

Classics Teacher Vacancies 2010 - II: not meeting the demand

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Main findings

IN 2010-11 THE number of teachers being trained through the PGCE and GTP routes was insufficient to keep pace with the number of Classics teachers who were retiring or moving away from Classics teaching into leadership roles. The Coalition Government's reported encouragement of state schools to start teaching Classics, especially Latin, does not seem to be mirrored by growth in the number of state school posts which were advertised. The number of vacancies in the state sector is very small, particularly at Head of Department level, which suggests that Classics teachers in the state sector who wish to gain experience in other schools or seek promotion may have to look to the independent sector for it. Overall respondents from the independent sector prefer to employ trained rather than untrained teachers; for those it does employ without qualifications, they say they are willing to fund training.

Background

From 1988 Bob Lister, the lecturer in charge of the Classics PGCE at the Faculty of Education at Cambridge, kept a record of all Classics teacher posts advertised in the *Times Educational Supplement* (TES). We have continued to maintain that record to the present day. However, tracking the individual details of the types of vacancy, the number of applicants and whether or not the successful candidates have teaching qualifications has only been carried out on an occasional basis over the years. In the current climate of cutbacks in state education and concern about the number of teachers being trained at secondary level (Hunt, 2011), The Roman Society wanted to obtain a better picture of the state of employment of Classics teachers and, by inference, the state of teaching Classics, especially Latin, in UK schools. It therefore commissioned a survey of all the schools which advertised for Classics posts in 2010-11.

Information from the survey suggests that the supply of trained Classics teachers is insufficient to maintain numbers in schools in the UK. Vacancies for Classics teachers seemed to have resulted from a significant number of teachers leaving Classics teaching: this was mostly due to retirement. Several schools, however, reported

that the vacancy had occurred due to an increase in demand for Classics in their schools. The survey also revealed that the number of applicants was usually small - more so in the state than in the independent sector - and the number of applicants for the positions of Head of Department in both state and independent sectors was often even smaller.

Methodology

In July 2011 we surveyed all the 123 schools which had advertised posts for Classics teachers in the TES between 1st September 2010 and 1st July 2011 with an anonymous postal questionnaire. All were surveyed from 1st July with the request that responses should be made by the end of the term. The response rate of 68.3% (84 in total) is considered very good for a postal survey and we are pleased and grateful that so many took the time to respond.

The questions sought to ascertain information about two linked areas of particular interest to the Roman Society: information about the numbers of Classics teachers who are entering or leaving the profession and the training of Classics teachers. We asked the following questions:

- how did the position become vacant?
- what sort of position was advertised?
- how many applicants were there for the position?
- did the successful applicant have teaching qualifications?
- if the successful teaching applicant did not have teaching qualifications, did the school plan to help them to gain teaching qualifications?

Each question had a simple tick-box, multiple-choice response to facilitate the reply and a stamped and addressed envelope was included.

Context

In order to set the present set of data in context, Table 1 shows the number of teaching posts for Classics advertised in the *Times Educational Supplement* (TES) for the last three years.

Table 1: Number of teaching posts for Classics teachers according to school type 2008-2011.

Academic Year	School Type			Total number of schools (% of the total)
	State Secondary	Independent Preparatory	Independent Secondary	
2010-11	21 (17%)	17 (14%)	85 (69%)	123 (100%)
2009-10	22 (15%)	18 (12%)	110 (73%)	150 (100%)
2008-9	46 (23%)	18 (9%)	153 (77%)	199 (100%)

Source: TES 2008-11

The figures show that the numbers of posts advertised over the last three years have declined across all school typesⁱ. We do not think, however, that this decline reflects a similar decline in the provision of Classical subjects in schools in the UK. We would suggest instead that the numbers studying Classics are more or less stable, as evidenced by the similar numbers of pupils being entered for GCSE and A Level examinations for each of the past three yearsⁱⁱ. While there is some anecdotal evidence of schools which have closed Classics departments or which have not replaced teachers who have left, the decline in the number of posts shown in the table is unlikely in itself to correlate to a reduction in the number of schools or the size of departments offering Latin or other Classical subjects. Indeed, by way of example, one of the more encouraging (and unsolicited) responses from the survey revealed that ten schools (two state non-selective, eight independent senior) had taken on an *extra*

teacher to accommodate an *increase* in the uptake of Classical subjects in their schools. It is likely, then, that the reduction in advertised posts owes much to individuals preferring to stay in post in their schools during a period of economic insecurity. Up to now, however, evidence has been based on guesswork and hearsay. One of the reasons, therefore, for carrying out the survey was to try to find out in more detail about the supply of Classics teachers in schools and to consider the issues which we think may arise from an analysis of the responses.

Results

Table 2 shows the number of schools which advertised in the *TES* and the response rate to the survey itself.

