

# TEACHER SUPPLY IN BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

## FINAL REPORT

JULY 2018





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## **Report:**

### **Teacher Supply in British International Schools 2018**

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## Acknowledgements

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## Further information

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## **Executive Summary**

### ***Background***

There are more than 4,300 British international schools operating globally, making up over 45% of the international schools market. The British international schools sector is a leading UK export, contributing to the UK economy through franchises, use of education goods and services, and repatriation of salaries. British international schools send students to UK universities, and generate soft power of incalculable value by educating thousands of global, political, economic and professional leaders in many countries. Between January 2012 and January 2018, the international schools sector as a whole grew, on average, by over 6% per annum, with the number of new schools increasing, on average, by over 450 each year. A UK-style, English-medium education is becoming increasingly valued by parents across the world. Parents choose British international schools to give their children the best possible educational opportunities, including facilitating entry to the UK education system at the school or university level.

### ***The problem***

Over the next ten years, the British international schools sector will require up to 230,000 more teachers to meet staffing needs<sup>1</sup>. There are currently substantial teacher supply challenges which, unless tackled with practical solutions, will leave the sector with a serious deficit in professional capital. The education sector in the UK faces similar teacher supply challenges, with research by the Department for Education indicating an overall shortfall of nearly 10% in recruitment targets to initial teacher training (ITT)<sup>2</sup>. In addition, many thousands of teachers are leaving the profession for non-retirement reasons<sup>3</sup>. There is a severe challenge to recruit and retain enough teachers domestically and internationally. Innovative approaches are required to meet rising professional capital needs.

### ***This research***

The Council of British International Schools (COBIS) contacted c.2,000 British international schools between January 2018 and April 2018. This innovative research captured the experiences and perspectives of more than 1,600 school leaders, incoming teachers (those entering the sector) and outgoing teachers (those leaving the sector) about the teacher supply challenges in the sector. Some of the key findings from this research are outlined on the following page.

## 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.
- 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%).
- Nearly a third of teachers entering the international school sector (32%) were thinking about leaving the profession before taking an international job.
- 94% of British international school leaders now find recruiting quality teachers 'somewhat' or 'very challenging' (31% very challenging).
- 93% of school leaders indicate that recruiting internationally trained teachers is important, and yet more than a quarter of schools (27%) have increased recruitment of local staff. This could present an opportunity to upskill local teaching staff with UK teaching qualifications.
- 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.
- 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. 26% of returning teachers worked internationally for 3-4 years; 71% of outgoing teachers leave the international sector within 10 years.
- 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.
- According to responding international schools, the services which would most help the international schools 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%); and Initial Teacher Training (ITT) 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.

## ***The solution***

With these research findings, COBIS seeks to inform, develop and manage strategies to attract, train and retain first-class teachers domestically and internationally. It offers a set of proposals that include: promoting the professional opportunities of teaching both domestically and internationally; increasing international training opportunities; and developing methods of formal recognition of the value of overseas service in the international sector, facilitating return to the UK.

The Council of British International Schools (COBIS), in partnership with ISC Research, has undertaken a major research project into the movement of teachers into and out of the British international schools sector. This research is based on more than 1,600 survey responses from school leaders, incoming teachers (those entering the sector) and outgoing teachers (those leaving the sector). It provides new concrete data on the profile and motivation of teachers entering and leaving the British international schools sector, how long they stay abroad, why they return, the quality of their experience and the current teacher recruitment climate in international schools. This research complements government data from England.

It demonstrates that, while teacher recruitment presents a challenge, teaching offers a rich and exciting career both domestically and internationally. International teaching opportunities attract good recruits and can support retention by encouraging teachers to remain in the profession. British international schools offer impressive 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.

According to January 2018 figures from ISC Research, there are more than 9,000 international schools operating globally<sup>4</sup>. Of these, more than 4,300 are British international schools, which make up 45% of the international schools market. 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 that have a British ethos (which can include high-quality pastoral care, a range of extra-curricular opportunities, and reference to British values, freedoms and culture). The British international schools sector is a leading UK export, with recent government figures revealing that it is valued at more than £1 billion<sup>5</sup>.

The sector contributes to the UK economy through franchises, use of education goods and services, and repatriation of salaries. In addition, British international schools send students to UK universities, and generate soft power of incalculable value by educating thousands of global, political, economic and professional leaders in many countries. A UK-style private education is becoming increasingly valued by parents worldwide as the preferred pathway for their children to attend Western universities. Between January 2012 and January 2018, the international schools sector as a whole has grown, on average, by over 6% per annum, with the number of new schools increasing, on average, by over 450 each year. This growth in the number of schools is placing increasing pressure on the recruitment of teaching staff; over the next ten years, if this rate of growth continues, it is estimated that the British international schools sector will require up to 230,000 more teachers to meet staffing needs.

The international schools market, including many British international schools, faces a shortage of teaching staff. There is increasing demand for teaching staff who are qualified to teach in the English medium, and preferably native English-speaking teachers. Many schools and school groups are deploying more aggressive recruitment strategies, engaging early in the school year with selected recruitment agencies, rather than relying on recruitment fairs. It is not uncommon to find that the number of schools in attendance at recruitment fairs outweighs the number of candidates.

The education sector in the UK faces similar challenges, with greater demand for school places and insufficient teacher numbers to satisfy increasing staffing needs. Due to increased births from the early 2000s, there are now many more students entering secondary schools at age 11 than are leaving at age 16. Secondary school cohorts are projected to increase by more than 530,000 by 2026, and many more teachers will be needed<sup>6</sup>. This situation is particularly difficult, with figures released by the Department for Education (DfE) showing an overall shortfall of nearly 10% in recruitment targets to initial teacher training (ITT)<sup>7</sup>, and with a far higher shortfall reported in certain subjects.

A recent DfE study revealed that 76% of school leaders interviewed reported 'significant difficulty' with teacher supply, and many reported a 'significant shortage of teachers'; the majority of school leaders felt that recruitment of teachers was 'getting worse'<sup>8</sup>. Shadow Education Secretary, Angela Rayner, has recently argued that 'the government has created a crisis at every stage of [the UK] education system, missing its own teacher recruitment targets in five consecutive years while thousands of teachers are lost from FE'<sup>9</sup>.

The number of teachers leaving the profession for non-retirement reasons increased from 22,260 (6%) in 2011 to 34,910 (8.1%) in 2016<sup>10</sup>. However, the numbers could be greater still. According to a 2018 House of Commons Briefing Paper, *Teacher Recruitment and Retention in England*, as many as 50,110 qualified teachers left the state-funded sector in the 12 months to November 2016<sup>11</sup>. In 2015, the number of teachers leaving the profession was higher than the number entering for the first time; in 2016, 2,620 more teachers left the profession than joined<sup>12</sup>. According to official figures released in 2017, a remarkable 27,500 (23%) of the 117,000 teachers who qualified between 2011 and 2015 have left the profession<sup>13</sup>. Of those who qualified in 2011 alone, 31% have left within the first five years of becoming teachers.

There is a severe challenge to recruit and retain enough teachers in the profession. There is also a rise in the number of teachers leaving the profession. The British international schools sector, although a significant export success for the UK, will require thousands more quality teachers over the next ten years. Innovative solutions and approaches are required to meet the staffing needs of schools in the UK and abroad. This is an international concern which should be seen from an international perspective.

This research was designed by COBIS to provide concrete data on, and an empirically informed analysis of, the movement of teachers into and out of the British international schools sector.

A number of empirical questions guided the development of the research: How is the current teacher supply challenge affecting the international sector? What factors are currently restricting growth in teacher numbers? More importantly, what factors will contribute to the increased supply of teachers in the system? Can such factors be used to inform solutions to these supply challenges?

Many schools have reported tackling teacher supply challenges through smart marketing and financial incentives, building an alumni database from which to recruit more teachers and participating in various ITT programmes<sup>14</sup>.

This research recognises such strategies, but seeks to address teacher supply by looking at it more *holistically*. It takes an innovative approach by regarding teacher supply as an *international* challenge. Taking a global perspective enables this research to extend its reach to the wider debates and issues and, in doing so, to formulate more targeted, far-reaching solutions.

This research has the following aims:

- (i) To build a profile of the teachers who are entering and leaving the British international schools sector;
- (ii) To identify some of the motivating factors behind this movement of teachers;
- (iii) To map out some of the patterns of this movement of teachers between the UK and abroad;
- (iv) To recognise the considerable professional experience these teachers gain, and the skills they develop, through such mobility; and
- (v) To devise and promote strategies that encourage the supply, training, retention and ongoing mobility of first-class teachers both domestically and internationally.

This research was conducted in two phases.

### **Phase One**

To obtain data from as wide a sample of schools as possible, and to achieve a robust and representative analysis, it was decided to use online surveys. Responses were obtained using a series of closed-ended questions.

There are variable numbers of British international schools in different regions of the world. To ensure a representative analysis, responses were obtained in proportion to the number of schools in each of these regions. Surveys were issued to schools and data was collected between January 2018 and February 2018.

Data was collected from the following three respondent groups; senior school leaders; incoming teachers (those starting a new international teaching post since August 2016); and outgoing teachers (those leaving the international sector, or considering leaving, at the end of the 2017-18 or 2018-19 academic year).

In total, 1,914 international schools with a UK orientation were contacted for this research. Invitations were issued to all COBIS member schools, as well as to a wider group of British international schools held on the databases at ISC Research. More than 1,200 responses were received during Phase One.

## **Phase Two**

Several themes and patterns emerged out of the completion of Phase One of the research. In the interests of teasing out more detail, and to further explore and validate these themes and patterns, a smaller corpus of respondents from Phase One was surveyed in a more focused, in-depth manner. This formed Phase Two of the research. In addition, several respondents were interviewed for case studies, providing rich, personal accounts of the teachers' experiences in British international schools (see *Teacher Supply in British International Schools – COBIS Case Studies*). These interview materials were analysed and more recurring patterns were identified. Phase Two of the research was completed between February 2018 and April 2018. More than 350 responses were received during Phase Two.

