

Recruitment and Retention of Newly Qualified Teachers in Oxfordshire Schools

Findings related to special schools

Report of research undertaken by the University of
Oxford and Oxford Brookes University for the
Strategic Schools Partnership Board



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June 2016

Chapter 3: Summary of findings related to special schools

3.1 What attracts NQTs to work in special schools in Oxfordshire?

Local connections

The pattern of local recruitment is even stronger in special schools than it is for the mainstream schools within the sample. The vast majority of the teachers recruited already lived locally and had trained with local providers, including one who had followed the GTP route after several years working as a Teaching Assistant. In some cases, like this one, the teachers had specific knowledge of – or prior experience in – the particular school, and knew that was where they wanted to work. All of the teachers had wanted to secure jobs where they were already living and several had family commitments that made it impossible for them to move anywhere else.

3.2 What obstacles are there to the effective recruitment of NQTs to special schools in Oxfordshire?

Lack of specialist training for special educational needs within most training programmes

Unlike the mainstream schools, the special schools that responded to the survey did not report any long-term, unfilled vacancies, which suggests that they have relatively few difficulties recruiting the teachers that they need. The only evidence that might indicate a difficulty is the fact that all the teachers recruited as NQTs commented on the lack of provision within their training programme for work in a special school. While this was addressed within the school-based training that made up the bulk of the GTP programme for the one trainee who had followed this route, the university-based training had followed a more generic structure, and so had not offered any additional guidance related to the specific challenges that they faced.

3.3 Why do early career teachers leave the special schools to which they were recruited as NQTs?

Fewer problems of retention than in mainstream schools - despite the specific challenges

It is not possible to make confident generalisations about teachers' reasons for leaving since we only collected survey data relating to eight NQTs recruited to special schools, and only two of these were teachers who had since left the school. In one case, the teacher was said to have lacked the necessary resilience and in another the move was attributed to the cost of living in Oxfordshire. Where teachers were recalling their colleagues' reasons for leaving, the moves were attributed

either to a difficulty in securing further promotion or to personal circumstances such as moving closer to family members. The specific costs of living in Oxfordshire was thus cited only once as the reason for a move. Since most teachers seem deliberately to have taken a position in the area in which they were already living, it is unlikely that the cost would prove to be a decisive issue for them. Moreover, since the teachers also stressed the scope for promotion to middle leadership that had been open to them, it also seems likely that teachers who are seeking additional income can secure it relatively easily – at least at the lower levels. It was only those seeking more senior promotions that were prepared to contemplate a move.

While the teachers acknowledged the very particular demands of working in a special school and generally felt under-prepared by their initial training programme for the work that they would be doing, the demands of the job did not, in general, seem to prompt a large number of resignations, although they do account for one of the resignations noted in the survey.

3.4 Why do some teachers recruited as NQTs to special schools in Oxfordshire choose to continue working in the school and what might induce others to stay?

Scope for early career professional development and promotion – more limited at senior levels

Although the data suggests that NQTs experience very specific kinds of demands in special schools – for many of which they feel essentially unprepared when they start – there is little evidence that they tend to leave the school because of those demands. Across the survey data (completed for six different special schools) and the interviews with four long-serving teachers, only one account was given of an NQT who left because of the demands of the job.¹

There is also little evidence of teachers moving away for personal or family reasons. Although one or two teachers may have considered moving elsewhere because of the cost of living, the fact that most teachers in special schools take up posts in the area where they are already living means that they have already found ways to manage the cost of housing. The few teachers who do leave seem to be more experienced teachers who are seeking promotion, particularly into positions of senior leadership. While special schools seem able to provide good opportunities for early promotion, the stability of their staffing tends to make it difficult to move for teachers seeking to move into the higher levels of school leadership.

