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What type of teaching role do you have?
I am a primary class teacher in a large primary school teaching a P3 class.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?  
Aberdeen Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?  
The children are the reason that keeps me in the teaching profession. I have always wanted to be a teacher and from 9am until 3.20pm I love my job. It’s wonderful to be part of the excitement of new learning and experiences and to be able to make a difference. It is hard to put into words what I mean but ‘the children’ probably covers it. At the end of a holiday (like this morning) I look forward to seeing the children and hearing what they have been doing over the holidays, how many teeth they have lost etc.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)  
I hope to teach until I retire but if I had the financial means I would definitely go part time as I feel the lack of work life balance is a real concern for health and relationships and it also affects my ability to teach. I would be a better teacher if I worked part time without a doubt.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?  
I could perhaps be encouraged in a small school but the cons definitely outweigh the pros for me. As I have said, the positive aspect of teaching is the day with the children and as senior management I would lose that. I would also have more paperwork and meetings which are the parts of the job that make teaching a negative experience.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)  
In our school it has been very difficult to recruit full time teachers and so we now have a large number of job shares. There have been people applying for full time jobs who only want to work one day. I believe this is for the reason stated above – teaching is a very stressful job and by doing it part time you have a better chance of succeeding.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?  
We have had a lot of changes in our SfL team over the last few years and there is no longer a full time member of staff in that department.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?  
There is a need for something to be done to retain teachers currently working in schools and I believe that addressing workload and managing teacher
morale is the way forward. We are constantly having more piled on and nothing taken away and it is becoming increasingly unmanageable. At the same time, we are being given new benchmarks which mean meetings to look at these and next year it will be new assessments. These assessments along with NIF data will determine how well we are doing our job. As far as I am aware, they will only assess literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and yet we are being expected to teach these vital aspects of the curriculum in amongst a lot of clutter. To retain teachers they need to be given a manageable task that means they are clearly working in the same direction as the assessments rather that spinning lots of plates and suddenly crashing into a “quiz”. I tell the children these standardised assessments are quizzes as I know they too have high stress levels these days. There also needs to be greater understanding by those at the very top of what happens daily and weekly in classrooms, in particular with inclusion. The decrease in teacher morale seems to link to the decrease in classroom support. To retain teachers this support needs to be replaced. It supports teaching and learning and would therefore improve attainment and equally it supports the teacher, helps reduce workload and allows the teacher to get on with teaching.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

The pupil support assistants are required to support individuals with need for full time adult support and so other children see very little of these vital ‘supporters’ and there is of course little, if any, time for admin support for teachers. This isn’t due to difficulties recruiting but rather due to an increased number of children with these needs in mainstream school while little or no increase has been made to staffing.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

I would describe morale as low and perhaps very low. The passion is being lost to stress. The key factors are increasing paperwork and expectations at the same time as decreasing levels of classroom support. We are also being asked to prove we are doing our job through increased testing, data and paperwork while we are all doing above and beyond what is stated in our contracts and for low pay when you consider the number of hours we work. One major thing that staff complain about is the GTC professional development portal. We have to spend hours proving that we are doing our hours of professional learning, which is extra hours of workload that does
benefit the children in any way. The professional learning is of benefit but typing it up is now.

**Additional comments**

I have recently written to Mr Swinney to express most of the concerns I have detailed above. I am or at least I was a teacher with great passion for teaching and learning and while I can’t imagine leaving I totally understand why those around me are. Rather than focusing on recruiting new teachers who will not last long in current conditions, pay and conditions need to improve to retain those who are in the job already and then there will be teachers encouraging others to join the profession. Currently teacher are discouraging friends from joining.

WENDY CAMPBELL

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

Primary Teacher – fulltime permanent

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?

Coylton Primary School – South Ayrshire

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

I enjoy the teaching process and working with the children. I like that everyday is different and I am never bored by my work.

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I am currently considering leaving early for alternative employment. I have taught since leaving school in 1986 and can no longer maintain the current workload without detriment to my own health and wellbeing. I am very disillusion by the state of Scottish education and I feel we are letting the children down. The curriculum is overloaded and the rate of change makes it impossible to embed good practice. I have very little job satisfaction as I consistently feel that I am not able to do my job properly.

**Q6** What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I would not consider promotion as I like teaching and a management role moves you away from that. We have lost all the PTs in our school due to cutbacks leaving it very difficult for the HT and DHT to be able to do their jobs
and leaving the other members of staff without support. Staying in class is not the easy option!

**Q7** What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

There is a huge shortage of people available to do the jobs in schools and absences are unable to be covered. Due to staff cuts, everyone in school has had to take on additional duties on top of already overwhelming workloads leading to increased (unpaid) working hours. Increasing numbers of children are requiring additional support, many due to behaviour problems and the support is not there for them. This impacts on everyone in the school as often their behaviour is distressing and disrupts the learning in the school. The levels of violence and aggression in schools makes working in school very difficult for all. The health and wellbeing of staff (and the children) is adversely affected making it hard to work in schools for extended periods of time and people then look for alternatives. Student teachers are also affected by this and often start to rethink their career choice whilst on placement.

**Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Right now teaching is not an attractive career path and schools are not particularly happy places to be. To make it a more attractive career path there needs to be some stability. The rate of change has been exhausting. Primary teachers should be teaching the children to read, write and count and ensuring the health and wellbeing of their pupils. The number of outcomes and benchmarks within the primary curriculum are impossible to deliver. People need to see the impact they are having on the children they teach and education in Scotland is currently causing stress for the teachers and children alike. Value the experience of the people at the chalk face, listen to what they have to say when they give suggestions and voice concerns.

Increase the number of personnel in a school to cope with the changing needs of our children. Good, quality staff at all levels is far more beneficial than a school full of resources but staff shortages. Train more teachers with a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in primary schools. It makes no sense to expect people to be experts in all areas of the curriculum and this only leads to feelings of inadequacy. How can someone be expected to teach a foreign language to children which they are unable to speak themselves? And let teachers be allowed to do what they do best, teach! Without having to manage violence and aggression, without having to spend time on administrative duties and without all the bureaucracy. I understand that money is tight and a huge pay increase is unlikely but if you are paying people to work 35 hours then only expect them to work 35 hours, not the 50 plus hours that most teachers are currently working.

Make teaching an attractive career prospect, valuing the people who wish to stay in the classroom and teach, it is not the easy option (as I have already said)! Support the teacher by ensuring adequate staffing from pupil support to management.
Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (i.e., is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

As previously mentioned, our school has gone from having 3 PTs to no PTs which has had a huge impact on the workload of all. We are expected to deliver the same experiences to the children but everyone, except the HT and DHT, is fully class committed and that in itself is a full-time job.

Our entitlement of pupil support teacher, school assistants and administrative staff has also been cut over recent years, as well as cleaning staff and janitorial hours. This has all had an adverse affect on the experience of school the children currently going through the education system are having.

Recently the remit of classroom assistants and pupil support assistants has changed as they have all become school assistants. In our authority this has effectively meant they are now all pupil support assistants which has caused them much worry and additional stress. The members of staff who were originally employed as classroom assistants feel their strengths lie in display and administrative duties such as creating workbooks for the children, laminating etc, all time-consuming duties which will now need to be carried out by teachers. This is another addition onto the workload of teachers and it means the school assistants are dissatisfied by their change in role. This change was made with no consultation and no additional training to accommodate these changes.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

The general morale among staff is currently very low due to constant changes and cuts, huge workloads and feeling undervalued.

Additional comments

I have been teaching for 30 years and have seen many changes, some for the better but many for changes sake. I know how to teach children but right now I feel I'm not able to do this properly, I am, however, open to change, when it necessary for improvement and we absolutely must raise attainment in our schools. I would like to teach until my retirement but the way I'm currently having to work is unsustainable. I don't want to be the old jaded teacher in the staffroom who moans about everything. I used to be proud to be part of the Scottish education system but now my main feeling is despair.
Although I have indicated my willingness to speak to the committee in person, I suspect that in reality my school would find it difficult, if not impossible, to cover my absence but we can cross that bridge if we come to it.

ROSE CASSIDY
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary teacher, permanent position

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Lothian Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I feel very passionate about wanting to make a difference within society and teaching is a great way to do this. I really value being able to be a positive role model for children in my class. I enjoy being dependable, relatable and consistent for children who, for whatever reason, may have chaotic lives out of school. I really enjoy feeling enthusiastic about teaching a skill in an interesting way and being creative with teaching and learning. I also feel very fortunate to work in a place where I am valued.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I hope to teach until I retire with potentially moving into more specific areas of education (for example developing aspects of the curriculum or support for learning). I am at the beginning of my career and plan to stay in teaching as long as I can.
My main concern about teaching in my future is the workload. I imagine that having a family and being a teacher is very difficult and I applaud all of the teachers who are parents. Being a teacher and having a family, I would be concerned that I would not be as effective as I would hope to be in either aspect.
Coinciding with workload, the lack of support within each classroom is a real pressure within the job. It is incredibly difficult to effectively support each child and reduce the gap when you are the only adult in a classroom.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I currently am not motivated to move up within education due to being at the beginning of my career. However, efficient support would be a good motivator.
I am discouraged by the incredible workload and stress I have seen from many head teachers.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
I think because we are a small school, there is a lack of bodies which makes support within each classroom difficult. It also means that if there are any challenges for specific children who might benefit from being out of the classroom or doing something separate from the class they do not have access to this. By having a learning environment potentially inaccessible for the child and the teacher this can make a very stressful work and learning environment. However, I do not think this is a problem specific to our school.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Additional Support Auxiliaries – the need for these positions is increasing and sometimes they lack the support they need to upskill in their job.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Providing more hours for support staff to have meetings/courses out with when the child they support is present.

Providing more jobs for support staff so there are more adults available to support pupils with their learning and reduce the ratio of adults to children.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures? Due to lack of funding, Support for Learning teacher was removed and classroom assistants increased.
- How well are they working? Only successful for pupils in classes with classroom assistants. Not all classes have access to these members of staff. The classroom assistant hours have had to be used for specific children who need more support than others.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

We used to have nurture groups but staff shortages mean these pupils can no longer access these.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite good – due to new management many members of staff are encouraged by this. However, at points it can be quite low due to our funding being continuously cut and teachers not knowing how they will support the needs of every child they teach.

Additional comments
I love being a teacher but currently feel the job is unsustainable. There is too much in the workload and not a clear idea of what we are achieving and aiming for.

SUSAN DOBSON

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

I job share in a P.1-3 class in the primary sector. I also have a 0.5 Pupil Support commitment in the same school and a 0.5 temporary contract with North Ayrshire’s Professional learning Academy again based in the same school.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Shiskine Primary, North Ayrshire.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

I love the day to day working with children; the light bulb moments when they get it; I enjoy the challenge of supporting pupils with additional needs and related research/study; positive feedback from parents/carers; working co-operatively with pupils’ families; the community link which is part of working in a small rural school; celebrating pupils’ successes outwith school; meeting pupils who have moved into the workforce or onto further education and hearing how their lives are moving forward; meeting those pupils own children; positive professional debate with colleagues when it occurs naturally.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I will not teach until I retire. I am in the lucky position where I can work with my family business and plan to leave soon.

I feel that CfE remains vague, and colleagues I speak to across Scotland are still approaching things differently. I believe consistency in planning across an authority is important and it seems some authorities have put time into producing curriculum planning processes. As a result of the Raising Attainment funding, NAC has established the Professional Learning Academy and it seems that part of this team’s remit is to produce planning for Literacy and Numeracy which we have still to get. Hopefully the new benchmarks will also help with consistency.

Professional Update has added to teacher’s workload, many people feel it is always ‘hanging over’ them. A less formal record of teachers’ professional update as part of the PRD process would perhaps be more manageable.

There is never the feeling of a job completed and at weekends and during holidays it’s difficult to switch off, there always seems to be something needing done. For example, this is our Spring break and I have been planning a twilight for colleagues about Dyslexia, to be delivered on our return;
updating Pupil Support Action Plans; writing pupil reports; planning teaching for next term…

I work on the Isle of Arran where we have 7 primary schools and 1 secondary. One of the primaries, an Early Years Centre and the secondary school share a campus and are under the leadership of one head teacher. As from August 2016, the other 6 primaries now have one head teacher and two deputes. This seems to be a unique model and as such we are all adapting as the session moves on. Some of the schools have challenging pupils therefore demand more management time. We have recently seen classroom assistant hours being cut, NAC are providing termly contracts – this is an unsatisfactory situation.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Until this academic session, the only opportunity for promotion on Arran was to head teacher, this is not a role I coveted, work/life balance is important to me. The change in management structure means we now have two depute heads – this is possibly a role I would have considered had I been younger.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

There is a problem across Scotland with encouraging people to join the teaching profession. On Arran, affordable housing is a big concern. Many of the teaching staff on Arran are within the 50-60 age range and will be leaving the profession around the same time. NAC should be actively addressing this. Our management team have been sharing recent posts on social media and this seems to have resulted in more applicants than we have had in the past. Perhaps more time and imagination should be given to the marketing of jobs.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Arran High School has struggled to recruit Maths, English and Business Management teachers. There are very few supply teachers across Arran.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

At least a Cluster, if not Authority approach to consistent curriculum planning; this would ultimately reduce teacher workload because planning could be shared. Retain Classroom Assistant support and provide training for Classroom Assistants – some are very capable and would enjoy the challenge of more responsibility and an increase in renumeration. Be more creative with marketing posts.

Reward long service, e.g. “An employee is entitled to 495.6967 hours (three months) of long service leave after ten years of full time eligible service, and 247.84835 hours (one and a half calendar months) of long service leave for each five years of full time eligible service thereafter.” Some Australian states provide this reward for long service.
Q10  Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

Multi-school management team – our first year, so difficult to state how well this is working. This is a permanent measure.

Reduction in Admin. hours.

As Classroom Assistants leave they are not being replaced; their contracts are being given out termly. This has resulted in low staff morale.

Q11  Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

NAC have provided teachers on Arran with Nurture training and seem to believe this approach would have a positive impact on pupils with challenging behaviour which would ultimately improve other pupils’ school experience and reduce teacher stress. Unfortunately NAC has failed to deliver funding for a Nurture Base.

Class teachers are having to become experts in all aspects of pupil support as a result of most children attending mainstream education – this expertise is being developed in addition to an already increasing workload. Increasing the number of Pupil Support teachers would be a benefit.

Q12  How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low amongst Classroom Assistants because of the uncertainty of their contracts.

Within my school we are an established teaching staff who all get along well and we have few problems with challenging behaviour of pupils – our morale is quite good. Within other Arran schools where there have been changes of staff and challenging behaviour from pupils, morale is quite low.