The early phases of data collection in this research retrieved a large corpus of material using surveys and interviews. Survey responses were collated and interview material was transcribed and organised for later analytic work.

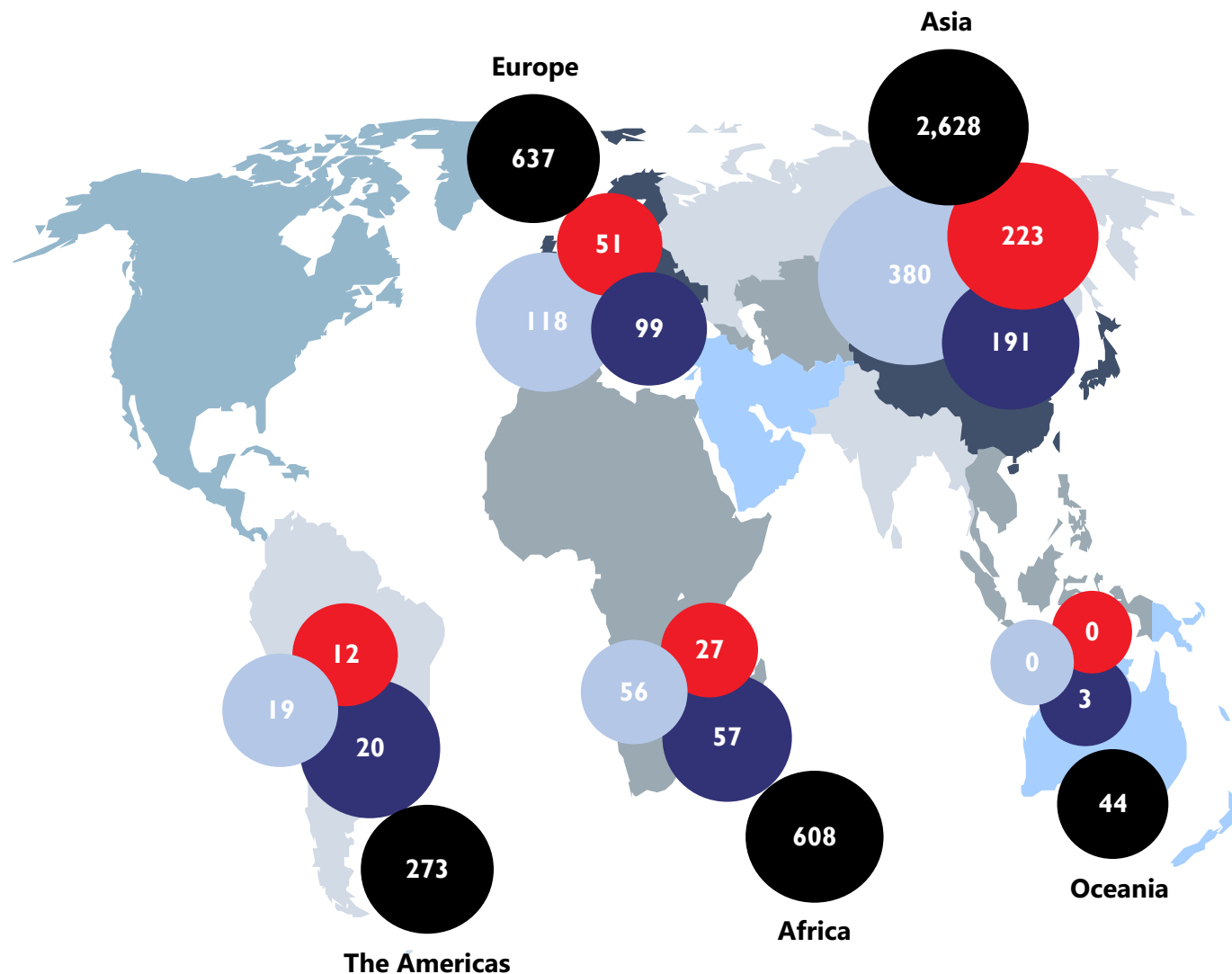
This section of the report provides analysis of this data. Analysis is broken down as follows:

- (i) An illustration of the sample of British international schools used in this research, split by region;
- (ii) A profile of the incoming teachers and the outgoing teachers based on the corpus of teacher data;
- (iii) The success of the British international schools sector;
- (iv) Teacher recruitment and retention challenges; and
- (v) Opportunities for sector development domestically and internationally.

The following analysis will be thematic in character, teasing out broad, overarching themes from the data. It will blend together responses from school leaders and from school teachers, as well as data from Phase One and from Phase Two of the research.

NB: Some data presented in this report has been rounded to the nearest one decimal place, meaning that some percentages may not add up to 100%.

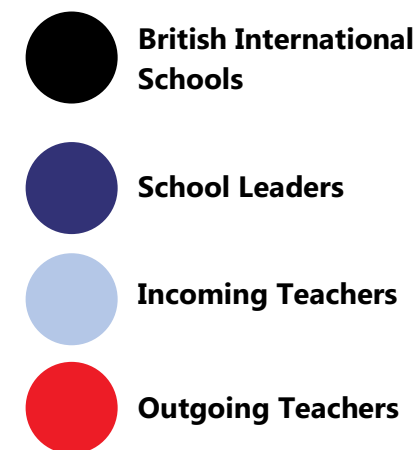
## 4.1 British International School Sample Sizes, by Region



This map provides details of the distribution of

(a) all the British international schools across the world, those that offer UK curricula and/or UK examinations (in black), and;

(b) respondents in this research across these British international schools (in dark blue, light blue and red).

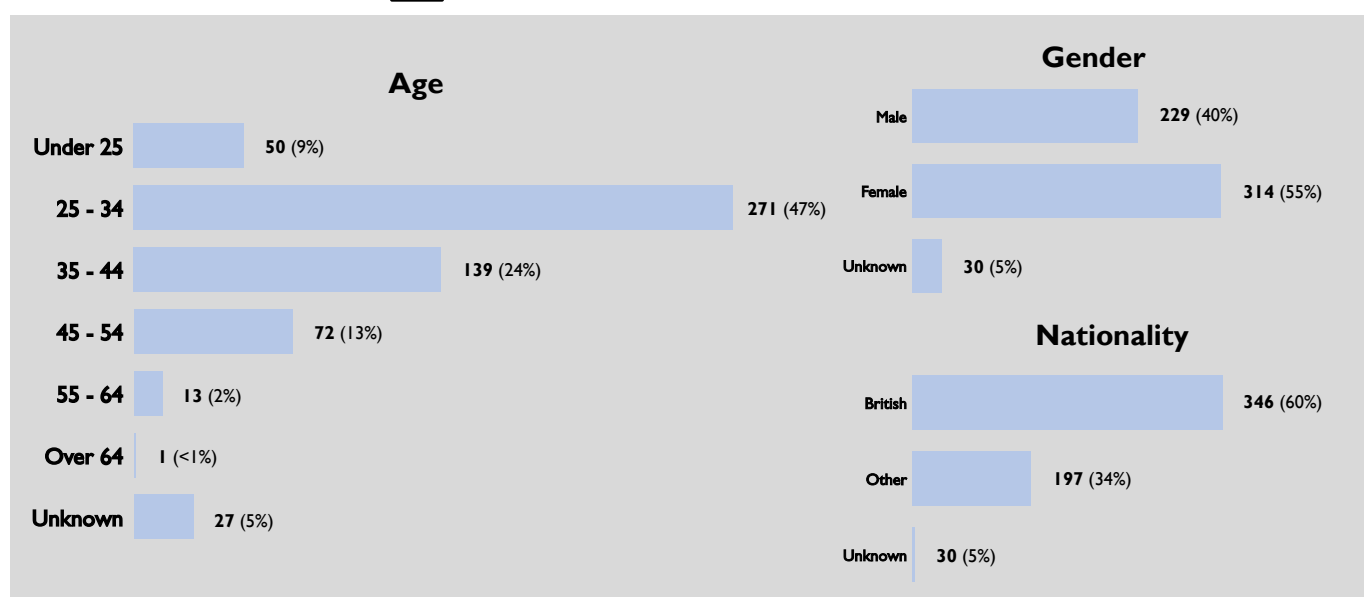


## 4.2 Teacher Profiles

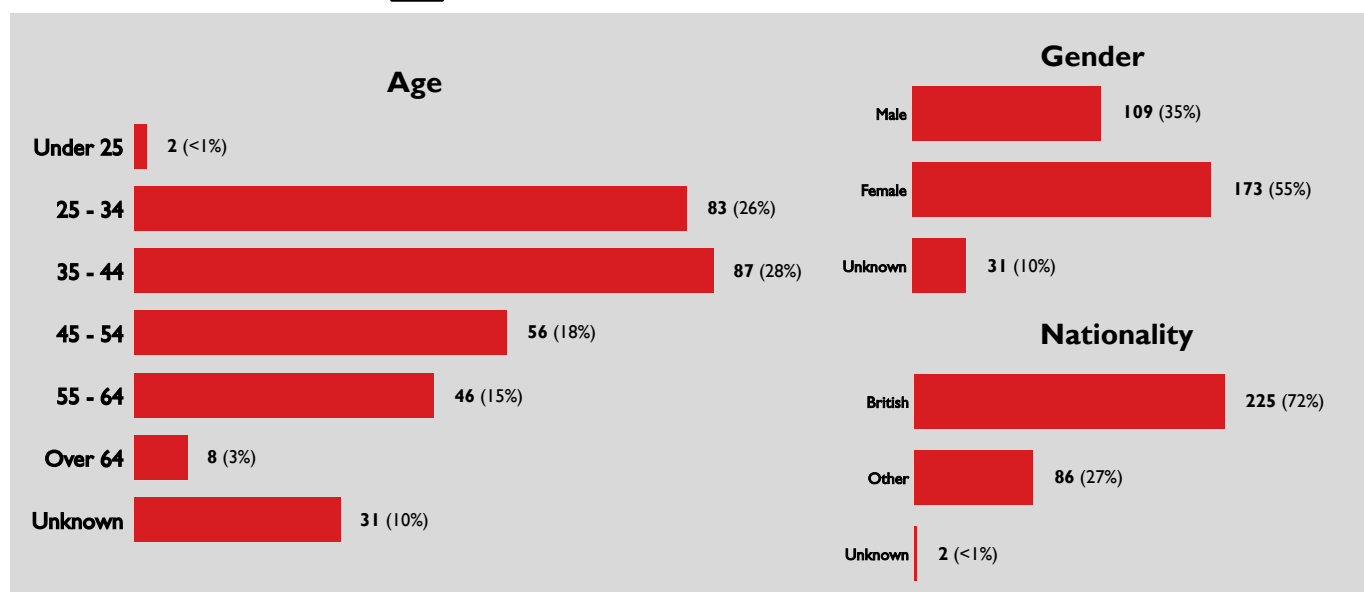
Teachers are the lifeblood of the education sector, and this research is embracing the idea of teaching as a global profession, practised on an international stage. Analysis has been produced from the results of a large corpus of surveys and interviews with teachers in the British international schools sector.

