FORUM
Volume 60, Number 3, 2018
www.wwwords.co.uk/FORUM
http://dx.doi.org/10.15730/forum.2018.60.3.375

The Value of Inexperience: young teachers in post-2010 English education policy

KATHRYN SPICKSLEY

ABSTRACT This article explores how the expansion of the Academies Programme and Teach First, combined with a political programme of economic austerity, has repositioned the role and expectations of young teachers since 2010. Specifically, rapid promotion to leadership has become normalised in policy discourse, which has the effect of raising expectations placed on new teachers. It argues that the effects of this repositioning have an impact on both new and experienced teachers, and could be contributing to the current recruitment and retention 'crisis' in teaching.

Introduction

Recruiting and retaining teachers is becoming increasingly difficult. In 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) failed to meet its recruitment targets for initial teacher training (DfE, 2017). *Schools Week* reported in 2016 that the teacher 'wastage rate' was at its highest level in a decade, and that teachers are leaving the profession at a faster rate than previously (Scott, 2016). Furthermore, attrition appears to be particularly prevalent among beginning teachers. Out of the 2011 cohort of qualifying teachers, 31 per cent had left the profession by July 2017 (Savage, 2017). I chose this particular statistic as I make up one of the numbers – I qualified in 2011, and departed in December 2017.

As John Quicke argues in the spring issue of *FORUM* (Quicke, 2018), the government's reaction to teacher shortage has been to focus on workload, a short-sighted response that willingly ignores the structural and political factors which have contributed to current recruitment and retention difficulties. In his article, Quicke reveals that one senior leader he knows 'talks of young teachers being used as "cannon-fodder"' (Quicke, 2018, p. 84). Considering the

significant cost of training new teachers [1], and the emotional investment made by new entrants to the profession, this anecdote is particularly concerning. In order to understand the current problem with teacher supply, we need to look carefully at how the profession is treating its young teachers.

Policy Rhetoric: changing expectations

Thirty-six years ago, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) published a report entitled 'The New Teacher in School'. One of the comments made in the report focused on the unrealistic expectations some schools had of their beginning teachers:

> Over a third [of schools] appeared to expect too much of newly trained teachers ... It was assumed, for example, that if the new teacher took over the class or the timetable of an experienced teacher of twenty years' standing, he would do just the same sort of job as his predecessor and expect no more support or help than the latter had received. (DES, 1982, p. 62)

The tone of this comment is indicative. It is almost presented as common sense that schools should expect newly trained teachers to perform at a different level to teachers with many years' experience. The fault is clearly directed at the school for expecting too much of new teachers, rather than at the new teachers themselves for their lack of capability. The implicit understanding is that experience matters in teaching, so new teachers need to be cut some slack.

Recent policy documents instead construct the new teacher as competent and in preparation for leadership. In its 2016 White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere', the Conservative government constructs the teacher's journey to leadership as starting the minute the teacher becomes 'accredited':

> By 2020, one possible journey to leadership could look like this (illustrative example): Chek-Yan is accepted on a School Direct place in a Teaching School, which is also part of a MAT [multi-academy trust]. She follows a structured programme, with support and monitoring from experienced teachers. Once accredited, Chek-Yan quickly progresses. The MAT moves her to a more challenging school after two years to broaden her experience ... She reaches head of department five years after accreditation. (DfE, 2016, p. 44)

The government's teacher recruitment website, Get into Teaching, dedicates a substantial amount of its literature to 'real-life experiences' of rapid career progression in the teaching profession:

> Just one year after completing his postgraduate teacher training, Owen progressed to head of department – and since then, he has continued to climb the career ladder.

> When I first started teaching as a newly qualified teacher, I looked for opportunities to support the school ... in my first year I led on redesigning the KS3 curriculum.
>
> [Olly's] rapid climb up the career ladder shows how quickly you can progress as a teacher ... from new graduate to assistant head in just six years. (DfE, 2018)

Conservative-led education policy since 2010 has specifically positioned new teachers as confident classroom practitioners with aspirations to leadership. This means that for the beginning teacher, there is now no time for mistakes, or for consolidating their classroom pedagogy. As soon as they are qualified, new teachers are expected to aim for leadership, which assumes competence at the classroom level. Statistics suggest that the claims on the Get into Teaching website are not merely clever advertising: the number of head teachers under the age of thirty-five has increased by three-quarters since 2010 (Shapero, 2017). Many more new teachers are aiming for leadership, and are getting there faster than before.

