

Speech: Justine Greening: teachers – the experts driving social mobility

Thank you, Alison [Peacock, CEO of the Chartered College of Teaching].

It's such a pleasure to be here at the inaugural national conference of the Chartered College of Teaching. I think today marks an historic step change for the teaching profession.

And I wanted to talk to you – not just about what I think about teaching – but also how I feel about the teaching profession. I belong to a profession too – I'm an accountant. That's what I trained in and the job I did before I got into politics.

One of the things I learnt early on in my career was the importance of being part of a profession – a community of experts with a shared commitment to best practice and driving up standards.

When people ask me now what my profession is, I still say that I am an accountant – because when you are a member of a profession, it is something you are for life.

I know teachers feel the same way about their own profession, and that is why today – and this inaugural conference – is so important.

Teachers are the experts who inspire the professionals of the future.

And we shouldn't underestimate just how powerful that is – from architects to academics, geologists to graphic designers, technicians to translators – it is teachers who lay the foundations for the successful careers the young people who are growing up in our country today want and need.

When I visit schools I talk to children and I wonder who they're going to be. What they can be. It is teachers who, on a day-to-day basis, understand and develop that potential to enable and shape those young people to – as it were – become themselves.

Teaching deserves all the hallmarks of the other great professions – with a high bar to entry, high-quality initial training and a culture of ongoing self-improvement.

So it's crucial that, like other experts, you now have a professional body with a shared commitment to ever-improving standards, disseminating evidence on what works, and driving progress for the profession as a whole.

I've been really clear that my defining goal as Education Secretary is improving social mobility across our country. So that it does not matter where you start, or where you grow up, you have the same opportunities to reach your potential.

And I know that I can't do that without you – a strong profession able to make it a reality.

That is why, in my [speech last month](#) setting out my vision, I placed building the right, long-term capacity in the system as 1 of the 3 core pillars of my approach for driving social mobility through education.

This, above everything else, means investing in the people who work in our schools – and that is what I want to talk about today.

Teachers are the great drivers of social mobility in our country. We know that the single biggest in-school influence on a child's life chances is the quality of teaching they receive – in fact, over a single school year, a strong teacher can help disadvantaged young people to gain as much as a whole extra year's worth of learning, compared to those taught by a weaker one.

So great teachers are the key to making sure that people can achieve their potential irrespective of where they start in life. I know that from my own personal experience. Teachers are experts in levelling up opportunity for all our young people.

So that is why we've particularly got to do more to attract the best teachers to our more challenging schools, and to reward and invest in those currently working there.

To me, education is about a child being ready and wanting to learn and a great teacher being able to engage and inspire them. Everything else is just an enabler.

When I was at school in Rotherham in the 1980s, my teachers helped me to make the most of my own talents. Without them I could never have got into the career that I wanted.

We never forget great teachers. I clearly remember one of my best teachers – my French teacher Mr Tranter. He made sure that all his pupils, including those who weren't particularly keen on learning French, were going to do it brilliantly.

Mr Tranter had his own techniques – as all teachers do. His was to plant his feet at one end of the board, start writing, steadily going further, and further across the board. We would all watch him to see, firstly whether he was going to be able to write straight – which he did of course – and secondly whether he would remain upright by the time he reached the other side.

He was a fantastic teacher. The proof of this was when, years later, I found myself as a newly qualified accountant in Switzerland. I was able to remember my French as if I had walked out of the classroom the day before, thanks to the amazing teaching by Mr Tranter.

I remember from when I started as Education Secretary, the many emails and letters from teachers around the country, sharing your thoughts and perspectives on what the priorities should be for education.

And I also received a letter from Mr Tranter, which actually started with the line “you probably won’t remember me”. Of course I did, because everybody remembers their amazing teachers.

People never forget great teachers because the impact they have on our lives goes beyond that of other people that we will go on to meet. That is why this profession is so important – it is transformational.

Across the country, teachers are doing an amazing job every single day of the week.

We have flown around the world to try to ensure we have the best, most innovative teaching that is out there – I was recently in Shanghai to observe how they teach maths. And they do it brilliantly. But it has really struck me what incredible expertise and practice there is right here on our doorstep.

