that in schools with less than 25% free school meals, a higher proportion of advertisements for teaching posts resulted in appointments than in those with over 50% free school meals. They also found a significant correlation between number of applications received and school GCSE performance.

There was enormous variation in the number of applications received, which presumably varies with the particular nature of the post advertised. There was little difference between vulnerable and matched schools in this, though it was only among the vulnerable schools that it was reported that some advertisements did not result in a single application. This was the case for two out of the three posts described in one school.

However, there were apparently differences between the vulnerable and matched schools in the quality of the applications, as indicated by ability to shortlist and appoint. The vulnerable schools far more often reported not short-listing and not appointing (Table 12).

Table 12: Applications and appointments in vulnerable and matched schools

	vulnerable	matched
Number of applications per post advertised	6.7	7.6
Percentage of advertised posts for which a short-list could be made	64%	84%
Percentage of advertised posts for which appointments were made	55%	79%

Headteachers were asked whether they thought that potential applicants for teaching posts take pupil attainment into account in deciding whether to apply for a post. All those in vulnerable schools believed that it was a factor:

To a large extent, good results give a good field to recruit from. (*vulnerable school*)

Many applicants (local) seek views from other teachers and review OFSTED. (*vulnerable school*)

This was linked to the official and media discourses:

Staff are reluctant to work in schools where attainment is low (even if it has high value added) because the media frequently implies that they are not doing a good job. (*vulnerable school*)

High level of public and official (i.e. DfES/govt) esteem attaches to high attaining school. The assumption is that teachers of able pupils are able teachers! (*vulnerable school*)

Schools with high attainment are seen as 'good' schools which encourages applicants. (*vulnerable school*)

The responses from the matched schools were more mixed. Some headteachers claimed that pupil attainment was 'not at all' taken into account, or was of 'no real significance' to applicants' decisions, or that other factors were more important, for example:

Location of school is probably the most important factor – this may often be reflected in league tables and attract. (*matched school*)

Others shared the views of those in vulnerable schools. One commented that pupil attainment is:

Important and often mentioned at interviews. (*matched school*)

Another noted:

It takes a special person to want to work in a challenging school. There is some GCSE related snobbery in the education system! (*matched school*)

Respondents were then asked to rate the importance of a number of factors in attracting staff to their schools, identifying each factor as 'very important', 'fairly important' or 'not important' (Table 13). Here there was little disagreement between responses from vulnerable and matched schools. The highest rated factor was school reputation, seen as 'very important' by over 80% of respondents. The other factors were rated as very important by fewer than 40%. The vulnerable school headteachers rated department reputation lower than did the matched schools.

Table 13: What do you see as key factors in attracting staff to your school? Number of headteachers responding in each category (N = 16)

	very important	fairly important	not important %
school reputation	13	3	0
pay level	6	10	0
the neighbourhood	6	9	1
position on league tables	5	10	1
the building	4	11	1
transport links	4	7	5
department reputation	2	9	6

Respondents were asked to write in additional factors that are important in attracting teaching staff. The vulnerable school headteachers identified staff development opportunities, OFSTED reports, ‘ethos’, and the existing staff.

Staff development opportunity; staff relationships and well-being; OFSTED reports, pupil performance etc. (*vulnerable school*)

Whether they want challenge of inner city teaching; in-service training – always raised at interviews; OFSTED report. (*vulnerable school*)

‘Ethos’, ‘feel’, how they perceive close potential colleagues. (*vulnerable school*)

One commented:

As bottom of the league, in awful building in an urban setting I am often surprised we are fully staffed. A social scene – a bright enthusiastic staff encourages retention (*vulnerable school*)

The matched school headteachers did not mention Ofsted, but emphasised ethos and leadership:

School ethos (behaviour, discipline/welcome); school leadership and support; the particular headteacher leadership team/faculty leader. (*matched school*)

Finally headteachers were asked about the key factors in retaining high quality staff (Table 14).

Table 14: What do you see as the key factors in retaining high quality teaching staff in your school? (N = 16)

	very important %	fairly important %	not important %
effective behaviour management	15	1	0
collegiality and effective team work	15	1	0
senior leadership and management	13	3	0
management at year and department level	10	5	1
professional development opportunities	10	5	1
promotion opportunities	9	7	0
pay level	9	7	0
school facilities and resources	9	7	0
working environment (building, facilities)	6	9	1
reducing teachers' paperwork	6	9	1
support in classroom	4	12	0
position in league tables	4	9	3

Again, there was a strong measure of agreement between the vulnerable and the matched schools: ‘effective behaviour management’ and ‘collegiality and effective team work’ were seen as the most important factors, and ‘position in league tables’ as the least important. However, there was a difference in emphasis, in that the vulnerable school headteachers rated professional development opportunities higher, while the matched school headteachers placed greater emphasis on promotion opportunities and pay.

Finally headteachers were asked to what extent they used pay as a strategy in recruitment and retention of teaching staff. In both groups there was a range of responses: some headteachers said they do use pay:

We will pay for additional experience/excellent teaching etc. in some way to attract the right staff. (*vulnerable school*)

We overpay due to the scandalous differential in outer/inner London allowance.
(*vulnerable school*)

We use it wherever we need to within the limitations of the budget. (*matched school*)

Others claimed to make limited use of this strategy:

Little as little flexibility. (*vulnerable school*)

Depends on nature of position/vacancy/area of responsibility and of course budget and equal opportunities. (*vulnerable school*)

Used very sparingly but increasing. (*matched school*)

Some said they do not use pay to attract and retain teachers: 'not at all', 'don't use it'. There was no difference between responses of vulnerable and matched schools, though it appeared that London and other inner urban schools were more likely to use pay to attract and retain teachers.

The teacher survey

Finally, we report on findings from the questionnaire that was sent to all teachers in ten schools, five vulnerable and five matched. As explained earlier, only eight of the ten schools involved have sent back the completed teacher questionnaires. These are shown on Table 15; 179 completed questionnaires have been received. It is not possible to calculate an accurate return rate as we do not know how many of these questionnaires were actually distributed to staff: however, it seems to have ranged from 12% to 70% in different schools. This is not in any way a representative sample of schools, and in reading the findings it should be noted that the Outer London schools sent in almost half the total responses.

Table 15: Questionnaires returned in teacher survey

VULNERABLE		MATCHED	
location of school	no. of returns	location of school	no. of returns
Outer London	51	Outer London	31
South West	25	South West	8
Inner London	21	Inner London	17
Yorks and Humberside	11	Yorks and Humberside	15
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>108</i>		<i>71</i>

The staff

Almost a quarter of the respondents in vulnerable schools were on temporary, fixed term or supply contracts, whereas none of those in the matched schools were (Table 16). The NEOST data considered earlier showed that 6.5% of teachers in the vulnerable schools were on temporary contracts, a rather lower proportion than the 11.2% in our sample; thus the questionnaire returns include a disproportionate number in this category. Clearly this is likely to have impacted on subsequent responses.