High quality induction support

The fact that NQTs do not seem to be deterred in the early years of teaching, despite the demands that they face and the lack of specific preparation for them within most training programmes, points

¹It should be acknowledged, however, that at least one special school in the county does not recruit NQTs, precisely because they recognise the demands of the role.

to the quality of the induction support that special schools seem to provide, including excellent mentoring and plentiful opportunities to observe and consult with other staff. Opportunities for observation are mentioned much more frequently than in mainstream contexts and although new teachers wrestle with the range of curriculum demands that they face (alongside all that they are learning about teaching students with special needs), they also appear to be extremely well supported by subject leaders across the school who recognise the obligation that they have to guide them.

Personal commitment: a sense of worth, enjoyment and agency

The positive attractions of teaching as a vocation and the sense of loyalty and commitment to students operate powerfully (as they do in other contexts) to persuade teachers to stay where they are, but some of the special schools included within this study also seem to balance an obligation for continual reflection and improvement with ensuring that teachers have realistic expectations of themselves and continue to find joy in what they are doing. There may be much that mainstream schools can learn from the special schools in this respect. The two schools represented in our small interview sample also suggest that teachers' on-going commitment can be secured by ensuring that decision-making is a collective process and that senior leaders are seen to be working *with* their colleagues rather than operating as a hierarchy. Again, respect for teachers' professional expertise and scope for them to take forward initiatives of their own are important in ensuring them of their value and securing their loyalty.

More specialist provision within initial training and induction

While there seems little that could realistically be done to retain more experienced teachers seeking promotion elsewhere, two kinds of improvement might minimise the risk of losing NQTs within the first year or so. The first would be to include more specific training for work in special schools within their initial training programme. While school-based training routes obviously provide considerable scope for this, it is important that practical experience and context-specific guidance is supported by appropriate theoretical understandings of particular barriers to learning and the ways in which they can be overcome. The second would be to ensure that external induction programmes, such as that offered by OTSA, also include some tailored provision for staff working in special schools.

Chapter 4: The design of the research

4.1 Summary

4.1.1 Research questions

The research was initially designed to address three key questions:

1. What attracts NQTs (in different subjects/phases; and from different training routes/ locations) to work in Oxfordshire schools?
2. Why do many early career teachers decide to leave Oxfordshire schools?
3. Why do some teachers recruited to Oxfordshire schools choose to continue working in the county and what might induce more to stay?

As the data was being analysed it became clear that a fourth question should be included to allow us to report on the extent of the problem of recruitment as it impacted in terms of unfilled vacancies and to reflect induction tutors' analyses of the difficulties that schools faced. An additional question was therefore inserted (which became Question 2):

- What obstacles are there to the effective recruitment of NQTs in Oxfordshire

4.1.2 Methods of data collection

The original research design included three key elements:

- a questionnaire survey sent to all state-funded primary and secondary and special schools asking about the appointment and subsequent employment trajectory of NQTs appointed within the last three years (target: responses related to 100 teachers; received responses related to 163 teachers);
- a series of interviews with teachers recruited as NQTs who had remained within the county for at least three years (target: 30 interviews; conducted interviews with 32 teachers); and
- a small number of group interviews with teachers from each sector who were responsible within school for induction support (target: interviews with at least 5 induction tutors in each case primary and secondary phase; achieved responses from 6 primary and 13 secondary tutors using a combination of group and individual interviews and individual written responses to the same questions).

It was also decided (at a point when recruitment to the survey was progressing very slowly) to invite a number of secondary NQTs who were attending an induction course at OUDE to complete a short

questionnaire providing relevant details about their own career trajectories and experience so far. Nine such questionnaires were completed and the data has been used, where relevant, particularly in fleshing out reports about the challenges of the NQT year and teachers' perceptions of different kinds of induction support.

All the data was collected during Terms 3 and 4 of the academic year 2015-16.

4.2 The questionnaire survey

An online survey (administered through Survey Monkey) was set up, with separate versions for state-funded primary, secondary and special schools within Oxfordshire, asking for information about the employment and career trajectory of any NQTs appointed to their school since 2012.