And part of our challenge is unlocking that best practice, understanding why it works, and disseminating it around other schools and teachers. It is important for us to be able to do that effectively, which is why I believe the Chartered College of Teaching can be so important.

It is important that all teachers are supported with the right framework that will allow them to become the best professionals they possibly can be.

A framework of support that will allow the profession – your profession – to flourish.

Strong entry into the profession

That support has to start when teachers begin their journey into the profession, with a real focus on evidence-based practice through the new ITT framework, recently developed by leading teachers and heads.

And we know that initial training is just the first step. I want there to be an expectation of ongoing learning throughout a teacher’s career – and the support necessary for that to happen.

A mature profession like teaching also needs high-status qualifications that reflect its standing.

So I want to be really clear today about my views on qualified teacher status.

Some people have suggested that QTS might be scrapped... or replaced with some vague notion of an ‘accreditation’ – let me be absolutely clear: not on my watch.

Keeping and strengthening QTS is vital. This is not about removing school freedoms. But I believe that teachers should have the highest quality qualification and what I want to see is a QTS so well regarded, so strong that school leaders will naturally want all their teaching staff to have it.

QTS should be the foundation stone for the teaching profession to build on.

And I want to strengthen it as a first step to ensuring that people entering teaching in the future join a profession that, as well as being truly valued, empowers them with access to the sustained high-quality training and development that every professional needs in the early stages of their career.

My aim is that from September 2019 we will introduce the newly strengthened QTS. And I want to work closely with the profession – including those of you here today – to shape what that will look like.

Meaningful professional development

And of course professional development as a teacher doesn't stop once you qualify – it has to continue.

The first few years are crucial for new teachers to embed learning and also to find their place in the classroom and the wider school community.

Getting this right means making sure that a new generation of teachers have the support they need, not only within their school, but from a broader profession made up of experts, with a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills.

There is a growing culture and ethos within the teaching profession of constantly seeking to improve teaching methods, use evidence, to look at research and stay ahead of the curve – just like other professions like medicine, engineering or law.

This culture of constantly pushing to do better – a hallmark of a great profession – will continue to be strengthened and embedded by teachers, with the support of the Chartered College of Teaching, as well as organisations like the Education Endowment Foundation and ResearchED.

This continued professional development also needs to happen within clear career development pathways – whether staying in the classroom as a subject expert, working elsewhere in the education system as part of a wider 'education career', or progressing into school leadership roles.

Lots of schools and multi-academy trusts are already doing this brilliantly – but I want it to become the norm throughout the system, whatever type of school you teach in, wherever you are.

And I want to work with you – the profession – to make sure this happens, with a golden thread through every teacher's career from initial training and QTS through continuing professional development, especially in those early post-QTS years, through to specialism or leadership.

We all know that for a culture of development to work, the highest quality, evidence-based CPD has to be available – particularly where it is needed, in our more challenging schools.

So today, I am opening the first round of bidding for the £75 million

Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund.

This first round of funding will support programmes which will have an impact in the [12 opportunity areas I recently announced](#) – where we want to really galvanise social mobility to increase opportunity for young people, as well as in other areas throughout the country where it can make the biggest difference.

This fund will enable new, high-quality CPD provision to be delivered where it can make the most difference and where it's needed most.

I believe that, as much as anything, investing in home-grown talent in these more challenging areas where we want to see educational outcomes improve, is absolutely vital. That talent will be key to supporting disadvantaged pupils and driving forward social mobility.

People are often most invested in improving the schools and pupil outcomes in their own communities.

This was something I saw within the DfE when I launched the opportunity areas. Lots of officials who had grown up in them came forward to offer help – they wanted to be involved. They know the areas like the backs of their hands, and now they are helping to champion change on the ground.

The Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund will also help to provide new evidence of what works, to add to the growing evidence base for the teaching profession, and enable approaches that are working locally to be scaled-up, so that teachers and leaders across the country can benefit.

I want to see us increasingly move from carrying out pilots to scaling up what works. We need to get into the phase of being able to spread that knowledge right across our school system so that all teachers and leaders, in all areas, can benefit.

