



National Association of Language Advisers

Notes of a meeting attended

Meeting	All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Modern Languages		
Venue	House of Lords	Date	09.12.2024
Purpose of meeting	How do we turn around teacher recruitment in languages?		
Those present	Chair - Baroness Jean Coussins, Vice Chair - Darren Paffey MP (see below for further information), and other members of APPG Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • René Koglbauer and Judith Rifesser, ALL • Vicky Gough, British Council, the administrators of the LTTS programme • Tanya Riordan, University of Southampton - university-based teacher training • Katrin Szredski-Seamer, National SCITT - schools-based teacher training • Language Teacher Training Scholarship (LTTS) scholars - current and newly qualified • Additional voices from ITT colleagues, school representatives and key stakeholders 		
NALA member	Marie O'Sullivan		

Report (list main issues)
<p><i>Last year, we barely hit half of the DfE' languages teacher recruitment target (only 51% of target forecast for 2024/25 intake). The APPG asks key stakeholders what must be done to address this key priority if the country wishes to achieve a step change in languages uptake.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • René Koglbauer and Judith Rifesser noted that there are issues around teacher recruitment generally, not just for modern languages, and there is a need to make teaching a more attractive profession again. Ask should there be changes to teacher training programmes? Vicious cycle (jump in anywhere, it works from any starting point) – fewer pupils taking languages, therefore fewer taking university courses, therefore fewer people choosing teacher training so fewer teachers, so fewer pupils able to take languages. • Vicky Gough explained about the British Council's administration of the Language Teacher Training Scholarship (LTTS) programme, with a target (ie funding for) 175 scholars from across the world. Many have previously been

language assistants. Applicants do not have to be British, and BC can assist with visa, but the bursary may not cover overseas fees which may be payable.

- Tanya Riordan pulled no punches in her remarks (and received a round of applause at the end!):
 - Fewer of her schools are taking trainee teachers; ITT is capping numbers because of a lack of training places in schools.
 - The status of languages in the UK is questionable.
 - Subject Knowledge enhancement courses are essential.
 - There is a need to support trainees' living costs.
 - There needs to be clarity on visa requirements, and help schools to understand what is required if they are to employ non-British citizens
 - Curriculum stability is essential 0 there have been too many changes over the last few years.
- Katrin Szredski-Seamer noted that her students are often required to teach to school lesson plan pro-forma, with no opportunity to be creative or try out what they are learning during training sessions, or plan lessons themselves.
- Two LTTS scholars spoke, one Spanish national in her training year and another British national whose degree didn't qualify her for government bursary so she went down the LSST route. Both spoke powerfully about their experiences and difficulties they encounter while training to be teachers of modern languages.

There then followed a series of questions on the above topics from APPG members, with clarification from the floor, culminating in Baroness Coussins creating a list of questions to put to the government (see below for subsequent link). Particular concerns were raised by other LTTS scholars present, speaking from their lived experiences, for example:

- The type of visa should students be on when applying for jobs (student/skilled worker)?
- Schools reluctant to offer employment as they do not wish to engage with supporting the visa process
- ITT course/placement and bursary finishes in June, if employed it may be end of September before they receive their first salary – how are they supposed to survive for 3 months with no money?
- The £10,000 relocation bursary was removed for overseas students *after* many of them had accepted the place, causing financial difficulties – some withdrew from the programme as a result.

At the end of the meeting, I spoke briefly with Darren Paffey, Labour MP for Southampton Itchen who is Vice Chair of this APPG. Darren was formerly a lecturer in Spanish and Linguistics at Southampton University. He mentioned concerns regarding the elitism which he sees in the school curriculum, and I asked if I could send him a copy of our report on The Languages Curriculum and Disadvantaged Students – he was interested to hear about this and so I have sent him a copy. His office team have confirmed receipt and will make sure he sees the report after the break.

Evaluation

The meeting provided some insights into the issues being faced by new recruits, and the APPG seemed genuinely taken aback by some of the comments from the young teachers present. Baroness Coussins has already followed up from the meeting with written questions, which can be read here:

<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2024-12-12.HL3428.h&s=Modern+Foreign+Languages#gHL3429.q1>

Relevance to NALA members (including suggested action)

I feel Darren Paffey is a good contact to cultivate. Hopefully he will respond to our report on disadvantaged students, and we can follow from there.

Source(s) of further information (e.g. websites, publications, contacts)

See above