It is sensible to assume, as HMI did in 1982, that most teachers get better at their job with practice. Research on teacher career trajectories indicates that teachers only begin to feel stable and develop a sense of secure self-efficacy after about four years in the classroom (Huberman, 1993; Day et al, 2007). However, the current government has consistently sought to undermine this, by claiming that the new 'generation' of teachers is somehow inherently better than previous generations. As Education Secretary, Michael Gove claimed that the 'young teachers who are now entering the profession are better than any generation of teachers ever before' (Gove, 2011). Michael Wilshaw, when working as Ofsted's chief inspector, compared 'decent but a little rusty' colleagues to 'sharp young graduates' (Wilshaw, 2014). The overall effect has been to position new – and specifically *young* – teachers as more effective than experienced ones. Two significant structural changes in education have further supported this rhetorical shift: academies and Teach First.

Enabling Conditions: academies and Teach First

Academies

Academies first came to prominence under the New Labour administration, sold to the public as an initiative intended to replace 'failing' comprehensives. There is evidence to suggest that initially some of the early academies suffered from significant recruitment problems. Unity City Academy, which opened in 2002, was placed in special measures during its first Ofsted inspection in 2005. The Ofsted report identified an unhealthy reliance on new teachers as one of the academy's problems:

> Problems over recruitment and retention continue to affect the academy. A third of the teachers are newly qualified or unqualified graduate trainees. (Ofsted, 2005, p. 3)

The following year, Ofsted inspected another early academy project, the Business Academy Bexley (now Harris Garrard Academy Bexley), rating it inadequate. Again, the inspection team noted the academy's turnover of inexperienced teachers:

> In its fourth year of operation ... there are still twenty new teachers to induct into the academy's ways of working. The academy has invested considerable time into supporting inexperienced teachers or those trained in other countries: the benefits of this investment are sometimes lost as teachers move elsewhere. (Ofsted, 2006, p. 2)

Some of the early academies not only recruited inexperienced staff, but also promoted them to leadership roles. As Philip O'Hear, the head of Capital City Academy, explains:

> As a new and expanding school, and with teachers still hard to find in London, we have had to expand and develop our staff ... We now have many junior teachers with one or two other significant responsibilities – transition co-ordinator, deputy head of year or running our Microsoft Academy. (O'Hear, 2008, p. 53)

Martyn Coles, the head of City of London Academy (COLA), presumably intended to retain his young staff by offering them leadership roles:

> Not unexpectedly, some younger teachers now want to be more involved in the pastoral side of the school, so we will probably create some assistant pastoral posts for these staff. (Coles, 2008, p. 29)

At the beginning of the academies programme, therefore, the hiring and promotion of young staff was generally presented as a pragmatic necessity. The flexibility afforded to academy heads over staffing and pay made it easier for them to promote younger staff than would have been possible within a local authority maintained school.

Ten years later, the propensity towards hiring young teachers continues to be noticeable within the academy sector, and particularly in certain high-performing academy chains. On a recent visit to ARK King Solomon Academy reported in the *London Review of Books*, George Duoblys described the teaching staff as 'a startling bunch: young, attractive and predominantly white' (Duoblys, 2017, p. 24). At a different 'flagship' academy in London, Christy Kulz's ethnographic research discovered that 'the teacher revamped as dynamic business professional is a popular image with parents. Several parents noted that Dreamfields teachers were youthful.' One parent went so far as to explain that 'it's good marketing ... they look like young business people and you just think,

"I can't believe they're teachers, surely they're not teachers." ... Sexy guys, sexy women' (Kulz, 2017, p. 142). Kulz's research indicates that hiring young staff may no longer be primarily a pragmatic decision, but instead an aesthetic one – part of the academy 'branding'.