Analysis of data has provided profiles of incoming teachers and outgoing teachers in the sector, composed of teacher age, gender and nationality information.

### Incoming teachers



### Outgoing teachers



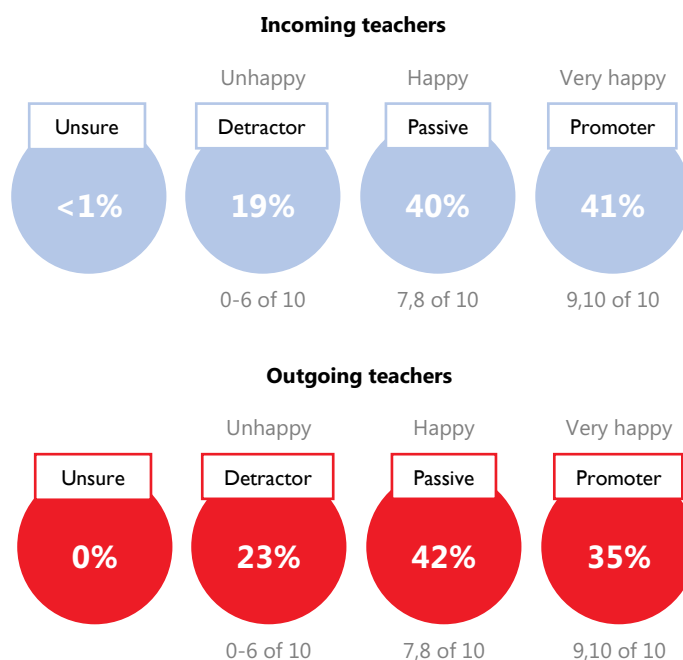
## 4.3 The Success of the British International Schools Sector

British international schools are a burgeoning area of the international schools market, satisfying increasing demand for a UK-oriented education across the globe, as well as providing some of the best opportunities for the development of the teaching profession.

Both incoming teachers and outgoing teachers were asked about their perceived happiness of their time in international schools. 41% of incoming teachers reported being **'very happy'** and 40% **'happy'**.

Likewise, with more experience in the sector, similar levels of happiness were reported by outgoing teachers: 35% reported being **'very happy'** with their time in international schools, and 42% reported being **'happy'**.

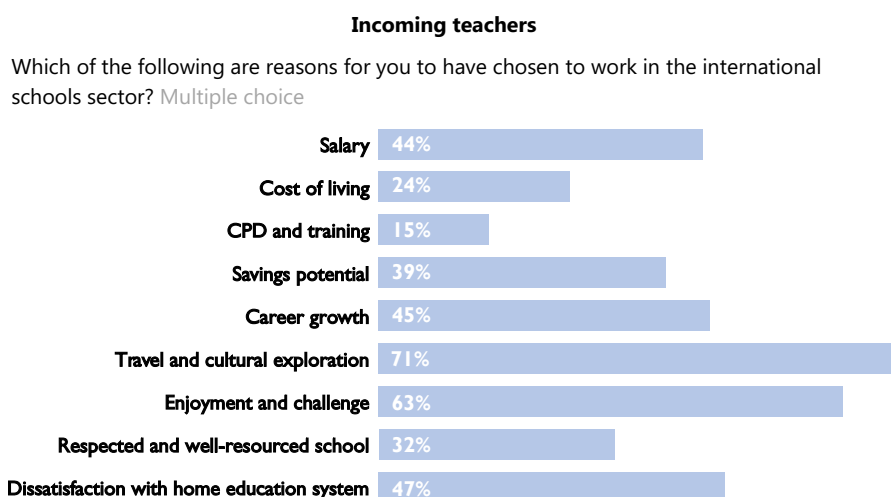
These figures clearly show that working in a British international school is a positive experience for the majority of teachers.



Many teachers enter the British international schools sector as part of their own career development. The international sector can be chosen over schools in the UK sector for various reasons.

Teachers were asked about their motivations for choosing to work at international schools. Both incoming teachers and outgoing teachers reported that **'travel and cultural exploration'** was the most prevalent reason for choosing to work in the international sector, at 71% and 72% respectively. This demonstrates that these teachers have a wide intellectual reach: an interest in and curiosity about a world beyond one's country of origin, which is satisfied by continued travel and movement, and an exploration of different cultural practices and customs.

The second most prevalent reason for working overseas is **'enjoyment and challenge'**, reported by 63% of incoming teachers and 67% of outgoing teachers.

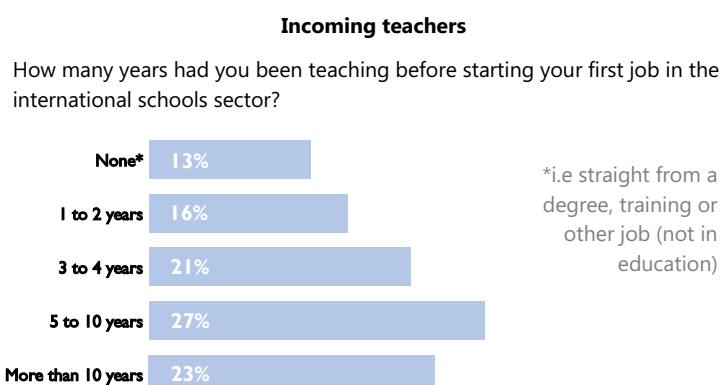
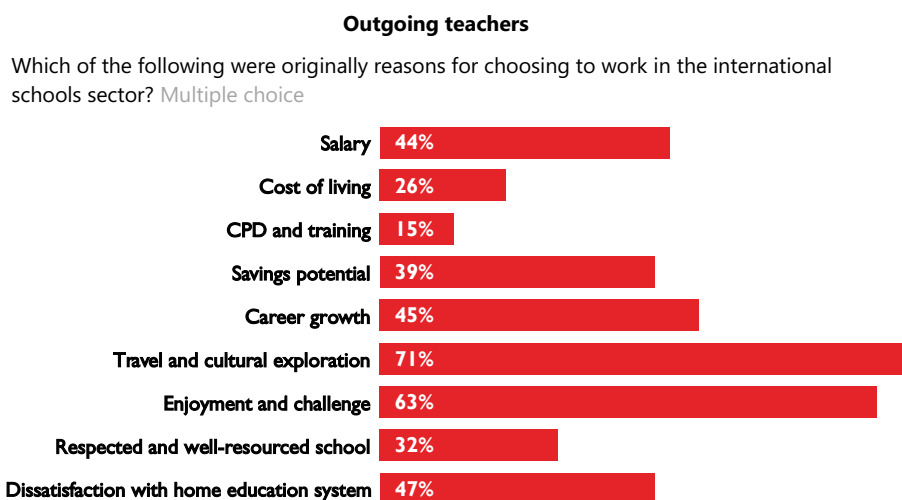


This shows that teachers have determination: a preference for expanding horizons, travelling in new directions and being willing to undertake tasks in unfamiliar countries with unfamiliar communities of people.

Both incoming teachers and outgoing teachers ranked salary as being significantly less important. Although salary is important, it takes second place to wider, intellectual challenge and fulfilment. These factors that are motivating teachers to teach in the international sector have immense value in the classroom, and enhance the status of international education. This perspective on the world is the most important quality that can be made available and transferred to a new generation of young people. It speaks of making connections, building relationships, including people rather than separating them. It is truly international in its orientation. This breadth of perspective embraces the world and endorses a global outlook. In short, these teachers are describing the defining characteristics of teaching, particularly in the international sector. These teachers have attached themselves to British international schools for exactly the right reasons.

Incoming teachers were asked about their teaching experience prior to entering a school in the international sector. Many incoming teachers entering the international sector bring with them considerable teaching experience.

Most teachers (27%) have between '**5 to 10 years**' of experience, but a still significant number (23%) have '**more than 10 years**' of experience and 21% have '**3 to 4 years**' of experience. This demonstrates that teachers at British international schools are bringing a wealth of teaching experience, further resources on which to develop their global, international orientations. It makes for a sound foundation and provides another enhancement to teaching provision at British international schools.



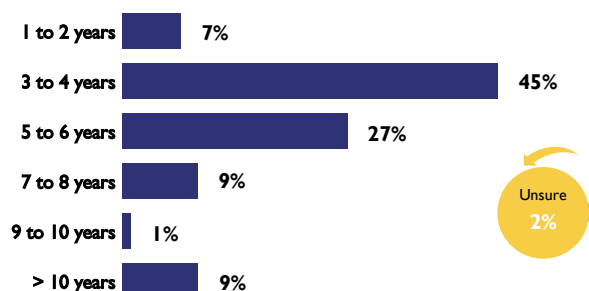
Despite teachers reporting being happy with their time at international schools, they do not stay at the same school indefinitely. School leaders were asked about the length of time teachers remain teaching in their schools. These school leaders report that the majority of teachers remain with their schools for between '**3 to 4 years**' (45%), with a still significant number reporting between '**5 to 6 years**' (27%).