KATE FARMER

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

Primary school teacher, working with 3-5 year olds this year but have worked across the whole school over previous years.
Q2  Whereabouts do you work?
Abbotswell School, Aberdeen City Council

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I am passionate about working with children. I know the work I do is valuable and makes a real difference to the children I work with. I enjoy working collegiately with colleagues and I am lucky in that I work in a fantastic school with a very supportive Senior Management Team.

Q5  Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I plan to work with children for my entire career however this may not be working for the council in a teaching job.

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I do enjoy management roles and responsibilities. Obviously the higher salary is attractive but I would be discouraged as I do not know how I would deal with the current staffing crisis if I were managing a school running on minimal staffing levels.

Q7  What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
In Aberdeen we have a staffing crisis because teachers in Aberdeen are only here for one of three reasons. Either they have always lived here and have not sought to move, they have studied in Aberdeen University and have then been given a job or their partner works in the oil industry.

No-one would move to Aberdeen City for any other reason. It is expensive to live here and there is no difference in teaching wage. The drop in the oil industry has also meant a lot of families have left the city to move away.

In regards to retaining staff, there are a lot of teachers who have not been supported enough in the changing job role of a teacher. There are a lot of mumblings of, "It’s not what it used to be!" and the pressures from the government are causing high stress levels and less enjoyment.

Q8  Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Currently Aberdeen City is short of staff across all sectors.

Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Initiatives from Aberdeen City Council to give incentives for staff to come to Aberdeen and then to stay in Aberdeen.
Q10  Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
   If so:
   - What are these measures?
   - How well are they working?
   - Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

   Our Senior Management team are taking greater class contact time and this will increase next academic year.

   Myself as Nursery teacher and our Deputy Head Teacher have both been pulled to other schools to cover for days, weeks and even part time for whole terms. This has been a demotivating experience for me as I then feel that I am not doing a good job. My own class is left without a teacher and the classes I am covering are suffering from having no consistency in teaching staff as well as a lack of progressive planning for their learning.
   In Aberdeen the problem is a lack of teaching staff in the city to fill all the vacancies.

Q11  Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

   There is a lack of consistency and progressive planning in classes which are being covered by individuals for a few days at a time.

Q12  How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

   I would describe morale at my school as quite good as we have good staffing numbers (I feel this is due to our good Senior Management Team.) But at the other schools I have been covering at I would describe it as very low due to the strain on schools to put bodies in front of classes.

CAROL LLOYD

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

   Class Teacher in a small primary school

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?

   Guardbridge Primary School, Fife

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
A dedicated workforce – colleagues who are committed to doing their best for their pupils; a well-paid job, with good benefits; a job which mostly treats me as a professional, is interesting and challenges me; a curriculum which provides opportunities for me to learn and grow as a teacher.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Will teach until I retire.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I would love the opportunity to seek promotion – I feel I do some of the jobs of a principal teacher already and am an excellent organiser and forward thinker. I feel there is not enough support for teachers to work towards promotion. The work load dissuades teachers from taking on new challenges.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

There are not enough teachers available, especially in the supply sector. As a result, teachers often work when they are ill and are often forced to miss their NCCT, take other classes or work unprepared for the pupils they are taking. Staffing in large schools (my experience for 10 years prior to the post I hold now), is flexible although often poorly organised, while in small schools, there is often no choice but to put classes together which results in poor educational experiences for children.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I feel little pressure can be put on pupil support staff to continue to train and remain up to date with current initiatives. Many support staff are hugely committed and do an excellent job but this is not always the case. There pay often forces them to feel undervalued and work hours do not allow for training or consultation with teaching staff. In addition, budget cuts mean their hours have been drastically reduced and support for children with needs is minimal.

Last year, the Support for Learning post was not filled at our school. As a result, the class teachers were given some time to take on the role for their pupils. We were however, not able to do everything, so records were not kept as they should have been.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I think we need as a society to value education more – taxes should be increased so that staffing budgets can be increased. The only alternative to this would be mediocre education provision for our children.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school
headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures? My school is part of a multi-school headship. This had been the case for some time.
- How well are they working? This has many negatives and a few positives – it gives me the opportunity to take on responsibilities I would not otherwise have as a class teacher, which I welcome, but does not often provide time for this to be done or any recognition that this is happening. There are times when the headteacher will only be in school for a day and a half a week. As a result, there are times when we need to rely heavily on our administrative staff member to deal with pupil issues or be in class for short periods so we can do this. We do get to collaborate with the staff at another small school which is a great sharing opportunity for us all.
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

This is a permanent measure.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

We are often not able to do activities like outdoor education because of staffing. We can sometimes get parents involved which has many advantages.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low. The biggest issue is always workload. New initiative are adopted by councils and challenges arise without serious thought to what we need to prioritise or who will take these on. Workload is something we talk about a great deal, but it is never seriously addressed as an issue which results in teachers leaving the profession.

Additional comments

I feel that teachers’ support for education students is not given a high enough priority and as a result, probationers often struggle to settle well into the profession and many leave after a few years. Time must be made for teachers to support students during their placements, rather than using them to cover classes which I have seen in both the schools I have worked in.

JANINE McGARVEY

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)
Principal Teacher in a primary school.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Thornliebank Primary in East Renfrewshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I still thoroughly enjoy teaching children. I enjoy engaging with pupils in a variety of teaching and learning activities and the excitement and delight they have when they learn a new skill or achieve a milestone in their learning. I think pupils now a days are lucky to enjoy a varied and exciting curriculum full of interesting and innovative learning experiences whilst incorporating the basic skills which have always been taught in schools.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I would like to be working in a school in some capacity until I retire. I do not know if I will have the energy to still be teaching young pupils until my projected retirement age of 67 or indeed if it would be appropriate to still be teaching at that age. When I began my career in 1989 I saw myself still teaching until my early 60s which was when I expected to retire.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Having been a principal teacher for many years I am now at the stage in my career where I am considering my options and thinking about whether I would want to consider promotion to senior management. My role is currently very similar to a depute head as we have no depute head in our school. What stops me is the pressure on your home life as I currently enjoy a very good work/life balance and I wouldn’t want that to change. Many depute heads are then put under pressure to become head teachers or find themselves in the position of being an acting head teacher and again I do not feel at the moment I want that responsibility. I also feel that sometimes there is not enough autonomy given to head teachers whilst sharing good practice amongst all schools is great and can be very useful for an authority to have all their schools following certain guidelines it can become a have to situation which is not always the best choice for individual schools.

I am concerned at the number of young and relatively inexperienced teachers seeking promotion too quickly due to opportunities being there and others perhaps not seeking promotion. Age is not everything but a minimum experience before becoming a principal teacher or depute head should be a consideration in my opinion.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
We have a large number of staff who have been teaching at our school for a number of years so I don’t feel we have that issue. We have however had lots of changes at management level over the last few years. I feel there should be a minimum period someone is a depute or a head before they can move to another job or seek further promotion in order to embed change and stop more frequent changes of management although change can be very good for a school if it is happening too frequently this can create uncertainty. It can also stagnate a school if staff stays the same for too long so there is a balance to be had.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I think it is getting harder to recruit promoted members of staff particularly in primary and I know there are gaps in high schools particularly within home economics.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

At the moment teaching salaries are losing ground with other professions. We have had below inflation rises for nearly a decade and with changes to pension contributions and national insurance many teachers are currently taking home less pay that they were 5 years ago myself included so making sallies more competitive and attractive would help.

I also think we need to have a national campaign to raise the levels of respect which the public in general and in particular parents give to teachers. I agree respect is earned but many people think teaching is a cushy job they could easily do themselves and that we don’t work full time etc

We need to attract more men to primary teaching however that is not going to happen whilst it does not have the respect as a profession that other careers currently have.

One way to address this might be to raise academic levels for entry. I am dismayed that we still don’t ask all primary teachers as a minimum to have both higher English and Higher Maths for the BEd or for PGCE. If it is seen as an easier option academically for school leavers it is seen as that by the general public.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)
We currently now have a headteacher and 2 principal teachers whereas before we had a Headteacher, Depute head teacher and a principal teacher. This will be saving a few thousand pounds a year in salary and was part of a cost cutting management review which happened in my authority last year. Our school is able to run but in my opinion it has changed my role as principal teacher to that of a depute – without the pay- as I have less time in class teaching and more time managing. If that had been my choice or the choice of the school that would be different but I feel it has been thrust upon myself and is a loss to the school and pupils as I am an excellent teacher.

I also feel it puts enormous pressure on a headteacher where there is no depute head. I think principal teachers roles within individual school need to be graded according to the level of responsibility they have – this is done in high schools but not in primary where they are on a set grade according to the authority you work. I am on a higher grade than most principal teachers in other authorities which I feel is unfair however I still do not feel that my salary reflects the responsibility myself and the other principal teacher currently have.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

I think morale in my school in general amongst staff is quite good. Things which affect staff morale are work pressures(lack of supply staff for absences has added to this greatly over the last few years), lack of respect from parents for their role in their child’s life and at the moment pay and conditions which teachers feel are consistently being eroded to get the most work for the least money from us. Teachers of my age group are also dismayed that the life and career plan they had for many years to work for 40 years or so then retire with a good, full pension has been taken away from us with the pension changes which happened before 2015. This has been the biggest factor along with paying more for those pensions which have affected staff morale over the last few years

Additional comments

I welcome the fact that the Scottish Government is taking the chance to speak with actual teachers too often change in our profession is led by those who have not taught in an actual classroom in many, many years. I sincerely hope that the majority of those people spoken to by the committee are actual teaching staff from within schools.

I never wanted to do anything other than teach when I was at school. I feel lucky that every day I get to come into a school and do a job I still most of the time I love. What I do not love is how the attitude towards teachers from society – in all walks of life -and parents and in turn their children have changed over the time I have been teaching.
SHARON NELSON

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

Primary teacher

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?

St Marks Primary

ERC

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Working with the children and teaching them new skills.

In particular introducing a new topic in maths or a new literacy skill that they have not yet learned and helping them to achieve their potential and absorb knowledge. I love seeing children apply skills across different curricular areas, think critically and question to lead their learning.

I enjoy helping them to improve their abilities in a wide variety of areas such as art, technology, social studies and science.

I work with a fantastic team of teachers in my school. Staff are welcoming and supportive towards each other.

I enjoy the feeling of satisfaction that I have made a difference, be it from carrying out a nurturing role, instilling consistent discipline or teaching a new skill.

I enjoying the school holidays and spending time with my family during these.

Q5  Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I hope that I will teach until I retire.

Failing that, I hope that I will continue to work with children/ young people/ in education and continue to make a difference to their lives.

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I would seek promotion if I felt that there was enough time to get everything done! That my remit was achievable and workable and still offered a work/life balance and the financial incentive was worth the additional responsibilities.

I would be discouraged by lack of financial incentives, lack of time given for additional tasks and lack of respect from parents.
Q7  What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Work/ life balance is compromised daily. There are not enough hours to get everything completed that needs to be completed.

Lack of discipline/ more pupils with challenging behaviour and not enough staff/ resources are in place to help.

Lack of parental support and responsibility for their children’s behaviour and the effect of home life on a child.

Ability of a parent to be given more power in a situation than a teacher.

Money.

Q8  Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

All primary teaching.

Nurture.

Secondary- physics and maths.

Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Increased pay.

Stop cutting Support for learning and teaching assistants hours.

Specialised additional support/ behavioural support units.

Smaller class sizes to help get it right for every child.

Increased awareness by parents of the amount of hours that teacher actually work and the effort that is given to get it right for their child.

Q10  Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

• What are these measures?

• How well are they working?

• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

Lack of staff:

We have not had a support for learning teacher.

Nurture group was limited to infant children.
Composite classes.
Class sizes at maximum levels allowed.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)
Seasons for growth, outdoor learning, nurture group attendance for specific P3-7 pupils (not just P1-2), art therapy have all been given priority in my school in the past however due to a variety of reasons these have not been able to be implemented in recent years.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Morale is quite low. Many teachers are dealing with challenging children and situations involving violent or aggressive children. There seems to be a lack of consequences for these children and their parents.

Many children are entering school not prepared for it; physically or emotionally. This has a spiralling effect throughout their primary years and it needs tackled and for strategies to be put in place to support teachers to support and ultimately, teach those children.

The priority given to individual pupils can affect the rest of the children in the class and their education and teachers are held accountable for academic results despite not being equipped or supported to teach.

However, in my school, staff support each other and share experience, advice and will step in when possible to help each other. This is due to the personalities and bonds created by the staff with each other.

EMMA NEWTON

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)
Primary Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
West Lothian Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with children, knowing that I can be a positive influence in their learning journey. Getting to work with like-minded individuals

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I would love to continue to work until I retire, however the workload is so
great, and the associated stresses that come with that, are such that I think if I
manage another 2-3 years I will be doing well. I am already trying to decide if I
could work part time from the academic year 18/19. Burnout is an issue with
many teachers I know.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management,
including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking
promotion?

If there was a defined training route that was paid for by the government, I
might consider it, however the rewards would have to be very great to
persuade me to consider this.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining
teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details
of practical experiences)

The main issues, as I see them, for retention, are workload, salary and value.
Teachers are not held in the same regard as other professionals - we all have
good degrees and undertake continuing professional development each year,
however in real terms our salaries are decreasing and the workload is
expanding. The GTCS just hit us all with a huge rise in our fees - which we
have to pay in order to teach in Scotland - with no discussion and when some
of us did raise questions about this their attitude was - tough!.

Parents expect us to teach their children everything from the traditional
reading and writing to manners, tooth brushing, feeding themselves and much
more. Parents complain when we have CPD events or holidays as they view
us as cheap child care options. There needs to be a top down shift in how we
are valued before we are seen as true professionals.

Whilst the CfE could be an excellent curriculum it falls short at the moment
because of the ever changing benchmarks and advice being given. HMiE
inspections are worthless as the people carrying them out have been out of
the classroom for too long and have no idea what most teachers now deal
with on a day to day basis.

I worked abroad for 2 years and can honestly say that I was valued as a
professional by everyone, my salary was double what I earned in Scotland, I
was given proper time out of class to plan and prep, I never had to cover a
class during my RCCT time because someone was off and the SMT took the
time to ensure we all knew how valuable an asset we were to the school.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest
challenges with recruitment or retention?

I think all areas will struggle - in Primary the workload is so high that teachers
are burning out. I could work 60-70 hours a week and never complete
everything I need to do. Having been very ill last year I now make sure I don’t
stay at school until 6pm every day and I try not to work at home, however I am
still averaging 45 hours a week and will spend most holidays doing some
work.
Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Salaries need to be increased in order to recruit and retain teachers. They need to be at a level commensurate with other professionals- my son graduated with a Masters in Physics this year, he was recruited by a large multinational company and his starting salary is already more than mine- I am at point 5 on the salary scale. How attractive can teaching really be when there are so many more options available to people with good degrees?