Table 16: Contractual status of respondents to teacher survey

	vulnerable %	matched %
permanent contract	71.0	84.5
temporary / fixed term contract	11.2	1.4
supply	12.1	0.0
part-time	5.6	14.1
	100.0	100.0

The data about pay scales also shows a strong contrast between vulnerable and matched schools: 29% of those in the vulnerable schools are on unqualified or agency rates, compared with only 3% in the matched schools (Table 17). Note that while the majority of the supply teachers were on agency rates, two were not (presumably because they worked through an LEA). Of the unqualified teachers, more than half were on permanent contracts.

Table 17: Pay scales of respondents to teacher survey

	vulnerable %	matched %
unqualified	15.9	2.8
fixed daily rate through agency	13.1	0.0
main scale	40.2	57.7
upper scale	21.5	29.6
leadership	7.5	7.0
advanced skills teacher	1.9	2.8

The high proportion of supply teachers and of teachers on temporary / fixed term contracts is reflected in ethnicity data: 22% of respondents in the vulnerable schools are ‘white other’; the places where they went to university indicate that many of these are Australians and New Zealanders. But the vulnerable schools also have a much higher proportion of teachers from minority ethnic groups among the respondents (19.4%, compared to 5.8% in matched schools) (Table 18). (The disproportionate number of responses from London schools is clearly a factor in this.)

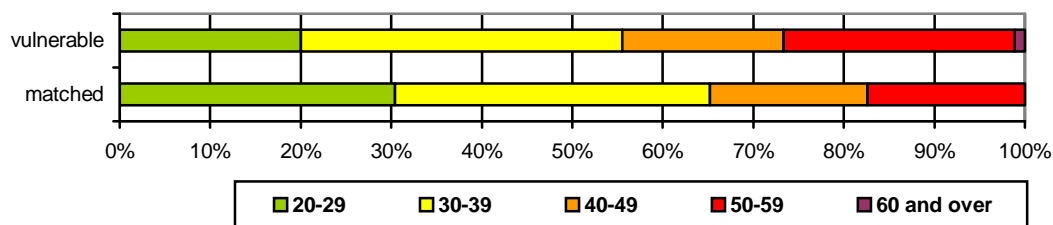
Table 18: Ethnicity of respondents to teacher survey

	vulnerable %	matched %
white British	58.3	82.6
white other	22.3	11.6
all other groups	19.4	5.8

This is partly because the vulnerable schools, and particularly those in London, employ many more overseas trained teachers. Of the respondents to this survey, 8% in the vulnerable schools were overseas trained (from Australia, France and Canada), while almost a quarter of those in vulnerable schools were (from South Africa, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Ghana, Mauritius, Pakistan, Philippines, Sweden, USA, the Caribbean). It has to be remembered that our sample was self-selecting and is not representative of the staff of the schools.

The average age of respondents in vulnerable schools was slightly older than in matched schools (Figure 7).

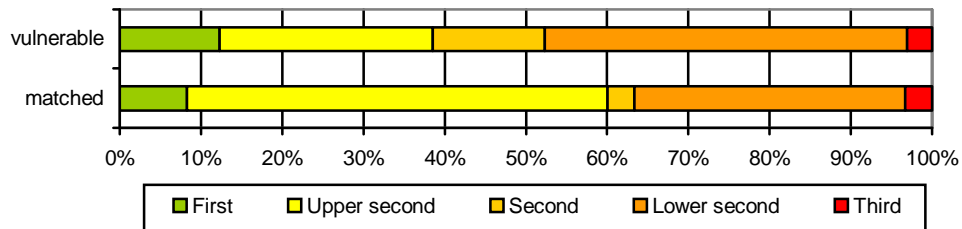
Figure 7: Ages of respondents to teacher survey



It is sometimes suggested that teachers in ‘failing’ schools are less well qualified: our data are limited because about a quarter of the teachers did not give a degree classification (generally because their degree result was not given in this form). But of those who did give classifications, a higher proportion of first class degrees was found

in the vulnerable schools, but also a higher proportion of lower second class degrees (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Degree classifications of respondents to school survey



We have shown that the vulnerable schools had a higher proportion of unqualified teachers; however, this does not necessarily indicate low quality. Some of these were on employment-based teacher training routes, and others had teaching qualifications from other countries.

In comparison with those in matched schools, fewer of those in the vulnerable schools had spent more than five years in their current schools, supporting the notion of higher turnover rates in these schools (Table 19).

Table 19: Length of time working in current school

	vulnerable %	matched %
less than 2 years	49.1	22.8
2-4 years	18.5	25.7
more than 4 years	32.4	51.4

However, this was also strongly related to location. In London schools (vulnerable or matched) only 34% of the respondents had been working for more than 4 years in their schools, whereas outside London this was true for 54%.

Applying to the current school

We asked the teachers how many posts they had applied for at the time they first applied to this school, and how many of these they were short-listed for or offered. In both vulnerable and matched schools, responses indicated that just over a third of teachers had not applied for any other posts, and the remaining teachers were evenly divided between those who had applied for one to three posts and those who had applied for more than three. (Teach First and GTP trainees and supply teachers have been omitted here.)

In the matched schools 45% had been short-listed for all the posts they applied for, whereas in the vulnerable schools this was the case for only 29%. This is an indication that those teaching in the vulnerable schools may be less 'marketable' teachers – but may also relate to their age and experience profile. However, a higher percentage in the vulnerable schools claimed to have been offered other posts, 31% compared to 22% in matched schools. But several respondents pointed out that they did not attend all the interviews they had been invited to because they had accepted the first post they were offered. Thus job offers may be a less useful indicator than short-listing.

We asked the teachers who had been offered more than one post what made them decide on their current school. Location was a key factor for both groups. Several teachers in vulnerable schools noted that they took the post because it was a permanent contract. One teacher in each group mentioned pay – being paid over the summer, and the recruitment and retention package offered. Some teachers in vulnerable schools noted that they liked the school:

The pay and ethnic mix of school so could put back into my community. (*vulnerable school*)

The multicultural school population. (*vulnerable school*)

Secondary school with opportunity for promotion. (*vulnerable school*)

I was attracted by the attitude of the senior staff and this commitment was evident from the job advert. (*vulnerable school*)

Approach of MFL department. (*vulnerable school*)

Some similar comments were made by those in matched schools

Liked the mix of ethnic backgrounds. (*matched school*)

Headteacher and role offered. (*matched school*)

Attitude of staff. Appearance of school. Teaching available to me. (*matched school*)

Only those teaching in matched schools mentioned school reputation:

Reputation. Experience when interviewed. (*matched school*)

Better reputation and OFSTED report. More opportunities. (*matched school*)

Some in matched schools contrasted their present school favourably with others they had applied to:

I left the interviews when I saw the schools were poor. This is a 'good' school in beautiful buildings and surroundings. The Headteacher was clearly strong and promoting high standards. Uniform was smart and the environment clean. Staff were very nice. (*matched school*)

