



TEACHER SUPPLY IN BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

INTERIM REPORT

MAY 2018



Introduction

The Council of British International Schools (COBIS) has undertaken research into the movement of teachers into and out of the British international school sector. This research, based on more than 1,600 survey responses from senior leaders, incoming teachers, and outgoing teachers, provides new concrete data about the profile and motivation of teachers entering and leaving the British international school sector, how long they stay abroad, why they return, the quality of their experience and the current teacher recruitment climate in international schools, complementing government data from England. It demonstrates that while teacher recruitment presents a challenge, teaching offers a rich and exciting career both at home and internationally. International teaching opportunities attract good recruits and can support retention by encouraging teachers to remain in the profession. British international schools offer tremendous personal and professional development opportunities for teachers, many of whom choose to return to the UK, bringing with them valuable skills and experience.

Using this research as a starting point, COBIS is now proposing innovative and positive solutions to the supply of teachers in order to ensure continued success for schools at home and abroad.

Background

There are currently more than 4,300 British international schools operating worldwide, representing 45% of the international schools market worldwide.¹ British international schools are a leading export, valued at more than £1billion.² In addition to contributing to the UK economy through franchises, use of education goods and services, and repatriation of salaries, these schools send students to UK universities, and generate soft power of incalculable value by educating thousands of global political, economic and professional leaders in scores of countries. The sector is growing by c.6% annually, with more than 450 new international schools opening each year. In the next ten years, British international schools will require up to 230,000 more teachers to meet their staffing needs.³

In England, secondary school pupil numbers are projected to increase by more than 530,000 by 2026, and more teachers will be needed.⁴ DfE data shows an overall shortfall of nearly 10% in recruitment targets to initial teacher training, with much higher shortfall in certain subjects,⁵ and in a recent DfE analysis, 76% of schools reported “significant difficulty” with teacher supply with many considering there was a “serious shortage of teachers,” and the majority feeling it was “getting worse.”⁶

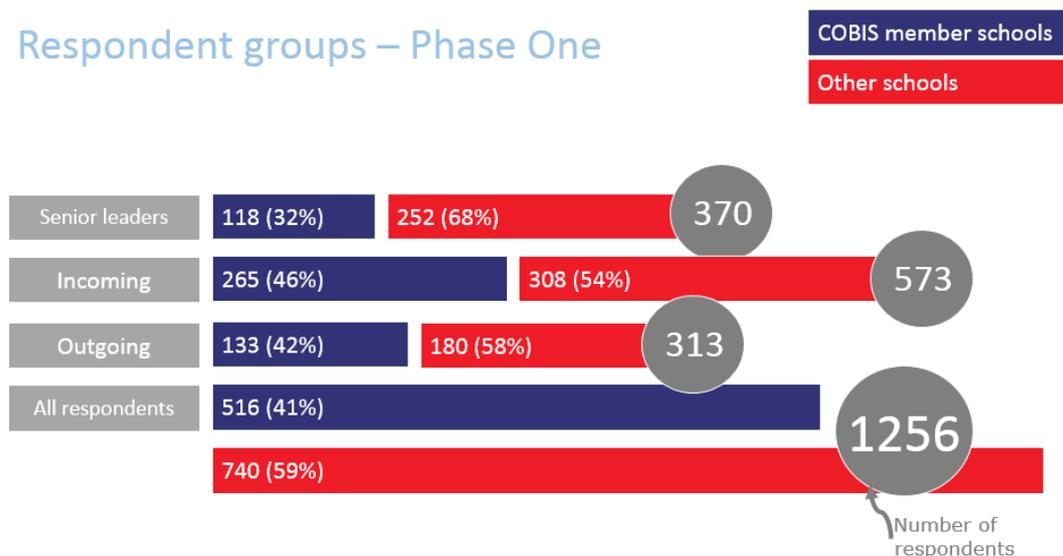
There is now a severe challenge to recruit and retain enough teachers at home and overseas. Current provision is insufficient – failing to attract and retain enough graduates in the teaching profession. In addition to the current challenge in the UK, the rapid growth of British schools overseas brings massive influence and export success but also demands the development of thousands more quality teachers. Innovative solutions and approaches are required to meet the staffing needs of schools in the UK and abroad.