It is important to note that both of the academies detailed by Duoblys and Kulz are repeatedly valorised in policy as exemplary institutions that embody all that is excellent in education. A founding member of the ARK academy chain, Amanda Spielman, was even appointed as Ofsted's chief inspector in January 2017. The staffing decisions made at these academies therefore have repercussions throughout the education sector, as other schools look towards these 'flagship' institutions for indications of how to align themselves with the elite in state education. Put simply, one way to make your school *look* like a flagship academy is to employ a very young, professionally dressed staff. Furthermore, as these flagship academies have been encouraged to develop into multi-academy trust chains and take over other schools, the *practices* of these academies are gradually exported into more and more schools – including the practices of hiring and firing.

Teach First

The Teach First programme recruits 'elite' graduates and provides these recruits with an intensive six-week teacher-training course before giving them classroom responsibility in schools based in 'challenging' socio-economic areas. Teach First teachers are contracted for two years, after which they gain qualified teacher status and can leave the profession if they wish. Teach First has the lowest retention rate of any initial teacher training programme, with around 60 per cent of Teach First recruits having left teaching within five years (Allen et al, 2016).

Teach First and the academies programme, although often assumed to be separate entities, in fact have a symbiotic relationship. The architect of New Labour's academy programme, Andrew Adonis, has explicitly drawn parallels between the two programmes:

> There is a close parallel between Teach First and academies. Both are focused on reinventing the comprehensive. Teach First seeks to radically improve their staffing; academies reinvent their governance and leadership. These are two sides of the same coin ... In both cases, the radical reform involved a new public service model of dynamic not-for-profit organisations providing state education.
> (Adonis, 2012, p. 42)

Adonis argues that at a theoretical level, academies and Teach First are closely aligned. At a practical level, when early academy schools struggled to find staff, Teach First was available to solve these problems (in return, of course, for a fee).[2] Teach First teachers are allocated to schools, rather than applying, so the programme became a perfect solution for schools that found it difficult to attract

applicants, including some of the early academies. Adonis claimed that almost all of the early academies were 'big recruiters of Teach First teachers' (Adonis, 2012, p. 145).

At Capital City Academy, Philip O'Hear explained how Teach First not only helped to solve recruitment problems, but also changed attitudes towards staffing more generally:

> we have had to expand and develop our staff through schemes such as Teach First and the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP)… This requires us to be outstanding at professional development. But it has also led us to encourage staff to develop rapidly by taking on leadership responsibilities, drawing on the experience of our first cohort of Teach First trainees who successfully took on additional responsibilities in their second year. (O'Hear, 2008, p. 53)

The first cohort of Teach First teachers proved that new teachers could be given leadership responsibilities. However, rather than reserving early career leadership responsibilities for his Teach First recruits, O'Hear used his experience of working with these 'elite' beginning teachers to expand the expectations of leadership to other beginning teachers. In this setting, Teach First therefore helped to create the conditions of possibility wherein it became normal, or even expected, for teachers in the early stages of their career to take on leadership roles.

An evaluation of the Teach First scheme undertaken in 2010 at the University of Manchester produced some significant findings about the nature of Teach First trainees which may shed some light on the popularity of the programme with school leaders:

> The most common expression used [by headteachers to describe Teach First trainees] was that Teach First teachers listen and learn from other teachers … The Teach First teachers appear to pick up the teaching styles of the schools they work in.
> (Muijs et al, 2010, p. 17)

The value of Teach First teachers appears to lie partly in their capacity to quickly and effectively conform to their school's expectations. Other research projects have highlighted the disciplinary identities which the Teach First programme instils in its recruits (Bailey, 2015; McIntyre & Thomson, 2016); Teach First teachers have high expectations of their own and their pupils' success, and are primed for management responsibilities from the very first stages of their career. One can imagine that many head teachers find the unique combination of compliancy and eagerness for additional responsibilities which Teach First teachers exemplify extremely attractive.

Teach First trainees are regularly described as 'committed' (Teach First, 2018). Considering the high drop-out rate from the profession by Teach First teachers, commitment here should probably be understood as the capacity to manage a high volume of work, rather than a long-term commitment to the

profession. When explaining their relentless energy and enthusiasm, one Teach First trainee said to researchers at the University of Manchester that:

> maybe where our strengths lie is in terms of energy, because you know that you may only be there for a year or two so if you want to implement a scheme you have to do it now ... and because you're only there for a short time you have a chance to quickly try everything because you have nothing to lose.
> (Muijs et al, 2010, p. 18)

Many Teach First trainees believe their time as a classroom teacher is limited, giving them a short-term perspective. In fact, these attitudes are not limited to Teach First. Research on teacher identity has consistently found that 'elite' graduate entrants to the teaching profession are more likely to exit the profession (Lacey, 1977; Kelly & Northrop, 2015). Key here is that Teach First trainees do not need to question whether their classroom workload is sustainable in the long term, because for Teach First trainees there is no long term in the classroom. Compliance with unreasonable workload demands is easier when a clear exit-point is in sight.