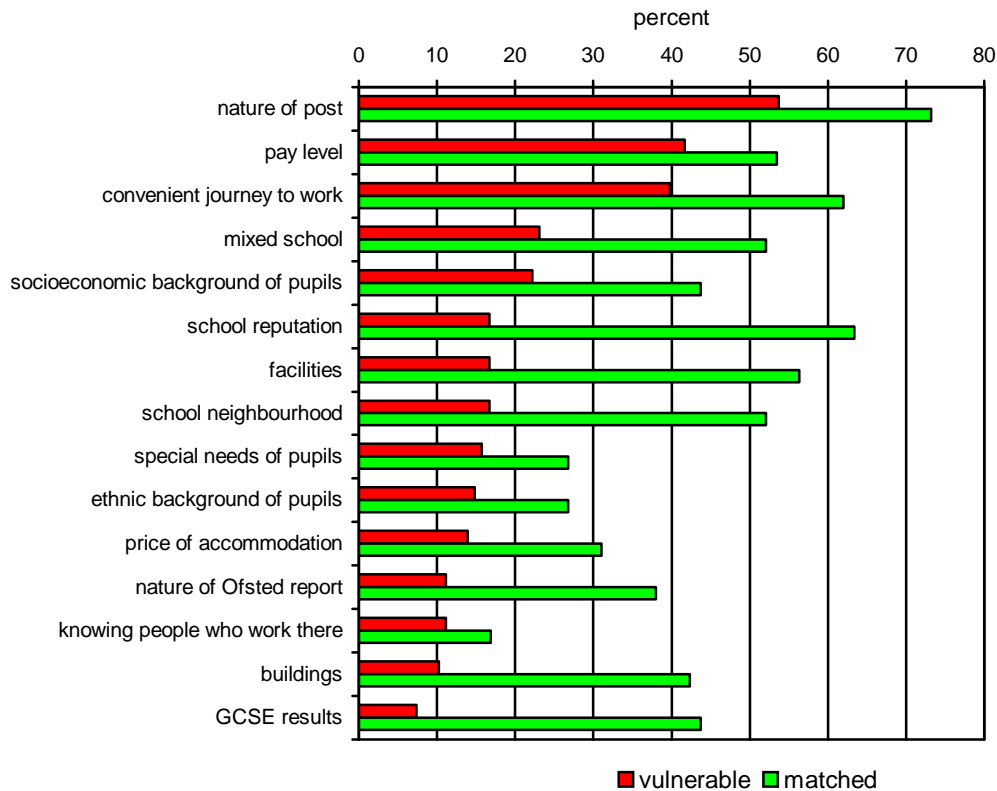
Location and surroundings and the fact that the other schools pupils seemed to have many behaviour problems. (*matched school*)

A better school. It was the school, I wanted to be at out of the two. (*matched school*)

We also asked respondents to indicate the importance of a whole range of factors in attracting them to the school. Figure 8 shows the proportion of each group that rated each factor 'very important' or 'fairly important'. It is noticeable that, in comparison to the teachers in matched schools, a smaller proportion of those in vulnerable schools rated each factor as important or very important. It should be noted that Figure 8 shows only those with permanent contracts, and omits all agency and temporary staff who may be assumed to have had very little choice of school. The conclusion then must be that the teachers in vulnerable schools report themselves as being less strongly attracted to the schools they teach in at the time they joined.

Both groups considered the nature of the post to be the most important factor of all, and the convenience of the journey to work and the pay level were also seen as important by about half the respondents. But many factors that were selected by the majority of the teachers in the matched schools were much less frequently selected by those in vulnerable schools; these include facilities, neighbourhood, nature of Ofsted report, GCSE results and buildings.

Figure 8: What attracted you to this school? Percentage of teachers on permanent contracts responding ‘very important’ or ‘important’ in each category



Note: Fewer than 10% of respondents identified each of the following factors as important: having been a trainee in the school, having been a supply teacher in the school; having previously worked with the headteacher; having previously worked with other members of staff; the specialist, academy or beacon status of the school; the religious or single-sex nature of the school. These are not shown above.

The largest difference in views concerns school reputation: 63% of those teaching in matched schools identified school reputation as a very important or important factor attracting them to the school, compared with only 17% in the vulnerable schools. We asked those who selected school reputation as important to indicate what the reputation was at the time they joined. Among the staff in vulnerable schools, some noted that the reputation was poor:

Varied but the school had a stigma attached to it. (*vulnerable school*)

In special measures – not particularly good reputation. (*vulnerable school*).

The school had a reputation of being very challenging located in a poor working class environment. Most students EAL. (*vulnerable school*)

Reputation as a very difficult school. (*vulnerable school*)

Others emphasised the upward trajectory:

Good to be able to contribute to changing an unfavourable reputation. (*vulnerable school*)

A school facing challenging circumstances but one that was committed to improvement. (*vulnerable school*)

I was inspired to take up a post here by the vision held by staff to improve the attainment and reputation of the school. I wanted to teach somewhere where the students are a priority. (*vulnerable school*)

A minority identified positive aspects:

Excellent SEN. (*vulnerable school*)

Strong PE department and Headteacher. (*vulnerable school*)

Lovely but challenging. (*vulnerable school*)

Two focused on their personal experience rather than the reputation of the school:

A hardworking, friendly staff gave me the impression that the school had a good reputation. (*vulnerable school*)

My personal experience with children from the school led me forward to work with them. (*vulnerable school*)

The data, then, suggest that a minority of teachers are specifically attracted by the characteristics of the vulnerable schools that they work in. We consider the characteristics of this group of teachers later in the report.

Those in the matched schools emphasised that, when they were recruited, the school reputation was good; they mentioned achievement, behaviour and Ofsted. Many were clearly attracted to working in ‘good’ schools:

Very good. Good GCSE results. (*matched school*)

Good results. Good discipline. (*matched school*)

Good – well behaved students, good results achieved (compared with previous school). (*matched school*)

Just been through OFSTED – a good report. (*matched school*)

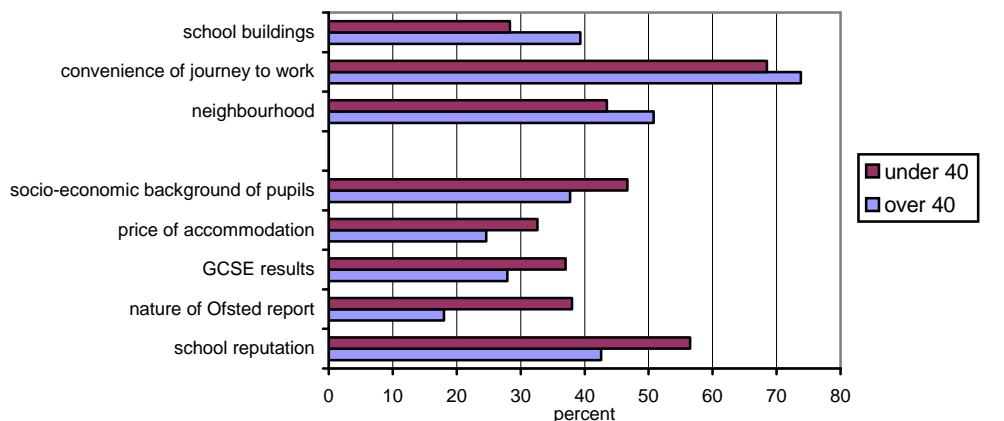
Several mentioned the history of the schools:

Over subscribed – ex-grammar school – traditional values and excellent pastoral structure and results. (*matched school*)

As ex-grammar school, now a comprehensive, it was one of the better schools in the area which I lived in. (*matched school*)