OTSA and Oxfordshire County Council both advertised the survey through their regular newsletters. Members of the research team in each university also used their existing contacts with teachers' responsible in school for initial teacher education and induction to encourage completion of the survey and direct it to the most appropriate person. The team also attended the Oxfordshire headteachers' conference in order to publicise it further.

The survey included two sections - a short series of questions about the number of NQTs employed by the school in the last three years, any unfilled vacancies in that period, and the number of teachers recruited as NQTs who had remained in post for more than three years. This final section was also used to invite the respondents to nominate appropriate teachers for the interview phase of the study.

The second section included a series of questions to be answered by senior leaders or administrative staff responsible for Human Resources (HR) in relation to each NQT appointed within the last three years. These questions relate to the NQTs' training route; their teaching qualification (e.g. subject specialism); the post to which they were recruited; and any subsequent moves/promotions within or beyond the school/county. While schools were invited to complete these questions for all relevant NQTs, those with very large numbers from which to choose were asked to provide details for a minimum of three teachers.

The aim was to secure survey responses for at least 100 teachers. Records from OTSA and Oxfordshire County Council suggested that in the last three years just over 1000 NQTs had been appointed (589 in primary schools, 455 in secondary schools and 10 in special schools), so this represented a minimum sample of approximately 10% of NQTs.

Questionnaire data was returned from 38 primary schools, with responses related to 87 teachers recruited as NQTs; from 19 secondary schools with responses related to 67 NQTs and from seven special schools with data related to eight NQTs. This meant that data was received in relation to 163 NQTs although some of these individual records were incomplete.

4.3 Telephone interviews with teachers recruited as NQTs who had remained in post for more than three years

Our original intention had been to conduct telephone interviews with 16 primary teachers, 12 secondary teachers and 2 teachers working in special school who were recruited as NQTs and who had remained in post for at least three years. This target was almost achieved in one case and slightly exceeded in the other two: 15 interviews were conducted with primary teachers, 13 with secondary teachers and four with teachers in special schools.

Potential participants were identified both through the school survey as explained above and by the Principal Investigator in each university asking colleagues working in partnership with local schools through their PGCE programmes to suggest further names of teachers known to them who were appointed as NQTs more than three years ago.

The research officers contacted potential participants by email initially providing details of the project and an opportunity to ask questions about it. Once consent had been given arrangements were made for the telephone interview, which generally lasted between 15 and 20 minutes, at a mutually convenient time. All the interviews were recorded.

The interview questions asked both about the teachers' reasons for taking a post in Oxfordshire and for remaining in the school. They were asked about the support that they had received in their early years in teaching as well as the challenges that they had faced at different points and the particular factors that had prompted or might prompt them to consider leaving. Respondents (especially those recruited from ITE programmes based in the county) were also asked about any peers training with them who had chosen to seek work elsewhere and/or colleagues who had chosen to leave – asking what they thought the reasons were

4.4 Focus group/individual interviews with teachers responsible for NQT induction, supplemented by individual questionnaires

Our original intention had been to hold two focus group interviews with teachers responsible for induction - one primary and one secondary, involving a minimum of five participants. We had intended to hold these discussions in Oxford Brookes University and in the University of Oxford, respectively, scheduling them to follow existing meetings that brought such teachers into the university in connection with their work on the PGCE programmes.

In practice, it proved difficult to accommodate group interviews with the appropriate personnel. Although we succeeded in bringing together four induction tutors within the secondary phase, it was decided to increase the pool of responses by offering to conduct individual interviews with relevant senior leaders or to invite them to provide written responses to the same questions if that proved easier for them.

Eventually responses were obtained from 6 primary and 13 secondary teachers responsible for

induction.

4.5 Additional data sources

It was also decided (at a point when recruitment to the survey was progressing very slowly) to invite a small number of current NQTs to provide further details about their experiences. This additional data was collected as the opportunity presented itself and although it ultimately proved less important as we succeeded in recruiting to target we have chosen to include the additional insights gained from these sources where they are relevant.

