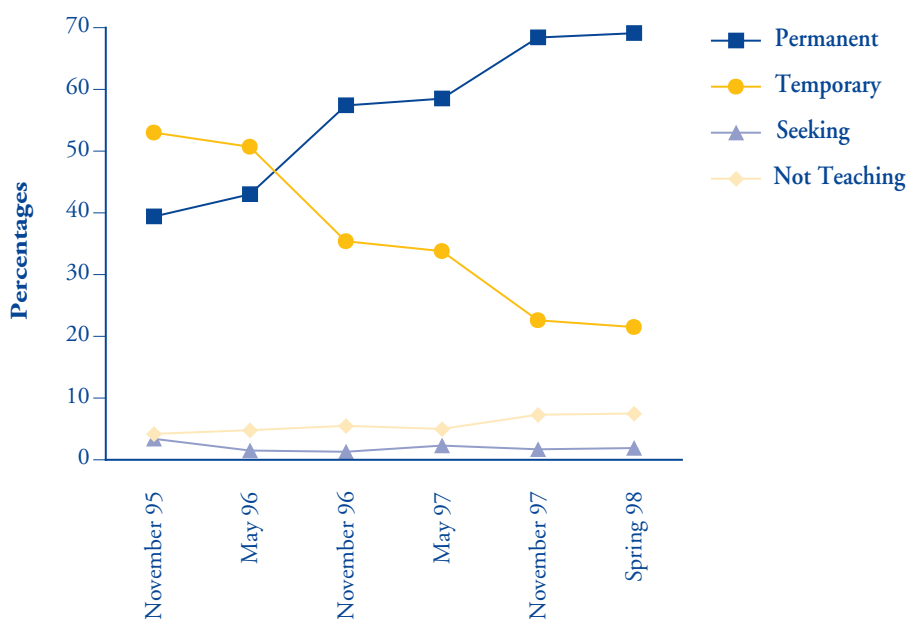


THREE YEARS LATER: A FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF TEACHERS WHO QUALIFIED IN 1995

Key findings

- Just under two-fifths (39.4%) of the teachers in the sample, who qualified in the summer 1995, had taken up permanent posts by November 1995. By the time of the survey in the spring of 1998 this proportion had risen to over two-thirds (69.1%).
- The percentage of recently qualified teachers (RQTs) in non-permanent posts more than halved from 53.0% in November 1995 to 21.5% in early 1998. The greatest decline was among the shorter types of temporary appointment (ie covering maternity leave or serious illness and day-to-day substitute teaching).
- The small percentage of RQTs actively seeking teaching posts fluctuated somewhat, beginning at 3.4% and ending at 1.9%. The percentage not teaching for other reasons rose from 4.2% to 7.5%.
- About 87% of the RQTs who were currently teaching thought they would certainly or probably remain in teaching for at least the next 5 years and only 3.3% thought it probable or certain that they would leave the profession. The secondary-trained men were, however, much more likely than the other RQTs either to have already left, as a fifth (19.7%) had, or to be doubtful about remaining, as over a quarter (26.9%) were.

Figure 1: Employment Situations of the 1995 Cohort over 3 Years



Introduction

1. The cohort of teachers who qualified in Northern Ireland in 1995 was the first, since annual monitoring began in 1978, in which those known to be in permanent posts in their first year (259 or 37.1%) were substantially outnumbered by those known to be in temporary posts (366 or 52.4%). A previous follow-up survey of the 1991 and 1992 cohorts (Sutherland et al, 1997), in which initially 52.7% and 39.8% respectively were in permanent and temporary teaching posts, found that by the end of the third year 79.5% had taken up permanent appointments. This left 15.0% still in temporary posts (only occasionally by choice) or looking for a post, with 5.5% having moved out of teaching. Questions were therefore raised about whether the employment situations of the 1995 cohort would show a similar improvement over time and also what might be the implications for the numbers of teachers being trained in Northern Ireland.

2. A follow-up questionnaire survey of the 1995 cohort was therefore mounted in the spring term of 1998. From the data collected it was possible to:

- trace patterns of employment over a 28-month period;
- examine in some detail the RQTs' teaching responsibilities in the spring of 1998;
- find out how many RQTs had left or were thinking of leaving teaching; and
- make comparisons with results from the previous follow-up survey of the 1991 and 1992 cohorts.

3. RQTs in temporary appointments could be classified into those covering the absence of another teacher ('locums') and those in posts which existed only on a non-permanent basis and to which no other teacher had the right of return (temporary 'postholders').