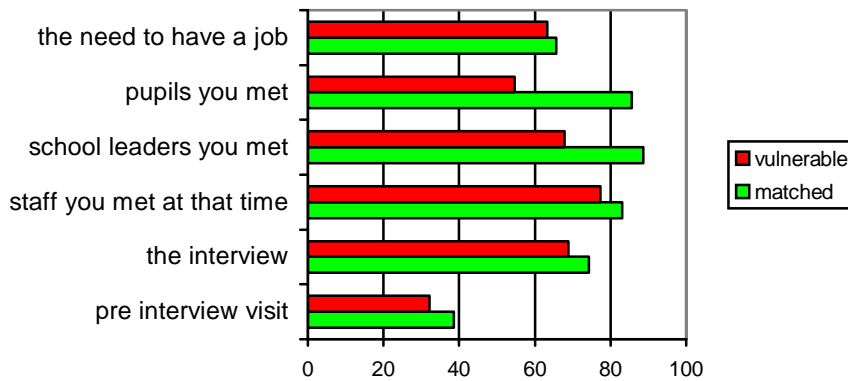
In deciding to apply for their current post, there were some age-related differences in the factors that encouraged teachers. Figure 9 shows only those factors where there were differences: more of the teachers under 40 considered GCSE results, Ofsted reports and school reputation to be important, whereas the older ones were more often concerned with the building, the journey to work and the neighbourhood.

Figure 9: What attracted you to this school? Differences by age group in factors considered very important or important



The questionnaire asked how much impact pre-interview visits and the interview itself had on the decision to accept the job. Responses from the two groups were similar, but more of those in matched schools claimed to have been influenced by meeting pupils and school leaders (Figure 10).

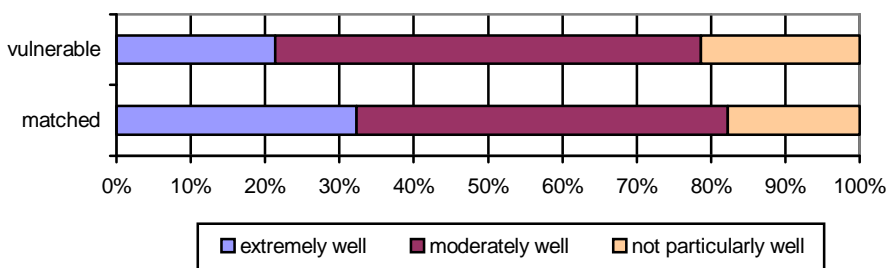
Figure 10: How much did any of the listed factors impact on your decision to accept the post, following your interview? Percentage of teachers identifying each factor as very important or fairly important



Initial and continuing professional development

One of the aims of the project was to find out how effectively the teachers’ initial teacher education and current professional development activity was supporting them in working in their schools. Figure 11 shows their responses in relation to initial teacher education. Respondents were given the option of stating that their initial teacher education was ‘too long ago to be relevant’. Around 12% selected this option; they have been omitted on this graph.

Figure 11: To what extent did your initial teacher education prepare you to work in your current school? (N = 151)



Fewer of those in vulnerable schools felt well-prepared, and slightly more felt that they were not particularly well-prepared. This is hardly surprising, as teaching training rarely takes place in really challenging schools, so the students do not experience this type of environment. Schools in serious weaknesses and special measures are rarely used in teacher training, and some ITT providers have been criticised by Ofsted for using schools seen as too challenging. An exception to this general rule approach is the Teach First programme, which sets out to train teachers in challenging schools in London (and is to expand to other large urban areas). However,

it is yet to be seen what percentage of Teach First teachers continue to teach in challenging schools after the two years of the programme have been completed.

Respondents made a number of suggestions about how initial teacher training could be improved. The aspect most frequently mentioned was behaviour management. Some also mentioned the need to learn how to teach disaffected pupils:

Teaching disaffected pupils how to take more responsibility for their learning - motivating and inspiring them. (*vulnerable school*)

Several identified teaching in multicultural schools and teaching pupils whose first language was not English as areas that could be improved. This echoes the findings of the Teacher Training Agency annual surveys, which have repeatedly shown that the aspect of their training that newly qualified teachers are least satisfied with is their preparation to teach in multicultural schools.

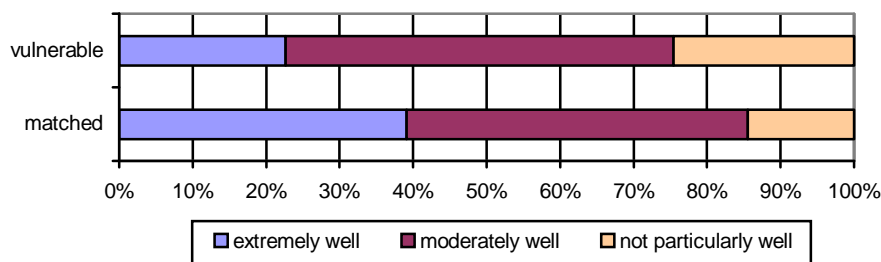
My education was excellent, but it lacked an approach to ethnically and culturally diverse schools. I had to develop my teaching methods at work, leaving always in mind the concept of respect. (*vulnerable school*)

Another aspect frequently mentioned was special educational needs: one teacher noted that it would have been useful to have:

Specific awareness and training in recognising and teaching pupils with special educational needs. (*matched school*)

Just as those in vulnerable schools felt less well-prepared by their initial teacher training, they also felt less well-supported by current professional development activity (see Figure 12). This is perhaps more worrying, given the emphasis on school-based professional development, and the current emphasis on the importance of such activity.

Figure 12: To what extent does your current professional development activity support you in working effectively in this school? (N = 175)



This question attracted a large number of additional comments. In the vulnerable schools, the most frequent comments were about the limited availability of professional development activities:

No professional developments are formally present in my school - you have to make it happen for yourself. (*vulnerable school*)

Offer it! (*vulnerable school*)

For it to occur more often. (*vulnerable school*)

In school training/specialist training should be available. (*vulnerable school*)

My school could allow me to attend professional development courses. (*vulnerable school*)

Many teachers also commented on their lack of time:

Time to access appropriate courses and support programmes. (*vulnerable school*)

I need time to consolidate professional development; time to put ideas into practice and share practice with colleagues. Time is probably what all teachers want. (*vulnerable school*)

Many respondents also mentioned that they wanted development specifically related to their schools, opportunities to network with staff in other schools, and inevitably, development related to behaviour and the needs of disaffected pupils.

Responses from the matched schools were broadly similar, but a noticeable difference was that rather than commenting on lack of professional development activity, teachers tended to comment on the limited funding available for such activity:

No finance currently available for CPD. (*matched school*)

Lack of money for INSET. (*matched school*)

Comments about lack of time echoed those of teachers in the vulnerable school:

No time (or money) to allow much, if any, professional development (within or outside the school). (*matched school*)

Possibly this is partly a question of teachers' priorities; it is hard to prioritise your own development in the face of the pressing and considerable needs of your pupils – though obviously in the long term the pupils will benefit from the development activities of teachers.