Professionalism- teachers need to be valued, not considered as glorified babysitters. This starts from the top- Government and councils need to value us for what we do- basically without teachers there will be no doctors, politicians, council workers, etc.

Workload- this needs to be tackled urgently. Previously there were support workers in school who would do a lot of the “extra” jobs teacher’s do- photocopying, covering boards, mounting work, wall displays etc. with the current cutbacks happening these jobs have now been added to the ever increasing workload of the teacher.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

My school has had an acting SMT team for a long time. We are due to get a permanent head in May. This has meant that there have been constant changes in our planning processes and policies. These may all change again with the new head arriving and many of us feel in a constant state of flux. Our PSW’s are being used to support the children who have a need, however with the push to ensure that most children achieve Early/First/Second level at the end of P1/4/7 changes are being made in some timetables to focus on this.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

There are not many after school activities offered in schools which are led by teachers, basically because the workload is so high already. The timetable is so crowded that ensuring coverage is a balancing act- we know what we need to cover but often do not have the time to ensure there is enough depth.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
I feel that as a sector, the morale in Primary Schools is quite low. Most of us feel undervalued and overworked and there will be at least 1 person each week talking about leaving. Key factors are workload and pay.

Additional comments

These exercises are only good if there is positive change on the back of the results. Publishing this during the Easter break, on Facebook does little to show teachers that we are valued. Since we all have to be registered with the GTCS a better way would to have had them send each teacher an email with all the links attached. More time would also be have been a good idea.

There needs to be more opportunities for teachers on the front line to be listened too and there has to be more than a tokenism approach to hearing our views. An Education Committee at government level that is made up of “real teachers” currently practising in the classroom would be a start. Following this through at the Initial Teacher Training level would also be beneficial- having a tutor who has not worked in a classroom for 10 years is not the best start our new teachers could have.

JAYNE ROWE

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

Seconded development Officer leading Professional Update and Professional Learning. Primary Teacher. I work with teachers in all sectors. I also work with all teachers in my role as an EIS learning representative.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Glasgow

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Seeing children develop, grasping new ideas that they never had before.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role).

My retirement age has been moved to 67. I don’t believe I could physically teach till then. Having recently injured my back I know I will have difficulty fully teaching aspects of PE. Ultimately I will aim to retire at 60 with my first pension pot if I can financially do so as I want to have a life and not work till I drop. Teaching is incredibly stressful and demanding and takes up in excess of 40+ hours a week including your nights, weekends and holidays. I am already tired and don’t believe I could go on for a further 24 years. The demands of teaching now are taking its toll the job has changed dramatically in the past 20 years being assaulted and constant abuse is draining on top of workload.
Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Nothing.

Q7  What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

As an EIS learning rep I frequently meet with teachers from all sectors and of all ages. Recently I was working with a group of young primary teachers who had just returned from working abroad for two years they are opting to go back abroad at the end of this current session as they cannot save enough to get themselves on the housing market. They felt working abroad for longer will give them a deposit on a house and to build savings to cover increased cost of living here and to make up for smaller wages.

Wages are the main factor in recruitment we are not paid comparative to other graduates, we are being asked to be a masters level profession but are not paid at that level or treated at that level.

Workload is another huge challenge, the public perceive it as a 9 – 3 job but it isn’t as said previously it can take over your life. Workload reduction measures as part of previous pay settlement have been useless teachers are working constantly.

Q8  Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Certain geographical areas have faced challenges in the past but now all areas are struggling to recruit supply teachers.

Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Workload addressed in an appropriate manner perhaps through increased NCT to allow for prep and correction to be partially achieved.

Reduce beauracracy – primary teachers forward planning, lengthy reports to parents.

Appropriate pay.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

• What are these measures?

• How well are they working?

• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)
There appears to be less PSA’s and class numbers are increasing to the maximum. The policy of inclusion is seeing more children with additional needs in mainstream classes with none of the children needs being met appropriately as there isn’t the support there that pupils would have received in ASN provision and lack of PSA’s reduces the amount of support available within the class.

As a parent I am seeing my daughters highers taught alongside national 5 pupils in all curricular areas. This is unacceptable as this reduces the amount of teaching time in an already tight time frame and not all subjects are compatible to this type of teaching we are doing the pupils a disservice.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Low. I have in the past few years thought if I was trained to do anything else I would leave. The level of abuse from pupils is now unacceptable. I know this is being seen across all aspects of the public sector – the recent increase in police assaults - but it is unacceptable we have a right to come to our work and feel safe. I also felt demoralised as I felt I wasn’t meeting the needs of any of the children in my class as there was so many different needs and only one of me.

Additional comments

Schools need to be resourced properly also, teachers are frequently buying their own resources to support teaching and learning. We are using our already diminished wages to prop up the education budget.

JANE SMITH

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

I am a fully qualified Primary School teacher, currently working 0.4 FTE on a permanent contract. I teach music throughout the school as NCCT, as I have a formerly acquired qualification in music.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

A Primary School in the Levenmouth area, Fife Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Seeing children respond to new ideas and experiences. In an area of social deprivation, high attainment and ambition are not often modelled in the local community, and are fairly thin on the ground in school, however, the expressive arts can open doors for some hard to reach children, and allow them to express their emotions and creativity constructively. Music can also
be an area where children experience success in literacy, while they may struggle with the written word and/or numbers. This can build confidence.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I hope to retire very soon. I am looking into possible research ideas at the moment, particularly the impact of being amongst the youngest in a year group upon long term attainment, motor development, social skills, and ultimately, employability/higher education upon leaving school.

I want to move on because I can no longer multitask quickly enough to cope with the behavioural challenges which are now commonplace. The stress affects my health.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I have not and would not seek promotion as management seem to spend all their time in accountability exercises, in child protection and social work meetings or paperwork, meeting children &/or parents over behavioural issues, or covering for absent staff due to a lack of supply availability. There is no quality time left to spend working with children in anything other than a firefighting capacity.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Council cutbacks to pupil support staff hours have had a significant impact on attainment and behaviour, and in staff stress levels, as higher tariff children are expected to cope in mainstream school settings without adequate support. It all falls to the teacher to keep ever more plates spinning. There is also a general lack of respect which seems to be widespread, not just our area; people demand their rights and ignore their responsibilities, and both parents and pupils have a sense of entitlement. Hospitals and train stations are allowed to display Zero Tolerance posters, but it seems schools are not as it does not create a welcoming ethos.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I can't see any attraction in promoted posts apart from the higher salary. There is little incentive to do Supply Teaching, when the terms and conditions have been downgraded to such an extent. It really is a last resort.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Restore the pay and conditions for supply staff at the appropriate point on the
Salary scale
Advertise a Zero Tolerance policy for abusive behaviour by parents AND pupils
Ensure councils provide sufficient resources to allow us to GIRFEC
Stop compulsory transfers of staff
Have a bank of specially trained teachers who can be used for attainment raising hit squads when not required for supply cover. This might take the form of going into a class and modelling a new idea, resource or technique.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

We do not have nearly enough support staff for all the children who require support

The HT and DHT are often tied up in meetings, and the rest of their time is often spent covering for staff absences.

Staff health is affected by stress levels

We have double classes in 3 rooms, which is noisy and impractical for some learning tasks. The only ‘breakout room’ is the main hall, which is also used for music, drama, lunches, ICT, library, and gym changing, and so finding a quiet space to do reading or similar is a challenge.

Our local council plans to increase class sizes in order to free up some teachers who they plan to move to hard-to-fill posts. They claim this will not affect attainment. It will. This is very apparent when there is a bug doing the rounds.. so much more can be achieved with fewer children and the teacher can pay more attention to each! It is also extremely demoralising for staff at risk of being transferred against their will. It is quite possible that there will be a change to the planned budget if there is a change in leadership following the May council elections.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

We try to ensure that the children do not miss out, but all of the staff are stretched very thinly.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low to Very low, depending on which member or staff. Pupil and parent behaviour is the biggest influence.

The likelihood of further testing in Primary Schools is another factor which affects the mood of the staff... children don't grow faster because you measure them more frequently. In order to do well in a test (and schools are judged by their performance in tests) young children need to experience that form of assessment, in other words, be taught to the test. This flies in the face of much recent research, and the principles of CfE.
LEANNE WARDROPE

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary Teacher with PGCPE qualification

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

City of Edinburgh Council – Kirkliston Primary

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
- pupils enthusiasm,
- seeing the changes in pupil’s learning and personalities throughout the year,
- helping those who have difficult home lives,
- being on or the only stable thing in some pupil's lives,
- the comradery with other teaching staff and PSA’s
- holidays
- stable lifelong profession
- decent pension and working conditions within the council

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I do intend to teach until I retire but I don’t know how I’m going to manage working at this pace when I’m 65! I’ll probably have to go part time or try to find a role within school that may not be wholly classroom teaching and less demanding, such as PE or art specialist or NCCT (non-class contact) cover.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Encourage:
- More money – pay has been virtually the same for the last 8 years and has not accounted for inflation.
- More influence within school policy and the way school is run and managed.
- Less demands placed on head teachers to be everything to everyone.
- Less demands put on head teachers meetings and more focus on class contact, liaising with staff and how to make the school a better place to learn and work.
- Bigger budgets and more outside support for pupils with ASN and scope for setting up ASN units or classes within school to lessen the demand on individual class teachers and PSAs.
- Less needless tweaking with the curriculum and the demands on HT from local authorities and government. HTs know their schools and what is best for
them and do not and should not have to answer, constantly, to QIOs, other head teachers and policies.

Discourage: (where to start? I could go on forever!)
- Ridiculous working hours – I’ve had numerous HTs emailing me at 11/12 o’clock at night and 6am because they are still working and trying to get through everything they need to do.
- Mistrust from parents. Throughout my 12 years of teaching the profession the respect for teachers has been eroded away to nearly nothing and parents think they can demand whatever they like and the more they cause a fuss and stamp their feet the more likely it is they get it. I don’t blame HT for this but no one backs up teachers and usually parents have more power than us and we have to back down because schools don’t want official complaints and investigations even though professionally we know as teachers we are doing what is right for pupils and HTs are worn down.
- I have worked in some of the most deprived areas of Fife and Edinburgh in my career and the parents have been far more respectful of the profession than the school I currently work in, which is very “middle class”. For some reason parents think it is acceptable to tell you how to do your job where I would never go into the bank, Standard Life or tell an airline pilot how to do their job. When did this become acceptable? Government policies that parents should become more involved in schools and how they are run is making running a school almost impossible as you not only have to bow down to policy makers but parents too. None of whom have the qualifications or experience to know what is best for the children in the school.
- CfE – there is no structure, no assessment and a huge amount of unnecessary “moderation” that goes on. No one, still, knows what a secure piece of writing should look like and in every school I’ve worked in the standards are completely different.
- Implementing ridiculous policies, proving you are leading staff development by holding unnecessary meetings, huge amounts of paper work etc.
- Named person – need I say more? So much time, paperwork and usually it gets you nowhere because the recourses you need for that child are just not there. Pupils needs to be in dire straits or in mortal danger for anything to be serious enough for social work to take notice.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
- Demanding parents
- Overly demanding management
- Management teams that don’t have your back with difficult parents
- No work schemes – literacy or numeracy – means everyone is reinventing the wheel all the time – and there’s no clear progression of skills

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Specialist teachers – PE, Art, Music, Drama – these specialist teachers are invaluable in schools. All primary teachers cannot have the skills to teach all of these subjects well (or certainly not as effectively as specialist teachers). It means the arts and PE are being taught poorly or definitely not as well as they could be in Scottish schools.

I have the Primary PE qualification, which I gained 6 years ago, and not been able to use it much in any of the schools I’ve taught in because they have not had the resources to release me from class to teach PE lessons to others classes or demonstrate lessons to other teachers. I am definitely not the only one with this qualification this has happened to.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

- Less demands on head teachers and give them more autonomy to run their schools – they should know what is best if you have the right person in the job.
- May people in management now should not be there – they are the ambitious ones who want to climb the ladder and often have lost sight of, or don’t care, what it is like to teach in the classroom and only want to show what a different their initiatives have made to a school.
- Excellent teachers, who would make fantastic deputes and heads, are not going into management because of the unmanageable demands made of people currently in the job and often choose to “have a life” rather than become a HT.
- Pay everyone more
- Be realistic about the hours teachers, deputes and heads work. Most teachers work around 45 hours per week (not the 37.5 in our contracts), deputes and heads do way more, usually 60+ hours per week. These are usually in school and do not account for the work done at home.
- A better curriculum – Scotland wide with assessments and clear skill progressions for each year e.g. in numeracy, by the end of P5, pupils should be able to do…This would allow everyone in Scotland to be teaching the same thing, with the same expectations of pupils of the same stage. If a pupil wasn’t working at that stage we could report to parents that they are working at a P4 level or P3 level, which is much clearer for parents.
- Being able to be completely honest with management and parents about pupil’s levels and abilities without anyone worrying about backlash from parents, the LA or the government. Far too long has pressure been put on HTs to elevate results and tell their staff that they can’t report that pupil’s level as first developing at the end of P4 because they should be working at first secure.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:
• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)
• Less PSAs for specific children
• Pupils with ASN are now given hours from a “pot” instead of being allocated hours personally. This has lead to a lack of hours and budget given to school and school shaving to either pay PSAs from the regular budget or not have a budget to support pupils that desperately need it.
• This goes against GIRFEC completely

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)
• Being able to observe colleagues – very valuable – as there is no cover
• I was recently told by my head teacher I could not go for an interview for a PT secondment position because my class would not be able to be covered for the rest of the year. My career has been hampered by the lack of supply and available teachers.
• Probationer colleges have not had their time out because the teacher that usually covers their day out was covering an absence.
• High volumes of staff absence due to burn out, constant colds/flues, stress

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
• Quite low
• Excessive demands from school management, LA and parents
• Declining behaviour of pupils and parents
• Inclusion agenda without the support given from management to class teachers, LA to support these children, who have highly complex needs, within a mainstream setting.
• GIRFEC doesn’t work. It usually means pupils with ASN, autism etc are dumped into classes and have to just do their best. Teachers have no specific training on how best to educate and support these pupils and outside agencies come in, usually tell you to use a visual times table and whatever you’re doing for the pupils is great. This usually is to the detriment of the rest of the class as pupils with ASN need a lot more 1-1 support which means less support for the rest of the class.
• Larger classes
• Smaller budgets
• Being asked to do more with less
• Teaching isn’t the same job as it was 12 years ago when I entered the profession – you have to justify everything you do constantly now – what
happened to professionalism and trust? All I every wanted to be was a teacher, from age 6 and it is getting more and more difficult each year.