Table 2: Response rate of schools according to school type in the academic year 2010-11.

School type	Total number of posts advertised	Number of responses (% of the total of posts advertised in each school type)
State Non-selective	8	5 (63%)
State Selective	12	10 (83%)
State Sixth Form College	1	1 (100%)
Independent Senior	85	58 (68%)
Independent Preparatory	17	10 (59%)
Total posts (% of total, n=123)	123	84 (68%)

Source: TES 2010-11

The figures show that all types of school were well-represented in the response rate to the survey. The response rate was no smaller than 59% for any type of school, with the average being 75%.

How did the position become vacant?

The majority of vacancies occurred due to teachers moving to another teaching position elsewhere: 24 respondents reported that the teacher had moved to another school; 11 further respondents reported that the teacher had left the school for other reasons, such as for maternity leave or for personal study. The majority of this last group of teachers, it could be said, had only left the profession temporarily and could be considered still to be in Classics teaching. An additional ten respondents reported that they had taken on an extra teacher as their department had needed to expand due to demand for teaching of Classics in their schools. Therefore, it could be said that 45 of the 84 vacancies which were reported to us (53.6%) had occurred due to straightforward shifts within the Classics teaching profession caused by promotion and teachers'

personal desire to change school.

What, then, of the other 39 vacancies? 23 of the respondents reported that the teacher had retired. If typical of the whole departing cohort, it would suggest that 34 teachers of the total of 123 vacancies reported in the *TES* retired in 2011. In addition, 11 respondents reported that the teacher had left teaching altogether, and three more reported that their teachers had been promoted to a position where they would no longer be teaching Classics. The loss of these 14 teachers, added to the retired teachers already mentioned, represents a *total* loss of 37 teachers to the profession known from the responses which we received. It could imply that as many as 54 (44%) of the whole 123 left the profession in 2010-11. This has serious implications for training, as we shall demonstrate below.

What sort of position was offered?

Table 3 shows the number of different types of post advertised in the *TES* for the period 2010-11, by school sector.

Table 3: Number of teaching posts for Classics teachers according to type of post and by school sector in 2010-11

Type of school	Head of Department	Other full time teacher	Part time teacher	Temporary teacher	Total
State	6	11	1	3	21
Independent Preparatory	8	6	3	0	17
Independent Senior	14	55	11	5	85
Total	28	72	15	8	123

Source: TES 2010-2011

Most posts were for full time teachers of classics (58.5%), with fewer for Heads of Departmentⁱⁱⁱ (23.7%). Fewer temporary or part-time posts seem to have been advertised this year than last year^{iv} (18.6%). In the state sector only six Heads of Department were advertised. The paucity of prospects for promotion within Classics Departments, especially in the state sector, is of concern, as shall be discussed below.

We received 84 responses to the survey. These were distributed as

follows: 21 Heads of Department, 46 other full time teachers, 13 part time teachers and four temporary teachers. The analysis which follows is taken from these survey responses.

How many applicants were there for each position?

Table 4 shows the total number of applicants for Classics posts according to the school type.

Table 4: Total number of applicants for Classics posts according to school type.

School type	0-5 applicants	6-10 applicants	11-15 applicants	16-20 applicants	More than 20 applicants
State Non-selective	1	4	0	0	0
State Selective	5	5	0	0	0
State Sixth Form College	0	0	1	0	0
Independent Secondary	9	26	17	2	4
Independent Preparatory	3	6	1	0	0
Total	18	41	19	2	4
(% of total, n=84)	(21%)	(48%)	(23%)	(2%)	(5%)

The number of applicants was usually low, with several unsolicited comments from respondents that the pool of applicants to choose from was disappointingly small. In total 21% had no more than five applicants to consider for interview and 69% had no more than ten. In the state sector no secondary school had more than ten applicants

to choose from. Two state schools reported that they were unable to appoint because of the lack of suitably qualified applicants.

Table 5 shows the number of applicants reported according to the type of post that was advertised.

Table 5: Total number of applicants for Classics posts, according to the type of post advertised

Post advertised	0-5 applicants	6-10 applicants	11-15 applicants	16-20 applicants	More than 20 applicants
Head of Department	9	10	2	0	0
Full time teacher	4	21	16	2	3
Other posts	5	10	1	0	1
Total	18	41	19	2	4
<i>(Percentage of total, n=84)</i>	<i>(21%)</i>	<i>(49%)</i>	<i>(23%)</i>	<i>(2%)</i>	<i>(5%)</i>

The data show that for all types of post advertised, in 21% of cases there were no more than five applicants for the post, and in 70% of cases there were no more than ten. For the posts of Head of Department, in 43% of cases there were no more than five applicants, and in 90% no more than ten. In the case of vacancies for Heads of Department there is little difference between sectors: the number of applicants in both sectors is low, with only two respondents reporting a field of more than ten applicants. The figures suggest that larger numbers of people apply for assistant teaching posts than for Heads of Department. A closer analysis of the responses, however, reveals a significant difference between the numbers of applicants for assistant teachers in the state sector compared with that in the independent. No state school (except for one sixth form college) received more than ten applicants for *any* of the posts advertised. Among independent senior schools, however, over a third had attracted 6-10 applicants, another third 11-15 applicants, and a sixth even more than that.