Purpose and Methodology

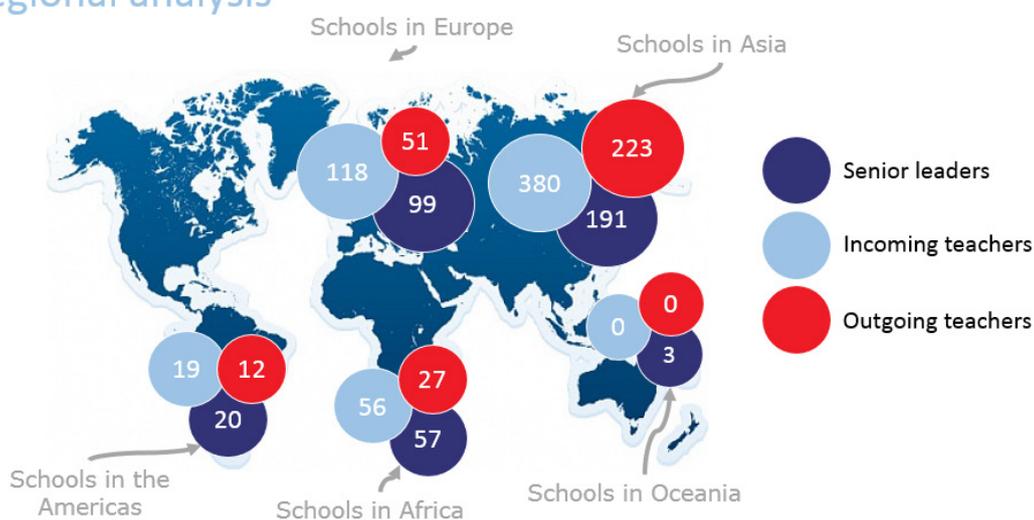
This research project was designed by COBIS to provide concrete data about the profile of teachers entering and leaving the British international school sector, how long they stay abroad, why they choose to move, why they return, the quality of their experience, and the skills they develop.⁷ The research also looks at the current teacher recruitment climate in international schools, as well as identifying possible areas for development in order to improve the supply of high-quality teachers and ensure the continued success of British schools both at home and abroad.

The research was delivered in two phases, with three separate online surveys for different respondent groups in each phase. The targeted respondent groups were: senior leaders; incoming teachers (who had started a new job in the international school sector since August 2016); and outgoing teachers (planning to leave the international school sector at the end of the 2017/18 or 2018/19 academic year). 1,914 international schools with a UK orientation were contacted directly for this research.⁸ Senior leaders were asked to complete the senior leader survey, as well as forwarding the incoming and outgoing survey links to their staff. Phase one responses were collected between 23 January and 11 February 2018. More than 1,200 responses were received during Phase one.

Respondent groups – Phase One

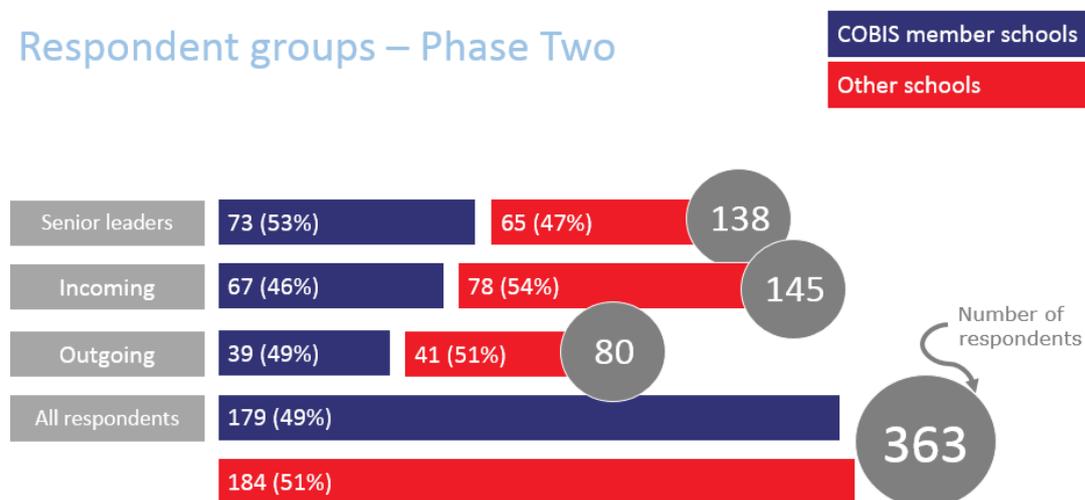


Regional analysis



For Phase two, three follow-up surveys were sent to selected respondents from Phase one. Responses were collected between 20 February and 9 March 2018. 363 responses were received during Phase two.

