

## **Information Further to Ministerial Answers**

**Information further to OAQ1512(FM) issued by The First Minister, on 9 May 2006**

**To Nick Bourne:**

I am writing in response to your follow-up questions to OAQ1512 on May 9, 2006 regarding the recent media coverage in relation to the recruitment of head teachers in Wales. The Minister for Education & Lifelong Learning issued a written Cabinet statement on headship appointments in Wales last week.

As regards the current oversupply of primary school teachers in Wales, the last published figures from the Schools Census indicated that between 1 January and 31 December 2004, 22 applications were received for every primary school post advertised. At secondary level, there are lower levels of applications in some subjects, although overall, between 1 January and 31 December 2004, just under 9 applications were received for every post advertised.

We have teachers who do not wish to work elsewhere but who cannot gain permanent posts in Wales. There is every likelihood that a significant downturn in pupil numbers stretching over many years. In recognition of these circumstances, we reduced initial teacher training (ITT) intake targets two years running and established a formal review, led by Professor John Furlong, to look at how we could bring the future supply of teachers more closely in line with the needs of schools in Wales.

The outcome of that review was accepted as a working basis, subject to continuing detailed analysis. It was that primary ITT intake needs to fall by 50% by 2010-11 compared with 2004-05 and secondary by 25%. The main stakeholders concluded that this scale of reductions is broadly right.

We are a signatory to the School Workload Agreement, negotiated between head teacher, teacher and school support staff unions, local and central government and set out a plan to reduce school workload enable teachers to focus on the teaching and learning of their pupils and improve work life balance for the whole school team.

A key element of it was the establishment of the School Workload Advisory Panel, who are all practitioners appointed from schools in Wales with the remit to raise awareness of workload implications amongst all those involved in developing and implementing policy in our schools and to advise on ways that the bureaucratic impact of initiatives may be eliminated or minimised.

The Panel have developed a very productive relationship with officials from a range of organisations and have been working to influence policies and working methods to have a positive impact on head teacher workload. It's Annual Report at <http://www.swapwales.co.uk/> outlines future priorities for action.

Our officials continue to work with the signatories to the Workload Agreement and non signatory unions such as the NAHT to ensure that we reap the full benefits of the Agreement in Wales.

I trust this addresses your concerns in relation to recruitment and workload issues impacting upon the profession in Wales.