At primary level, two newly-qualified teachers in one school were interviewed by telephone about the challenges that they were currently facing as NQTs and the training and support that they were receiving. They were also asked about the likelihood of leaving their current post within the next two or three years and any motives behind their response to this question.

At secondary level those NQTs who were attending an induction course at OUDE (as part of an OTSA/OUDE programme) were asked to complete a short questionnaire providing relevant details about their own career trajectories and experience so far. The NQTs were invited to respond to a paper-based survey that explored specific questions about the challenges that they were currently facing as NQTs and the training and support that they were receiving. They were also asked about the likelihood of leaving their current post within the next two or three years and the reasons behind their response to this question. Responses were received from nine NQTs: two teachers in each of the following subjects: Science, Maths, English and MFL, and one in history.

4.8 Full details of the data collected for the special school survey

4.8.1 Survey responses from special schools [data from seven schools relating to eight NQTs]

The invitation to participate in the survey was sent by email to all special schools within the county and seven schools responded. One school explained that they had a policy of not recruiting NQTs; the other six schools provided data relating to one or two teachers recruited to their school as NQTs during the course of the past three years. Specific data was thus provided for 8 individual teachers, some of whom were described as teaching students at a particular key stage while others were described as teaching a number of different subjects. Although most of the six schools tended to span both the primary and secondary age range, half of them focused predominantly on one or the other.

4.8.2 Telephone interviews with teachers recruited to special schools as NQTs who had remained in post for more than 3 years [4 interviews]

Telephone interviews, lasting between 15 and 20 minutes in most cases, were conducted with four special school teachers, originally recruited to their schools as NQTs. They came from two different schools and had been nominated by the teacher who had completed the school survey. Although the sample was obviously a small one, it was significantly different from the sample of teachers recruited for interview from the surveys of primary and secondary teachers in mainstream schools in that all the teachers had been in post for at least six years (and some considerably longer) and three of the four were quite senior teachers within the school. The pattern of long-term retention and promotion of teachers within the schools that these figures seem to reflect is, however, entirely consistent with the impressions of the schools given by these teachers in interview.

Chapter 7: Detailed findings for special schools

1. What attracts NQTs to work in special schools in Oxfordshire?

1.1 Findings from survey data about the trajectories of recent NQTs

The respondents completing the survey were able to give training details about five of the eight teachers that had been recruited as NQTs. In four cases the teachers had trained locally within Oxfordshire or Buckinghamshire and the fifth had trained in a neighbouring county.

1.2 Findings from interviews with teachers in special schools recruited as NQTs (still in post after 3+ years)

Of the four teachers interviewed two had trained within Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire and another with a provider in a neighbouring county. They were all **living locally** before they undertook their training, which was also true of the fourth teacher, who had gone to London to train only after working in the school as a Teaching Assistant. In this case, the head had encouraged them to consider returning as an NQT. In two cases the teachers had specific knowledge of, and interest in, working in the school before they undertook their training – which was what persuaded them to apply. In all four cases the teachers were essentially committed to working in the area and regarded it as impractical to go anywhere else. Unsurprisingly, they had no reservations about taking up a post in the county.

2. What obstacles are there to the effective recruitment of NQTs to special schools in Oxfordshire?

2.1 Findings from survey data about the trajectories of recent NQTs

None of the six special schools that responded to the survey reported any vacancies that had been unfilled for at least three months. This would suggest that they have **relatively few difficulties** recruiting adequate numbers of teachers.

1.2 Findings from interviews with teachers in special schools recruited as NQTs (still in post after 3+ years)

The only sense in which the data that we collected suggested that there might be any difficulty in terms of *effective* recruitment of NQTs came from the responses of the teachers interviewed. With the exception of the one NQT who had undertaken their training largely within the special school (through the GTP route), and found the school-based elements of the course very appropriate, the others had received very **limited specialist training** related to the demands of a special school. The particular challenges that they faced related not only to understanding the needs of the children, but also to their responsibilities to communicate effectively with parents and to manage the work of other adults. An additional demand for which some felt unprepared was the **breadth of curricular knowledge** that they found they also needed. Even the teacher who was following the GTP route reflected that the university-based elements of her programme had not been geared to the specific demands of teaching in a special school.