The first time I encountered Teach First trainees was, perhaps unsurprisingly, while working at a primary academy, part of a large national chain. The Teach First trainees were regularly praised by the head teacher, who made it explicitly clear that having Teach First trainees on the staff was a mark of the school's quality. The Teach First trainees I worked with were extremely enthusiastic and hard-working. However, I did notice how compliant and uncritical this group of teachers were.

I remember a particular conversation I had with a Teach First teacher, following a presentation on UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools award. This teacher told me how interesting they had found the presentation, and said they had never heard of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) before. I admitted surprise that they had not been informed about the UNCRC as part of their Teach First training, as it had featured heavily in my own Early Years PGCE. In response, the trainee said, 'Well, we only have about five or six weeks' training, so they concentrate on the important stuff – you know – maths and English.' I said I was surprised that children's rights could be considered unimportant, but the trainee replied that of course rights are *important*, but standards are *more important*.

Uncritical acceptance of school or government policies is a valuable commodity in today's educational climate, and it is particularly valued in academies. Courtney and Gunter have researched staff turnover and the narrowing of dissent tolerated in schools, noting that 'whilst headteachers and principals of all types of school dispose of teachers, the ability of academy leaders to set their staff's pay and conditions means that in these schools, the discourse is more intense and disposal is easy' (Courtney & Gunter, 2015, p. 411). The particular characteristics which Teach First teachers appear to be

predisposed towards are therefore perhaps particularly valued within intense academy environments.

It is important to note that within the policy discourse, Teach First teachers are regularly valorised as the gold standard of teachers. Stephen Hillier (then Chief Executive to the Training and Development Agency) exemplifies this with the statement, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if all the people who joined the teaching profession were more like the people who are recruited through Teach First?' (HC, 2012). By promoting Teach First teachers as the 'gold standard' of beginning teachers, other entrants to the profession are encouraged to behave in a similar way.

However, to treat all teachers as if they should behave like Teach First teachers is problematic. Teach First teachers have a short-term mindset. They are encouraged to move beyond the classroom after a few years, setting up social enterprises or rapidly moving into leadership (Bailey, 2015). Under these conditions, unsustainable workloads or repeated compliance seem manageable, as there is a clear end point in sight. But to expect *all* beginning teachers to work as if they are probably going to leave teaching in two or three years is simply to invite burnout.

The Value of Inexperience…

Inexperienced teachers have become a valuable commodity. Thanks to Teach First and some high-profile academy chains, young 'business-like' teachers have become associated with ill-defined but persuasive concepts such as quality, commitment, hard work and professionalism. Academies lead the way in offering leadership responsibilities to inexperienced teachers who embody these characteristics.

For head teachers managing tightened budgets in a time of austerity, employing and promoting inexperienced teachers is a win-win. The school gets all the prestige of having a young, aesthetically 'professional' staff body, while at the same time forking out less money on staffing. Adding a TLR (Teaching and Learning Responsibility wage) onto a NQT (newly qualified teacher) salary involves significantly less expenditure for a school than adding a TLR onto the wage of an experienced teacher at the top of the main pay scale. The result is that older and more experienced teachers can feel devalued or overlooked, and may choose to move elsewhere (which is another bonus for management teams that need to save money, because these expensive teachers who have worked themselves up the pay scale can then be replaced by NQTs).

Furthermore, since the introduction of performance-related pay for main-scale teachers in 2013, it has become easier for heads to retain teachers on lower salaries. If teachers do not meet their targets, then their increment is denied. In my experience, it is quite easy for a head to set targets that are impossible to meet. I was once set a target of 100 per cent of my class reaching age-related expectations, despite some not having achieved this in the previous year. When I queried this, I was simply told by my head that 'this is what the

government now expects'. There was no allowance for discussion or negotiation. Under this system, a teacher can therefore remain on £22,917 (the starting salary for an NQT) for an indefinite period, and an unqualified teacher on even less. Those of us with a suspicious mindset might suggest that the repositioning of young teachers as the darlings of education policy might have less to do with their educational value and more to do with fiscal 'responsibility'.