Retention

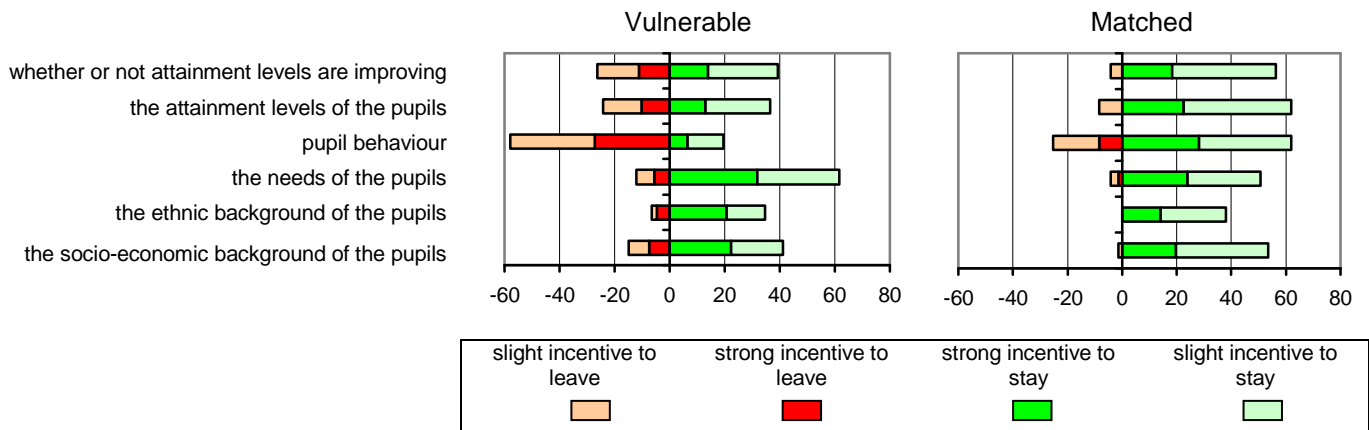
The teacher questionnaire listed a number of factors that could be incentives to stay in or to leave a school. These were grouped under headings: location factors, factors in the school, staff, pupils and your work. Respondents were asked to rank each factor on a 5 point scale from 'strong incentive to stay' to 'strong incentive to leave'. The charts below ignore all neutral /not applicable responses, and shows the proportions seeing each factor as an incentive to leave or to stay.

The first thing that is apparent is that a higher proportion of those in vulnerable schools consider each factor as an incentive to leave. This reinforces the general picture that emerges from these data of teachers in vulnerable schools being more discontented than their counterparts in other schools. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that even in the vulnerable schools, most factors were identified as positive by more teachers than saw them as negative.

The factor that was the greatest incentive to leave for those in vulnerable schools was pupil behaviour, seen as an incentive to leave by more than half the respondents (and as an incentive to stay by 10%) (Figure 13). This was one of the few factors that was more often seen as an incentive to leave. However, in the matched schools, while some respondents saw pupil behaviour as an incentive to leave, the majority saw it as an incentive to stay, and other factors relating to the pupils (their achievement and backgrounds) were seen *only* as incentives to stay.

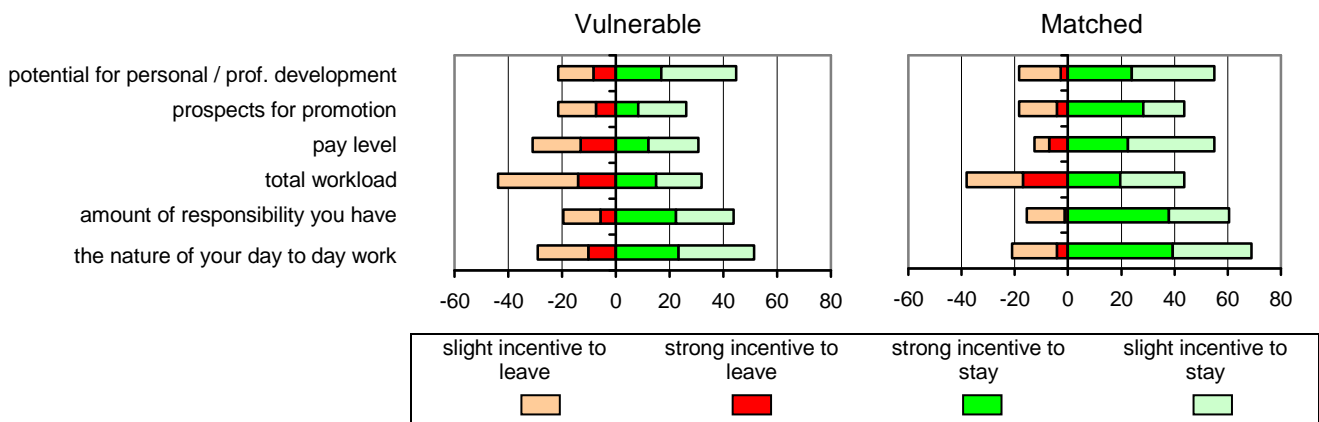
While pupil behaviour clearly acts against staff retention in vulnerable schools, it is significant that over 60% of the respondents in these schools identified 'the needs of the pupils' as reasons to stay in the school; this was higher than in the matched schools. This suggests a sense of vocation or mission plays a role in staff retention.

Figure 13: To what extent do FACTORS RELATING TO PUPILS encourage you to stay or leave your current school? (N = 178)



In contrast to pupil factors, the factors concerning teachers' work were all identified by some teachers as incentives to leave the school (Figure 14). In the vulnerable schools, workload was the second most frequently selected incentive to leave, and in matched schools, the most frequently selected – but nevertheless was seen as a positive attraction by more teachers than identified it as negative. Over 20% of teachers in each group saw the nature of their day to day work as an incentive to leave.

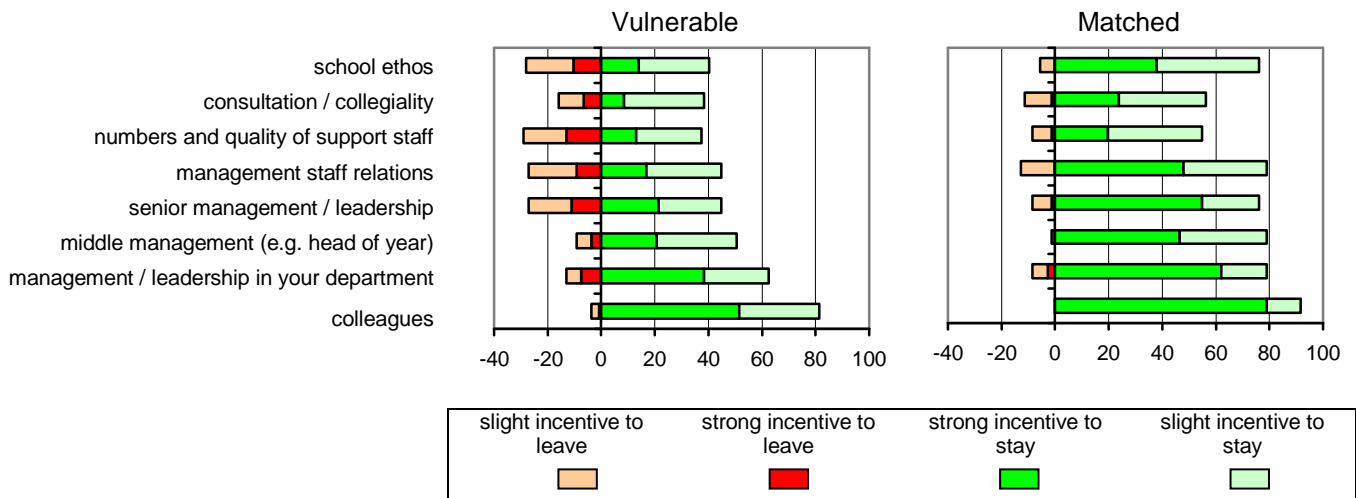
Figure 14: To what extent do FACTORS RELATING TO YOUR WORK encourage you to stay or leave your current school? (N = 178)



Overall, the factor most frequently selected as an incentive to stay in a school was colleagues (Figure 15). This echoes the finding of a much larger survey of teachers' view about retention (Dalgety, Hutchings and Ross, 2003) which analyses responses from 2800 teachers. In that survey colleagues emerged as the most important factor promoting retention.