Incoming teachers were asked about their plans for staying in the international sector. Although these teachers report a variable period for which they are planning to stay in the sector, a common period is between '**3 to 6 years**' (25%). The greatest proportion of teachers are looking to stay in the sector for '**more than 10 years**'. Although impressive, it may reflect some of the great hopes and aspirations that these teachers have, rather than a realistic timeframe. As shown below, many teachers find that ties with the UK – parents, children, siblings, partners – draw them back even when they are happy with their international experience.

Outgoing teachers were asked how many years they have been in the international sector. The majority (35%) of teachers have stayed in the sector for '**5 to 10 years**'; however, two-thirds of teachers have stayed for five years or longer. The plans of incoming teachers and the actual circumstances of outgoing teachers show that teachers do not stay in the sector for their entire careers. This is quite normal and part of the typical career patterns of teachers moving between schools to gain experience and develop professionally. This indicates that professional capital is *mobile* – teachers move about the sector, and some will choose to return to the UK.

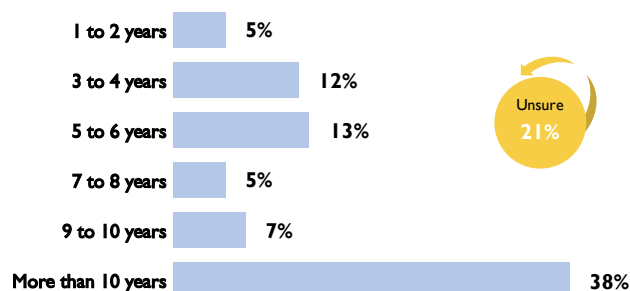
#### School leaders

On average, how long do teachers stay in your school?



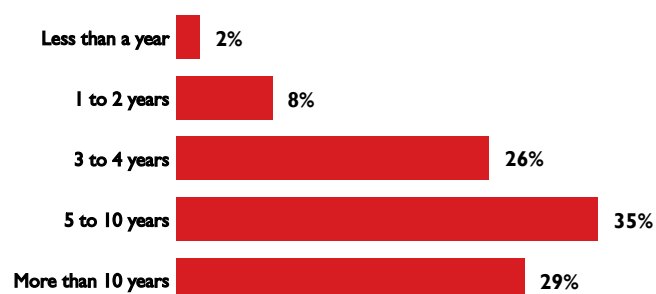
#### Incoming teachers

How long do you plan to work in the international schools sector?

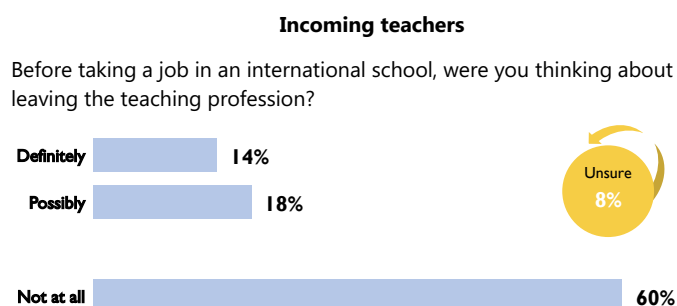


#### Outgoing teachers

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



A strong theme to emerge from the interviews was the dissatisfaction among teachers, some of them still in training, with teaching conditions in the UK. Indeed, survey responses from incoming teachers highlighted that nearly a third of teachers (32%) were either **'definitely'** or **'possibly'** thinking about leaving the profession before taking up a position at an international school.



Interview respondents spoke of their love for entering a career in teaching, expressing their unbridled enthusiasm. But then something changed. Jennie Douras teaches at Braeburn School, Kenya. Jennie undertook her teacher training in the UK. She was struggling with the completion of her training to achieve QTS. Long working hours and a

*"I turned down a job at my (UK) school. I had told the Headteacher that I wanted to leave."*

**(Gary Hellyer, British School Muscat, Oman)**

heavy workload took its toll.

*"I wanted to quit teaching in my second year. I didn't feel like I had any time for myself."*

**(Jennie Douras, Braeburn School, Kenya)**

Gary Hellyer teaches at British School Muscat in Oman. As a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT), Gary quickly realised that the workload was getting too much.

Jon Datta teaches at The Edron Academy, Mexico. Jon taught in the UK but became unhappy with the unwieldy development of his work-life balance.

Polly Hall teaches at the British International School of Wrocław in Poland. Polly trained as a secondary school teacher in Nottingham, UK; however, this early experience changed the way she viewed teaching. These extracts, which are taken from *Teacher Supply in British International Schools – COBIS Case Studies*, are spelling out a pattern, increasingly reported across the UK, of the pressures that teachers face in their jobs.

Of greater concern, these pressures are shaking the profession at its foundations; many teachers have left teaching, many are continuing to leave and many more are contemplating leaving, as a result.

*"I was working 70 - 80 hours per week. I thought, do I really want to spend the next 50 years of my life working 80 hour weeks, never seeing my friends. Students don't have respect for teachers (in the UK) - and that is because that respect is not in the wider community. That lack of respect is reflected in all of the Government changes: under-inflation pay rises: having to work more for less money... That is why teachers are leaving in droves."*

**(Jon Datta, The Edron Academy, Mexico)**

*"After that one term in a secondary school, I realised that secondary school teaching was not for me, I wondered if maybe teaching wasn't me for - I wasn't sure where I was going."*

**(Polly Hall, British International School of Wrocław, Poland)**

One interpretation of this rising discontent over teaching in the UK, endorsed by several recent media reports, is to regard the challenge facing the teaching profession as being a 'UK'

problem for which there should be a 'UK' solution. This interpretation creates barriers, limiting what can be done to address the teacher supply challenges ahead.

As Jennie, one of the respondents in the extracts above, alluded to, there is a critical element to this dissatisfaction. Jennie proposed teaching as a function of location: changing *where* one teaches changes *what* teaching means.

Jennie handed in her notice while teaching in the UK, and did not want to continue teaching the following academic year. She considered other roles outside of teaching, until it was suggested that she consider teaching abroad.

*"I thought if I get that spark back and really enjoy it then I'll know it was teaching in the UK that put me off, not teaching in general."*

**(Jennie, Braeburn School, Kenya)**

These first-hand teacher perspectives are demonstrating that the conditions of teaching in the education sector in the UK are changing dramatically. This is resulting in the departure of increasing numbers of professionals from the sector. But rather than leaving the profession, some of these teachers are spreading their wings and venturing into the international sector. The effects are dramatic. The move to the British international schools sector has been transformative for these teachers. This is a pattern observed across much of the interview

*"I'm much happier than I was. I absolutely love it working here. I feel like I've got a balance."*

**(Jennie, Braeburn School, Kenya)**

*"I have absolutely loved it. (...) My goal every year is to end the year a better teacher than I started - it is easier to do that here."*

**(Gary, British School Muscat)**

Rather than insubstantial, glorified reports of extended holidays in the sun, these are experiences that unfold teachers' career trajectories.

material collected for this research. Jennie's outlook has changed; as has Gary's, Jon's and Polly's too.

These 'relocation' reports from respondents are building a picture of success. Moving to British international schools has recovered these teachers' primary reason for entering teaching in the first place - the passion. Something was absent in the UK that is now very much present abroad.

*"I've been much happier in my day to day life since I've moved to Mexico."*

**(Jon, The Edron Academy, Mexico)**

These teachers are taking their emerging careers seriously, and moving to British international schools for these teachers has been restorative. International schools have provided a vital resource for these teachers,

*"I have lots of friends who are only a year or so into their teaching career and a lot of them are desperate to leave teaching or move abroad. I can tell them that, for me, moving to an international school was the best thing I have done."*

**(Polly, British International School of Wrocław)**

both at a critical point in their careers and at a critical point in contemporary teaching practice.

Thus far, analysis has begun to address the idea that British international schools are providing, and have provided, an option for teachers in the UK (and teachers from other countries) that is professionally relevant, beneficial and, as has been demonstrated, critical. This analysis shows that teacher mobility is part of the normal practice of teacher development. However, more importantly, it has identified that British international schools have played a vital role in retaining teachers and preserving their interest in developing their teaching careers. The British international schools sector is a component part of ongoing teacher mobility.

## 4.4

## Teacher Recruitment and Retention Challenges

School leaders are responsible for ensuring high-quality education provision at their schools. This means recruiting quality teachers to fulfil required staffing needs. However, this is not always possible. And this is likely to become more of a challenge over the coming years, because of the impacts of:

- (i) projected growth in the number of new international schools;
- (ii) projected growth in the number of students;
- (iii) current trends of low uptake on teacher training places in the UK; and
- (iv) the high percentage of teachers, many of them newly qualified teachers, leaving the profession.

School leaders are ideally placed to offer valuable perspectives on teacher supply issues at British international schools. Responses from 370 school leaders were gathered, providing a rich corpus of data.

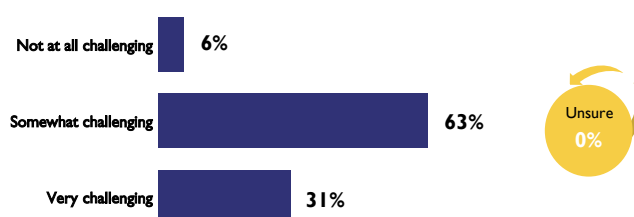
This research found that **94%** of school leaders reported that recruiting the required quality of permanent staff is challenging.

School leaders reported on the recruitment of candidates that met their expectations. Less than a third (32%) reported '**always**' being able to get high-quality staff and, of greater concern, **10%** reported that they are '**rarely or never**' able to recruit the right teachers. This suggests a shortage of adequately trained/experienced teachers in the international sector. These reports confirm the overall perception of the current teacher supply challenge.

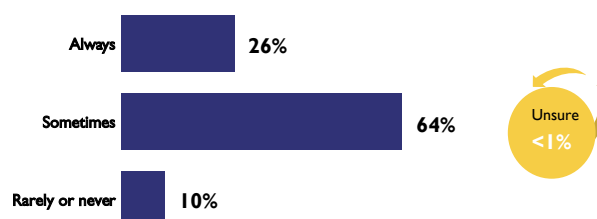
The international schools sector draws heavily on international teaching talent, utilising the diversity of skills, experience and backgrounds of teachers from across the world. The sector places a high value on teacher mobility across the profession.