- Lack of promotion opportunities – old senior teacher post – all teachers and now expected to take on leadership roles whereas before senior teacher used to get paid to take on more responsibility. This is now expected of all teachers including probationers.

**Additional comments**

What my pupils could do in P6 12 years ago, when I started teaching, is now not achievable by most P7 pupils I see. This is due to the overladen and burdensome curriculum, numerous initiatives (like Eco schools, citizenship etc. that have to be done over and above the curriculum), leadership roles for pupils, class assemblies, inclusion of pupils that have no place in a mainstream environment, ASN pupils who would benefit highly from trained ASN teacher and support assistants being in mainstream classes, excessive paperwork, excessive courses and need for “professional development”, courses that don’t develop anyone, CAT and learning and teaching sessions in school that develop nothing, “autonomy” for head teachers to create their own curriculum in school (massive amounts of unnecessary work for teacher in each and every school in Scotland reinventing the wheel every year).

I love being a teacher, it is a huge part of who I am but I am fed up of being over worked, underappreciated by parents, school management and Local authorities and angry at the state of Scottish education. I used to be proud to be a teacher in Scotland and I now despair at the state of education I now send pupils to the high school. Teacher all work immensely hard, care deeply about out pupils and want the best for future generations. Unfortunately, the direction that education in Scotland is heading is heading I worry for the future of my pupils and don’t know how long I will be able to continue to do what I love.

**JUDITH WILLIAMS**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

I am in a permanent 0.5 post in a primary school. I job share in a P7 class.

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?

I work in Aberdeenshire.

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

I love working with the pupils across the school. They are all individuals and all have their own challenges. They are capable of so much and rise to different challenges all the time.

I have a great relationship with my colleagues too.
Q5  Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I turned 50 this year and I have always been a teacher. Until recently I never considered another job. Now I am looking into alternative careers.

In teaching the goalposts and even the game are constantly changing. Whenever a new Minister of Education takes over they introduce new ideas which rarely have a positive impact.

The latest PISA results have shown a continued decline in educational standards in Scotland yet teachers are working harder than ever to improve the attainment of their pupils. Something is terribly wrong.

Teachers are undervalued financially and within the community. Our workload increases all the time. We never switch off after school or in the holidays; work is constantly on our minds.

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I have been acting HT on two occasions. There is nothing in this world that would make me apply for a permanent promoted post.

I am aware that my HT works extremely long hours and receives very little support from staff above her. Staffing, paperwork and parents are huge issues for promoted staff.

Q7  What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

We are fully staffed at our school but have huge problems finding supply staff – as do most schools in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Staff regularly come to work when they are unwell but we are all so aware of the issues finding cover.

Although there is currently a downturn in the oil industry many graduates can still find a job in industry on a salary similar to or higher than the top teaching grade.

Teaching salaries are not competitive among other graduates.

Q8  Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

In primary schools in our area supply teachers are like gold dust.

Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Increase wages significantly. Treat teachers with respect. Stop blaming us for every failure in education and with young children.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
If so: Our SFL teacher is taken away from supporting pupils with support needs in order to cover classes in the LEARN regularly when no supply cover is available. Multi school headships have also been used.

These measures have been temporary so far.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Morale is generally quite low due to workload. We have just finished report writing. Reports take at least one hour to write per pupil, and that is after notes have been compiled.

There are never enough hours in the week to fit everything in. The curriculum for excellence was supposed to streamline the curriculum. Sadly it seems to have done the opposite.

I think that those in charge of the education system should spend real time in a classroom to see what goes on.

Mcrone hours are also an issue in many schools. Our contracts state that a full time teacher should have 22.5 hours class contact a week. This rarely happens due to staff illness and lack of supply cover. So on a regular basis our contracts are breached!

Additional comments

Are you serious about improving the issues within teaching?

Please read the comments you receive. Please take them on board. Please act.

Surely the children of Scotland deserve the best.

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 1

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

I am a Primary teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Stirling Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

I have 27 years continuous service in Primary Teaching and am still teaching as I love my job in front of the children in the class.
Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I have set my sights on retiring as soon as I reach 55 regardless of my loss in pension etc as the bureaucracy has overtaken the job and I feel constantly snowed under with paperwork and endless target setting, assessments and form filling. Although everyone keeps saying this is being addressed, that has not filtered down to the Headteachers that I have worked for, in fact the swing is continuing to go the wrong way sadly. It seems the only way some think they can justify their existence.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

There is no way I would go for promotion. I like being in front of a class, teaching and not moving paper about or in front of a computer in an office, simply covering my back.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Poor management at my school is a big issue. It has caused many staff to leave, burned out by the huge amount of workload. The more teachers do the more is piled on their plates, never less.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I cannot comment on specialisms, but having gained my PGCert in Pr PE 10 years ago, local authorities no longer have permanent peripatetic PE teachers, therefore that time and effort I feel has been wasted. I am back in class and my qualification is not recognised.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Better training of Headteachers. Weed out the bullies and Neanderthals.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures? Composite Classes, less support assistants
- How well are they working? not as effective as they should be.
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?) Temporary

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Very Low, young staff do not see themselves in the job in 27 years, time like me.
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

Teacher at Primary School

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? East Ayrshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? The children and watching them learn, grow and achieve.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Unsure at present

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Career advancement.
Politics.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Workload and lack of support. Unjustified criticism from parents.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Unsure

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Management of workload. Support with issues and unrealistic parents.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:
• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

Fewer classroom assistants and bigger classes.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

More support for learning resources.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Low. Workload and unrealistic parents.

ANONYMOUS 3

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

I am a class teacher in a primary school and also have some acting experience in management.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

East Renfrewshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

The actual teaching of pupils and having a major role in their progression is the main reason. The variety of the job keeps it interesting and the holidays ensure that I can look after my own children with ease.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I would like to think that I will continue to teach until I retire, however, the workload and pressure is ever increasing and I am not sure that I will be able to work until retirement if it continues this way. I have considered alternative employment, however as my degree is in primary education there is not many opportunities at a professional level available to me.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I like to progress and have experience as an acting principal teacher and I am keen to make a difference. However, I am part time and there are very few management opportunities for part time staff, no matter how hard they work.
Additionally, there is a huge amount of pressure on management in the authority that I work in and that would discourage me.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The quality of student teachers has decreased greatly in the last 10 years. In my school, we have had a larger number of NQTs that do not meet the standard or only just meet the standard. In my opinion this is because they do not have enough practical experience of working in schools. I don’t feel that a post graduate qualification is enough for many people (I am aware that there are also many successful post graduate teachers but I have experience of far more poorer ones). 2 out of our NQTs last year did not meet the standard and the 3rd one only just met it.

The last pay rise was actually a pay cut due to increased pension contributions and my take home pay is actually less than it was a few years ago which is very demoralising when inflation has increased all my other outgoings.

I believe that many current staff are fed up working long hours and although they do many wonderful things, they are still ‘picked up’ on something within each dialogue session or learning visit which can be very soul destroying.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I am primary based and cannot really comment on this as I have very little knowledge.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

A massive reduction in workload.
A proper pay rise.
Increase numbers of Pupil Support Staff to support additional support needs

Teachers need to be better prepared, the post graduate should be far more school based and longer than one year.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)
Teaching staff have been asked to take on playground duty due to the lack of support staff which I think is out of order when many of these teachers arrive at 8am and leave at 6pm and also take work home.

Support staff are distributed to classes based on needs within each class which is the fairest way of doing it.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Morale is low as staff never feel that they are doing a good enough job, even though they are doing their best. They also do not feel valued. Key factors are the huge workload and the lack of additional money to reflect this.

Expectations are very high within my authority which is a good thing, however, sometimes staff need to feel appreciated which does not happen from management within the higher level of education.

ANONYMOUS 4

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

Principal teacher in a Primary school

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

East Ayrshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

My whole career has been spent in teaching- I enjoy working with children.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I will hopefully teach until I retire.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Now too old to consider head teacher level. Have had spells of acting head in the school where I work.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Our school staff has been very steady over the past twenty years I have been here. People have stayed until retirement.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

In our school staffing has seen minor cuts through school roll fluctuation, but remains fairly steady with no full time loss. The impact on my PT role has been significant as I need to take on more class teaching time due to lack of support/flexibility staffing, and in having to cover the reduced class cover contact time for all staff. Also, tenporary (almost two years) cover for Head Teacher role was shared with another school, and this meant I had to cover day to day matters as I was in the school all of the time, and the HT had much more to deal with. Now we have a HT of our own, my timetable is more stable.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Staff morale has been low due to difficulties with the HT position, but now should be on the rise. Staff do feel stretched to the limit, so any further staff cuts would influence this.

ANONYMOUS 5

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Non-class contact teacher – 3 days

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Renfrewshire Council – Primary sector

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

- The children (positive experiences)
- Watching the children learn and the wonder on their faces when they understand/enjoy what they are doing
- Teaching science
- The holidays
- The flexibility of where you do your planning
- The staff
- The trust from the children and the responsibility we have

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

If I were to come into money, I would give up immediately. I do not see myself working until I am 67 as I do not think that I would have the energy to do it at that age. I am hoping to be retiring around the age of 60 as I would have been teaching for 38 years by then.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I would not like to be in management as you lose contact with the children and I would not enjoy all the paperwork and the responsibility.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

- Pay is poor for the hours you work
- Paperwork and bureaucracy
- Constant changing of curriculum and goal posts
- Constantly adding more initiatives with no time to do it

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Shortage of supply teachers because of reduced pay for first 2 days. Increase this to normal level to encourage teachers to teach for short periods of time. For example if a teacher has child care for 2 children (£30 each = £60) and they are only getting £65 in their hand instead of £95, then it is not worth their while to do odd days supply. That is one reason why we cannot get short term supply teachers.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)
PE specialist

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
I would say the morale in our school is generally good. It can be very stressful when it is report card writing season, parents’ night and target setting.

ANONYMOUS 6

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)
Primary Class Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeen City

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I enjoy actually teaching. I feel it is a worthwhile profession that makes a difference. I am proud that I can try to provide children with a good role model, particularly with all of the global unrest today. I think I am good at my job and the children in my class benefit from my teaching.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I would like to think that I will be teaching until retirement age, but it very much depends on whether or not workload etc continue to rise at the pace it is doing so.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I have no interest in promotion. The management team in my school are never in class and this, for me, is the reason I became a teacher! I would only be tempted to go for a promoted position in a school that was smaller so that I could still be in class, but I don’t think that I could be an effective class teacher and an effective member of management due to the workload of both positions.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Workload and pressure! In my school in particular, I feel that there are new initiatives etc that we are too quick to volunteer to trial. While I am open to change and the need to progress and move forward, I feel that we take on so many new things at once that we don’t ever do anything well. Our fingers are in too many pies.

Since the change of curriculum from 5-14 to CFE, I am hugely concerned at the lack of assessment and consistency within and between schools. Levels are “achieved” purely through teacher judgements, and these judgements vary greatly between teachers within individual schools, throughout schools across the authority, and throughout the authorities within the country. I know that I and most other staff in my establishment find this very demoralising.

In regards to recruiting teachers, I think that many people are put off due to the fact that the salary is not reflective of the workload. A lot of jobs with a similar level of workload pay much more. With regards to Aberdeen in particular, the cost of living and property prices are very high.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Since I have started teaching, I notice that we have lost almost all of our visiting specialists. We have no music, art or drama specialist anymore.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Much clearer guidance with CFE. I feel that it has been thrown at teachers and we have been told to “find the answers”. I think a national change of curriculum should have been thought out much more clearly.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Last year myself and a colleague team-taught a large class of 37 pupils as the school did not have enough classrooms to teach them as 2 separate classes. It worked very well. I benefitted from having a colleague to work closely with, and I feel the children benefitted as we were able to work more intensively with children who were struggling with certain curricular areas or concepts. This was a temporary measure and there are no team-taught classes this year, although I think it would be considered as a solution if a similar situation was to arise again.

We have composite classes every year and have had ever since I began work at this school. I feel this will be a permanent measure.

Unfortunately, due to staffing shortages, our SFL provision has greatly suffered for the past few years. Children who require SFL simply do not get it as the staff employed for this usually end up having to cover classes.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

As mentioned previously, we have very few visiting specialists. Although children still receive lessons in these areas from their class teachers, I feel that specialist input is an opportunity the children are missing out on.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Within my establishment I would say that general morale is quite to very low for the factors that I have mentioned previously.

Additional comments

Having read through my responses I feel that this is a very negative set of answers! However, I feel it is important to be honest. I in no way blame my management team and understand that most schools in Scotland are probably in the same position.
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

Supply teacher in primary education.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Argyll & Bute Council.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Making a difference in children’s lives.

Each day is different.

Working with children.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Possibly. I’ve returned to teaching after a two and a half year gap. Enjoying being back in school at present.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Please bring back chartered teacher status. Many of us do not want to progress to headteacher level and in my area of Mid Argyll, there are very few opportunities for promotion to senior management.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The extreme stress and pressure on teachers which is well documented in mainstream news and lack of financial incentives.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Supply teachers are almost extinct due to ridiculous rules in terms of pay. Huge pressure on schools. Detrimental to pupils learning experiences and teacher CPD.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Reintroduce chartered teacher status. Scrap ridiculous supply teacher pay. Develop early years model and extend to P2 possibly P3 to ensure more play. Invest in forest school education. Reintroduce teachers into nursery settings,
not at management level. Invest heavily in nurture within education. Streamline health and social care side by side with education.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Quite low. Pressure of workload.

ANONYMOUS 8

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary Teacher – Class Teaching and Support for Learning.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
West Lothian Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Love of education and curriculum development and working with children and families.
Love of professional development and lifelong learning.
Passion for human development and a curiosity about life.
Psychology background.
Working on and developing my own personal and professional strengths.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I would only consider leaving early to pursue some research based employment or further work in education that may not be classroom based.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Easier access. I work in the Catholic sector and due to personal circumstances do not feel I would be an ideal candidate.
Also training to get to that level is difficult to get into.
Discouragement – lack of access, lack of childcare, long working days, more paperwork and less interaction with children.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Recruiting;
there doesn’t seem to be a very wide pool of teachers – experienced, or new. Pay is not in line with other graduate professions on entry and is capped after relatively few years of experience.