Respondent groups – Phase Two



Case study interviews were also conducted between February and April 2018 to provide more detail about individual teacher and leader experiences.

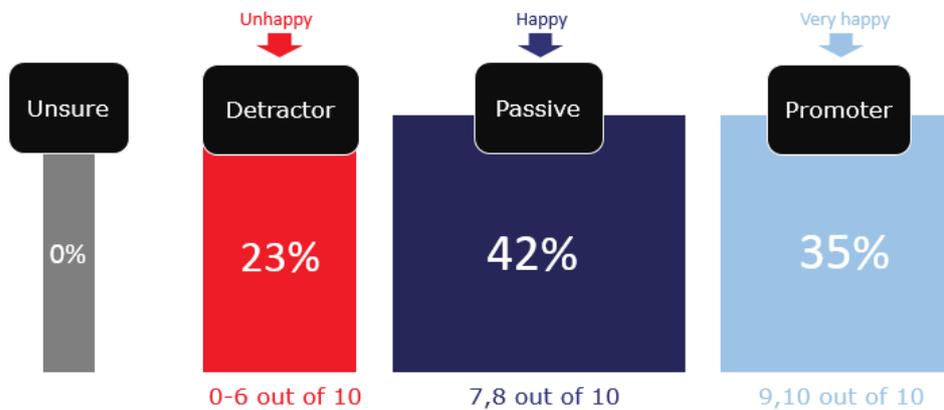


Key Findings

77% of outgoing teachers are happy or very happy with their international experience; 81% of new international school teachers are happy or very happy with their experience.

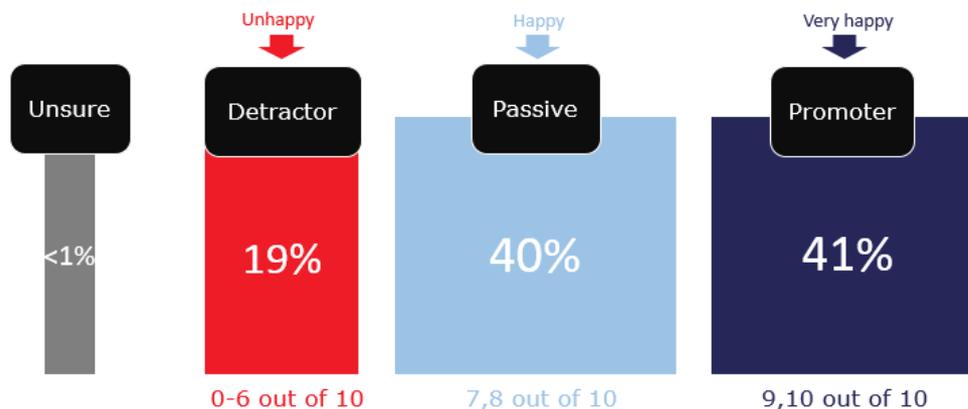
Outgoing

As a whole, how happy are you with your experience? Take into account being in the country, community and school.