School leaders were asked about the recruitment of internationally trained teaching staff – those teachers who are not trained in the host school country, including UK-trained teachers as well as teachers trained in other countries such as USA, Canada, New Zealand, etc.

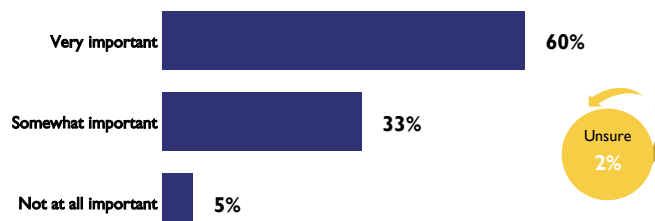
Currently, how challenging is it to recruit the required quality of permanent teaching staff for your school?



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



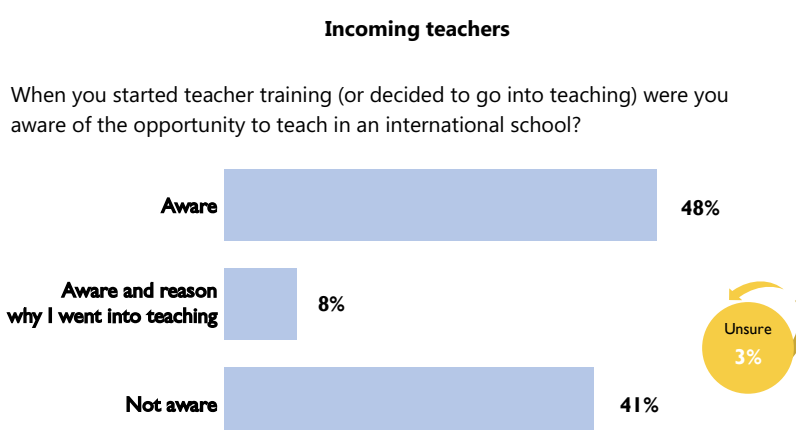
How important is it for you to recruit internationally trained staff for teaching posts?



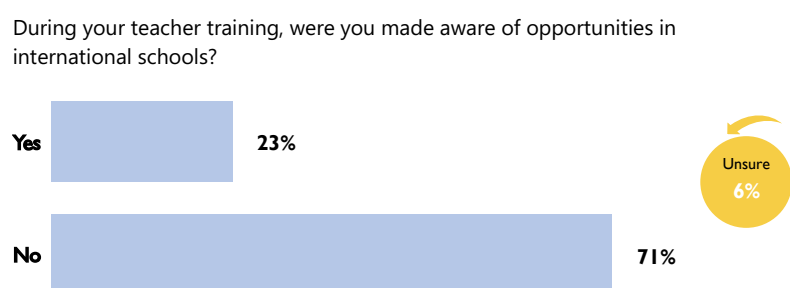
This research reveals that **93%** of responding school leaders report that recruiting internationally trained staff is either '**very important**' or '**somewhat important**'. As stated, British international schools welcome the recruitment of UK-trained teaching staff but these teachers are not always available in sufficient numbers. One of the findings of this research has been that the career paths of school teachers are enhanced by mobility between schools in the UK and schools in the international sector. However, the value of this mobility is not always promoted and recognised.

Incoming school teachers were asked whether they were aware of teaching opportunities in the international sector *when they first began* their training.

Respondents were relatively evenly split between being aware (**48%**) and not being aware (**41%**) of opportunities to teach in the international sector. Teachers were also asked whether they were made aware of opportunities in international schools *during* their teacher training.



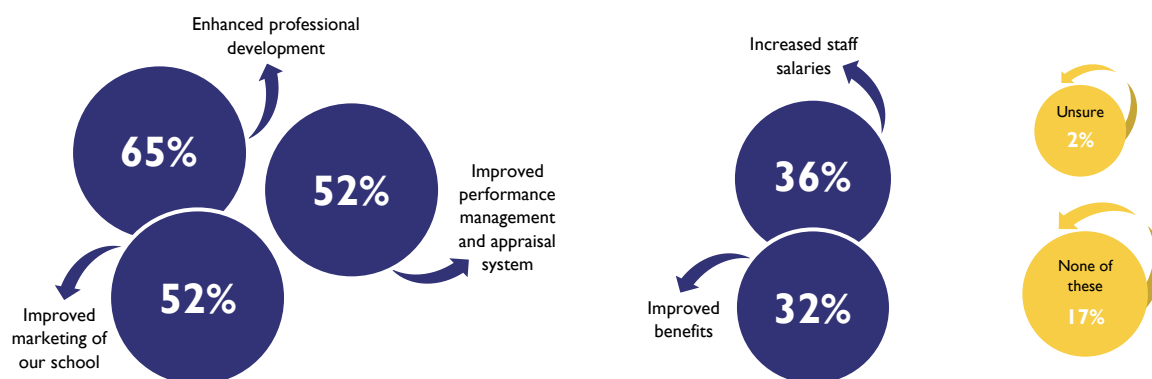
A remarkable **71%** of these teachers were not made aware of opportunities at international schools during their teacher training. Analysis of these responses from school leaders and school teachers reveals a basic challenge for teacher movement and mobility between the education sector in the UK and the international sector.



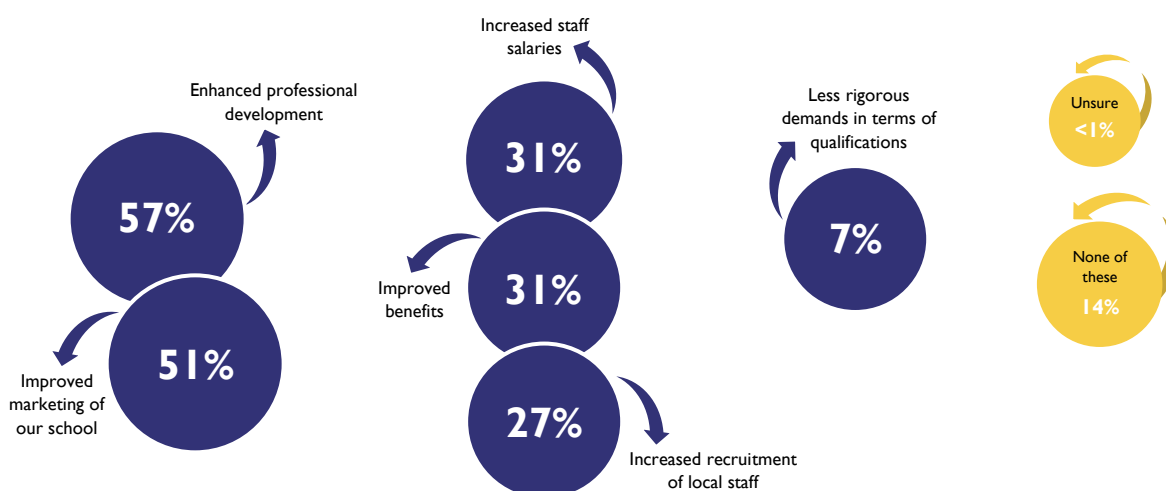
This formulates a dilemma surrounding the supply of, and demand for, teachers domestically and internationally. There is a basic tension between, on the one hand, British international schools seeking to recruit internationally trained staff (including UK-trained teachers) and, on the other, teachers in the UK at the point of their training not being made aware of international teaching opportunities. The education sector in the UK does not promote the international sector as a valuable part of teaching experience, and therefore it is not promoted at training level. This means that the recruitment problem, outlined by school leaders, persists. Strategies are needed to increase the recognition of international teaching experience by the UK education sector.

British international schools are being proactive in addressing teacher retention and teacher recruitment problems, and are improving teacher supply in the sector. School leaders were asked about the changes they have made to facilitate both teacher retention and recruitment in the past two years.

What changes have you made in the past two years to improve teacher retention?



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



Schools reported that the most prevalent method of facilitating teacher retention and recruitment in the last two years was through '**enhanced professional development**', with '**improved marketing of our schools**' ranking second most prevalent. Note that increases in salary and improved benefits are both ranked as significantly less important as retention and recruitment tools. At this point, analysis seeks only to draw attention to the fact that these schools are increasing their appeal for teachers specifically, and for the teaching profession more generally.

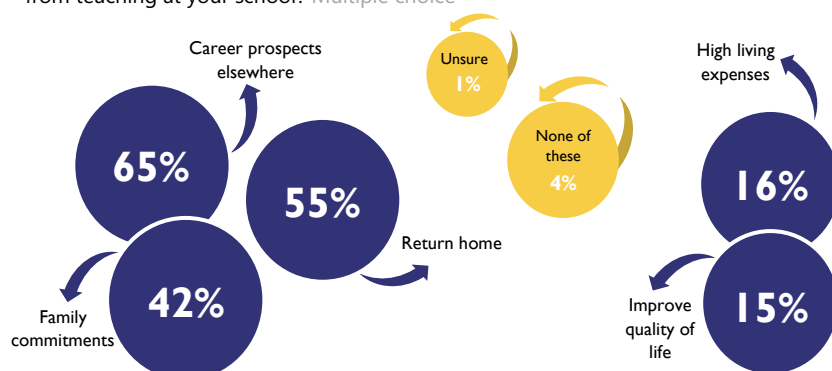
Thus far, analysis of British international schools has identified a critical need to recognise (a) the teaching resource the sector *currently* possesses, which can be mobilised, and (b) the teaching resource it *could* attract given its increasing training and development capabilities.

## Opportunities for Sector Development Domestically and Internationally

This research is developing an empirically informed analysis of the teacher supply challenges at British international schools *and* at schools in the UK sector. Whereas several recent reports have focused on the teacher supply 'crisis', and the impacts of a so-called 'brain drain' on the UK's education sector as teachers 'flock' overseas, there is a far more important, positive side<sup>15</sup>. Many teachers who have left the UK to work in the international sector, having completed another phase of their teaching career, move on. The developing analysis of data in this research is revealing the circumstances under which these teachers leave the international sector.