3. Why do early career teachers leave the special schools to which they were recruited as NQTs?

3.1 Findings from survey data about the trajectories of recent NQTs

Of the eight NQTs included in the survey data, two of the eight teachers recruited as NQTs left their roles in special schools at the end of their first year. In one case, the teacher moved to another maintained school outside the county, and it was suggested that this was because of the cost of living in Oxfordshire. In the other case the teacher left the profession, and it was suggested that this was because they lacked the resilience needed to work in that particular school.

3.2 Findings from telephone interviews with teachers recruited to special schools as NQTs

3.2.1 The nature and extent of the challenges that they faced as NQTs (including the extent to which they felt prepared for the challenges)

Extent of the challenge: In three out of the four cases, the teachers who had been recruited as NQTs reported that they had found their first year 'very' or 'extremely' challenging. The fourth noted that while the 'challenges' were greater than they had been in their PGCE year, the workload was not as intense so that the experience overall was less 'overwhelming'.

The nature of the challenge: In most cases the challenges were associated with the fact that their initial training had not really equipped them to work in a special school, so they had **much to learn about children with complex needs**. One teacher described this process as like 'starting from scratch'. In addition to handling **difficult incidents** that arose in relation to individual students,

associated demands included **liaison with parents** and **managing the work of other staff**. Even for the teacher who had followed an employment-based route (the GTP) and was thus familiar with the particular demands of the role there were challenges: one associated with safeguarding issues in relation to students with very severe problems and the other stemming simply from the volume of work.

The extent to which they felt prepared for the challenge: None of the teachers really felt that their training programme had adequately prepared them for the **challenges that they faced in a special school setting**. The teacher following the GTP route felt well-supported in the school and that they had been appropriately guided in that context, but felt that the university-based training (because of the lack of time devoted to it) had necessarily lacked depth and any specific focus on special educational needs. One of the teachers who had undertaken a mainstream PGCE programme had been given some opportunities for additional observation in special school settings, but similarly felt that the programme should have addressed special educational needs more effectively. Another teacher who had pursued a mainstream route was more resigned to the mismatch, knowing that there would be elements of the role for which they would necessarily be unprepared, but regarding what they had taken from their training programme as serving them very well.

3.2.2 Reports on their colleagues' reasons for leaving

Although three of the four teachers interviewed were aware of colleagues recruited as NQTs who had since left the school, most of them suggested that the staffing at their schools was generally very stable. This was the view of the fourth teacher who could not recall any NQTs who had since left. While two teachers mentioned personal reasons for colleagues' moves, related to decisions to move nearer to family members, they suggested that this was less common than moves to secure further promotion, which was also cited by a third teacher. They noted that once teachers wanted to move beyond middle leadership into more senior positions there were few opportunities at the school, which meant that they would have to move at that point.

3.2.3 Reports on their own reasons for considering leaving

Two of the four special school teachers who were interviewed suggested that they had at some point considered leaving teaching. In one case this was stimulated simply by the desire to do something different. In the other, the teacher wondered whether they needed to take time out to 'regroup' – perhaps by taking time to work in another country.

When asked if they had ever considered moving to another school, only one of the four teachers suggested that they had considered this. Their reasons were related to the cost of living and their quality of life – noting a desire to live by the sea. In explaining why they had never been tempted to consider a move, three of the teachers stressed how fortunate they were to work where they did. Essentially they **enjoyed their work** and could not imagine being as lucky again in finding a school that would offer them the same **opportunities for career progression** as they had enjoyed. Nor could they see the scope to secure better outcomes for students anywhere else.