Incoming

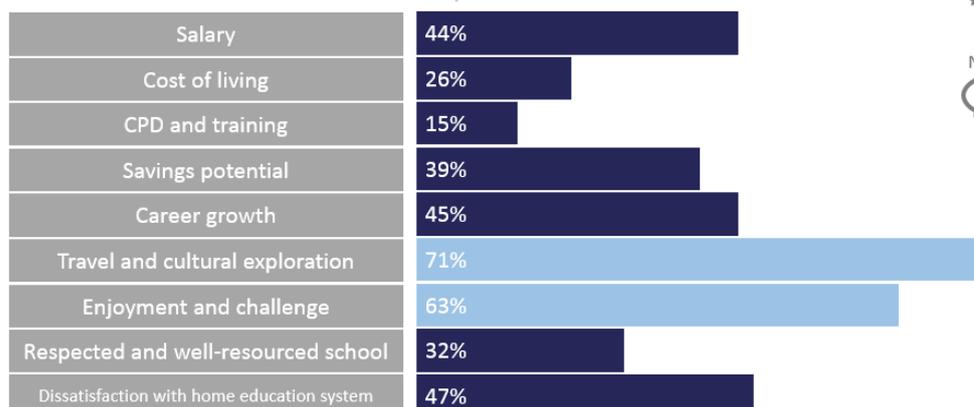
As a whole, how happy are you with your experience? Take into account being in the country, community and school.



Teachers choose to work internationally for many reasons. The main motivations are travel and cultural exploration (71%); and enjoyment and challenge (63%). Other contributing factors include: dissatisfaction with home education system (47%); career growth (45%); salary (44%).

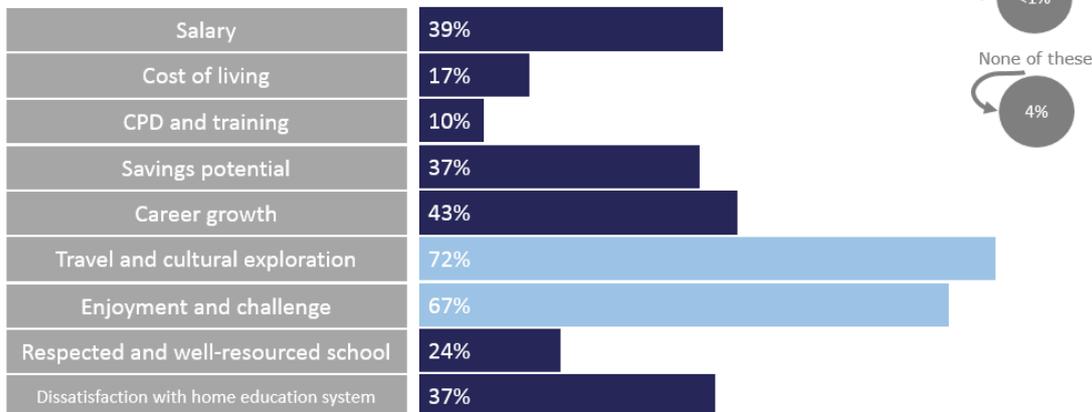
Incoming

Which of the following are reasons for you to have chosen to work in the international schools' sector? Multiple choice



Outgoing

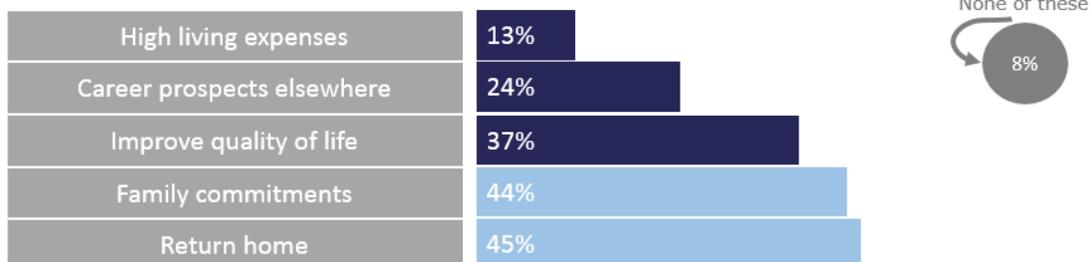
Which of the following were originally reasons for choosing to work in the international schools' sector? Multiple choice



Many teachers return to the UK after working abroad, with family commitments (44%) and a desire to return home (45%) cited as the main reasons for leaving the international schools' sector.