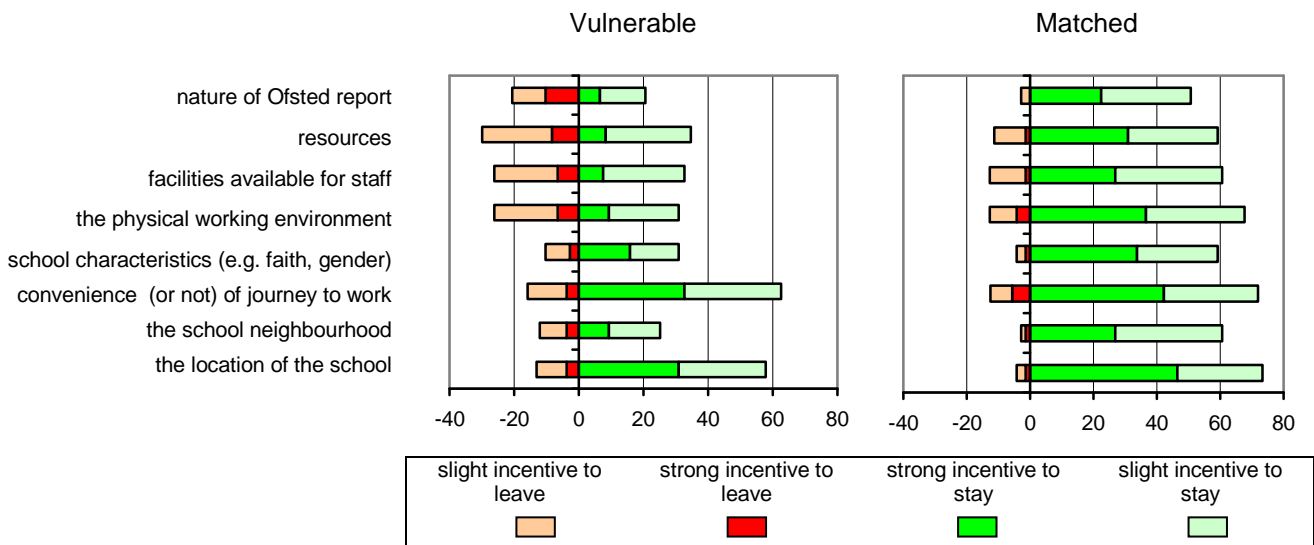
In the matched schools, management at every level was also seen as a strong incentive to stay; in the vulnerable schools fewer teachers saw senior management as an incentive to stay, though departmental management was seen more favourably.

Figure 15: To what extent do FACTORS RELATING TO STAFF encourage you to stay or leave your current school? (N = 178)



While colleagues were seen as the strongest incentive to stay in a school, other frequently selected incentives to stay related to the location of the school and the convenience of the journey to work (Figure 16). Those in matched schools were much more likely to select the factors relating to management of the school as positive than their counterparts in vulnerable schools.

Figure 16: To what extent do FACTORS IN THE SCHOOL AND ITS LOCATION encourage you to stay or leave your current school?



We also asked teachers to write in any other incentives to stay in or leave their current school. Loyalty to pupils and colleagues was identified as a factor by some of the teachers in vulnerable (but not matched) schools, particularly by those who had taught in the schools for some years:

Been here a long time and feel a strong loyalty to the school. I feel I can make a difference to many of our students' lives.

My loyalty to the school and its pupils. My long-lasting relationships with colleagues - all my working life.

The students need good teachers !

But other teachers, in both vulnerable and matched schools were staying where they were because it suited their family arrangements, or because they could see no alternative:

Nothing else available at the moment !

Husband's work.

My son attends a private SEN school, funded by the LEA, so I want to stay in this area and there are few alternatives.

Several explained why they were aiming to leave:

I need more inspiration within the department, I need to learn more. Find it frustrating with behaviour of pupils to stay.

Workload and stress related issues are the main factors which encourage me to leave the profession altogether.

Although happy at the school I am considering my next move – possibly into Assistant Head, and with a young family London is expensive and I will want to move out of the area soon.

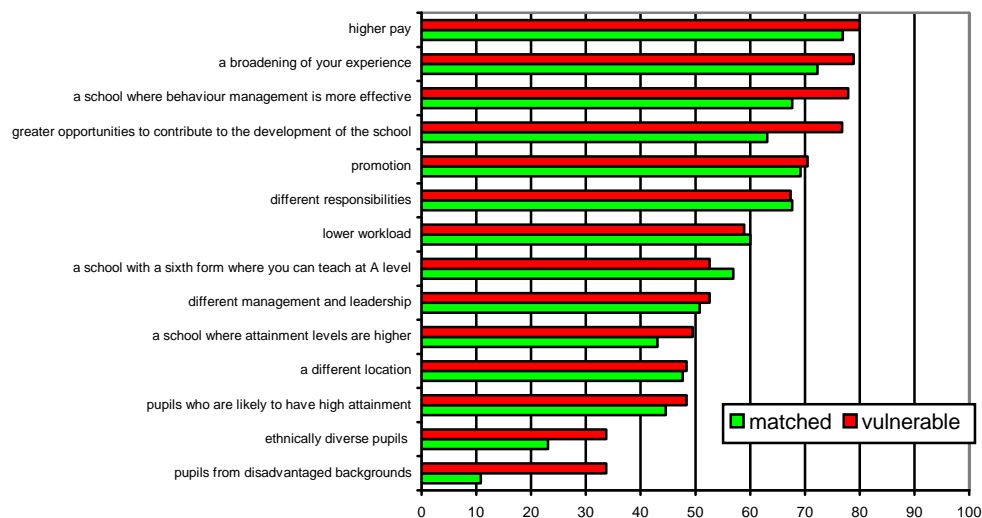
I want to buy a house.

Expectations for the future

The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate what they would be doing in one, two, five, ten and fifteen years time. The pattern of responses of those in vulnerable and matched schools are remarkably similar. Similar proportions of teachers intended to stay for some years in their current schools (either at their current level, or with promotion), or to move to other schools. Similar proportions expected to leave teaching for career breaks, retirement, or to take up other employment. However, such predictions do not necessarily relate in any way to what actually occurs in the future.