I also think it's important that existing training is reviewed and reshaped – to make sure it keeps up with emerging practice and evidence.

So I can confirm that the new fully revised, gold-standard national professional qualifications – developed in partnership with the teaching profession – will be implemented from September this year.

There will be new high-quality qualifications for middle and senior leaders, headteachers, and – for the first time – executive leaders. I'd like to thank the expert working group that has put so much work into this.

The qualifications build on the strong NPQ brand, with a revised content framework, to reflect the education system of today, and with an even stronger emphasis on the use of evidence and support for the pupils that need it most.

And running through all this there is a recognition that we need to be conscious of the right approach for teachers working with children with special educational needs and disabilities. Every teacher is a teacher of

children with SEN and disabilities, so it is important to ensure that this is mainstreamed within our NPQs, training and best practice. I think this needs to happen as they are being developed, rather than as an afterthought so that the professionals are properly equipped to support all pupils.

I think the national professional qualifications for school leaders should have the same kudos that MBAs do in business – recognised in and outside the profession as qualifications that empower individuals with high-quality leadership and management skills.

I want to make sure that these new qualifications are available to as many people as possible – particularly in the areas where they can make the biggest difference.

I want to support those working in challenging schools by investing in their development.

That is why I have set aside up to £10 million from the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund to incentivise take-up of these new gold-standard NPQs for high-potential professionals working in our most challenging schools. These people are key to raising standards and driving social mobility, and I want to support them however I can.

And alongside this, I also want to do much more to attract the very best teachers and school leaders in the system to work in and transform our most challenging schools.

I think we should be looking at how can use career progression routes to make that happen and I am directing my department to explore the available options.

Helping to meet wider challenges

I recognise that strong career pathways are not just about recruitment and making sure we get the best and brightest people coming into the profession. To me it is just as much about retention.

I know that there are challenges in teaching – yes, on recruitment and retention, but also on workload – challenges that we all need to tackle together.

Of course, there is no silver bullet to solve these, and I wouldn't want to underestimate the challenges.

We will shortly publish the findings of the DfE's teacher workload survey, and an action plan setting out what we will do – including a programme of targeted support for schools to tackle workload where it is most needed.

I want to work with the profession to explore new and innovative ways to address these challenges. And I want that mind-set of partnership with the teaching profession to exist throughout the Department for Education.

I believe a new focus on making sure all teachers have a clear and supported career path can help with some of these issues.

I want our teaching professionals to have clarity about how you can progress in your careers, a framework of support, and a culture that continues to embed new evidence and learning.

This has to underpin how we make teaching an even more attractive and rewarding profession to join and stay in.

And our continuing work with you, as well as the teaching unions, on reducing workload – including relentlessly challenging practices which add unnecessary burdens to your days – is part of how we make sure there is the time for you to spend on your own development and the skills you need in the classroom.

A self-confident profession

When I look at the profession, I believe a lot of the key building blocks are already in place.

Through organisations like the Education Endowment Foundation, evidence-based practice is really starting to take off, and the Chartered College of Teaching can be a real driver for that – collecting research and disseminating it for the benefit of the system as a whole, and connecting the teaching profession more widely.

Its establishment shows that the profession is stepping up to address the needs of today's young people and evolve to meet the challenges for future generations.

And I especially want to see a new generation of teachers becoming part of the Chartered College of Teaching – to help safeguard and shape the profession's future. You have as much to invest and are as invested in its success as anyone.

With evidence at the core of the way you deliver teaching for our children and young people, I believe the teaching profession can continue to assert itself as a truly high-status profession.

Teachers are the experts on teaching, and so I want to see the teaching profession leading on raising standards in schools.

And to return to my core ambition as Education Secretary, I know it is great teachers and teaching that – more than anything else – can level up opportunity and drive social mobility in this country.

Great teaching transformed my life, and I want to make sure that happens for today's generation of children in our schools.

I'm therefore thrilled to have been here today to mark this inaugural conference.

It really is an historic step for the teaching profession and I look forward

to the difference the independent Chartered College of Teaching – and you – will continue to make for children and young people throughout the country.

Thank you.