Outgoing

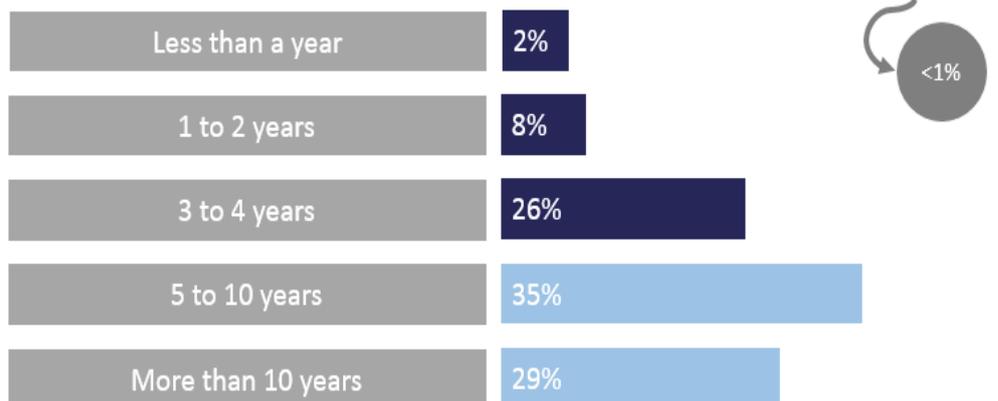
Which of the following are reasons why you might or will be leaving teaching in the international schools' sector? Multiple choice



26% of returning teachers worked internationally for 3-4 years; 71% leave the international sector within 10 years.

Outgoing

How many years have you been teaching in the international schools' sector?

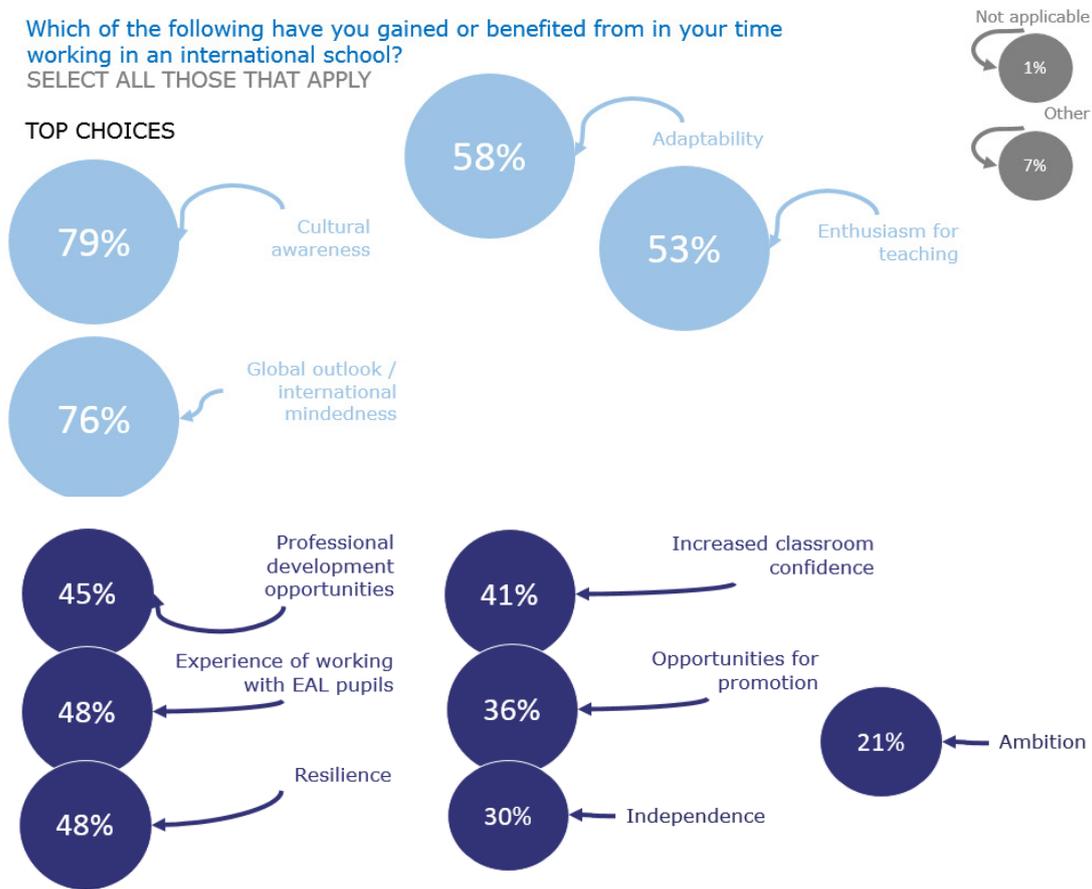




Returning teachers bring with them a wealth of experience and skills including cultural awareness (79%), global outlook/international mindedness (76%), adaptability (58%), and renewed enthusiasm for teaching (53%) as well as EAL experience, resilience, and professional development opportunities.