4. Why do some secondary teachers recruited as NQTs to special schools in Oxfordshire choose to continue working in the school and what might induce others to stay?

4.1 Findings from telephone interviews with teachers recruited as NQTs

4.1.1 The nature and effectiveness of support in their NQT year

Support that they had expected: Three of the four teachers reported that they had expected to be allocated a mentor and additional non-contact time. Only one teacher specifically mentioned their expectation that they would be taught how to teach students with learning disabilities. Three of the teachers also mentioned their expectations of broad support from across the school community – including advice from different subject leaders and support from the senior leadership team. In some cases these expectations of wider support drew on their prior knowledge of the school.

Support that they received: All the teachers were allocated a **designated mentor** (and in the one case where that mentor fell ill, a senior teacher stepped in to fill the position). They also all stressed the wide range of help and guidance that they received, with opportunities for observation of others (as well as observation and feedback on their own teaching and progress towards the standards), team teaching and lots of *'incidental'* support. One teacher described this as *'phenomenal'* (Interview 2), explaining that *'the emotional and practical support was always there, whenever it was needed'*. Although one teacher noted that they didn't get as much help with their curriculum needs as they had anticipated, another was effusive about the extent to which subject leaders acknowledged and fulfilled their responsibilities to guide NQTs. Only one teacher mentioned attending training offered by the local authority.

Value attributed to that support: All four teachers were very appreciative of the support that they had received; one describing it as the *'maximum'* help (Interview 3) they could have been offered; another referring to it as *'incredible'* and a third acknowledging how privileged they felt, given that the level of support was very different in other schools. Particular praise was expressed for the way in which senior managers protected their non-contact time, for the **quality of the mentoring** that they had received and for the way in which the internal support from the school had **built their confidence**. While external training was regarded as worthwhile, not least for the changes to meet other NQTs, the school support was what *'really built me'* (Interview 4).

4.1.2 Other kinds of informal support that they received in the NQT year

The nurturing nature of the schools as they related to their students' needs seem to have been fully extended to the **nurture of the NQTs**. The teachers in these contexts repeatedly made use of superlatives, variously describing their schools as *'phenomenally'* or *'exceptionally'* supportive, or with an *'incredible ethos'*. One teacher could *'distinctly remember colleagues 'putting their heads round the door and checking that everything was all right; saying "Good luck for your first day" – those things that make a big, big difference'* (Interview 2). The schools came across as committed to teachers' professional development and therefore consistently reflective about their practice: *'They*

*love to examine what is happening? How do we make what happens to these young people that come to us the best that it can be?’ (Interview 3) But they also seemed to **avoid placing inappropriate pressure on staff**: ‘They looked after me to make sure I didn’t have unrealistic expectations of what I could achieve. Not judgmental or overly critical, but supported and developed you as a professional’).*

One teacher acknowledged that more support was available to them beyond the school, mentioning training sessions and a discussion forum provided by OTSA had they felt in need of it. But essentially the quality of the mentoring that they had received meant that they felt little need for anything further.

4.1.3 Nature and effectiveness of support in their second year of teaching

None of the teachers suggested that there had been any kind of specific programme expressly designed for teachers in their second year, although two of them mentioned being aware of a particular teacher (their former mentor or the school’s deputy head) continuing to ‘*keep an eye*’ (Interview 3) or ‘*informally check-up*’ (Interview 2) on how they were doing. In some cases the nature of the school, with regular curriculum or SEND-focused workshops, meant that they continued to receive regular support for further development; in others the teachers assumed specific leadership roles which gave them further well-structured opportunities for professional learning. In these two cases where the teachers took on subject leadership roles in their second years, they both stressed the specific support that they received in this role; one emphasising the ‘*framework*’ (Interview 4) that structured that support as he progressed and the other stressing the ongoing support ‘*from peers as well as the leadership team*’ (Interview 2). Overall, three of the four teachers summed up the support that they had received in their second year as ‘*very helpful*’ or ‘*really good, with a great focus*’ (Interview 4). (The other teacher merely refrained from offering a general summary in addition to their specific descriptions of different features.)