Retention:
Long working hours at school and at home.
More paperwork as curriculum development and planning seems to take longer every year.
More testing for children seems to be a negative thing and is something I and many of my colleagues do not see the benefit of for our children.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Even as a Support for Learning Teacher, if we need supply cover at my school, I am the first to be selected to cover a class therefore my own curriculum and groups of children most needing support suffer.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Increase pay and prestige of being a Teacher - at entry level and continuously. Through better or more follow up training etc.
We go to numerous training courses, meetings throughout the year, try a number of initiatives – always with the aim of closing attainment gaps etc. But sometimes it is hard to evidence this. We see it, people know it’s happening in a school by its ethos but sometimes it’s immeasureable.
Also less emphasis on testing and league tables – I don’t think these are helpful or informative and in some cases can be quite damaging to staff morale, parents information and even children involved.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
If so:
• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)
We have a multi-school headship, now a SMT
We are a small school who had 3 composite classes, we now have 4 as our school roll went up.
We have a Nursery attached and have removed the teacher from there and promoted a Nursery Nurse to a ‘manager’ style position there.

Our Support Assistants are invaluable and as such are supported by our Head teacher – i.e. she would rather budget to keep a PSW rather than buy more resources.

I would argue that most of the above are working well – we will be experiencing an even greater shared headship in August though as our Head will by in an Acting up position of Head at a 3rd much larger school, along with her current 2. So the details of that still have to be thought about. And the impact is unclear as yet.

**Q11** Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Only lack of Support for Learning if other things seem to become a higher priority – you can not have a class full of children with no teacher, but a Support for Learning Teacher available working with small groups. – Makes no economic sense unfortunately.

**Q12** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Morale in our school is very high. We are supportive of each other from Support Assistants through to Teachers. And our Head is especially supportive both personally and professionally.

This is ultimately for the benefit of the children in our care and their families and we all benefit from this atmosphere of support.

**Additional comments**

If you have any other comments please include them below:

My only other comments would be about recent publicity about the Attainment Gap for Scottish children from areas like ours. Although we may not be the most high flying academically, our children have very mixed backgrounds and sometimes a major achievement for our child may be talking to an adult 3 times in one day/week or eating breakfast/snack. But this is not the whole story. We also have lots of children who whilst not living the life of luxury they try their best, as do parents, and we do our best too…but they are achieving as much as they can. Should this be held against them? Do we need to keep re-testing them? And what does it prove? If your poor you are no less likely to be clever or talented and how do we measure these things anyway? Just my own personal final thought.
ANONYMOUS 9

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
I am a primary teacher who has been promoted to middle management level.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Independent School in Edinburgh area.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with children and families. The rewarding nature of making a difference in people’s lives. The fact that I am doing something worthwhile and not just driving up profit margins for some conglomerate business.

The fact that after 10 years in teaching I am highly skilled and effective at what I do and I like that. I don’t want to start over again in a new profession although I consider it.

Not wanting to let the system beat me.

The highly dedicated, fun and inspiring people I work with. Teachers, support staff and the children and families too.

The variety and the nature of the job. It keeps me on my toes and no two days are the same.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
No. My pension age is currently 68 and rises have been discussed on the news.

I think there is very little chance that I could see myself teaching until then. I don’t think that would be physically possible. Nowadays teaching seems to be a young person’s game.

I am not sure I can sustain another 5 or 10 years of full time teaching, let alone 38. However, the effects of early retirement on the new pension are brutal. It’s something that worries me often.

I have considered for a few years leaving the profession as I do not think the level of physical and mental strain that result from such long hours and consistent pressure to perform at capacity are sustainable. I have seen it impact my physical and mental health, as well as others around me. I am not sure I will last to 40 but I don’t know what else I can do.

Over the past 12 months I have started searching and applying for positions in other industries.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Encouraging Factors

I am currently middle management at my school and have applied for DHT positions within schools in the past. I am encouraged to do so because I like challenge and mental stimulation in my work and I am ready for the next step.

Friends have suggested that DHT positions offer a better balance of non-contact time/responsibility than PT roles. I would like the chance to focus on management role responsibilities without the huge pressure of a class responsibility as a class teacher (not the contact teaching hours but the pastoral work, admin, displays etc related to a class which takes probably at least double the contact hours). This would allow me to focus on developing my skills in leadership and change management etc.

I am intelligent and feel that I have a lot to give to the profession and that would encourage me to apply for Senior Management positions too. I’d like to be involved in broader thinking about the Scottish education system.

Discouraging Factors:

Workload – would I be able to sustain any sort of physical health or personal life in a Senior Management role? I suspect not.

Career progression – I would not like to be a Headteacher. Too much responsibility and time commitment for too little money. Too much ‘school administration’ and not enough ‘school leadership’ in the role. Is there any point in progressing otherwise?

Application process – Can I even get a job in Senior Management if I want one? I have applied for DHT jobs in 3 councils and had interviews in 2 councils. Each has it’s own application style and they vary hugely. The whole recruitment process feels like a tick box exercise and the candidate who knows the criteria (i.e. has inside contacts) will fare best rather than necessarily the person most suited to the job. I cannot get feedback on my application unless I secure an interview. It’s frustrating. I am a highly skilled and committed professional with a track record of leadership and yet I can’t make that next step in my career and I don’t understand why. I am left guessing and will soon give up.

At interview candidates are all asked the same questions for consistency but it doesn’t bring out the true best in people. Again, it’s seeing who can tick all of the boxes on the hidden marking sheet. I have been offered a job from the one interview I went to outside of teaching which was when they asked follow-up questions, engaged with me and genuinely seemed to want to get to know me and allow me a chance to put across all of my skills and experience as well as a little of my personality. Why does the system within education have to be so ‘tick box’ and impersonal?

Poor HR/Unclear job descriptions. - The job descriptions and profiles I have read for DHT and PT posts across different regions are often very poor. Some are completely generic and make no reference to the specific school. They tell me nothing about the job I would be applying for. Many include spelling mistakes or obviously outdated information (e.g. references to 5-14
are still not uncommon). Very few actually tell me what the specific responsibilities of the DHT at that school would be. Again, this makes it difficult to answer application and interview questions.

Bureaucracy in education - Would I become part of a system of political bargaining chips and popular policies at the expense of children? Could I bear to continue such a system? Would it wear me down even quicker?

Named person, safeguarding responsibilities – fear over a lack of clarity in the current ‘blame culture’ society.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

My school

My school (independent) does generally retain staff, though many leave after having children as part time work is not offered. This has resulted in a situation where I (at 32) am now among the older staff at school.

We have no issue in recruiting excellent candidates for each new school session but it is extremely difficult to find good cover teachers or maternity cover teachers during the academic year.

Cover staff

The lack of quality teaching staff available during the academic year I believe is largely attributable to the changed arrangements for supply work. It used to be an attractive and well paid option for some people, now it is not financially viable and so many seek other types of employment.

I agree that some cover staff were just showing up for the contact hours and therefore being paid exorbitant amounts but perhaps a clear contractual obligation to carry out marking/planning paired with decent financial incentive would give us a bank of high quality cover staff so that management are not constantly having to be pulled for cover. Some of these teachers may then take maternity or long term cover contracts within the academic year too.

Recruitment Crisis Nationally

My perception is that there is a current recruitment crisis in Scottish education. This is clear as I have seen Scottish Government adverts targeted at new teachers to the profession in ‘fast track’ routes or bringing teachers across from Canada and other countries. In my opinion I feel that this is both insulting to the teaching profession and foolhardy.

This would not be necessary if teachers were being retained in the profession!!! This is the crux of the issue and is what needs to be tackled rather than running down a route of throwing money at a short-term fix without tackling the underlying cause. It's papering over a big crack in the ceiling. The teachers recruited now will not stay in the profession either unless something changes and we will be back to square 1 in a few years. When I
trained 10 years ago there were hundreds applying for each job – where are they all now?

Why are teachers leaving the profession? That’s the key question. There is not one simple answer, but I think we can identify some key elements:

1. Workload
2. Resources
3. Pressure
4. Lack of respect

**Workload**

I know that John Swinney is making noises now about tackling teacher workload, but it has definitely spiralled out of control due to a number of factors.

CfE was a lovely idea and is based on wonderful principles that very few of us could ever argue with. However, the actual implementation of it has failed.

Deciding on a bottom-up model with teachers creating their own guidelines and shaping education from the chalk face sounds like a lovely idea as opposed to a set of top-down imposed standards (hello English school system, we don't want that). However, without time and money being invested in doing this it has ended up with teachers being frazzled trying to work out what they are meant to be doing before they can start doing it. Work has been replicated across schools, clusters, councils… a waste of time!

The new benchmarks should be helpful but they perhaps come too late when teachers are already at breaking point and just add another layer of complexity to the already very unwieldy curriculum and policy documents that Scottish teachers are supposed to be following.

The ‘E’s and O’s’ in my opinion are wordy and unclear. Simplification is needed. I saw a great comparison of different international grammar guidelines once but I can’t find it to link here. It’s a worthwhile comparison.

First level grammar in CfE states: I can write independently, use appropriate punctuation and order and link my sentences in a way that makes sense. **LIT 1-22a** Compare that to the English, Canadian, Australian and US guidelines and you may be shocked at the contrast.

I would actually say that Twinkl are managing to produce far more user-friendly style content for curriculum guidance in teaching at the moment and they pay salaries of about £17k for ex teachers to sit and make them at home. How much are the government paying their advisors?

There is a bit of a culture of doormat-ish-ness and martyrdom in the teaching ‘profession’ which I believe is unhealthy. It is, after all, a job and if we want to retain teachers we need them not to have physical and mental breakdowns. Yes, it is a vocation and we all care deeply about the children we are responsible for, but we shouldn’t really be expected to put those children’s needs above our own health and wellbeing or above our own personal relationships. Sadly, I feel this is not always the case.
People feel like they can’t say no to new initiatives. People feel that they have to work 60 hour weeks trying to do it all or they’re not a ‘good teacher’. People feel like they can’t use published resources because everything should be individualised for each learner. It’s completely unsustainable.

Why is educational policy set by politicians (or academics) with no training or experience in education rather than by teachers?

Resources

Lack of appropriate facilities and resources is another issue.

Council and school budgets have been slashed and items that were previously purchased at LEA level (with associated economies of scale) are now purchased at school level so money does not go as far either. Teachers are supplying basic essential items like pencils and glue sticks from their own wages!

There has been a move away from using text books (learning should be ‘active’). Which now means that publishers are not creating high quality up to date texts and quality educational videos aimed at the primary market have become a thing of the past. We are using some really outdated resources but they are still better than anything available that is more up to date. Good teaching needs good quality resources and these are sadly lacking at the moment. Teachers are making and sharing resources but I worry about consistency of quality.

Instead, again teachers are using their own money to pay for subscriptions to sites like Twinkl, TES and ‘Teachers Pay Teachers’ to access resources that would previously have come from a publisher out of a school budget.

Pressure

Teaching comes with so much pressure it’s all you can do not to have a mental breakdown on an almost daily basis.

In state schools a huge amount of this pressure comes from poor levels of provision for those with ASN who have been ‘mainstreamed’. Mainstreaming as a policy has gone wrong. Children and teachers (and therefore the rest of the associated class) are being left with no support when the desperately need it. I have a friend who had a refugee child arrive in her school who was classed as ‘blind in one eye’ and therefore did not meet criteria for support. However, the child only had one eye!! She was blind, profoundly blind, and had to be led around by other children in her class. How can that be right?

Non-verbal or potentially violent children left in a room with one adult and 30 of their peers. Meanwhile the teacher is expected to constantly be providing completely targeted teaching to all of the children in the class by differentiating activities for each different level. How on earth is that possible for one human to do?? How is that right for the child with ASN, the teacher or the other children? Couple that with increasing rates of diagnosis of conditions like ASD, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia.
Many of my teaching friends feel guilty every day because we cannot ‘meet the needs of every learner’ 100% of the time. There was a recently published questionnaire in TES which shows that this feeling of guilt is common.

Society seems to think that teachers are now responsible for every aspect of a child’s upbringing – teachers need to help them make good nutritional choices, teachers need to tell them about the dangers of the internet and social media, teachers need to help them learn to toilet train and speak correctly and tie their laces.

This is compounded (in my opinion) by the SNP’s decision to tackle the poverty related attainment gap through schools. Rather than through any sort of policy actually directed at reducing the poverty gap that leads to this difference in the first place. Apparently, it is now a teacher’s duty to eradicate the effects of poverty too. One child has arrived at school without their basic needs having been met, emotionally vulnerable, with a very small sphere of life experience and a small vocabulary of words available to them for speech. Why shouldn’t they be able to achieve just as much as the child down the road who arrives at school having been emotionally stable, having formed healthy attachment as an infant, having eaten healthy food and attended all sorts of baby classes and visited play parks and museums and leisure centres and been on holiday to various different locations and has seen the sea and a forest and a mountain and a lake and a river and a football match and has a much richer vocabulary? Apparently there is no issue here that an ‘attainment fund’ teacher can’t solve in 12 months. Despite all the evidence to the contrary that the early years development is entirely critical. I am talking about poverty of experience here now rather than poverty just of money. I strongly feel that this is political glory hunting. As was the promise to ‘reduce class sizes’ which has resulted in many schools in Edinburgh squeezing 40 odd primary 1 children into a classroom – but they have 2 teachers so the ratio is 1:20. What a scam! While they are trying to provide active, play based learning too with absolutely no space in which to do it.

Would we need such a focus on mindfulness in schools at the moment if we hadn’t created such a climate of pressure and stress in the first place?

Lack of respect

Teaching is not a profession that is respected in this country.

It is not highly paid in comparison with other jobs requiring the same level of education. It does not have career opportunities for progression and potential for improved earnings that other careers do. I imagine that many teachers leave the profession after a couple of years of sitting at the top of the pay scale thinking that they have no further room for progress and can’t sustain their current work in the long term.

Politicians, parents, the media feel that they can make comment on how teachers do their job, despite having had no experience of doing it themselves. What we do is constantly questioned.
Plus there is a society in which children are now being given more freedom and choice, and more instant gratification, than ever before. Parents ask their children if they would like to do something or eat something rather than telling them. Parents feel guilty if their child is ever bored. Therefore children genuinely find the school environment trickier than in the past as the expectations are so different to what they are used to – e.g. being given an instruction to follow with no arguments. It is genuinely making life more difficult, for teachers and for children who don’t understand the rules.

**Q8** Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Additional Support for Learning teachers and assistants.

Any specialist teaching in primary – music, art, drama, science, instrumental. Due to a lack of funding and job security and a lack of suitable facilities and resources.

**Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

RETAINING TEACHERS should be the absolute number 1 priority. Every teacher who leaves the profession takes all of their experience with them.

Tackling workload and teacher health and wellbeing is absolutely key to this.

Appropriate support for children with Additional Support Needs is vital, as is appropriate funding and resource provision nationally.

Making supply teaching a more appealing option again would be helpful in providing suitable cover staff available for when this is needed during the academic year, either for short periods of illness or for longer term maternity/absence cover.