Employment Patterns in the Early Years of Teaching

4. The employment situations of the RQTs in the response sample were charted in 'snapshots' at six-month intervals. As can be seen in Table 1, the percentage in permanent posts rose from 39.4% in the first November after qualification to 57.4% at the beginning of the second year and to 69.1% by the spring of the third year. During the same period the percentage in temporary appointments dropped from 53.0% to 21.5%.

Table 1: Employment Situation of the 1995 cohort at 6-month intervals (in percentages)

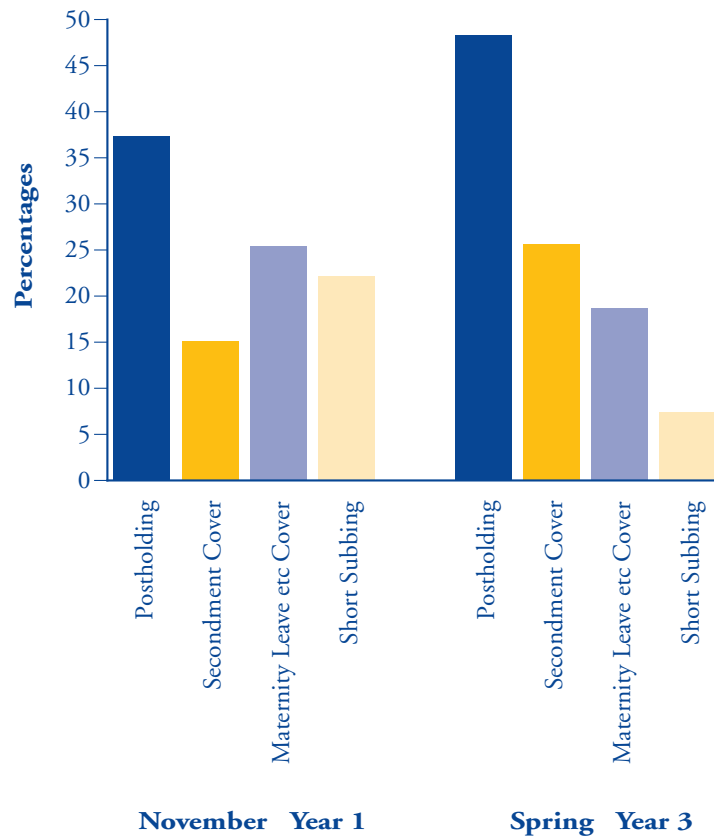
Employment situation	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
	Nov	May	Nov	May	Nov	Spring
Teaching						
Permanent	39.4	43.0	57.4	58.5	68.4	69.1
Temporary: postholder	16.6	17.4	12.4	11.9	9.0	9.8
Temporary: secondment cover	6.7	7.1	7.3	7.1	4.8	5.2
Temporary: maternity/long illness	11.3	10.9	6.1	6.3	3.3	3.8
Temporary: short subbing	9.9	6.3	4.2	2.7	2.9	1.5
Temporary: details unknown	8.6	9.0	5.5	5.7	2.5	1.3
Teaching: details unknown ¹	0	0	0.4	0.4	0	0
Not Teaching						
Known to be seeking a post	3.4	1.5	1.3	2.3	1.7	1.9
Not teaching (other) ²	4.2	4.8	5.5	5.0	7.3	7.5

5. The decrease in the number of temporary appointments was much greater for the shorter forms of non-permanent appointments (ie covering a maternity leave or serious illness and day-to-day substitute teaching) than for the forms likely to last at least a year (covering for teachers on secondment and ‘postholding’). The decline in the percentage engaged in day-to-day substitute teaching was particularly marked (Figure 2). In the November after qualification, ‘locums’ outnumbered ‘postholders’ in a ratio of just over 3:2 but by the time of the survey the ratio was close to 1:1.

¹ Two RQTs indicated that they were teaching in their second year without giving any further details about the nature of the appointment.

² Virtually all RQTs coded as ‘Not teaching (other)’ were known not to be seeking a post at the time in question. It was not worth while having a separate category for the very few cases where it was impossible to deduce whether the non-teaching RQT was actually seeking a post at the time.

Figure 2: Relative Frequencies of Different Types of Temporary Appointments



6. The percentage of RQTs who were unemployed teachers seeking teaching posts fell from 3.4% to 1.5% between the 2 'snapshots' in the first year and subsequently fluctuated between 1.3% and 2.3%. The percentage of RQTs who were not teaching for other reasons climbed generally upwards over the period, from 4.2% to 7.5% by the spring of 1998. The total number out of teaching, for whatever reason, fell from 7.6% to 6.3% during the first year but subsequently rose steadily to 9.4%.