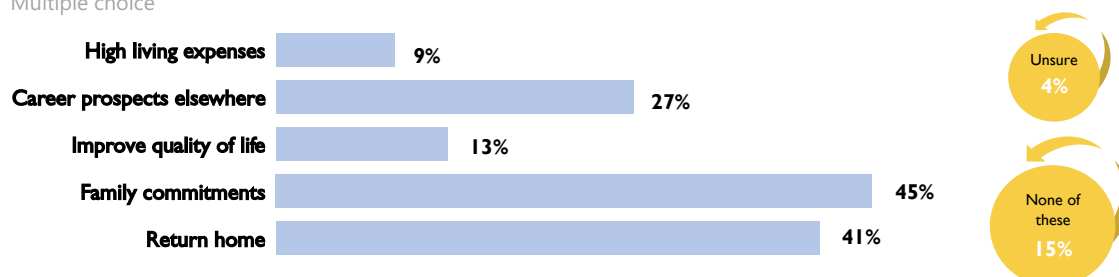
School leaders were asked about the reasons teachers leave their schools. Two of the top three key reasons for teachers moving on were **'return home'** (55%) and **'family commitments'** (42%). School leaders' responses correlate seamlessly with the responses from both incoming teachers and outgoing teachers.

Which of the following do you see as the key reason(s) teachers move on from teaching at your school? Multiple choice



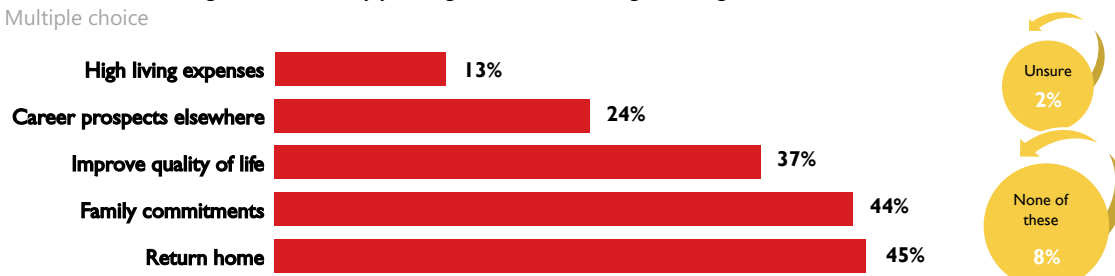
### Incoming teachers

Which of the following do you see as potential reasons why you might leave teaching in the international schools sector? Multiple choice



### Outgoing teachers

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



Unsurprisingly, of the top three reasons for these teachers leaving the international sector, two are **'family commitments'** and **'return home'**. It is significant that these reasons are not

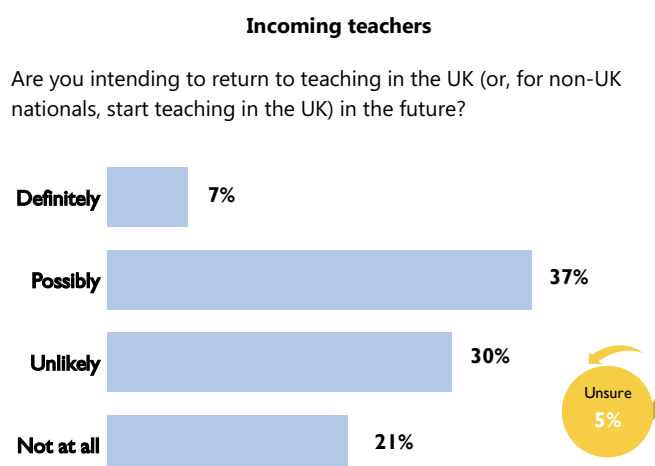
connected with, for instance, pay, workload or working hours (the reasons UK-based teachers gave for leaving, or thinking of leaving, the profession while in the UK). Similarly, from the responses, few of these teachers believe their departure will be due to quality of life issues or living expenses. These teachers, it can be suggested, have regained their motivation and enjoyment for teaching – the very qualities that drove them to work in international schools.

Many of these teachers will be returning to the UK. These returning, homeward-bound teachers are a hugely significant feature of critical discussions on current teacher supply challenges in the UK. COBIS feels it is important to begin to establish a body of empirically based research that identifies solutions to this supply challenge, and to embrace the continued success of the teaching profession at home

and overseas. Incoming teachers were asked whether they were intending to return to the UK in the future. Although only a small percentage of teachers reported that they would **'definitely'** be returning (**7%**), the majority reported that they would **'possibly'** be returning to the UK to teach in the future (**37%**).

To complete this analytic argument, a final set of data comes from teachers who took part in the various case studies in this research. Many of these teachers spoke about their imminent or future return to the UK, after having spent time at British international schools.

Taking stock of this corpus of data, it can be seen that large numbers of teachers are returning, or intending to return, to the UK. Some of them have indicated that they will be taking up teaching posts, others have alluded to this possibility, or working in the wider education sector. This 'repatriation' narrative of teachers represents, in theory, significant additional teaching capital for the education sector in the UK. It is something that, with the introduction of suitable management processes, will reinforce teacher numbers in schools in the UK.



*"I've done my three years abroad."*

(Gary, British School Muscat, Oman)

*"My dream is to come back to the UK. I miss the UK."*

(Amy Hyland, Braeburn School, Kenya)

It is equally important to identify the professional experience of these returning teachers, as the implications are far reaching.

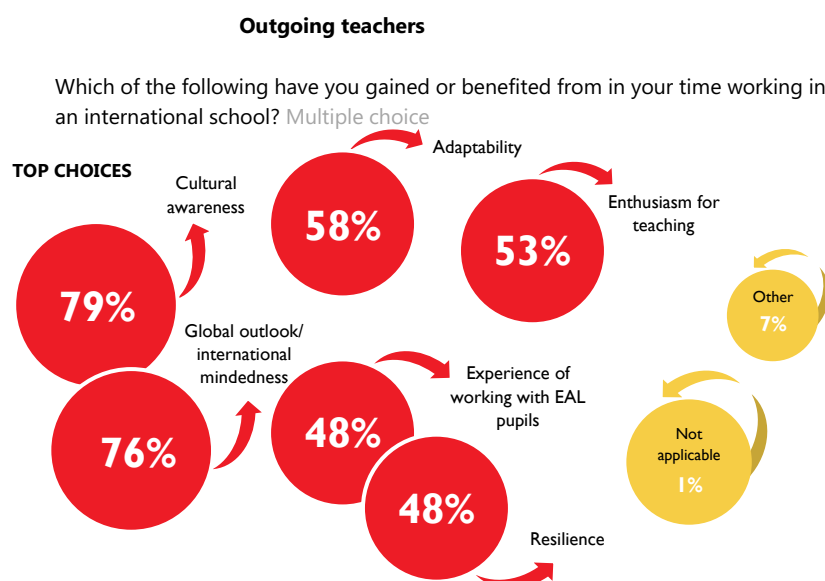
The responses from questionnaires reveal that the two most prevalent things outgoing teachers gained from their experience at international schools were **'cultural awareness'** (79%) and a **'global outlook / international mindedness'** (76%).

Earlier analysis revealed that the two most prevalent reasons teachers gave for working in the international

sector were **'travel and cultural exploration'**, and **'enjoyment and challenge'**. In other words, what teachers sought in working in the international sector is now valuable qualities with which they are returning to the UK: cultural exploration has culminated in cultural awareness, and enjoyment and challenge in international mindedness. In addition, still high on the list of teacher responses for experience/skills gained is **'adaptability'** (58%), **'enthusiasm for teaching'** (53%), **'experience of working with EAL pupils'** (48%) and **'resilience'** (48%).

This analysis is revealing the professional expertise and experiential knowledge that returning teachers possess. Taken together, as a standard of teaching practice, these qualities and skills would be immensely supportive and complementary to schools in the education sector in the UK. Perhaps of even greater importance, these are significant and relevant attributes to be passing on to the leaders of the future. This global and cultural sensibility would be of particular interest to the education sector in the UK, given the changing nature of the classroom environment, including:

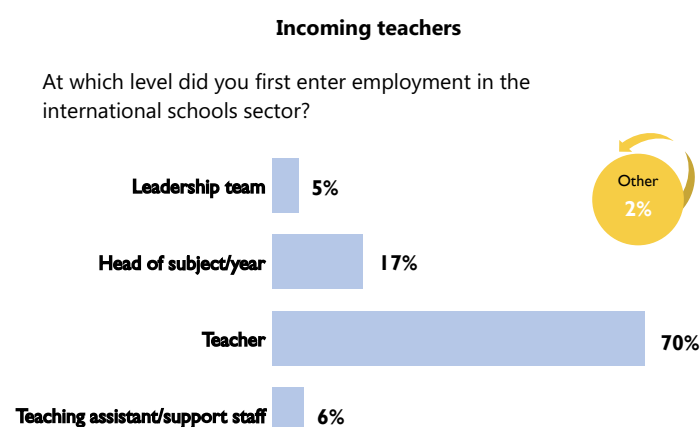
- (i) the growing levels of ethnic and cultural diversity;
- (ii) the ever-increasing need for different understandings and approaches to learning;
- (iii) the benefits of multiple ways of delivering the curriculum; and
- (iv) the value and importance of being able to communicate at multiple levels and in multiple contexts in a globalised world.



This repatriation of international teaching experience to the UK is well supported by the way in which teachers have characterised their return. For instance, in Kenya, Amy, who appeared earlier in the analysis, teaches in a class with students from 15 nationalities, and has had access to valuable professional development related to English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision. Amy articulates her experience vividly. Likewise, Stephanie Rae teaches at Kent College Dubai, and outlines the level of support she receives at her institution. Gary at British School Muscat, Oman, richly expresses the character of his career development and, more importantly, the development of transferable skills, while in the international sector.

Craig Heaton, Head of St Saviour's School Ikoyi, Nigeria, speaks of the huge – yet undervalued – benefits that overseas teachers can bring to teaching in the UK.