My argument is not that these damaging employment practices are happening everywhere, or even in every academy. My argument is that current policy rhetoric around new teachers, combined with the growth of academies and Teach First, has made it easier for school leaders, if they choose, to cut costs through exploitative and unsympathetic employment practices.

…and the Cost

Policy rhetoric, the academies programme and Teach First have all played their part in changing perceptions of young teachers. In the process, the expectations of young, beginning teachers have increased substantially, and perhaps to an unhealthy degree.

In their research on Teach First teachers, McIntyre and Thomson found that 'many Teach First teachers do feel very acutely disappointment, anxiety, and a sense of failure if they are not able to demonstrate tangible turnarounds in their classes' (McIntyre & Thomson, 2016, p. 168). These ugly feelings are impossible to manage for extended periods of time, and as I have tried to argue, they should not be understood as restricted to Teach First teachers. Teach First has had a ripple effect on the educational landscape, unfairly raising expectations of new teachers across the board.

In the recruitment and retention crisis, I would argue that we are beginning to see the cost of creating a system which demands too much of our inexperienced teachers. Anecdotal evidence appears to indicate that teachers are increasingly requiring support for mental health issues (Walton, 2017). Furthermore, by valorising youth over experience, classroom teachers are encouraged to participate in a competitive environment, rather than learning to support and value each other. The happiest school I worked in was one in which the youthful enthusiasm of new teachers was balanced against the wisdom of experienced teachers. This balance can only be achieved if teachers are encouraged to support each other; instead, the current system pits young against old unnecessarily.

We need to be realistic about what beginning teachers should be expected to achieve, celebrating their successes and forgiving their failures. I was lucky that in my first school, I was frequently reminded that I was not a superhero, that I was allowed to make mistakes, and that I should take a break sometimes. I feel sorry when I read reports of new teachers who are not granted similar levels of support and understanding, and am unsurprised when these stories often end with a decision to leave the classroom. By building up the confidence

and expertise of beginning teachers over their formative years in the classroom, and by truly valuing the experience that teachers gain in the classroom, I believe retention and recruitment could both be improved. The cost of treating young teachers like 'cannon fodder' is becoming readily apparent, and we simply cannot afford to let it continue.

Notes

[1] The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) recently reported that it cost between £17,000 and £38,200 to train a new teacher (Allen et al, 2016). The cost varied according to the training route taken and the phase of education taught.

[2] As the founder of Teach First, Brett Wigdortz explains, 'Too many start-ups are unable to grow because they cannot scale up their funding ... At Teach First we look for schools to contribute towards our running costs by paying a "recruitment fee" for each of our teachers who work in their schools, on the basis that they receive a real benefit' (Wigdortz, 2012, p. 102).

References

Adonis, A. (2012) *Education, Education, Education: reforming England's schools*. London: Biteback Publishing.

Allen, R., Belfield, C., Greaves, E., Sharp, C. & Walker, M. (2016) The Longer-term Costs and Benefits of Different Initial Teacher Training Routes: IFS Report 118. London: Institute for Fiscal Studies. https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/comms/R118.pdf

Bailey, P. (2015) Consultants of Conduct: new actors, new knowledges and new 'resilient' subjectivities in the governing of the teacher, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 47(3), 232-250. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2015.1038696

Coles, M. (2008) Governance and Staffing, in J. Astle & C. Ryan (Eds) *Academies and the Future of State Education*, pp. 25-31. London: CentreForum. https://www.centreforum.org/assets/pubs/academies-web.pdf

Courtney, S. & Gunter, H. (2015) Get Off My Bus! School Leaders, Vision Work and the Elimination of Teachers, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 18(4), 395-417. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2014.992476

Day, C. Sammons, P., Stobart, G., Kington, A. & Gu, Q. (2007) *Teachers Matter: connecting lives, work and effectiveness*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Department for Education (DfE) (2016) Educational Excellence Everywhere. Cm 9230. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/educational-excellence-everywhere