**Q11** Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Additional support for learning provision.

Access to services such as CAMHS, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Counselling, bereavement support. Specialist support for children with ASD, blindness, deafness etc.

**Q12** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Low overall, I would say there is a determined but resigned feeling that it’s bad and set to get worse (budget cuts, Brexit, another referendum, financial instability) but we’re going to continue trying to do our best regardless. Did you see the recent statistics about suicide rates in primary school teachers in England? Double the national average. I wonder how it would compare in Scotland? The wellbeing questionnaire published in TES is very worthwhile reading.
I would suggest a flick through the TES page, or the ‘Scottish Primary Teachers’ facebook page to get a feel for the mood. I stopped following TES on facebook as it was so depressing. Scottish Primary Teachers is a good mix of inspiring individual teachers sharing of ideas, and then sharing the articles that paint the bleak picture of the national scene.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

• What are the factors that influence whether teaching is considered an attractive profession compared to other professions by those that might consider a career in teaching?
  Pay and conditions, workload, respect.

Teacher Training

• Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?
  I believe that Initial Teacher Education needs to be improved to be more fit for purpose. They have gone down a route of making it more academic and a Masters level study. I can see how this ties together with the idea of more professionalism and a more engaged ‘practitioner-researcher’ style of approach to education.

  However, this is not preparing students for the reality of the teaching profession in this country. There is not a lot of time left around the demands of classroom teaching for deep research level reflection. What new teachers need to do is hone their craft in schools at the chalk face, getting involved in real life school development work and in supporting GIRFEC in all its different forms so that they are prepared for the real job. I have seen too many students who seem to think that teaching a few lessons really well equates to being a good teacher. It just doesn’t. The pastoral work, the displays, the development work and planning paperwork, the communication with parents all seem to be side-lined in the current training system. However, I think that the ‘teach first’ system in England is also not fit for purpose as it gives insufficient understanding of teaching and child development and makes pupils in to guinea pigs. Student teachers must be in classes learning from and being supported by experienced class teachers (who should not be used for class cover during a student placement).

  I had a final placement PGDE student a few years ago who could teach a good lesson but cried constantly on placement, asked me to teach the class in the morning so she could prepare for her afternoon observation (her final observation before she gets a class of her own to plan whole weeks for!), did not attend staff meetings and did not attend staff in service day training so that she could work on her folder. I raised my concerns with her university tutor that she was able to teach isolated lessons but was not prepared for the realities of being a teacher and may not make it through her probation year. The tutor’s response was “yes, that happens to so many of them”. Surely then the training needs to be adapted to create students who are ready to be teachers?
This consultation approach

I think there should have been consultation BEFORE the Scottish government started recruiting teachers from abroad. It feels like an insult to those here.

I think that this consultation could have provided a simpler survey format to encourage wider engagement and that it could have paired some tick box sections to shape thinking and still have allowed for free typed answers. This would have been much easier to share widely and for people to respond in the time they have.

I do not think that the consultation should have been carried out over the Easter holidays and I think that GTCS and EIS could have been used to share and encourage participation.

Thank you very much for consulting though and for taking an interest. I am moderately hopeful that things will begin to improve soon

ANONYMOUS 10

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Satisfaction at seeing children progress and develop
Holidays and being able to spend time with my own family during school holidays.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
No

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I would be discouraged due to the high levels of pressure put upon headteachers from local authority and government.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Lack of permanent contracts being issued – employees need to be interviewed every year for posts within the same authority.
High pressures put on teachers with diminishing support, more children with ASD and other additional needs being placed in mainstream classes with no support given to teaching staff. I currently teach a class of 22 children of which 5 have a diagnosis of ASD. I do not have a full time member of support staff to work with these children, when a support worker is available, there are still many needs to be met and we are stretched to the limit to work with these children. This is not beneficial to the children with needs but also does not help the other children in the class as most adult support is used with these ASD children who are struggling to cope in a noisy, busy classroom.

Teachers workload is far too much trying to juggle the needs of all children, completing ASPs for them, not to mention the day to day stress of daily upsets and disturbance due to children being placed in an inappropriate learning environment.

Supply staff due to changes in pay for staff; it is no longer worthwhile for teachers to work day to day supply.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Provide more ASN support either in mainstream schools or expand the provision for ASN bases so that children can be educated in a more appropriate setting and allow teachers to teach the other children in their class.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Not that I am aware of but I only moved to this authority last year.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

ASN support

Supply staff

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low – workload – most teachers I know put in hours of work at home.

A curriculum that is so full that we struggle to fit in everything that we are expected to teach. Lack of supply teachers puts pressure on staff to struggle into work when feeling unwell and very stressed.

The impact of higher numbers of children with additional needs being placed in classes with little or no support provided to deal with them.
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Principal Teacher Pupil Support (learning)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Renfrewshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with young people and professionalism of most of my colleagues.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I would hope that I would be able to leave teaching before retiring – mainly owing to the fact I do not think I would be able to keep up with the workload and stress and still be effective in my role when I am in my 60s.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Nothing: the hours required to complete the job effectively do not make it possible for a balanced work/home life. As a middle manager I am working 50+ hours a week.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
The work expectation…50+ hour weeks. Red tape…paper work. Having to parent pupils before you can actually teach them. Lack of resources and alternative supports to deal with pupils with complex needs – the requirement to be all things to all people and a very over crowded curriculum.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Looking at work load – teachers being aware that this is not at 35 hour a week post! Making realistic demands on time – less paper work and more time actually teaching.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
If so:
• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

A significant cut in support staff owning to budget cuts has impacted on pupils in a negative way

**Additional comments**

Teaching is a job that I love. However what my job entails now bears no resemblance to what I started doing. I have significantly more ‘parenting’ role now picking up on things that traditional parents would have done. The increase in pupils with mental health issues has had a significant impact. My colleagues and I spend approximately 30 mins each day on the fallout from social media that parents are not dealing with.

**ANONYMOUS 12**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary teacher – in class

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?
Dundee City Council

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Direct contact with the children – this is the bit I love about my job

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
Stay until I retire – only been teaching since 1999 (graduated in 1987 but no jobs in Dundee, then the catch 22 of can’t get on the supply list without your probation being completed)

**Q6** What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Nothing would encourage me.

No way would I want those jobs – bad enough having to listen to that garbage but to have to spout it as gospel. No way could I preach it. Puppets with no control.

Would never pay me enough to do that.

**Q7** What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Workload – who else works like teachers with no overtime payments. eg How do you get yourself organised for Day 1 with 1 day in-service spent in
meetings/training? When do you have time to tidy/organise your class? Wall displays and photocopying with 1 hour classroom assistant time, etc etc
Training – doesn’t prepare you, lecturers are not realistic about what actually goes on in schools
Pay – not actually had an increase – in my hand salary in the last 5 years has gone down by £20 a month.
Politics – constantly bombarded with new things, hot topics, we having being doing it all wrong, we are failing the children, attainment gap etc etc
Hassle from peers – teachers holidays, only work 9-3, teachers have it easy, teachers hate my child …
Parents – constant battle about something and no support from management – too scared to stand up to them – approach you in the playground, write about you on Facebook, write nasty letters
Constant demands – students, planning, CPD, working time agreement, assessment, marking, assemblies, extra-curricular activities etc etc etc
Lack of resources – teachers constantly spend money on their classes and classrooms to make it look good, outdated resources,
No specialist teachers – new staff have little experience of teaching gym, drama, music etc

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Support staff are paid such a low wage – who would want to do that?
Teachers – respect has gone from the profession

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Teachers pick students not management/lecturers
Realistic training – hoop you have to jump through are ridiculous
Jaded teachers who are so burnt out have no energy to support students
Pay increase – recognise the amount of work that really gets done. Not just relying on the good will and pride of teachers to give a good service.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
If so:
• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)
My school hasn't actually been that bad as we are almost fully staffed and sickness is surprisingly good.

Offsite children now in class – no extra support given for this so Support staff used to deal with this. Less time in mainstream classes – Again workload suffers.

DHT farmed out for a school who are getting inspected leaving HT only for 300 children, no PT. Often no one in school in a leadership role

Constant changing of class groups due to always trying to reduce staffing – children lost in this, transfer of information gets lost, valuable teaching time used settling new classes,

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Specialist teachers are no more – PE, drama, music etc

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low morale and the general feeling that it is never going to get any better. Things will just get harder and harder. Teaching is not what it was even in my 17 years in the profession.

Management have no authority and gumption – just sing the party song.

Additional comments

Love teaching but so much more to the job than teaching!

ANONYMOUS 13

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Primary supply teacher but working mostly in one school

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

East Renfrewshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

I enjoy working with children of all ages. Their enthusiasm and positivity is infectious and it is rewarding to see them learn and flourish.

I also enjoy the camaraderie of colleagues and sharing ideas and strategies with them.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I would like to think I will teach until I retire, although I do think that increasingly it is a profession more suited to younger people as the energy levels required – due to increasing workload - may be difficult to sustain for someone of over 65.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I would not be interested in seeking promotion because I am happier to work on a supply basis where I can be in control of the hours I work and so can achieve a better work life balance.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I think that the issue of increasing workload is a serious one for teachers. There is far too much emphasis on measuring achievement, recording scores, comparing them to last year’s scores etc. All this tracking of numbers leaves teachers less time and energy to plan and implement quality learning experiences for children. The endless data created does not help improve the core skills of any pupils but instead is sometimes used to ‘beat teachers with a stick’, pitting the current performance of their pupils against how they performed for a previous teacher. All of this number crunching and box ticking leaves teachers feeling exhausted, demoralised and as if their professional judgement counts for nothing. It is little wonder that recruitment and retention of teachers is a big problem.

Class sizes are too large and there are more and more children who have complex needs coming into mainstream without the necessary classroom support being provided for them due to ‘budget constraints’.

The changes to the way supply teachers are paid, meaning that a higher rate of pay only applies after a certain number of days, means that many people who would previously have been happy to take a day’s work know that financially it is just not worth it anymore.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)
The number of support staff has decreased steadily over the years, despite the fact that their duties have been extended in many cases. Often now they are required to monitor the insulin levels of diabetic children, for example, as well as supervise playgrounds, help with wall displays and help gather resources. The role that they once had of helping the class teacher with a small group within the class is long gone and often teachers have to share the time of one support assistant with many of their colleagues.

**Q12** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

I would say that staff morale is quite low due to people feeling overworked, undervalued and not respected. See above.

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**ANONYMOUS 14**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have? (Primary Class Teacher working full time in a rural 2 class school.

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?

Aberdeenshire Council

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

I work with some amazing people. This includes support staff, management and colleagues. I really care about the impact teachers can have on children and want to help shape the future of our country. When children begin to make connections and apply the learning I have taught it makes me very proud and happy to be doing such a job.

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I want to teach until I retire but for the amount of paper generated in this job and stress I don’t know if I could. For what I do the hours of unpaid overtime and lack of appreciation I could be working in an office or supermarket and not have to worry about buying resources or supplies. Also the pay is unlikely to be a huge difference because I am at the top of my pay scale and cannot move or improve.

**Q6** What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I have wanted to seek promotion but the issues surrounding this are huge. In larger schools teachers are not given the opportunities to develop and gain the experience to undertake the role. Alongside this we are watching head teachers having their own judgements questioned expected to do things that are either wrong or unachievable with no support or alternatives. I know of several head teacher friends and colleagues who are unhappy with their jobs.
Why would I want to join this with the pressure and stress already as a classroom teacher.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

1) Most teachers have no room to improve and achieve in their profession outside the classroom. If you are in a situation that is stressful and uncomfortable SMT do not have the experience or energy to support. It is all about closing the attainment gap. An impossible dream! I am passionate about raising attainment for all in my class and children working to the best of their abilities but if I am truly doing my job right then I will be helping the best and the poorest to improve this means the gap can never truly disappear.

2) like everything is being rationed and it leads to stress. Teachers don’t have resources they need...are too scared to ask for them...fed up asking and have moved on to funding resources themselves...jaded and no longer care/ cannot afford to fund it and become stressed not meeting requirements. We are expected to use digital technology by the Government and Local Authorities but have to fund the purchase of this out of our own budgets. Some schools are asking their Parent Councils/ Fundraising Groups to fund this while others must make the choice between more reading books or another ipad/laptop.

3) Teacher work long hours and are not always getting the contractual obligations such as non-contact time or provision of quality CPD. Filing was never the role of the teacher, there was never time for it, and backing artwork, so the position of Classroom Assistant was made. This person would do the job that teachers were told that they were not supposed to do. Now they have taken away Classroom Assistants and become Pupil Support Assistants and teachers are told they are just to work with pupils so you must justify which pupil requires support and how that PSA is supporting them and what improvement this has made to their attainment. While teachers struggle to keep their heads above the water and file the papers they are not supposed to file and back work that isn’t in their job description. We are being told that we might not get these things due to funding/supply/staff issues but we are still expected to complete the work. A full time teacher plans for 22.5 hours of contact time with children. Lessons are planned, assessed and marked (or should be) in the 2.5 hours they are not with the children. If they don’t get that time they must then plan for 25 hours with 0 time allocated for planning, marking and assessment. More work with less time to support. Or a variation within this but it is more work we are expected to do more work for nothing. I don’t know of any other professional who would be asked or expected to work for nothing. Not to mention teachers usually volunteer in some capacity outside of school so most already go above and beyond what they are contractually obliged to do. Most teachers cannot even work to rule because it is actually impossible to do this without have a detrimental impact on children’s learning. We have no other option.
4) Pay – pure and simple. Teachers were expected to be professionals and complete a 4 year degree qualification to justify this. They did it and began earning a professional salary. It was designed that once you reached point 6 you plateaued at £35,763, currently. For that same salary the workload has risen exponentially (due to a constantly changing Government/curriculum) and the facility to allow teachers who wanted to specialise and improve was removed. Teachers could no longer expected to gain Chartered Teacher status for their continued improvement, development or additional responsibilities they took on. Now teachers are expected to take on additional responsibilities and work for nothing and it counts as nothing more than experience for SMT if the choose/are able to apply for positions. Now we are being told that they want us to become a Masters Profession. Not a problem, I’ve always wanted a Masters…but now you are expected to pay up to £1000 or more to get this for no benefit to your career. I don’t know if I can afford this right now…and if I could the fact remains that I can earn more than my current salary in most Graduate schemes. Why should I remain a teacher?

5) Some management, QIOs/Education Directors/ Heads of Service are out of touch with what teaching involves. This makes it difficult to relate with staff in the frontline struggling.