7. Of the 45 RQTs who were not teaching at the time of the survey, 7 had never applied for a teaching post and 4 had been unsuccessful in all their applications. The remaining 34 had taught, although 13 had been only short-term substitute teachers. Only 9 of the 45 who were out of teaching were actively seeking a post, although another 9 expected to begin applying in the fairly near future. A change of career and difficulty in obtaining secure employment were the main reasons given for not currently teaching. Alternative employment in a wide variety of fields had been found by 30 of the 45 non-teaching RQTs.

8. Some groups of RQTs had more success than others in being appointed to permanent posts, especially those with a first-class honours degree and those whose main subject was music, mathematics, a science or a modern language. The small group of social science teachers had consistently the greatest difficulty in finding secure employment, followed by those offering religious education as their main subject. The percentages of primary-trained and secondary-trained teachers in permanent posts were fairly similar throughout the first three years. The main sector difference was the higher percentage of secondary-trained than primary-trained

teachers who had withdrawn from teaching by the time of the survey (12.6% vs 2.1%). Nearly a fifth (19.7%) of the secondary-trained men and exactly a tenth (10.0%) of the secondary-trained women had left teaching before the end of the third year.

9. Despite the general improvement in the employment positions of the 1995 cohort over the period under review, the percentages in permanent posts were consistently lower at each of the 6 time-intervals from qualification than in the corresponding 'snapshots' of the 1991 and 1992 cohorts in the previous follow-up study. In the final 'snapshot' of the present study, taken in the spring of the third year, the percentage in permanent posts (69.1%) had not quite reached that achieved by the 1991 and 1992 cohorts by the beginning of their second year (71.5%). While the percentages of RQTs in the two surveys who were in shorter-term temporary posts were fairly similar at each corresponding time-interval, more of the 1995 cohort than of the 1991 and 1992 cohorts were in the longer-term types of temporary appointments (postholding and covering for a seconded teacher). The percentage out of teaching by the final snapshot was significantly higher in the present than in the previous follow-up survey.

10. RQTs in temporary posts, and especially those in the shorter-term categories, quite often experienced periods of unemployment. While postholders and those replacing seconded teachers averaged only a week or two of unemployment in the year and those covering maternity or longer-term sick leave missed about a month's work, short-term substitute teachers worked on average for only about the equivalent of 7 months in the first year and 6 months in the second year.

11. Half (49.9%) of the RQTs who had taught since qualification had been employed in only one school and 71.4% in not more than two schools. However, 13.0% had taught in six or more schools, including 5 who had been in 20 or more schools.

Teaching Posts and Responsibilities in the Spring of 1998

12. At the time of the survey 434 of the 479 RQTs in the sample were teaching, the ratio of permanent to non-permanent appointments being 76: 24 or just over 3:1. All but 18 of the teaching posts were in Northern Ireland, with 11 in Great Britain, 5 in the Republic of Ireland and one each in Canada and New Zealand.