Department for Education (DfE) (2017) Initial Teacher Training: trainee number census 2017 to 2018. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2017-to-2018

Department for Education (DfE) (2018) *Real-life Experiences*. Get into Teaching website. https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/life-as-a-teacher/real-life-experiences

Department for Education and Skills (DES) (1982) The New Teacher in School: HMI report. http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/hmi-discussion/new-teacher.html

Duoblys, G. (2017) One, Two, Three, Eyes on Me! George Duoblys on the New School Discipline, *London Review of Books*, 5 October, pp. 23-26. https://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n19/george-duoblys/one-two-three-eyes-on-me

Gove, M. (2011) Michael Gove to Cambridge University: the Secretary of State's speech to Cambridge University on a liberal education, 24 November. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/michael-gove-to-cambridge-university

House of Commons (HC) (2012) Great Teachers: attracting, training and retaining the best. Ninth Report of Session 2010-12 (HC 1515-II). Education Committee. https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/1515/1515ii.pdf

Huberman, M. (1993) *The Lives of Teachers.* London: Cassell.

Kelly, S. & Northrop, L. (2015) Early Career Outcomes for the 'Best and Brightest': selectivity, selection, and attrition in the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Survey, *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(4), 524-656. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0002831215587352

Kulz, C. (2017) *Factories for Learning: making race, class and inequality in the neoliberal academy.* Manchester: Manchester University Press. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526116185

Lacey, C. (1977) *The Socialization of Teachers.* London: Methuen.

McIntyre, J. & Thomson, P. (2016) Poverty, Schooling, and Beginning Teachers Who Make a Difference: a case study from England, in J. Lampert & B. Burnett (Eds) *Teacher Education for High Poverty Schools*, pp. 153-170. London: Springer International Publishing.

Muijs, D., Chapman, C., Collins, A. & Armstrong, P. (2010) Maximum Impact Evaluation: the impact of Teach First teachers in schools. http://www.teachforallnetwork.net/articles/max_impact.pdf

Ofsted (2005) Unity City Academy: school inspection report. https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/133768

Ofsted (2006) The Business Academy Bexley: school inspection report. https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/133769

O'Hear, P. (2008) Community, in J. Astle & C. Ryan (Eds) *Academies and the Future of State Education*, pp. 48-56. London: CentreForum. https://www.centreforum.org/assets/pubs/academies-web.pdf

Quicke, J. (2018) Recruitment, Retention and the Workload Challenge: a critique of the government response, *FORUM*, 60(1), 77-86. http://dx.doi.org/10.15730/forum.2018.60.1.77

Savage, M. (2017) Almost a Quarter of Teachers who have Qualified since 2011 have Left Profession, *Guardian*, 8 July.

https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/jul/08/almost-a-quarter-of-teachers-who-have-qualified-since-2011-have-left-profession

Scott, S. (2016) Highest Teacher Leaving Rate in a Decade – and 6 Other Things We Learned about the School Workforce, *Schools Week*, 30 June. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/highest-teacher-leaving-rate-in-a-decade-and-6-other-things-we-learned-about-the-school-workforce/

Shapero, C. (2017) Over 100 Schools Now Have Headteachers in their 20s, Data Shows, *Telegraph*, 27 July. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2017/07/27/100-schools-now-have-headteachers-20s-data-shows/

Teach First (2018) Developing Great Leaders for Your School. https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/schools

Walton, B. (2017) Teaching is Driving Too Many Teachers to Mental Health Problems, *TES*, 18 December. https://www.tes.com/news/teaching-driving-too-many-teachers-mental-health-problems

Wigdortz, B. (2012) *Success Against the Odds. Five Lessons in How to Achieve the Impossible: the story of Teach First.* Croydon: Short Books.

Wilshaw, M. (2014) HMCI Launches Ofsted's Annual Report 2013/14. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-launches-ofsteds-annual-report-201314

KATHRYN SPICKSLEY is a doctoral student at the University of Worcester, researching primary teacher identity in academy schools. She is particularly interested in exploring the way that language constructs identity, and the policy rhetoric surrounding teachers since 2010. Before undertaking her PhD she worked as an early years teacher in primary schools around the UK. *Correspondence*: k.spicksley@worc.ac.uk