Outgoing

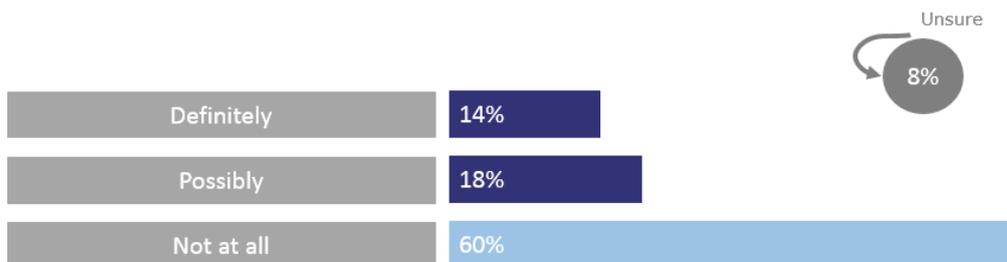
Which of the following have you gained or benefited from in your time working in an international school?
SELECT ALL THOSE THAT APPLY



Nearly a third of teachers entering the international school sector (32%) were thinking about leaving the profession before taking an international job.

Incoming

Before taking a job in an international school, were you thinking about leaving the teaching profession?



94% of British international school leaders now find recruiting quality teachers ‘somewhat’ or ‘very challenging’ (31% very challenging). Only a quarter of school leaders indicate that they can always recruit candidates of a calibre that meet their expectations.

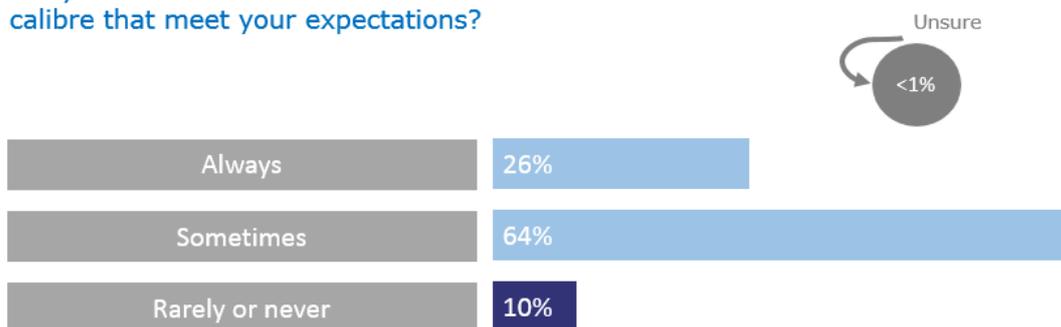
Senior leaders

Currently, how challenging is it to recruit the required quality of permanent teaching staff for your school?



Senior leaders

Are you able to recruit candidates of a calibre that meet your expectations?



British international schools are already being proactive in improving recruitment: 57% with enhanced professional development and 51% with improved marketing in the last 2 years.

Senior leaders

What changes have you made in the past two years to facilitate teacher recruitment?





93% of senior leaders indicate that recruiting internationally-trained teachers is important, and yet more than a quarter of schools (27%) have increased recruitment of local staff (see page 6). This could present an opportunity to upskill local teaching staff with UK teaching qualifications.

Senior leaders

How important is it for you to recruit internationally-trained staff for teaching posts?



According to responding international schools, the services which would most help the international school sector with teacher supply in the coming years are:

- Ability to act as a Teaching School for UK trainees (41%)
- Conversion courses (to QTS/PGCE) for internationally-trained teachers (36%)
- Initial Teacher Training programmes to train local staff (31%)

All of these could additionally have a positive effect on UK teacher supply by increasing the pool of qualified teachers.