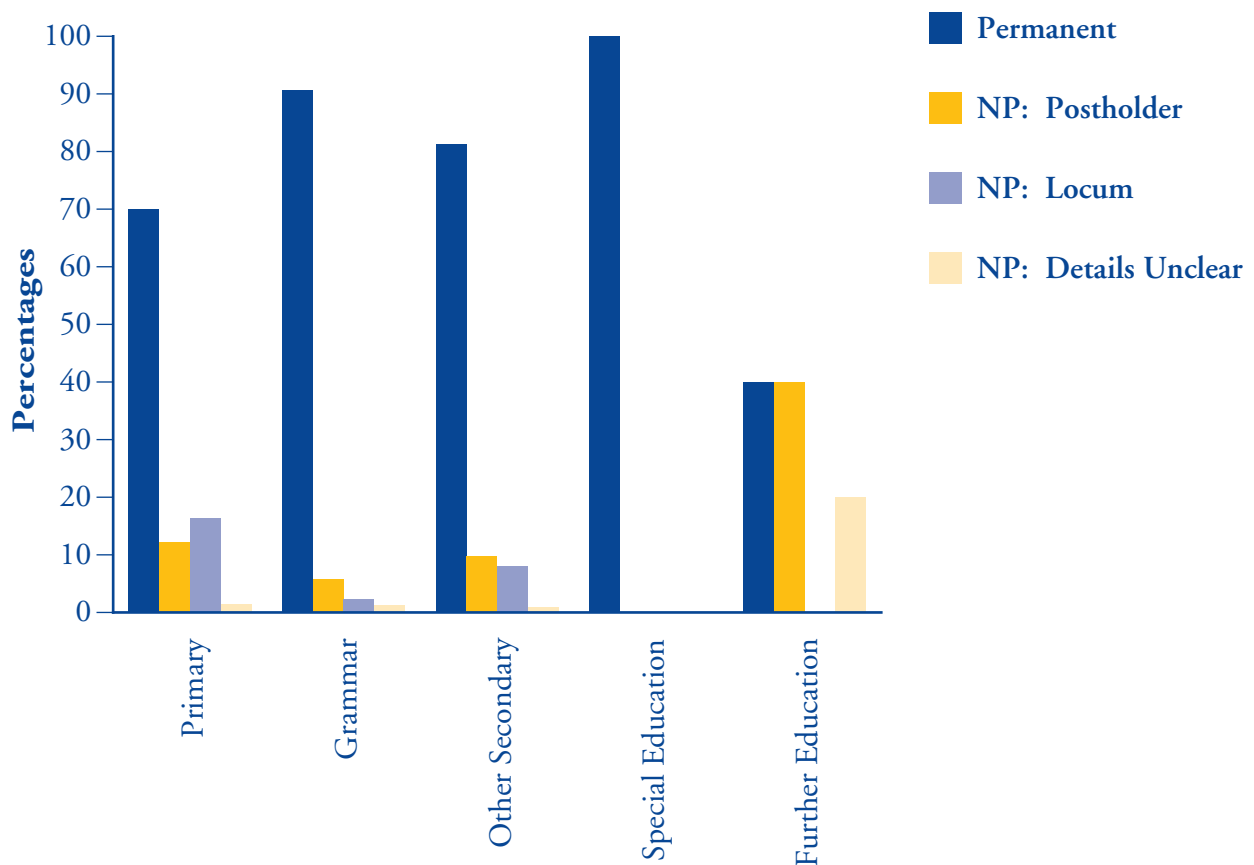
13. Of the RQTs who were teaching in the spring of 1998:

- 213 were in primary schools and another 4 in nursery education;
- 197 were in second-level education, of whom 86 were in grammar schools and 111 in schools where the intake was not selected by ability;
- 5 were in further education;

- 8 were in special education;
- the remaining 4 were either in short-term or part-time posts in different kinds of educational institutions or (one RQT) employed as a home tutor for excluded pupils.

14. Permanent contracts had been given to 91% of the RQTs in grammar schools, 81% in other secondary schools and 70% in primary schools. While all 8 teachers in special education were in permanent posts, this was so of only 2 of the 5 in further education (Figure 3). At least 89% of the RQTs in post in the spring of 1998 were teaching in the sector for which they had been specifically trained.

Figure 3: Posts Held in Different Types of Institutions in the Spring of 1998



15. About a third (32.9%) of the RQTs in primary schools had composite classes of 2 or more age groups. Just over half (53.5%) taught one or more subjects to classes other than their own, the most frequently mentioned subjects being music, art and physical education.

16. Of the RQTs in second-level schools or further education, 51% did some sixth form (or equivalent) teaching and only 3% did not teach beyond Key Stage 3. The remaining 46% taught a mixture of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 classes. In listing the subjects they taught for at least 2 hours a week, 34% recorded just one subject, 42% recorded two subjects, 19% named 3 subjects while the remaining 5% listed 4 subjects.

