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Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for School Standards

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Mr Rob Wilson MP
By email: james.giblett@parliament.uk

20 February 2017

Dear Rob

Thank you for your email of 26 January, on behalf of Reading Secondary Heads, regarding teacher recruitment.

I was sorry to read about the concerns head teachers in Reading have about teacher recruitment and retention. I look forward to meeting you tomorrow to discuss these issues in more detail.

In advance of our meeting, you may be interested to read our latest teacher recruitment information. The initial teacher training (ITT) census for 2016/17, which was published on 24 November 2016, showed that secondary postgraduate recruitment is at its highest level since 2011/12. 15,713 secondary postgraduate trainee teachers have been recruited this year, which is over 500 more secondary trainees than last year.

We have the highest number of trainees in science and mathematics since 2011/12. There are 5,850 trainees in these subjects this year, an increase of 12 per cent on 2015/16, at a time when the economic recovery is creating many more employment opportunities for STEM graduates.

In addition, we have recruited more trainees than we did last year in most English Baccalaureate subjects: biology, chemistry, geography, mathematics and modern foreign languages. In physics, traditionally our hardest subject to recruit to, figures are up 15 per cent on 2015/16.

We do, however, recognise that teacher recruitment and retention can be challenging for some schools and in certain areas of the country. That is why we are spending over £1.3 billion on recruiting and training new teachers in the five years up to 2020 – including up to 2,500 additional mathematics and physics teachers.

With regard to the concerns raised about affordable housing, officials at the Department for Communities and Local Government have advised that, at the Autumn Statement 2016, the Government announced an additional

£1.4 billion in the Affordable Homes Programme, increasing the overall budget to £7.1 billion to deliver 225,000 affordable housing starts by March 2021. The expanded programme now allows a wide range of affordable housing products. All qualifying workers, including teachers, would likely be eligible for Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy homes which are available at sub-market rent, allowing tenants to save for a deposit for their first home, providing that they are otherwise unable to afford to purchase on the open market and have a household income of less than £80,000. They can also benefit from our other housing offers such as Help to Buy, with up to 20 per cent equity loan, and starter homes which will give a minimum of 20 per cent discount exclusively for first time buyers aged between 23 and 40.

With best wishes.

In much

Nick