Did the successful applicant have teaching qualifications? and If not, does the school plan to help them gain teaching qualifications?

All the state schools who appointed teachers appointed them with QTS, according to the legal requirements. Of the 58 independent senior schools which responded, 37 (64%) appointed teachers with QTS. Of the 21 which did not appoint teachers with QTS, 13 (62%) reported that they would offer the teacher the opportunity to gain QTS. Of the ten independent preparatory schools which responded, nine appointed teachers with QTS; the remaining one reported that they would offer training. The high number of appointments in the independent sector of teachers with QTS or with the promise of helping their new appointees gain QTS is very encouraging.

Discussion

Should we be concerned about the small number of posts advertised in Classics teaching?

The raw figures do not necessarily tell the full picture of what is happening in schools. The number of posts advertised for Classics teachers is very small ($n=123$) when compared with that of other subjects, and it appears that this number is the lowest it has been for a number of years. This situation might lead one to believe that the size of departments is shrinking, that departments are closing or that posts are not being filled as they become vacant. All of these are possible explanations. Nevertheless, there may be optimism in that the survey revealed that ten schools were enjoying growth in the number of teachers in their Classics departments. This seems to corroborate evidence held by the Cambridge Schools Classics Project and by the Roman Society Schools' Subcommittee which suggests that there are state schools which are introducing Classics – especially Latin – into their schools through the use of teachers from

other disciplines, notably Modern Foreign Languages, History and English. Only very occasionally are these posts, which combine the teaching of Classical subjects with those of the National Curriculum, advertised. And in the same way, in the state sector, anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers already in post are being deployed to take responsibility for the teaching of Classics when a colleague leaves or retires. In this way the Classics post is never advertised externally. This may go some way to explain why the number of Classics posts advertised in the state sector was so small ($n=21$). The present economic uncertainty is also likely to be having an effect on whether incumbent teachers in both sectors are prepared to move either to equivalent posts or for promotion elsewhere.

The very small number ($n=6$) of Heads of Department posts vacant in the state sector has implications for the prospect of promotion for Classics teachers. There were twice as many vacancies for Heads of Department in independent senior schools ($n=14$) and more than three times as many in the independent sector as a whole ($n=22$). It may be that for assistant teachers working in the state sector often the only way to gain promotion within Classics teaching is for them to move out of teaching Classics within the state sector to take up a pastoral or assistant headship, or else to move to the independent sector.

Can the present training routes meet the demand for Classics teachers?

The number of Classics teachers who left teaching – either by retiring or moving to other positions – is worrying: even if the total number of teachers lost is *only* the number *reported* by the responses which we received ($n=37$), it is difficult to see how the number of teachers being *trained* can keep pace. The evidence suggests that the majority of schools have to or wish to appoint teachers with Qualified Teachers Status (QTS) gained through the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)^v or the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP). With PGCE training places cut from 29 to 24 in 2011-2012^{vi}, the PGDE no longer offered, and numbers taking the GTP remaining small the situation is serious: the survey shows that 37 Classics teachers *did* leave the profession in 2010-11. If the total number of teachers leaving really is nearer the 54 figure, then it is hard to see how the present Coalition Government's wish to see more Classics teaching in state schools can be achieved. The previous Labour Government's answer to the shortage of training places available on the PGCE was to suggest that the GTP route would provide the capacity for trained teachers in the state sector, and this remains, as far as it is possible to discern, the present Coalition Government's policy. Yet the number of Classics teachers being trained under the GTP is very small – in the region of 4-5 annually in both state and independent sectors since 2006^{vii}. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the GTP route is problematic for Classic teachers in particular to access, and this situation has been acknowledged by sources close to the Coalition Government. The Coalition Government has recently

published its proposals to find more ways to provide training, including an increased role for School-based ITT providers (Department for Education, 2011) But this forgets an inconvenient truth: that the number of GTP training placements available in the state sector is very limited – school consortia simply do not have the capacity or finances to train enough Classics teachers. Sources close to the Government have suggested that teachers who gain QTS through a GTP in the independent sector might transfer to the state sector to make up any shortfall. It would be interesting to see if this will be the case. There will be some changes in the survey for the 2011-12 academic year to try to find out.

