

Budget school spend: education recruiter responds

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Wednesday, 8 March 2017

Philip Hammond pledged to help fund up to 110 new free schools, including specialist maths schools, in today's Budget. However, at a time when teacher shortages are already wreaking havoc on the sector, a veteran education recruiter has questioned the feasibility of the proposal.

Commenting on the announcement, Baljinder Kuller, who has over 15 years' experience in education recruitment, and is now Managing Director of online supply teacher portal, The Supply Register, said;

"While it's fantastic that the education sector has not been overlooked in what has been hailed by many as a 'no-frills' Budget, Hammond's plans seem to outright ignore the existing issues that school leaders are currently facing.

"At a time when headteachers are protesting about a funding crisis in existing schools, directing funds into new schools seems bizarre – particularly when the National Audit Office is questioning if free schools offer value for money, with half of the 113,500 new places being opened in free schools by 2021 creating spare capacity in nearby schools.

"Aside from this, we need to take into account existing skills shortages in the education sector. Recent news that the number of graduates training to be teachers has fallen for the fourth year running, with a 2,000 shortfall in the number of people starting initial teacher training courses in 2016, is the latest in a long line of indicators that the current teacher recruitment crisis only looks set to worsen. Consequently, this money would be better invested in training and developing teachers to help mend damaged talent pipelines and fill existing vacancies. What's the point of building new schools if there are not the teachers to fill them?"

- Ends -