Incoming teachers were asked about their level of employment at the time at which they entered the international sector, while outgoing teachers were asked about their level of employment at the point at which they left the sector. The majority of incoming teachers were **'Teachers' (70%)**, while a much smaller proportion of responding teachers were **'Head of subject/year'**



*"The real-life experience I can bring to my teaching – respecting diversity and acceptance for one another – that's a big plus."*

**(Amy, Braeburn School, Kenya)**

*"Our school funds leadership courses and CPD courses – they are so active in helping staff develop. The school is willing to support staff financially to work towards promotion, and that has made all the difference."*

**(Stephanie Rae, Kent College Dubai)**

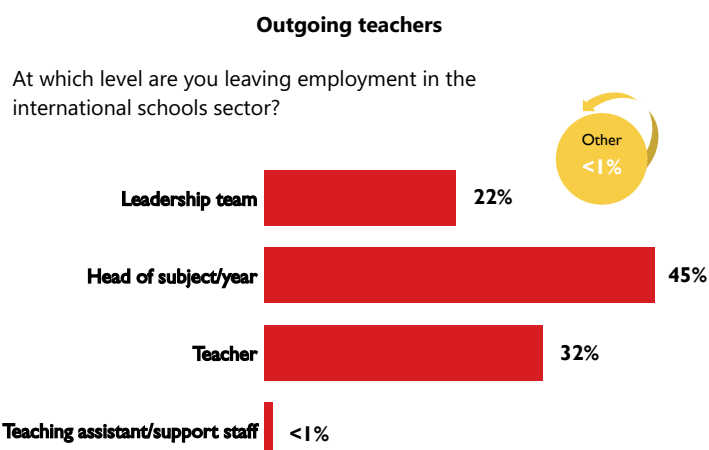
*"I'm more accomplished as a teacher. This is a great opportunity to take what I've learned abroad and bring it to the UK. ...I am coming back more motivated... if I had stayed in England I would have been happy staying at the same sort of level, with the same workload, but now I am inspired to do more, and start stepping up the ladder in teaching."*

**(Gary, British School Muscat, Oman)**

*"People are sceptical about teachers coming from overseas. They don't realise that some of the education here is way beyond what you expect in terms of the quality of teaching, pedagogy, use of resources, how teachers can maximise the potential of students by meeting the needs of all learners at every level."*

**(Craig Heaton, St Saviour's School Ikoyi, Nigeria)**

**(17%)**, when they moved overseas. However, the majority of outgoing teachers, now they are leaving the sector, are **'Head of subject/year' (45%)**, with fewer responding as **'Teachers' (32%)**.



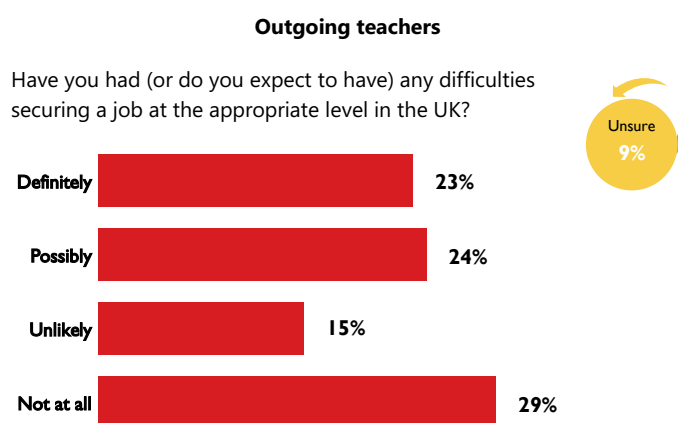
This demonstrates extensive professional development is taking place in the international sector, and valuable teaching experience is being gained.

These teachers are bringing back with them a new-found passion for teaching, built around an impressive suite of skills acquired and developed while at British international schools. It is widely understood that international

schools invest heavily in the professional development of their teachers, working hard to enhance their profiles and to extend their capabilities, ensuring they can teach at the highest levels in a global marketplace.

In addition, the teachers who decide to return to the UK have developed greater understanding and knowledge of the use of different teaching styles and the diverse range of circumstances in which those styles can be applied.

Overseas experience is not always sufficiently recognised by the education sector in the UK, which can present a barrier for those teachers who wish to resume their teaching careers in the UK. Arguably, inflammatory commentary in the British press has instilled a level of uncertainty in the UK education system about returning teachers, perhaps even prejudice, driven by a lack of appreciation of teachers' professional status. This is something that needs to change to enable the pool of teaching capital in the domestic market to expand, and it is the intention of this research to begin to produce and encourage that context of change. Education officials in the UK must acknowledge the value of British international schools, and the teaching and development opportunities provided by the sector.



The problems for teachers moving or returning to the UK, and the lack of adequate recognition of the skills they have gained in an international context, can be documented across the data in this research. Outgoing teachers were asked if they had (or expect to have) difficulties securing a teaching post at the appropriate level in the UK. 23% of teachers reported that they **'definitely'** would experience difficulties, and a further 23% reported that they **'possibly'** would experience difficulties.

There is a pattern of concern, shared among the outgoing teachers in this research, about returning to the UK. Several of the teachers interviewed echoed this concern about returning to the UK, including Sarah at British International School of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

*"I have friends who have returned to the state system in the UK and found the transition really difficult."*

(Sarah Winsor, British International School of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

Some parts of the education sector in the UK are apprehensive, or poorly informed, about teaching practices in the international sector. Steps need to be taken to increase understanding, and targeted, relevant strategic solutions need to be proposed.

Hermione Thomas is Regional Manager at Protocol Education, a recruitment firm that assists UK-based teachers to secure teaching posts as well as international teachers looking to relocate to the UK. Hermione ponders some of the questions that recruiters ask themselves when faced with recruiting teachers from the British international schools sector.

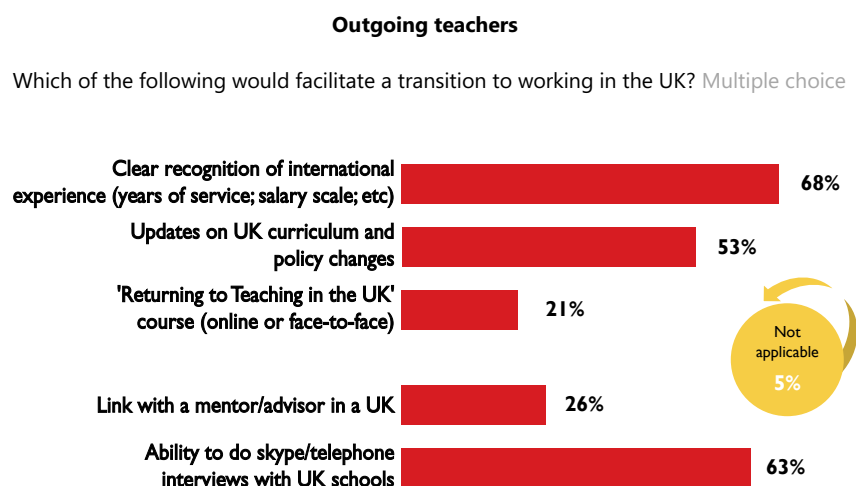
*"What is a British School? What is the IB? So often the process grinds to a halt for candidates trying to come into the UK because their experience doesn't slot perfectly into the UK system. We need to look at making it a more simplified process."*

(Hermione Thomas, Protocol Education)

Teachers in the international sector are aware of this uncertainty surrounding international education. Outgoing teachers were asked to respond to a multiple-choice question on those things that would facilitate their transition back to the UK. The most popular response, by a clear margin, was **'clear recognition of international experience'** (68%).

Again, this shows that, if the success and ongoing development of the British international schools sector is openly embraced and recognised by the education sector in the UK, then a huge pool of teaching resource can potentially be made available. This includes both UK nationals, as well as internationally trained teachers who have gained experience of British pedagogy in a British international school.

This recognition is important for two reasons. First, it will offer a method by which *greater* numbers of teachers can be retained in the supply chain. A globally minded profession which operates on a worldwide platform draws on, prefers and develops teaching talent that is international in its orientation. This international experience could have relevance, as part of a career trajectory, in any educational environment, domestic or international. And second, going hand in hand with the first, it will mean *fewer* teachers leave the profession.

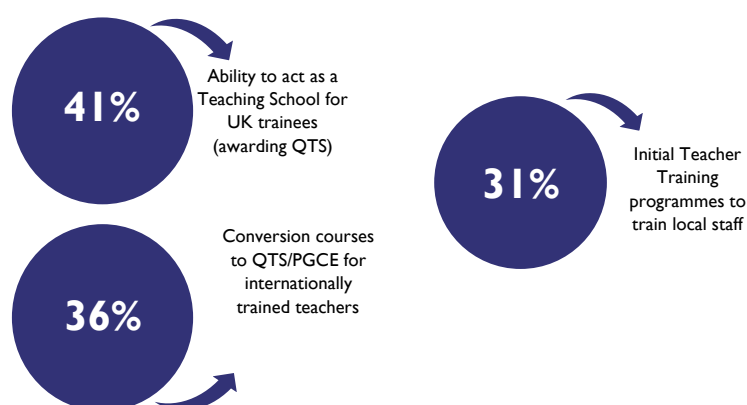


Recalling some of the reviewed literature earlier in this report, research has demonstrated that significant numbers of teachers have left the profession<sup>16</sup>. In addition, earlier analysis in this research revealed that nearly a third of incoming teachers (32%) were either **'definitely'** or **'possibly'** thinking about leaving the profession before taking up a position at an international school.

In short, these findings suggest that there are huge opportunities for addressing the current teacher supply challenge in a practical, relevant and sustainable fashion. Better still, this data points to strategies for the development of a teaching pool using resources *which are already in the system*. It simply requires widening the perspective, with the education sector in the UK working collaboratively with British international schools across the globe.

