School Autonomy and the Teacher Labour Market

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Introduction

▶ Since 2002/03, 20% of secondary schools have become “sponsored academies”:
  ▶ Upon approval of the Department for Education (DfE), schools acquire autonomy over teachers’ management, school curriculum, structure of school day/year
  ▶ They get supervised by a Sponsor (Charity, Business, University)
  ▶ 80% of these schools are deemed low-performing by OFSTED prior to conversion

▶ Attracting and retaining good teachers is especially challenging for disadvantaged schools  (Glazerman et al. 2013, Springer et al. 2016, Swain et al. 2019, Benhenda 2020)

▶ Sponsored academies have improved students’ educational attainment  (Eyles and Machin 2015, Eyles et al. 2016, Andrews et al. 2017)

▶ How do sponsored academies affect teachers’ hiring, retention, and pay?
  ▶ We use secondary-school teachers’ data from the School Workforce Census (SWC) and the Database of Teacher Records (DTR) over period 2001/02-2018/19
  ▶ Compare the evolution of the outcomes of interest around conversion in schools that convert earlier (treated) and schools that convert (4 years) later (control)
Headteachers

The conversion tends to be accompanied by a change in the headteacher.
We also find that the new headteacher tends to be more educated, and more likely to come from an outstanding school or a different local authority.

Teachers’ turnover

LHS: The share of teachers leaving the school increases just before the conversion
LHS: It goes back to pre-conversion levels upon conversion
RHS: The share of new hired teachers’ increases from the conversion onward
Teachers’ and pupils’ numbers decrease before conversion and recover thereafter

Teachers’ composition and pay

1. Composition:
   • The conversion changes the composition of teachers towards younger, more educated, higher-achieving teachers
   • Teachers coming from other schools are more likely to come from outstanding schools or other LAs

2. Teachers’ pay:
   • The composition of teachers’ pay shifts away from additional payments such as “teaching and learning responsibility payments”
   • Pay dispersion across equally experienced teachers increases in the second year after conversion
Discussion

- Disadvantaged, OFSTED-deemed low-performing schools that convert into sponsored academies experience a substantial change of management.

- The conversion does not increase teachers’ retention, but leads to a change in teachers’ composition:
  - Sponsored academies are able to attract more educated and high-achieving teachers, both from outstanding schools and other sectors.

- Sponsored academies also limit the use of additional payments in teachers’ pay.

- We are currently working on:
  - Studying medium/long-term dynamics.
  - Estimating spillover effects to non-academy schools.

- Implications: importance of the school management to attract high-quality teachers and improve students’ outcomes.

(Bender et al. 2018, Huber et al. 2021, Lavy et al. 2023)
References


