

News

Today's highlights

- 11am** Matt Chorley talks to the Tory MP **Stephen Hammond** about being kicked out of the party for being a Remainer
- 2.40pm** **Mariella Frostrup** talks to **Rachel Cockerell** about *Melting Point*, her book about Russian Jews fleeing to Texas
- 3.45pm** The comedian **Tom Walker**, right, tells **Jane Garvey** and **Fi Glover** about his upcoming Jonathan Pie tour
- 10pm** **Carole Walker** live from North Carolina before Super Tuesday

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TODAY'S EDITION

NEWS



TIGHT CORNER
Pressure grows on Christian Horner over messages

PAGE 9

SPORT



OLYMPIC HOPES
Pole vaulter Molly Caudery is on a roll after Glasgow win

PAGE 50-51

TIMES2



DOMESTIC BLISS
Stay at home boyfriends become social media stars

PAGE 3

Surge in foreign candidates for teaching jobs Britain can't fill

Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor
Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

A "massive surge" in foreign teachers is being used to plug classroom vacancies as schools struggle to attract qualified British applicants.

Overseas applications for teacher training have doubled this year after ministers began a recruitment drive in countries including Nigeria and India and offered £10,000 payments for teachers to come to Britain.

One in 12 of those accepted on to teacher training programmes for this autumn is from outside Europe, up from one in 18 last year, with courses increasingly reliant on foreign staff to maintain numbers after a drop in successful applications from Britain.

Experts say British applicants are put off by poor pay, a heavy workload and children's disruptive behaviour.

Universities say they are accruing foreign applications in physics and languages, where the most generous bursaries of up to £27,000 are on offer, but that many applicants are unsuitable. One in four foreign applications is rejected, compared with one in 11 British applications.

The proportion of foreign rejections is a third lower than last year: 23 per cent of applications compared with 36 per

cent. But the number of foreign applicants accepted for training this autumn was up by 57 per cent from last year.

By far the biggest rise in applications has been in physics, where those coming from abroad to work or train are now eligible for £10,000 "international relocation payments".

Applications have tripled and acceptances have more than doubled for physics teacher training starting this September, which universities say is in large part owing to more interest from applicants in sub-Saharan Africa.

Last year the government launched a recruitment drive alongside relocation payments and a change in rules to more easily recognise maths, science and language-teaching qualifications from Ghana, India, Singapore, Jamaica, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

James Noble-Rogers is executive director of the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers, which represents universities offering initial teacher training. He welcomed the increase in applicants for subjects with shortages but added: "The sheer volume is disproportionate to the potential gains, we need a better system... the real solution is to boost domestic recruitment."

This year, 717 applicants from outside

Britain and the European Economic Area were accepted on courses, up from 456 last year. This compares with 9,411 accepted from Britain, down from 9,480 last year. A total of 6,920 applications were received from overseas.

Emma Hollis, chief executive of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers, said that there was a net gain in the number of acceptances and that the subjects that were benefiting were "the ones that we want to see", including physics, mathematics and computer science — which historically "have all struggled to recruit". She added: "Those shortage subjects are really at crisis point now so any net gain is worth pursuing. We need to ensure financial incentives continue."

The Department for Education insisted that the numbers coming from overseas were small, saying: "We are focused on striking the right balance between acting decisively to tackle net migration, which we are clear is far too high, and retaining and developing highly skilled teachers."

"Our recruitment and retention strategy will always be focused domestically, and schools in England now have more teachers than ever before."

Recruiting to classrooms from abroad is not sustainable, leading article, page 25