School leaders were asked about some of the other ways in which teacher supply can be increased over the coming years. In a series of multiple choice questions, the most prevalent form of support to be highlighted by schools was the **'ability to act as a Teaching School for UK trainees (awarding QTS)'** (41%).

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



Allowing graduates (both UK-based and international) to enter a teaching career by completing their teacher training and gaining QTS overseas is a hugely attractive opportunity. It would assist in the recruitment of more new teachers into the system. Importantly, it provides a positive picture, offering entry into a prosperous profession that, certainly in the UK, has been framed in (largely unwarranted) negative language.

The second most prevalent form of assistance that school leaders selected was **'conversion courses to QTS/PGCE for internationally trained teachers'** (36%). Increasing the availability of conversion courses to allow internationally trained teachers to be awarded QTS would give many thousands of teachers far greater opportunities to develop their teaching careers.

Having the capability to train and, after successful completion of such training, award teachers with a formal UK teaching qualification would give overseas schools incredible power to assist with teacher supply. As stated in the introductory section, ISC Research forecasts that the British international schools sector will need up to 230,000 more teachers in the next 10 years. Internationally trained staff with QTS/PGCE would provide an additional supply of teachers to satisfy this increased demand. However, because teachers remain mobile and travel within the education sector as part of their career progression, this would also mean the availability of many more teachers for schools in the education sector in the UK. This forms a demonstrable push for globally minded, international teaching.

The third most prevalent form of assistance that school leaders selected was **'Initial Teacher Training programmes to train local staff'** (31%). Introducing ITT programmes into British international schools could appeal to the many graduates, teaching assistants and other

support staff, as well as to local staff of proven quality, who wish to undertake professional training. The availability of such programmes could attract many graduates from overseas too, potentially alleviating some of the considerable pressure on the domestic supply of teachers in the UK.

This last finding is particularly relevant and timely. In revisiting data presented earlier, and developing this analysis, it will be recalled that 27% of responding school leaders reported that, despite the importance of recruiting internationally trained teachers, they have '**increased recruitment of local staff**'. Introducing ITT programmes overseas would allow the opportunity to upskill many of these local staff with UK teaching qualifications.

Many of the local and non-UK teachers at British international schools, following their UK peers, could develop their careers by travelling within the sector. For schools in the education sector in the UK, this will not only add to the overall pool of professional capital, but also enrich the educational resources at the sector's disposal (e.g. more diverse, globally minded teaching experience, increased awareness of cultural diversity, expanded learning styles, etc.). Chrysta Garnett, currently Head of School Partnerships at Bristol City Council, has worked extensively in the UK and at schools in the international sector. She affirms the richness of experience that teachers gain in the international sector, and its value for schools in the UK sector.

*"I learned a huge amount from my Canadian colleagues, Kiwi colleagues, French colleagues. They brought with them their knowledge of their own curricula and practices. It can only be a good thing to have a global perspective of learning and pedagogy."*

**(Chrysta Garnett, Bristol City Council)**

This puts British international schools in a very strong position to begin to address teacher supply in the UK. But this is not about taking sides. To repeat, the strength of the British international schools sector will depend on the strength of schools in the UK; and vice versa. The current teacher supply challenge, distributed as it is internationally, requires international solutions.

Teaching in British international schools brings with it advanced skill sets, world-leading professional experience, and cultural and educational awareness. This is a perfect résumé, waiting to be applied in innumerable teaching environments to vastly enrich learning in UK classrooms. Greater recognition of the professional resources that returning teachers bring to UK schools is essential to developing strategic solutions to the teacher supply shortage in the UK. This recognition must come collectively from school leaders, recruitment services, international sector representatives, the DfE and others.

It is concerning that reports reveal that fewer people are choosing to enter a career in teaching. Early 2018 figures from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) show that the number of applicants for teacher training courses was almost 30% lower than it was the previous year, leading one senior DfE official to describe the situation as 'very severe'<sup>17</sup>. As a result, the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) was expected to spend £95 million less than scheduled on programmes this year. Again, proposing teaching as an *international* career option, which would include mobility between the education sector in the UK and the international sector, could beckon additional teaching capital, encouraging new, globally minded graduates seeking international travel and cultural exploration. Such a proposition could support recruitment drives for ITT programmes.

This research is setting out an argument for solutions to teacher supply that are built on global reach and international operation. The possibilities for future growth and success emerge out of collaborative practice, breaking down the boundaries that separate domestic and international education.

The education sector in the UK is facing a significant shortage of qualified teachers. With increasing demand and dwindling supply, several reports have characterised the situation as a major 'teacher supply crisis'<sup>18 19</sup>. The supply of high-quality teachers is of course vital to the success of schools worldwide.

COBIS is a membership association of British international schools of global quality and corporate Supporting Members. COBIS regards and embraces education in the spirit of *internationalism*. Keen to develop the education sector and encourage the growth of teacher supply, COBIS has undertaken an empirical investigation into teachers entering and leaving the British international schools sector. This provides insights which will help to inform, encourage and manage strategies to attract, train and retain first-class teachers domestically and internationally.

COBIS is committed to co-operative connections between the British international schools sector and the education sector in the UK, through which can be provided solutions to current teacher supply challenges. Recently, steps have been taken to attract teachers back into the UK to satisfy teacher shortages<sup>20</sup>, with the government announcing that it will spend £10million on the recruitment of foreign teachers into UK classrooms<sup>21</sup>. COBIS proposes additional and long-term support to the sector, underscored by the establishment of shared, interactive and collaborative educational practices between, among others, UK and international sector representatives, the DfE and the DIT. This proposal includes:

### Promoting the professional opportunities of teaching

COBIS takes seriously the idea of teaching as a global profession. One of the most critical components of teacher supply is ensuring that teaching is placed in a global context. The promotion of teaching as an *international* career opportunity highlights the remarkable breadth, diversity and scope available for those wishing to enter a career in teaching. The opportunity to teach domestically and internationally as part of a structured career trajectory is incredibly attractive as a career prospect. This increased mobility for teachers to travel between the education sector in the UK and the British international schools sector is extremely beneficial for the market more generally. As a marketing device designed to address the teacher shortage challenges in the UK and to encourage growth in teacher numbers, this seems to be a 'win-win' situation.

### Increasing international training opportunities

This research has identified an innovative way of increasing the growth in teacher supply in the UK. 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 the recruitment of teachers to ITT programmes overseas to attract many graduates including teaching assistants and other support staff, alumni, spouses and local staff of suitable and proven quality. This additional pool of teachers would reduce the need to draw from the domestic supply of teachers in the UK to fulfil demand in the international sector. Equally, however, as part of their career development, these newly trained global teachers could be candidates for entry to the domestic teaching market in the UK.

School leaders at British international schools indicated that enabling their schools to become training establishments, with increased access to programmes that lead to QTS, would increase their teacher recruitment capabilities and encourage new teachers to the profession. This would offer these teachers opportunities to train and teach in many of the high-quality and accredited British international schools operating worldwide.

### **Recognition of the value of international teaching experience**

This research has clearly shown that there is a wealth of high-quality, first-class teaching experience in the British international schools sector. COBIS is keen for the value of overseas experience to be recognised, in the UK and globally. Recognition of valued and accredited service overseas will ensure that teachers with international experience are welcomed, encouraged and supported to enter or return to the education sector in the UK. Once this international experience is acknowledged and valued as a source of teacher supply in the education sector in the UK, it can then be fully *utilised*. This will mean putting in place clearer, more transparent, visible and recognisable pathways to support the mobility of teachers back to the UK, as well as encouraging teachers to gain experience of working internationally.

This research has sought to highlight the positive, encouraging and optimistic future of the teaching profession, both domestically and internationally. Several media reports have characterised the current teacher supply challenges using negative language. This has not helped. However, in the pursuit of success in education provision, this research has proposed that collaborative working practices are needed, whereby the domestic market in the UK and the international sector share a vision for best practice. This will provide fertile ground upon which to develop and promote strategies that attract, train and retain teachers both domestically and internationally. It means developing a global language of teaching and a globally mobile teacher workforce.

## Abbreviations

COBIS	Council of British International Schools
DfE	Department for Education (England)
DIT	Department for International Trade
EAL	English as an Additional Language
IB	International Baccalaureate
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
NCTL	National College for Teaching and Leadership (former)
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UK	United Kingdom


## References

- <sup>1</sup> Figures on the current and projected size of the international schools market are courtesy of ISC Research (<https://www.iscresearch.com/>)
- <sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/663141/SFR68\\_2017\\_Text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663141/SFR68_2017_Text.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubacc/460/46002.htm>
- <sup>4</sup> Data from January 2018. <https://www.iscresearch.com/>
- <sup>5</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683043/SFR12-2018\\_Text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683043/SFR12-2018_Text.pdf)
- <sup>6</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/627388/SFR31\\_2017\\_Projections\\_Text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627388/SFR31_2017_Projections_Text.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/663141/SFR68\\_2017\\_Text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663141/SFR68_2017_Text.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/682892/SFR11\\_2018\\_Main\\_Text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682892/SFR11_2018_Main_Text.pdf)
- <sup>9</sup> <http://www.educationbusinessuk.net/news/05022018/teacher-recruitment-targets-missed-five-years-running>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubacc/460/46002.htm>
- <sup>11</sup> <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7222/CBP-7222.pdf>
- <sup>12</sup> <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7222/CBP-7222.pdf>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/jul/08/almost-a-quarter-of-teachers-who-have-qualified-since-2011-have-left-profession>
- <sup>14</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/682892/SFR11\\_2018\\_Main\\_Text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682892/SFR11_2018_Main_Text.pdf)
- <sup>15</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-35660457>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://www.teachers.org.uk/edufacts/teacher-recruitment-and-retention>
- <sup>17</sup> <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/exclusive-recruitment-crisis-leaves-millions-initial-teacher-training>
- <sup>18</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-42873153>
- <sup>19</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/jan/31/teacher-shortage-leaves-english-schools-in-crisis-watchdog-says>
- <sup>20</sup> <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7222>
- <sup>21</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2017/07/14/government-spend-10m-600-foreign-teachers-one-biggest-ever-overseas/>



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