6) Violence. Violence is not tolerated by any other public or private service. But in teaching it is ok because he or she is just 5/ they have additional support needs or similar. I know of several teachers including myself who have been bitten, kicked, verbally abused, physically threatened and abused and nothing is done in 90% of the cases. It is not written anywhere that a zero tolerance policy on abuse means in actuality means 1 in 10 violent incidents will be dealt with seriously.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Supply/ Head Teachers

No one wants these jobs for the money being offered. Our supply staff are often retired teachers helping out…many don’t need the money and won’t due to it costing more to travel to schools than they actually earn, especially if childcare is involved.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Deal with the workload first. New teachers are being killed with the bureaucracy and old teachers are now collapsing under the pressure.

Look at career progressions and pay. You want us to do more that is fine but there will be a cost to this.

Support Management at school level either given them the authority to make the changes to what they need without the stress of having to take on additional HR roles through the Governance plans. This means allow them to
choose the staff they feel would be best in their school but HR still control contracts and payslips.

**Q11** Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Nursery Teachers. Aberdeenshire changed their role made them Principle Teachers to share around a cluster so all children would get a little bit of teacher time. Now they have been pulled back into the classroom and the nurseries are not always getting that quality intervention promised.

**Q12** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Moral is good until teachers think about the job, management, the government or curriculum. Then it becomes rock bottom and they begin digging. I’ve known 2 teachers to say enough is enough and leave the profession because the silver lining has disappeared.

**ANONYMOUS 15**

Q1 I am a fully qualified primary school teacher.

Q2 I work in Glasgow.

Q4 Positives of Teaching

Teaching can be a very rewarding career. Working with children is a privilege. It is lovely to see children learning and preparing for the world.

Q5 I came into teaching as a second career. In the ten plus years that I have taught in Scotland I have seen many changes. Most of them not for the better. We as teachers have less autonomy now than we did 10 years ago. We have uncontrollable workload and our collective mental health is suffering. I joined the SPP with the agreement that I would retire at 60 and that has been moved to 68. I do not believe that I will be able to do this job justice at that advanced age. I do not think I will continue in teaching until I retire. I have a Bachelor of Commerce degree to fall back on when teaching becomes too much.

Q6 I do not think that I could be convinced to seek promotion to senior management. The job of Headteacher has become completely unmanageable. The skill set needed to do the job well is too vast. Even the most talented people cannot be good at dealing with parents, staff, children, politics, business (budgets). Even with the best will in the world no person could complete the remit of today’s headteacher in the amount of time available. Having worked in many schools I have seen the stress levels of HT’s and their lack of work life balance.

Q7 Recruitment and retention of teachers is difficult because we are required to hold an increasing level of education for a decreasing amount of remuneration (in real terms). Our workload has become overwhelming and due to
Government policies such as presumption of mainstream, large class sizes, decreasing budgets and lower pay for supply teachers.

The school environment is now extremely stressful. We have children with increasing needs that we are ill equipped to support and we are regularly short staffed. The curriculum is overcrowded and we are being asked to teach more and more with less and less.

**Q9** Recruitment and retention would be improved by paying a more reasonable wage, providing adequate training, stabilising staffing levels, and treating teachers as the professionals that they are.

The pressures on teachers are ever increasing we work many unpaid overtime hours and stretch ourselves to our limits. This often leads to us getting run down and picking up illnesses from the children. When we are ill we are scared to be home getting better due to Draconian attendance policies, so we drag ourselves in and infect those around us.

**Q10** Teacher shortages greatly affect the quality of teaching and learning in our schools. When it comes to teaching assistants they are rarely available to help with learning as they are tasked with babysitting unruly children who disrupt their peers learning.

**Q12** Most of the teachers I know would not recommend the profession to others. I know many that have talked their children out of training as teachers due to the lack of respect that we get. The Curriculum for Excellence though good in it’s ideals, has been severely misinterpreted and highly under resourced.

**ANONYMOUS 16**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have? (Primary teacher)

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?
   South Lanarkshire Council

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
   Working with the children; my own professional development and desire to learn; working with colleagues; building a learning community across and beyond our school; working with business and other voluntary sectors of the community. Sharing my love of learning with all.

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
   Yes
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Encourage - Money & desire to more involved in the development of my school community
Discourage – administration/workload

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Finding teachers who are flexible enough to accommodate the school’s needs; support staff (including clerical, classroom assistants and catering staff) – finding suitable staff who will work for the pay;

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I work in primary – senior management roles? Additional support need teachers? I know secondary have subject teachers are in short supply for maths particularly

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

A professional pay for a professional job. In real terms, my income has reduced over the past 5 years at least. My current actual take home pay is what it was over 5 years ago – and costs have not stayed at the rate of 5 years ago

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so: Due to the increase in school role and the fixed number of rooms

- What are these measures? – composite classes with 2 teachers
- How well are they working? – not effective when one of the two teachers goes off sick and part-time cover is put in
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?) temporary

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Ok – workload
ANONYMOUS 17

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have?
    Full time primary school class teacher

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?
    Fife Council

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
    Positives – for the most the children, being able to support children develop into confident, able young people.

Q5  Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employ/ent?
    I will leave at retirement age, mainly due to my personal circumstances, rather than the job keeping me there.
    I have considered leaving due to lack of respect from pupils, parents and general public / media, meddling by non-classroom based experts who suggest / direct changes without adequate resources, paper work and working hours and a salary that has not risen in the past number of years to take rising costs and inflation into consideration.

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
    Absolutely nothing would make me consider leaving the classroom. Class teachers are heavily inundated with paperwork, senior management has an even heavier burden to carry. I studied to teach, not manage budgets, wave a flag for another new initiative or to be creative with fewer resources to the detriment of staff and children.

Q7  What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school?
    Main challenges – financial
    Firstly teaching salaries are well behind equally qualified graduates, unless you go into management, salaries remain stagnant after a few years, for the rest of your career.
    Budget cuts / lack of equality across Scotland schools, many staff buy resources from own pockets.
    Secondly the working hours, to do a 35hour week is nigh on impossible week after week without there being a major impact on the learning and teaching. Resources, especially on line need checking for suitability and mistakes all of which takes time. For example Fife are focussing on Conceptual Numeracy, alone when teaching Place Value all our school based resources are out...
of date the word ‘unit’ has been changed to ‘ones’, so I now have to make boards / worksheets etc that say Hundreds, Tens and Ones. Only one word has changed but the impact has been huge for planning and preparation purposes, has it made a difference to the understanding for the children, I truly don’t think so.

The lack of support for a classroom teacher who has a pupil with a condition such as ADHD / Autism. An unsupported pupil can cause huge disruptions to the learning and Teaching in a classroom. As is in our case many pupils receive some support, but these children are Austistic for every moment of their lives and not only when the PSA is on duty. Stress in dealing with children with challenging conditions is on the increase and the solution – cut the hours of highly skilled people who are needed both to support the child and to allow the other children in the class to continue uninterrupted with their learning!

Behaviour of pupils for trainee teachers, probationers and young teachers is a huge concern and an increasing concern for more experienced class teachers.

There seems to be little or no support for the adult, with unhelpful questions such as ‘What did you do to cause this situation? What could you do to avoid similar situations?

There are many children with behavioural issues where they have no interest in changing their behaviours as they know there are no actions and the process is incredible slow to deal with a repeat offender. Rather than fine people for having holidays out of term time, fine those that send children to school who cause disruption in the class due to their poor behaviour.

There seems to be an increase in the number of verbal assaults / physical assault and defiance amongst some of the children who are attending school.

In which other aspect of society are the providers expected to deal with abusive children?

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

In the working agreement teacher are entitled to preparation time (2.5hrs), teacher who cover the 2.5hrs are difficult to find / replace. Support for Learning staff have had their time cut in Fife.
Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Improve working conditions - pay, resourcing and stress inducing situation see Q8 behaviour.

Q10  Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
No measures put into place to deal with changes. Increased class sizes, reduced support assistant time are all grudgingly accepted – we in the classroom have no power or say in the matter, we just have to deal with it!

Q12  How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Morale amongst staff – low.

Older staff cannot wait to get out – due to constant changes and not always for the better, behaviour and increasing number of children with a medical diagnosis who need support but don’t get it or are currently going through an assessment process which takes many, many months. Young and inexperienced management who are clearly out their depth some with as little as 5yrs teaching experience and experience staff having to step in and cover.

It is a known fact that it is increasingly difficult to fill HT vacancies, but a certain level of experience / number of years in the classroom should be mandatory, weak and poor leadership is part of the low morale equation.

For young teachers they see and are more willing to seek new employment challenges, where they can experience a better work life balance.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

Stop comparing Scotland to other countries, unless the ethos towards education is equal. Having experienced education in other countries, the ethos of the Scottish parents (I am aware that it is not all parents) is as poor as the results of Scotland in the International tables.

Accountability is essential in education but the support and accountability of parents should also factor in the statistics. Monies given to parents for the wellbeing for their child should be spent on the child and not to support wishes and desires of the adult in charge. A small example, no financial support for school uniforms to those responsible for the child at home, monies to school instead, child provided with a uniform at beginning of term would ensure that the child ‘looks like everyone else’ and belongs to the same school / group – giving the child a sense of belonging and in some cases reduce the instances of bullying due to a lack of appropriate clothes for school.

Why is absenteeism allowed to go as low as 60% before alarm bells ring?
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary School Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeenshire Council.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I feel working with children in general is a very rewarding thing to do. Everyday I get to know a little bit more about the lives of the children I teach, and everyday feel grateful for being allowed to play such a vital role in their education and wellbeing. There are challenging days (and weeks and months!) where you feel nothing is being achieved, however when things go right there is no better feeling. Playing a part in the development of a child’s confidence, knowledge and skills is one of the most rewarding experiences a person can have. I have always been someone who enjoys learning new things and I feel that teaching is a profession that suits my personality. I constantly have to think of new ideas and am often opened up to new ideas by the children I teach.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
Currently I feel I can see myself remaining in teaching until retirement. However if circumstances such as unrealistic paperwork requirements, rushed curriculum changes and insufficient pay continue, my viewpoint may change.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
At present I would not seek a promoted post. I have some friends and former colleagues who have successfully entered into management positions and from their experiences it is my opinion that senior management teams across the country are feeling over stressed and under supported by the government. I also feel that the government should consider looking at how management teams are distributed in schools. My current school does not qualify for a depute head post due to our role size. However because of deprivation issues, and a high percentage of EAL children the workload is too much for one person to successfully deal with.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Behavioural issues would be the main challenge at our school. We have a high level of children coming from lower income families, with difficult backgrounds. The baggage these children carry from home cannot simply be dropped at the school gates and often this causes disruption to learning and teaching time. Many of these children come to school with very poor social skills and have a limited understanding of what is appropriate in an educational setting. This in turn can disrupt the learning of others in the class as a high percentage of teaching time is directed towards teaching basic social skills and rules, which normally would come from a home environment.

I also feel because our school is in a more rural area of Aberdeenshire we face the problem of probationer teachers “ticking the box” and being placed in our town. However after their probation year is up, they often seek out employment in more appealing locations with a greater level of amenities and cultural experiences.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Most specialist areas, Support for Learner teacher posts and EAL support roles.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Ideally I feel that teachers should be given a higher wage, which better reflects the dedication and commitment they put into their work. Many young recruits enter the profession with little knowledge of how difficult the job can be. I recently had an excellent student who commented that many of his peers were already talking about how in their words, “the job just isn’t worth the money”.

Changes to the curriculum are being made to help teachers navigate through CfE better than previously, but still I see new probationer teachers completely at a loss about how to create a suitable progression for the children in their class based on the vague E&Os provided.

I also feel that work should be done to help bring the reputation of teaching back up in regards to public opinion and the representation of teachers in the media.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
If so:
• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

Our last head teacher retired in 2015. At current we have an acting head, who has been in this post since 2015. I feel that this has not been dealt well, as in my opinion a school should not be left with an acting head for this length of time.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low. Everyone I talk to at the moment is feeling very undervalued and under a great deal of pressure. Many have talked about leaving the profession completely. I feel that it is perhaps worse in my school due to our current situation. However I feel as a profession we feel like we voluntarily go above and beyond what is required every day. Working at weekends, working during nights, working during our holidays and still we feel like we are being told we are not doing enough for the children we teach and not being paid adequately for our time.

ANONYMOUS 19

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Permanent Class Teacher in Primary School with a primary 7 class I also have responsibility for Science within my school.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

The children, the lightbulb moments, the helping children discover more about themselves and reach their potential. Seeing a difference in a class from the start of the year to the end of the year.

Great supportive colleagues within my school who support, share and help each other on a daily basis.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

 Probably leave early as I think this is a difficult job to do when you are older as it is very active and mentally and physically draining at times.
What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Support from line managers to back you up on decisions with more autonomy within your own school.

What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Workload can be difficult at times especially looking at constantly tracking pupils. Support with difficult parents and parents being very vocal, forthright and actively being hostile to members to staff.

Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Science/technology/ICT can be difficult within primary as many teachers themselves don’t feel confident in teaching these curricular areas.

Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Better pay always helps with retention but I also believe less testing and allowing teachers to have freedom to teach without having to cover all E&O’s. More Autonomy with less paperwork and box ticking.

Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

Due to staff absences we have lost ccc time and have lost support staff to try to cover more classes within the school. Head teacher having to cover classes due to lack of supply teachers. Sickness and absence not being covered by the council but unsure if it is due to lack of availability?

Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

It is difficult to get staff to allow to take the pupils on trips due to lack of staff.

How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Quite low due to paperwork and generally parents being rude, abusive and belligerent towards staff.

**ANONYMOUS 20**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have?

Primary class teacher

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?

South Lanarkshire Council

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Working with fantastic children, seeing the difference I make.

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I would consider leaving the profession early if something is not done to address the excessive, unnecessary paperwork that seems to be required. Also if the number of unpaid hours I am required to work to fully plan and prepare for my class each day isn’t addressed.

**Q6** What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I have no interest in any sort of promotion. I trained to be a teacher not sit in an office completing paperwork.

**Q7** What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The very negative reputation Scottish Education has at the moment, the amount of extra, unpaid hours required just to be able to do the job properly, to a high standard, poor pay which doesn’t reflect the amount of hours teachers spend out with the school day, high levels of stress within the profession

**Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Clearer guidelines from the Scottish Government. For example at the start of CfE the first thing that should have been developed was the benchmarks so that every teacher had the same standards and expectations. Instead we have spent 10 years all trying to develop our own resources in schools or learning community groups by second guessing the wording in outcomes and experiences

**Q10** Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school
headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Multi-school headship for several years
Changes in use of support assistant – no-one available to work alongside class teacher as office has no cover

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Quite good but only because we have a very supportive headteacher

ANONYMOUS 21

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary Class teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Making a difference to young people’s lives
Seeing pupils grow in confidence
Earning and sustaining the trust of parents
Working as part of a team in a school.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I will teach until I retire in just over 2 years.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Never wanted the responsibility and always found job satisfaction in the classroom.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
The job is becoming unmanageable. I am winding down but still work every evening Sunday – Thursday (for at least 2 hours) and many weekends and still I do not finish all that is expected of me.
Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Class teachers in schools of higher deprivation or less support from Parents

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Seriously tackling needless paperwork eg Tomes for forward plans which are limited in their use. More support staff to help reduce numbers of pupils with challenging behaviour

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

A probationer at our school covered a 25 multi composite class for the day I don’t work. In last month new colleague covers P5-7 (my class)

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite/ very low

Over working, challenging behaviour ,

ANONYMOUS 22

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

Primary School teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

East Renfrewshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

It can be an incredibly rewarding job, to see children grasping concepts that they were previously unable to understand.
It is wonderful to have pupils who are excited and eager to step in to my classroom, and to hear from parents who say their children love to come to school and to learn.