This article is designed to offer some information on a subject which is often talked about and has often relied too much on anecdotal evidence. We hope that the information is helpful for individuals, schools and the classical organisations in enabling them to support Classics teaching in schools in the future. We hope to carry out a similar review each year and are very grateful to the Roman Society for the financial support given to carrying out this and future surveys.

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Surveying Perceptions of a Classical Education

Jeannie Cohen & Peter Jones

BETTANY HUGHES WAS recently filming in a small village in Syria. The village children gathered round to find out what she was doing and Bettany told them she was making a film about ancient philosophers. 'Oh' they said, 'We have those.' 'Really? Who in particular?' asked Bettany. 'Why, Socrates and Aristotle' they replied. The world swam briefly before her eyes before she picked herself up, dusted herself down and got on with the filming.

If children in village schools in Syria know about the great ancient classical thinkers, why don't all our children?

The lack of official interest in the subject emerges in the government's own record-keeping. In the House of Lords, 24 May 2011 Lord Patten asked how many classics teachers there were in English state comprehensives since 1990. Lord Hill of Oareford replied with a government chart revealing the following ludicrous sequence of figures: 1992 – 1,300; 1996 – 500; 2002 – 1,000; 2007 – 200. Assuming one classics teacher per school, 800 were dropped in the four years 1992-6; 500 then rehired in 1996-2002; only for 800 to be dropped again in 2002-7. This is transparently nonsensical, as the Department of Education well knew. For it reveals in the footnotes that the figures were drawn from 'an occasional survey most recently run in 1992, 1996, 2002 and 2007, a representative stratified random sample. As the numbers of classics teachers and schools offering classics are relatively small, the likelihood of the drawn samples accurately estimating the national number of classics teachers is relatively low'. Thanks a lot. But those were the figures they kept, and they must have controlled policy.

This neglect was presumably the consequence of Baker's creaking National Curriculum which, until last year, was to make Classics – Latin, ancient Greek, Classical Civilisation, Ancient History – a *disciplina non grata*, given no official status within schools. Any state school that did take it on gained no credit for it in any assessment of the school's achievements.

That the full range of classical subjects does survive in schools, and where it does, it flourishes, is solely the result of teachers' heroic efforts, against all the odds, and certainly no thanks to government. When *Friends of Classics* two years ago professionally surveyed

References

- Department for Education. (2011) Training our next generation outstanding teachers. HMSO, London.
- Hunt, S. (2011) Training Classics Teachers. *Journal of Classical Teaching*, 24, 2-3.
- ⁱ Source: database of all Classics posts advertised in the *TES* 1999 present, held by the author at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.
- ⁱⁱ Source: JCQA Inter-awarding Body Statistics: 2008, 2009 and 2010.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Among the group identified as Heads of Department we have included Teachers in charge of Classics.
- ^{iv} Source: database of all Classics posts advertised in the *TES* 1999 present, held by the author at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.
- ^v The PGCE in Classics is offered by Cambridge University and King's College London; the PGDE used to be offered in the University of Glasgow, as part of a combined English or History Classics course.
- ^{vi} The TDA announced cuts to the number of funded training places for Classics through the PGCE for 2011-12 in March 2011.
- ^{vii} Source: www.classicsteaching.com

those 1000 schools where something classical was taught, the response of parents and non-classical staff was in the region of 75-90% in favour. Further, as JACT members know, under the aegis of the Cambridge School Classics Project 600 state schools have started Latin in the past ten years. And the government response? To cut the number of classics teachers it trains, while it also makes Latin, Greek and Ancient History E-Bacc subjects. One wonders if the right hand knows what the right hand is doing, let alone the left.

So, as usual, classicists continue to prop up an ailing education system ourselves. Not that we want to force any classical subject down anyone's throats (as if we could). We just want to make it available to as many of our state schools pupils as possible – the 3,000 (c.75%) where nothing classical is taught at all – and that is what the new fundraising charity *Classics for All* is committed to doing, with its second distribution of grants to projects that will get classics in any of its forms into schools and the third coming up in the summer for more strategic projects (e.g. training up non-specialist teachers). By then it will have disbursed around £200,000 on new initiatives.

But we have to continue making the case for Classics, and we can now add another powerful benefit to the list, one that we all know is the case for the subject anyway, but has now been proved in the most striking manner: that, on top of its intrinsic linguistic, historical and cultural interest, it lays the foundations of significant, lasting benefits, for careers and life in general, to those who studied it even for a short time.

In 2011 *Friends of Classics* asked the distinguished market researcher and *Friend* Colin McDonald (of McDonald Research) to carry out a professional survey of the value that those who had studied Classics attached to it in *later life*. As far as we are aware, this is the first time such an exercise has been carried out for any subject; no other school discipline we know of has ever been submitted to such a demanding appraisal. You may imagine the combination of excitement and trepidation with which we awaited the YouGov results.

Colin approached the professional polling organisation *YouGov*