Respondents were also asked, if they were to move to another school, what they would be looking for in that school. Figure 17 shows the percentage identifying each listed factor as fairly or very important.

Figure 17: If you were to move to another school, what would you be looking for in that school? Percentage of respondents identifying each factor as very important or fairly important



Higher pay and a broadening of experience were the most frequently identified factors, along with greater opportunities to contribute to the development of the school, promotion and more effective behaviour management. Smithers and Robinson (2005) found that among secondary teachers there is a 'small but distinct tendency to trade upwards', with teachers leaving schools with lower GCSE results and moving to schools with higher GCSE results. In this survey almost half the teachers said that they would be looking for a school with higher attainment levels. More than half identified a sixth form as something they would be looking for.

Smithers and Robinson (2005) found that men are more likely to move schools to obtain a pay increase. In our study about half of the men and half of the women responding identified higher pay as very important among the things they would be looking for in a new job, but more women considered it fairly important (34% compared to 21% of men) – thus overall a higher percentage of women identified pay as an important factor in a new job.

Responses to this question showed some differences related to age: younger teachers were more concerned about pay and promotion than their older colleagues. There were few differences between vulnerable and matched schools. Those in the vulnerable schools more often selected 'a school where behaviour management is more effective' perhaps reflecting their current experience. They also more often selected 'greater opportunities to contribute to the development of the school'. This could relate both to the fact that in a higher proportion of the respondents in vulnerable schools were on temporary or supply contracts, and thus definitely marginal to the schools they worked in. It may also reflect the higher level of disaffection with the school leadership, in comparison to those in the matched schools. While only a minority of teachers in either group selected 'pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds' as something they would be looking for in a future school, it is significant that a far higher proportion of those currently teaching in vulnerable schools did so (34%, compared to 11% in matched schools).

We turn, then, to consider the characteristics of the teachers who prefer to teach disadvantaged pupils.

Teachers motivated to teach disadvantaged pupils

At the outset of this project one of the aims was to find out what proportion of teachers deliberately choose to work in challenging schools. Clearly our data do not allow us to answer this question, because rather than surveying a representative group of all teachers; we are focusing on those already in challenging schools. Consequently the proportion of teachers we find who like working in such schools is likely to be higher than in the population as a whole. Some indication of the small proportion who relish challenge is offered by Cockburn and Haydn (2004). They asked 59 trainees what factors they were looking for in teaching posts, and found that only three out of the 59 said they wanted to work in a challenging school.

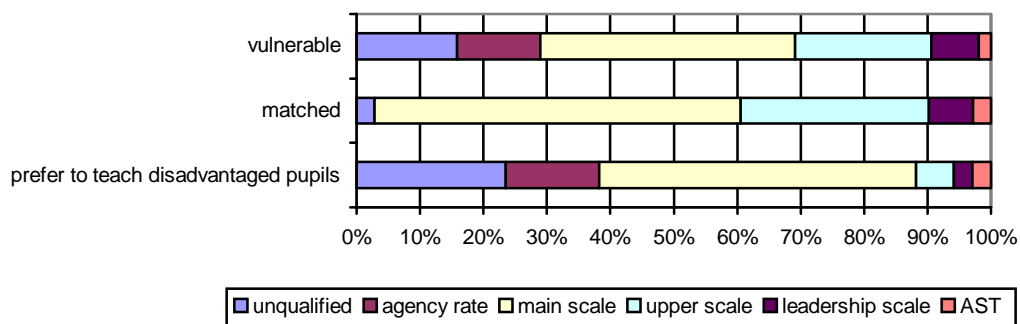
From our data we can identify a group of teachers who choose to work in challenging schools, and review all the data we have in relation to them. Of the 179 teachers responding to this questionnaire, we have identified 34 who could be said to fall in this group. They indicated that if they were to move to another school in the next five years, teaching pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds would be very or fairly important, and they also indicated that an incentive to stay in their current school was

the needs of the pupils. Of these 34 teachers, 29 were teaching in vulnerable schools and 5 in matched schools. In both groups a disproportionate number were teaching in London schools.

Compared with the sample as a whole, these teachers were more likely to be female (74%, compared with 62% in the whole sample), more likely to be from minority ethnic groups (26%) (compared with 12% in sample as a whole, and 19% among respondents in vulnerable schools). There is a strong link in these data between preferring to teach disadvantaged pupils and preferring to teach pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely than white teachers both to want to teach pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and to see ethnic diversity as a positive aspect of a school.

The groups of teachers who prefer teaching pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds were younger than the sample as a whole, with almost 80% under the age of 40, the majority being in their thirties. The group included trainees on the GTP and Teach First programme, as well as supply teachers and those on temporary contracts. Notably it included fewer teachers on the upper and leadership scales than the sample as a whole (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Pay scales of those in vulnerable and matched schools, and of the group who prefer to teach disadvantaged pupils



It is possible, however, that the way in which we have defined this group has excluded the older and more senior teachers. This is because we used the question about what you would be looking for in your next school as a way of identifying the group; however, some older teachers will not be anticipating further moves, and so may not have answered this question. We therefore examined the responses of those on the upper and leadership pay scales to see whether there were indications of this vocational motivation. Of the 34 teachers on the upper, leadership or AST pay scales, responding in vulnerable schools, more than half identified the needs of the pupils as an incentive to stay in their school, and many of these indicated that an attraction of the school had been the socio-economic background of the pupils, with attainment levels being a lesser priority. However, in their responses to the question about what they would be looking for in a future school, it was clear that lower workload and higher pay were more important considerations than the nature of the pupils. While the numbers are small, and there are limitations to quantitative research, we could speculate that these teachers may be suffering to some degree from burn-out, and that for most teachers, there is a limited time for which they can contribute enthusiastically in a vulnerable school.

We examined the responses of the teachers who were motivated to teach disadvantaged pupils to other questions. They were more likely than other respondents to identify teaching pupils from minority ethnic groups as a positive incentive. They were also more likely than others to want opportunities to contribute to the development of their schools.

Strategies to enable challenging schools to attract and retain high quality teachers

Like the headteachers, the teachers responded very fully to an open question asking what could be done to help schools in disadvantaged areas to attract and retain high quality teachers. Three areas were repeatedly mentioned: pay, pupil behaviour, and supporting and valuing staff. Most of those mentioning pay linked it to other things:

Higher levels of pay and reduced teaching workload. (*vulnerable school*)

High pay. Strong behavioural support. Reduced work load. Staff bonding days. Activities for staff. Money for resources. Small classes. More support. (*vulnerable school*)

Some suggested help with housing or fares, rather than, or in addition to, higher salaries. It should be remembered that a majority of the responses came from schools based in London, where the cost of housing is very high, and many teachers leave to move to less expensive areas after teaching in London for less than five years.

Responses also emphasised the need for more funding for schools, which would be used to reduce the pupil teacher ratio, reduce workload, employ more support staff, improve buildings and resources, and improve professional development.