Senior leaders

What additional support or services would most help the international school sector with teacher supply in the coming years?



The key findings above show that teachers choose to move to the British international school sector for personal and professional fulfillment, and that the vast majority of both incoming and outgoing teachers are happy with their international experience. Teaching is a truly global profession, offering a rich and exciting career opportunity both at home and internationally. Overseas opportunities can support teacher retention by reengaging those that are considering leaving the profession. 32% of incoming teachers were considering leaving the profession before taking an international job, while 53% of outgoing teachers say they are leaving with a renewed enthusiasm for teaching. Many teachers return to the UK after working in a British international school, bringing with them a wealth of valuable skills and experience including cultural awareness, international mindedness, adaptability and resilience. Teacher supply does present a challenge for the international sector; 94% of school leaders indicate that recruiting teachers is challenging or very challenging. But schools are already taking steps to improve recruitment and retention, and have identified a number of services (teaching school status; conversion courses; overseas ITT) that could support teacher supply in the coming years, both internationally and domestically.

Recommendations

The opportunity to work both at home and internationally makes teaching a highly attractive career. Teachers in British schools overseas work in some of the best schools in the world – schools that are high performing, up-to-date and well-resourced. Erecting barriers, or a conflict between domestic and overseas supply, would be counterproductive. In light of this research, COBIS is now proposing a new, co-operative approach, which will benefit both the UK and international education sectors:

1. **Promote attractive professional opportunities – positioning teaching as an international career option:** A co-operative enterprise among UK and international sector representatives, the DfE and DIT to promote the opportunities of teaching as a career, both in the UK and in British international schools located overseas. In addition to enriching the professional experience for teachers as they move and return home, this can enhance the attractiveness of teaching as a profession to increase recruitment to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) at home and abroad, and support teacher retention.
2. **Increase international training opportunities – overseas teaching schools and recruitment overseas into ITT:** International schools could play an increasing role in training teachers in their locality as a means of increasing the teacher supply pool for British curriculum schools and upskilling existing teachers. This could include fresh solutions for recruitment of teachers to ITT programmes overseas to attract graduates including teaching assistants and support staff, alumni, spouses and local staff of proven quality (thus reducing stress on domestic supply), as well as expanded provision for ITT in the many high quality and accredited British international schools, with opportunity for teaching school status and QTS.
3. **Value overseas service – facilitate return to the UK:** Ensure that teachers with international experience are welcomed, encouraged and supported to enter or return to the UK schools sector through recognition of valued and accredited service overseas.

The findings of the research and proposed solutions now form the basis of a new COBIS strategy to support teacher recruitment and training, both internationally and domestically, and have been welcomed by Government.

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- 1 Figures on the current and projected size of the international school market are courtesy of ISC Research Ltd. British international schools are schools located outside the UK that teach a curriculum (wholly or in part) that would be recognised in the UK (such as the National Curriculum for England) and have a British orientation/ethos (which can include high-quality pastoral care, a range of extra-curricular opportunities, and reference to British values, freedoms and culture).
 - 2 *UK revenue from education related exports and transnational education activity in 2015* (DfE, Feb. 2018; SFR12/2018)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683043/SFR12-2018_Text.pdf
UK revenue from education related exports and transnational education activity 2010-2014 (DfE, July 2017)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630741/UK_Revenue_from_Educational_Exports_2010-14.pdf
 - 3 Figures on the current and projected size of the international school market are courtesy of ISC Research Ltd.
 - 4 *National pupil projections – future trends in pupil numbers: July 2017* (DfE, July 2017, SFR 31/2017)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627388/SFR31_2017_Projections_Text.pdf
 - 5 *Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Census for the academic year 2017 to 2018* (DfE, November 2017, SFR 68/2017)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663141/SFR68_2017_Text.pdf
 - 6 *Analysis of teacher supply, retention and mobility* (DfE, February 2018)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682892/SFR11_2018_Main_Text.pdf
 - 7 This COBIS Research project has been delivered in partnership with ISC Research Ltd, and with further support from C3 Education.
 - 8 ISC Research provided access to their database of contacts for this review; COBIS also approached COBIS Member Schools directly.