



Influencer Award

Name of organisation or individual nominated

Teach First

1. What were you trying to change? (maximum 200 words)

Help us understand your vision, aims and the factors that drive you forward

In 2008, just 24% of children claiming free school meals (FSM) achieved five GCSE A* - C grades including Maths and English, compared to 51% of those not on FSM.

Excellent teaching has an effect on achievement that spans social backgrounds. Studies show that the lowest performing pupils are first to respond to effective teaching. Pupil achievement can show a differential as high as 53 percentile places over three years as a result of teaching sequence, controlling for other factors.

Yet schools in the most disadvantaged communities typically struggle to recruit. A 2005 IPPR study found vulnerable schools filled 55% of advertised teaching vacancies, compared to 79% in equivalent schools in non-disadvantaged areas. Teaching has also struggled to attract the brightest graduates as a career path. In 1999 graduates with an upper second class degree were 50 per cent more likely to train to teach than those with a first, rising to 90% more likely for those with a 2:2.

We believed that this combination of data put a powerful case for an organisation to work to raise the status and the effectiveness of teaching, and place more high-quality, socially responsible recruits specifically into challenging schools, where the need is greatest.

2. How did you use your influence? (Maximum 200 words)

Who did you influence, what methods did you use to influence them and how did you overcome problems etc.

We have been successful in grabbing the attention of business leaders and politicians. We are supported by teaching unions and leading employers, and we encourage their employees to become highly involved in delivering Teach First's Programme.

Our approach rests on working in partnership with existing teacher training providers, business, schools, and government to provide participants with the highest possible quality of teaching and leadership training. This has meant engaging them in what was a new and initially controversial approach to teacher training – we needed them on board to quality assure our support for teachers, both in the classroom and our leadership development opportunities.

We have devised an offer successful in inspiring some of the UK's most exceptional graduates to teach, and convinced headteachers across of the UK of our ability to select candidates of great merit. Our 2009 cohort is 485 strong, and we have worked with over 200 schools since 2003.

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Initially, our recruitment process, ongoing teaching and leadership training and support for schools was delivered through a skeleton staff working in collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University and corporate supporters, including the membership of business organisation London First. Through these first core advocates we have grown our networks of support to support increasing impact - expanding to five UK regions; Masters-accrediting our Programme to enhance its appeal; and creating a set of opportunities for Ambassadors (alumni) to address educational disadvantage inside and outside the classroom (67%+ remain actively involved), with the goal of securing a legacy of systemic change.

3. What changed? (Maximum 200 words)

e.g. Did you change a law, an attitude, a policy, a conflict situation?

Our impact has been significant and widely recognised.

We have raised the status of teaching, with Teach First ranked 8th most prestigious graduate employer by the 2009 Times High Fliers Survey, and voted by students the most popular graduate recruiter to the public sector. In 2008, 5% of all eligible Oxbridge finalists applied to Teach First, and 2% of all eligible Russell Group graduates.

Ofsted reported in 2008 that some of our teachers were *'amongst the most exceptional seen on any teacher training route'*, with half of the inspected (2006) cohort achieving QTS at the highest level. The presence of Teach First teachers was reported to have *'a markedly beneficial impact on the schools involved'*, with contributions including *'a notable impact on transforming under-performing departments'*.

In 2008 we secured a substantial package of funding from Government which, if match funded by other sources through our fundraising, will enable us to sustain and grow Teach First in five regions of the UK. We aim to recruit 850 graduates per year by 2013, making us one of the top two bulk graduate recruiters in the UK, and are seeking to support 100 of our teachers into headship positions by 2018.

Our model is now being applied in countries across the globe, with us advising on implementation.

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