

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 26 OCTOBER 2015

REPORT ON: STAFFING LEVELS IN DUNDEE SCHOOLS

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 407-2015

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update of teacher staffing levels in Dundee schools. At their meeting on 27 April 2015, the Education Committee agreed to instruct the Director of Education to produce an annual staffing report detailing the teacher number and pupil teacher ratio as set out in the annual Scottish Government census that is carried out each September. In addition, information was requested on the Council's commitment to maintain teacher numbers, the effectiveness of current recruitment and retention procedures and projected workforce requirements across educational sectors. (Article No V refers)

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the Education Committee are requested to note the content of the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 This report details teacher numbers and the pupil:teacher ratio in Dundee schools at the point of the September 2015 census. It further sets out the Council's commitment to maintain pupil numbers, the effectiveness of current recruitment and retention procedures and the projected workforce requirements across educational sectors. The report highlights local and national issues impacting on the recruitment of permanent and supply teachers and the successes in tackling the issues within Dundee.
- 4.2 Dundee City Council made a commitment to Scottish Government to maintain teacher numbers and pupil teacher ratios as part of the agreed budget process for the financial year 2015-16. If the commitment is not met, there would be an impact on the allocated council share of funding provided within the Local Government Settlement. It would also impact on the council's share of the additional figure of £10 million pounds agreed between Scottish Government and COSLA with the aim of supporting:
- the maintenance of the full time equivalent (FTE) teacher number and pupil teacher ratio at the point of census in September 2015; and
 - the provision of places for all Newly Qualified Teachers entering the profession through the initial teacher induction scheme.
- 4.3 The teacher number for Dundee in the September 2014 staff census was 1407 FTE and the pupil:teacher ratio was 12.9:1. The staffing level in Dundee schools was better than almost all council areas across Scotland with a pupil:teacher ratio well below the national average of 13.7:1. It is also the case that in 15 primary schools located in areas with the highest levels of deprivation, class sizes are set at a maximum of 25 pupils from P1-P3. The national figures for the September 2015 census have been collected but will not be published until the start of December 2015. The Dundee position is that the census figure for 2015 is 1412.5 FTE and the pupil:teacher ratio is 12.9:1. The total teacher number includes teachers across all educational sectors as well as

specialist teachers working in areas such as Offsite Education, Bilingual Support and the Outreach team.

It is worth noting that teachers working within pre-school settings are included in the total teacher FTE figure but are not included in the calculation of the pupil:teacher ratio since this is only based on the number of pupils in the primary and secondary sectors. Dundee is one of the very few council areas where teachers continue to be employed in pre-school settings and there is a clear commitment to maintain this model.

The census data for September 2014 and 2015 is:

Census Data		
	2014	2015
Total Teacher FTE	1407	1412.5
Total Pupil roll	17689	17931
Teacher FTE (excluding pre-school)	1372	1384
Pupil:Teacher ratio	12.9	12.9

- 4.4 Given the reported challenges faced by a number of council areas in meeting teacher numbers, the position in Dundee is positive. A considerable amount of work has gone into the recruitment process for permanent and supply teachers in pre-school, primary and secondary settings. There has been a rise in the number of supply teachers, particularly in the primary sector and the ongoing recruitment process should further increase the number of permanent teachers and place them into posts currently filled by supply teachers. The success of the recruitment process has taken place during a period of widely reported teacher shortages.

Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Planning

- 4.5 The annual recruitment process has been challenging at local and national level in recent times. The challenges have been the subject of considerable discussion and have been reported widely in the media. It is clear that despite an increase in the number of training places for student teachers, a number of council areas are experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. The staffing position in Dundee has improved as a result of a successful and ongoing staffing exercise. This has ensured that a significant number of Newly Qualified Teachers, permanent teachers and supply teachers were recruited for the start of the session in August 2015. This is a positive development but there is a clear recognition that additional work and ongoing recruitment is required in the coming session to fill vacancies, ensure that all teaching posts remain filled and increase the number of supply teachers.
- 4.6 There has been an increase in the number of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) within the primary sector this session but a slight reduction in the number of NQTs in the secondary sector. The current position is that there are 44 NQTs in the primary sector and 22 NQTs in the secondary sector. There is always a reduction between the allocated number of NQTs and the actual number of NQTs who take up post each August. This happens for a number of reasons including failure to pass the training course but there is a clear impact on the workforce planning process since NQTs are assigned to schools in advance and have to be replaced if they withdraw. To put this into context there were 5 withdrawals from this session's primary NQTs and 4 withdrawals by secondary NQTs. For this reason, planning and placing workforce projections are based on a 10% drop out rate.
- 4.7 The issue of teachers accepting posts in schools then withdrawing at very short notice has an impact on effective workforce planning. Given the current level of teaching vacancies across the country, candidates have a considerable degree of choice. This has resulted in the situation where applicants accept posts then withdraw when offered an alternative post that may be more suitable to their needs in terms of location or travel distance. In the three weeks prior to the start of the session, 9 primary candidates and 4 secondary candidates withdrew their acceptance of posts and indicated that they had accepted posts in other council areas.
- 4.8 The selection and appointment of suitably qualified teachers who have approval to teach in the denominational sector presents a challenge, particularly in the primary sector. In discussion with senior representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, active steps have been taken to recruit permanent teachers and this discussion will continue with a view to extending the recruitment process beyond Scotland.

- 4.9 Maternity and paternity leave arrangements are built into the workforce planning model since the teachers need to be replaced throughout the leave period. At this point in time there are 44 teachers (37.0 FTE) across the city on maternity leave. This is broken down by sector in the following table:

Sector	Number	FTE
Nursery	1	0.4
Primary	27	23.6
Secondary	13	12.4
Others (e.g. Kingspark)	3	0.6
Total	44	37

- 4.10 The availability of sufficient numbers of supply teachers is a challenge. There are a number of teachers who are classified as 'permanent supply' teachers within the primary sector who provide cover for maternity / paternity leave or long term absences. The current strategy is to increase the number of permanent supply teachers working in the primary sector so that there will be greater capacity to cover short term absences. One of the barriers in the current market is that a number of teachers have indicated their preference for a permanent teaching post within a school setting rather than employment as a permanent supply teacher. The solution in Dundee is to offer teachers a direct route from the permanent supply pool into permanent school posts thereby reducing the time spent in a supply position.
- 4.11 The supply position is more complicated at local and national level in the secondary sector given the nature of subject specific teaching requirements and the limited short term supply pool. This presents workforce planning issues given the difficulties of predicting the subject areas which will be affected by absence. The local solution has been to build up the supply pool using recently retired staff. The entire supply list for primary and secondary teachers was updated and renewed over the 2015 summer period. In addition, all teachers who are about to retire are given the opportunity to be placed on the supply list with immediate effect so that they can make a seamless transition from a permanent post to the supply pool.
- 4.12 Workforce planning approaches have been updated and revised based on recent recruitment experiences. Calculations to measure the annual staff turnover have been brought forward to February of each year and the recruitment process to recruit new teachers and the NQT cohort takes place at the earliest possible stage so that a clear staffing picture is available prior to the Easter holiday period. This reflects an element of over recruitment to reflect the reality between initial and final NQT uptake figures and the fact that not all teachers take up the posts they have formally accepted.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

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