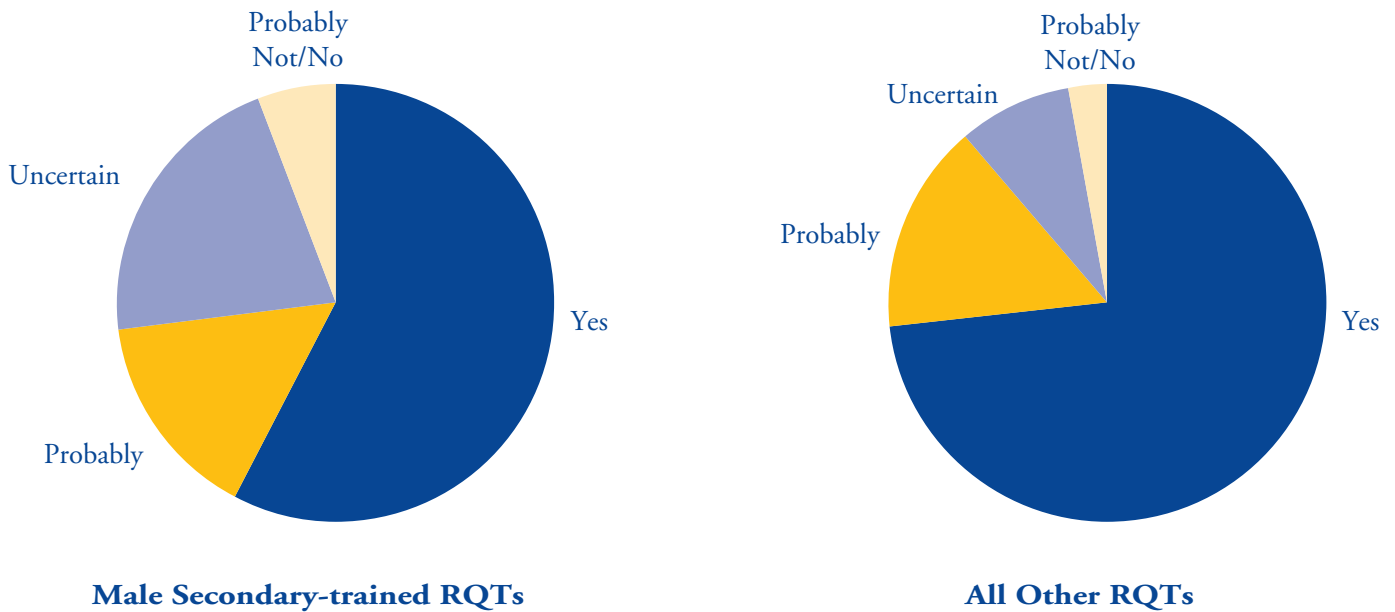
17. Special responsibilities had been given to exactly half (50%) the RQTs, although only about a fifth (21%) of these teachers received an above-scale allowance. For primary teachers, the responsibilities were usually for an area of the curriculum. Teachers in second-level schools most often reported pastoral responsibilities.

Further Study and Future Plans

18. By the time of the survey, 13.4% of the RQTs had already obtained at least one further qualification, 14.8% were on award-bearing courses and 22.8% intended to begin a course of study within the next 2 years. In all, 40.2% of the sample showed some interest in further study. While many of the qualifications already obtained – for example, in information technology or sports coaching – may have been taken in order to improve immediate employment prospects, the most popular choice of course for current or future study was a master's degree in Education.

19. When asked if they intended to remain in teaching “for the foreseeable future, say the next 5 years”, 71.4% of those in post at the time of the survey indicated that they fully expected to stay and another 15.5% that they probably would. Only 3.3% thought they would probably or certainly leave, the remaining 9.9% being uncertain. Unsurprisingly, teachers in temporary employment were less certain of staying than those in permanent posts, often citing the difficulty of finding employment as their reason for doubt.

Figure 4: Intentions of remaining in teaching of secondary-trained men in comparison with all other RQTs



20. Secondary-trained male teachers, as well as being more likely to have already left teaching than primary-trained men or women teachers from either sector, were also more doubtful about staying on than these other groups (Figure 4). Only 57.7% of the secondary-trained men thought they would certainly stay and 15.4% that they would probably stay; 21.2% were uncertain and 5.8% thought they would probably or certainly leave. For secondary-trained men the most frequent reason for thinking of quitting teaching was a desired career change. It would seem advisable to keep monitoring the number of teachers in the various categories who leave the profession within a few years of qualification.

Methodology

21. Questionnaires were sent in late February 1998 to all 758 teachers who qualified in Northern Ireland in 1995. Replies were received from 479, a 63.2% response rate. Although significantly more of the women than of the men participated (66.7 vs 51.1%), the respondents quite closely resembled the full cohort in the subjects they had studied and the balance of primary-trained and secondary-trained teachers. Only slightly (and not significantly) more of the respondents than of the full cohort began their careers in permanent posts (39.4% vs 37.1%), thus mitigating fears that participants in the study might have been atypically successful in their early careers.

The Project

22. The follow-up survey of teachers who qualified in Northern Ireland in 1995 was commissioned by the former DENI from the NICER Research Unit of the Graduate School of Education at Queen's University, Belfast at a cost of £9,972.

Full Report

23. The results of the survey are reported in full in "3 Years Later: A Follow-Up Survey of the Employment Patterns of Teachers Qualified in 1995, conducted in 1998" by Anne E. Sutherland. A limited number of copies are available from the Department of Education, cost £5.00.¹

This paper is a summary of the research report and as such any views it contains are not necessarily those of the Department of Education.

¹ Each educational institution and library is entitled to one free copy.

Reference

Sutherland, A E with McGillion, P M and Loane, M (1997) *Teachers who Qualified in 1991 and 1992: a follow-up survey of employment patterns conducted in the summer of 1994*. Research Series No 3. Bangor: DENI.

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