4.1.4 Nature and effectiveness of support in their third year of teaching

The teachers continued to describe their schools as very **supportive** in their third year of practice. Three of them mentioned that they took on new responsibilities at the end of that third year and in all three cases they described how they had been preparing for the role – either through specific research projects they were doing in connection with a subject association, or in consultation with the colleagues moving on from the role, or through discussions initiated in **professional development** meetings. It seemed clear that the schools in which they worked were very aware of teachers’ potential and interest in career development as well as professional learning and took **succession planning** very seriously.

4.1.5 Other kinds of support that they would have welcomed in their first 3 years of teaching

Three of the teachers interviewed could not think of any other ways in which they personally could

have been supported during their first three years, although one of them acknowledged that teachers with a different approach to their own professional learning might have welcomed more theoretical input in the form of a Master's programme. Another acknowledged that it might be important for there to be a more effective back-up system if teachers were not being effectively supported. Although OTSA had apparently reviewed the provision that was being offered, this particular teacher was not entirely convinced that they would have had any authority to insist on improvement in cases where that might prove necessary.

The one specific suggestion as to how their own support could have been improved was that the local authority programme should offer **NQT induction that was specific to special schools**. They felt that the authority was insufficiently aware of the distinctions between mainstream and special schools and thus was failing to provide appropriate opportunities for special school staff.

4.1.6 Specific factors that induced them to stay when they had contemplated leaving teaching

The two teachers who had never even considered leaving suggested that the main reason for this was that they had never been overwhelmed by their workload or the stress of the job. One felt that they had never experienced difficulties of work-life balance while the other explained that they had '*closely watched*' (Interview 1) this especially when the pressure was on, so that they did not burn out or become disillusioned. The same teacher had deliberately *not* sought a more senior position because it was the '*joy*' of working with students and the love of '*continuing to learn*' that was their chief motivation.

In both cases where the teachers had contemplated leaving teaching, they reported that it was their loyalty to the school and their fundamental belief in the quality of the work that it was doing that persuaded them to stay.

4.1.7 Specific factors that induced them to stay when they had contemplated moving elsewhere

It was essentially the same loyalty to their school and belief in the quality of provision offered to the students that both prevented the teachers from contemplating a move anywhere else and held back the one teacher who had wondered about doing so (in order to find somewhere cheaper to live and nearer the sea.) The teachers re-emphasised how lucky they felt in their current contexts, their enjoyment of the work that they were doing and the quality of the outcomes that their school was making it possible to achieve for students. Although two of the teachers also noted that their family was settled in the area too, these points were made after they had stressed their own sense of commitment and enjoyment of the work.

4.1.8 Specific factors that they believed might induce them to stay longer

Only one of the four teachers suggested that they might perhaps leave their current school within the next two or three years in order to secure a more senior post. In this case they did not offer any

suggestions about what might induce them to stay. Another teacher, who had no intention of leaving, stressed that the school had achieved an '*amazing balance*' between striving for continual improvement and ensuring that everyone enjoyed what they were doing: '*Everybody works to the best of their ability. We have incredibly high standards and work so hard, always raising their own game and raising others through challenge. All take genuine pleasure in what they do*' (Interview 2). Another feature of the school that made it so attractive to this particular teacher was the way in which '*decisions are made collectively rather than unilaterally*'. The teacher felt that '*people treat the leadership team on an equal footing, rather than as a hierarchy*' and that the school had found ways to enable individuals to contribute to those aspects of management in which they were most interested.

In reflecting on what might have induced colleagues to stay when they had left to seek promotion elsewhere, the only suggestion that was made related to creating appropriate development opportunities at the school. It was noted that this had occasionally been done where it was possible within the school budget, but there seemed less scope for the school to be able to do so in future.