Smaller classes (12-15). More TA support. Proactive behaviour management. More TA management support. A policy of 'it's not your fault' when pupils misbehave. Supportive management. Better buildings. Better resources. Enough time to do the job. (*vulnerable school*)

Small teaching groups with plenty of TA support and support systems in school which cooperate effectively. (*vulnerable school*)

Ensure that there are adequate resources of time and equipment/material to do the job properly. (*vulnerable school*)

Better pay; more in-class support, better training; time to plan and mark i.e. a reasonable workload. (*vulnerable school*)

Inevitably support for behaviour management attracted many comments:

Extra behaviour management, extra staff managing only this, so teachers can get on with teaching. (*vulnerable school*)

Good school management. Support from the management of the school. Strict behaviour policy. Back up to the teacher immediately when and where required. (*vulnerable school*)

Have management support teachers with a thorough, strong and consistently enforced discipline programme within the school. (*vulnerable school*)

Remove violent pupils. Make the school safe for both staff and pupils. (*vulnerable school*)

Supporting and valuing staff was frequently mentioned. This was often linked to the need for more effective management. Dalgety, Hutchings and Ross (2003), in a survey about teacher retention completed by 2800 teachers, found that the aspects of school leadership considered the most important in relation to teacher retention were effective communication with staff, being supportive to staff at all levels and being approachable. The current teacher survey echoed these findings:

Support from management rather than always supporting pupil. Given a sense of worth by management. (*vulnerable school*)

Communication with staff from management. Respect for staff by management. Support from management. (*vulnerable school*)

Make the teacher welcomed and make him feel that he can count on the other members of staff for support. In my opinion, most schools in London are challenging and what really makes a difference is the staff. (*vulnerable school*)

Give them support and value them. (*vulnerable school*)

A high value placed on staff, not financial but in terms of how they are treated by colleagues and management. A good strong team with shared purpose and ownership of goals. (*vulnerable school*)

More classroom support. Better facilities for teaching staff. Recognition of hard work and dedication in such schools. (*vulnerable school*)

Take an interest in the motivations/professional ambitions of staff. (*vulnerable school*)

Professional development was seen as crucial:

Workshops in school. More specialist practitioners from outside. More inspiring days – such as workshops, performances, whole school projects/year projects. (*vulnerable school*)

Provide teachers with relevant professional development to extend their responsibilities in the school. (*vulnerable school*)

Responses from the matched schools were similar; only a few can be included here:

Keep the pupil contact time as low as possible to allow for good preparation/marketing etc. Pay staff well (as in other professions !) and make sure that their hard work is recognised. Offer them the best support and facilities you can afford. (*matched school*)

Smaller class sizes. Subject specific support staff. Clerical support (i.e. letters home re behaviour etc. There is so much chasing up pupils in a school like this). Following through homework and attendance is so important. (*matched school*)

Strong management – consistency in discipline, respect for staff, counselling support, strong staff welfare ethos. (*matched school*)

Pay more. Reduce paperwork and other administrative duties. More time to share ideas and good practice with other members of staff. Fewer and less frequent, untested DfES initiatives. (*matched school*)

An extremely strong support network. Possibly the pairing up of experienced teachers in that school with new teachers. A strong social life between teachers. (*matched school*)

Summary and implications

This section returns to the questions posed at the outset of this project, and considers the extent to which we have been able to answer them.

- Is there any justification for the widespread assumption that the quality of the workforce is lower in schools with lower attainment?

Clearly this is a problematic issue, in that there are various ways of evaluating the quality of the teaching workforce, and questionnaires are unlikely to be particularly effective. We have shown that the headteachers of some vulnerable schools consider some of their teachers to be of inadequate quality. There were only small differences in degree classification, with more teachers in the vulnerable schools having first class degrees, but also more having lower second class degrees. A higher proportion of those teaching in vulnerable schools were paid as unqualified teachers. However, some of these had teaching qualifications from other countries, and others were on employment-based routes; this categorisation does not necessarily reflect on the quality of their work, though it may indicate that they need greater support. The headteachers' concern about quality seemed to relate more to a feeling that some of the teachers in vulnerable schools had lost enthusiasm for their work.

- How does the internal market for teachers work? Why are teachers attracted to School X or School Y? What role is played in this by pay, school management, pupil behaviour, behaviour management policies, Ofsted reports, etc.?

It appears from our data that a majority of teachers choose to work in 'good' schools, where behaviour management is effective. While many teachers believe that pay incentives could solve the recruitment and retention difficulties of vulnerable schools, pay did not generally appear as a key factor motivating teachers' choices.

The main incentive to stay in any school is relationships with colleagues. A positive and supportive atmosphere among staff appears to be a key factor in teacher retention. School leaders have a crucial role both in fostering this atmosphere, and in providing support and encouragement. The teacher survey showed that teachers in the vulnerable schools were much less likely than those in matched schools to consider that their school leadership team does provide such support, or to see them as effective or as an incentive to stay in the school. Thus, in the vulnerable schools, teachers have less confidence in the school management, and equally, the headteachers have less confidence in their teachers. But where teachers do see school management in positive terms and believe that the school is improving, they are much more likely to want to work in a school.

Workload and pupil behaviour were identified as the strongest incentives to leave any school. In the vulnerable schools the latter was the strongest incentive of all to leave, cited by more than half the respondents. However, 'the needs of the pupils' was identified as one of the strongest incentives for retention of teachers in vulnerable schools.

- What proportion of teachers deliberately choose to work in challenging schools?

In our survey, about 20% of all teacher respondents appeared to have a particular motivation to work in vulnerable schools, in that they indicated not only that they had chosen their current school because it was challenging, but who also indicated that they would choose to teach disadvantaged pupils in the future. The majority of these were already doing so; thus the proportion of highly motivated teachers in vulnerable schools is probably over a quarter of the teacher workforce. This group is predominantly (but not exclusively) made up teachers aged under forty. A disproportionate number of teachers from minority ethnic groups fall in this category. To this group, we can add the older teachers who had chosen to work in a challenging environment, but who indicated that if they were to move on, they might prefer something a little easier.

However, while there are teachers who choose challenging schools, the teacher survey indicates very clearly that they are less contented than those in less challenging schools. This brings us to the final question posed at the start of the project.

- Do staff in such schools feel adequately supported by their initial and continuing professional development activity?

The teachers in vulnerable schools felt less well-prepared by their initial teacher training, which is unsurprising, in that little teacher training takes place in such schools. But more worryingly, they also felt less well-supported by their current professional development activity than those in matched schools. Many of them reported that they were involved in very little professional development activity. They argue that teaching disadvantaged pupils and dealing with their poor behaviour takes up more time than teaching in a less challenging environment, and that as a result there is not sufficient time for professional development. The headteachers argued that class sizes in challenging schools should be lower, and that timetable loads need to be lighter, in order to compensate for the extra time spent in teaching and managing behaviour.

The implications of these findings, together with those from the qualitative part of the project, are fully discussed in the main ippr report on the project. Perhaps the main issue to arise directly from this report is the need to provide more support to those teachers working in vulnerable schools in order to retain them in such schools and to enable them to work effectively. This includes both practical support and giving them a sense that their work is valued. It would involve a recognition that workload may be higher in vulnerable schools. The teachers need to be provided with adequate professional development opportunities, and with time to pursue such development. Effective school leadership is obviously central, but both headteachers and teachers believe that additional funding is also needed to tackle the problems faced by those working in vulnerable schools.

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