Every day in the classroom is different (although this isn't necessarily always a positive!!) so the job cannot be described as boring or monotonous.

There are times when your efforts and commitment are shown to be very much appreciated (mostly by pupils and parents) so that can be rewarding.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Because the retirement age keeps increasing and increasing, I would not like to say with any certainty that I would physically be able to teach until I am eligible to retire. The job can be very demanding and tiring.

Furthermore, it is very frustrating to witness continual changes to the curriculum and the addition of (what seem to be) pointless administrative tasks and duties, taking teachers away from what one would expect to be their primary purpose – instructing children in the classroom.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Nothing would encourage me to seek promotion.

I am interested in teaching children, not managing people or paperwork.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

A major recruitment issue appears to be the recruitment and retention of supply teachers.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

In my opinion, the main problem lies with supply staff and not permanent staff. Supply staff do not seem to feel appreciated. They are taken advantage of and not made to feel valued.

Furthermore, I have noticed that the response to challenges with staffing keeps seeming to be addressed in a very reactive manner – student teacher numbers are slashed, then suddenly there is a panic because there aren’t enough teachers, so student teacher numbers are suddenly increased. In my opinion, this results in universities taking on many students who are not fully committed or fully suited to becoming teachers. Furthermore, in my experience, the PGDE course is generally not sufficient to prepare students for life in the classroom, so the profession is inundated with many unready and unsuitable teachers who do not stay. Money wasted.
Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Not that I can think of, although I find the availability of support assistants is minimal.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Support for pupils with Additional Support Needs is unreliable due to staff shortages, because management are not always able to get cover for illness or other staff absences. As a result, it is generally the support that gets pulled. This means that it can be difficult for the class teacher to plan, not knowing whether or not the extra support will be in place.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low because of the uncertainty over the continuously changing curriculum. Because there is no properly accountable assessment or standard across the country. Teachers just don’t trust the Levels and are forced to make judgements based on a too vague curriculum.

ANONYMOUS 23

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

I am a primary teacher in an acting Principal Teacher role until the end of this school session.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

West Lothian Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

I enjoy working with children, my colleagues and parents. The only positive that keeps me in the job at the moment though is the holidays and being able to have this time with my own children. As soon as I no longer require to be with them during the school holidays I am planning to leave.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

There is no way that I can continue teaching until I retire, which would currently still be 31 years of teaching. The job is far too demanding and I
cannot envisage being able to deal with the level of effort required when I am in my 50s and 60s. I have already decided that I will be leaving teaching when my own children are teenagers and I no longer need to be available for them during the school holidays.

What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I am currently in an acting promoted post and I will be leaving this post at the end of this school term and going back to a class teacher role. In my local authority all principal teachers are paid at the lowest possible rate. This is no incentive for anyone to take on a management role. Currently, I spend most of my days dealing with behaviour issues and rarely have any time during my allocated management time to do any development work. This means that this work is then done in my own free time at evenings and weekend. I also have a 4 day class commitment but only have 50 minutes of RCCT time per week which I often also end up using to deal with management issues, for example dealing with behaviour issues that have occurred at lunch time. This again means that I spend time at evenings and weekend planning for class preparation, marking etc.

I have worked in a seconded role as a development officer for my authority and have seen the pressures put on headteachers by council executives and elected members to improve attainment figures. These people have no idea about the realities of a classroom. The procedures being used to measure the pupils’ attainment are not suited to the Scottish Education system, yet headteachers and senior staff are held to account for achievement of these ridiculous assessment systems.

What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

As a class teacher I feel that there is absolutely no recognition of being ‘a very good/ excellent classroom teacher’. In a school I worked in previously only those who were interested in promotion to senior level were given any kudos in the school. I have many strengths as an experienced teacher and having had 18 months out in a development role relating to numeracy I know that I have a lot to offer in a school situation in terms of leading learning but unless you are interested in climbing the career ladder this experience, skills and knowledge does not matter. The Charter Teacher system was not great as teachers had to fund their own study but there does need to be some incentive for classroom teachers to stay in the classroom and develop themselves professionally. I feel that the creation of such a post would be the only thing that would keep me in the profession beyond the 10 years that I am planning for at the moment.

The pressures of the job and the expectations of Curriculum for Excellence create pressures and challenges that make it difficult for teachers to do their job. I find it ridiculous that there are so many aspects of education that we are expected to cover within 22.5 hours of class contact per week, yet the core
subjects of literacy and numeracy are failing. The fact that we are teaching children modern languages from early level and increasing this to 2 languages by the time they leave primary school, yet many children cannot read, write or compute fluently totally baffles me. The curriculum needs stripped back and there needs to be clear emphasis on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Everything else should be additional to that.

A further challenge is the amount of children in classes with additional learning needs that teachers are required to plan for. This is often with very little additional support through support for learning, outreach services (which have been cut severely within my authority), pupil support worker time etc. Within a class 1 teacher is expected to cater for a wide variety of needs, for example within a class you may have children who speak a few different languages, a child with ASD needs, a child with dyslexia, children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and many other complex needs. Teachers are not equipped with the knowledge and skills to support all of these needs effectively yet they are expect to, as well as teaching the rest of the class and raising attainment.

Class sizes are also an issue. I find it ridiculous that teachers who have 8 children in a class are paid the same amount as teachers who have 33 children in a class. This must be a completely different workload. A teacher with a large class has more marking, planning and preparation, reporting, parents nights in comparison to teachers in a small school yet there is no recognition of this.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I think the whole teaching profession in general is facing a crisis. Every teacher that I know who graduated at the same time as me is disillusioned with the job and planning to leave soon. The fact that I have a friend who is planning on cashing in her pension so that she can retrain for a different role really highlights to me the issues in the job.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

There needs to be a more streamlined curriculum that focuses on core skills and knowledge. Teachers need to be valued as professionals and not always pressured to perform. I would be interested to know if other professionals e.g doctors are monitored as regularly as teachers are. This process in many cases can be highly stressful and not conducive to supporting learning.

There also needs to be incentives for teachers to stay in the classroom or to go for promoted posts. I think there should be principal teachers for curriculum development in primary schools and principal teachers who have management responsibility. For me, the management roles such as behaviour management, budgeting etc do not appeal, but if there was a curriculum development promoted role I would be very interested in this.

Class sizes and needs within classrooms, and support measures in place for these needs, also need to be addressed.
Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

In my current role, to allow teachers to have their allocated RCCT, children are put together in the hall for 50 minutes 3 x per week. This is not conducive to effective learning at all but due to complete lack of being able to recruit additional teachers beyond the classroom teachers then having teachers deliver more meaningful learning for pupils, for example a PE or Music specialist, this is not an option.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Morale is exceptionally low across the teaching profession.

I have been in the fortunate role of being able to work within many schools through my development role and I know this is not isolated to one school or situation.

Staff are being pressured too much with attainment figures, being forced to push children through tests and assessments for which they are not ready.

In some schools, parents can be an issue and depending on who is leading the school, parents can be allowed to make teacher’s lives very difficult.

Additional comments

Being a teacher is not an enjoyable job and I would not recommend it to anyone. I have 2 young children and I feel that my role as a mum and as a partner to my husband is often compromised because of the commitments and expectations of my job. I work every evening after my children go to bed. I spend time in my holidays planning and organising for work. I spend my own money buying resources for my classroom because funding has been cut, for example we have no access to colour printing in school, yet we are expected to have bright and attractive classroom displays. I am constantly anxious and exhausted by my job but I would not take time off as this is frowned upon and the authority sickness policy is awful. I enjoy being in the classroom with the children but I cannot continue giving so much of myself to this job. I cannot see how things can get any better but I would love it if the results of this survey can achieve something because I know I am definitely not an isolated case in feeling like this.

ANONYMOUS 24
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (0.5 permanent contract in a school (primary)

I currently teach 1 extra day per week in my school too.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Stability due to permanent contract. Fits in with my children also.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I will not teach until I retire. I feel that a change is needed as I have taught for 15 years and feel that I need a new challenge. I do not experience the same pleasure in this job due to many reasons; workload, lack of resources, pressure from SMT, abuse (written and verbal) from parents, lack of opportunities to diversify in my job, constant changes in the curriculum/assessment, wide range of ASN that teachers are expected to cope with, as many as 7 ASD children in one mainstream class.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Nothing could encourage me to seek promotion.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Challenges will vary. The job is no longer as appealing due to factors listed above (Q5).

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

unsure

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

More support for NQT with realistic expectations. More advice given to supporters. Less area cover contracts, More class post contracts.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:
• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

Temporary measure – collapse of CCC timetable. School assembly held in place to give CCC time. DHT and HT cover classes.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Class trips cancelled due to lack of support staff.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Staff moral very low. Many talking about their dissatisfaction with the job. Many considering alternative careers. Many tired of the heavy workload and abusive nature of many parent interactions.

ANONYMOUS 25

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary School Class Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Ayrshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
• Enjoyment of the job
• Supportive colleagues
• The children

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I plan on teaching until I retire.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I am not particularly interested in seeking promotion as I enjoy being class committed. I would maybe consider it once I have more experience, however the work load would discourage me from pursuing this.
Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

There is very little supply available to cover staff illness.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

The increasing workload puts a lot of people off coming into teaching and as a result there are fewer people completing a teaching degree at university.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

Head teacher covering classes due to staff illness and lack of supply teachers available. These were temporary, however resulted in head teacher missing meetings etc.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite good

ANONYMOUS 26

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Primary Teaching

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

East Renfrewshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

The pupils. Their enthusiasm for learning. The parents and seeing how much they appreciate what we do for their children.

I love being in the classroom teaching.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Yes. I have taught since I was 21 and don’t know what else I would do
Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Too much paperwork, emails to answer and tasks to do unrelated to teaching own class. In some cases behaviour of pupils and little pupil support assistant time to help.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

It varies. At the moment I know a number of staff seeking to leave the profession feeling undervalued and they are great teachers so this is very sad.

ANONYMOUS 27

Q1 What type of role do you have?

Primary teacher: CCC cover

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

South Lanarkshire

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?

No, I would not recommend teaching. I think there are too many difficulties with behaviour in particular, curriculum implementation and the need to work over the number of hours that are paid to recommend it as a profession. I believe that only those that really want to teach and work with children see the job as worthwhile – and stay.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?

Recognising that appropriate support needs to be given to those teachers who are tasked with teaching children with either learning needs and/or behaviour difficulties.

Recognise that teachers contribute many hours of unpaid work and do something about it!

Provide better resources for the implementation of the curriculum in all its areas.

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a ‘goodwill’ basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?

Ironically filling out this form – I’ve still got work to prepare.

However, generally I as a mature teacher and an EIS rep do not feel under pressure to volunteer and as I’m not looking for promotion am not looking to
put a CV together which, if I was, would find myself working beyond my duties as a classroom teacher to achieve that.

Q9 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

It varies from staff to staff and throughout the year. Generally, I would say morale was quite good. However, with the implementation of publishing school results that may well change.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

Over the years I have enjoyed teaching. However, I looking back over the years, there have been many changes which have effectively gone full circle. I am very aware how time has not been sufficiently well factored into these changes at the time of them being made.

ANONYMOUS 28

Here are my thoughts on the recruitment and training process for teachers. I would be happy to discuss these further.

I myself am a primary school teacher who has had teaching students, both PGDE and BEd. I have experienced a range of students who have been very good as 3rd years to having a 4th year student who needed lots of guidance. I believe at the training side there is a high expectation of students having numerous paper exercises which take away from the teaching and learning aspect of being a teacher.

My second point is that my sister has recently (within the last week) been rejected from both Glasgow university and Strathclyde university to primary teaching. She has been volunteering in schools, is a full practicing catholic, has experience of working in various organisations and has a degree in psychology. She is a woman in her late 20s and has wanted to be a teacher for the best part of ten years. This woman will potentially be lost to the profession. In what way is the university admission held accountable to those that they turn away? How much experience does she require to become a teacher?

I believe that the university admission process has to be taken back from UCAS who can't/won't give personalised feedback on why she hasn't been selected. How can she build the skills to become a teacher if she isn't given feedback? As a experienced classroom practitioner, I find this process completely unacceptable. I have to make sure I get it right for each child but this doesn't seem as if this applies to further education.

In the area of teacher retention during the initial training, I refer back to my first point. A lot of the 'tasks' that I completed during my training were not useful. They just seemed to be a paper exercise to make sure that the student had done some work. Perhaps the ITE has to be streamlined to make sure that the professionals that are
being trained understand how to plan for effective teaching and learning. In my experience I have seen students with some time wasting tasks for all those involved.

With regards to furthering a teaching career by becoming a HT or DHT, I believe that the reasons that I became a teacher are lost. I have walked into my HT and seen her sat with a mountain of paperwork and folders. This has no interest to me. In addition the pressure that the pupil equity fund has put on individual establishments has put a great strain on HTs. They are now going to be questionable for the way money is spent on children to 'close the attainment gap'. As a Catholic male in his 30s I have not had any desire to become a HT. This is a combination of the workload and the move away from classroom practise.

Thank you for taking time to read my thoughts on the key areas of teaching.

ANONYMOUS 29

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Primary school teacher, working at two small, rural multi composite schools with shared head teacher. One school has a single class currently with 16 children in P1-6 and the other school has two classes, 17 children in P1-4 and 15 children in P5-7. I cover the 3 usual teachers' Reduction of Class Cover and Principal Teacher time as well as team teach for maths and literacy lessons.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Making a contribution to society; feeling like I'm doing something worthwhile.
Contributing to children having an opportunity to make the most of themselves through attainment, building confidence and enjoyment.
Supporting children through challenging times and (I hope) making situations better.
Enjoying the company of children.
Continually learning as I learn with the children.
The holidays!

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I am in only the 4th year of my teaching career but I think it unlikely I will teach until retirement. The stress and time commitment is considerable with much evening working. The demands made of teachers can feel impossible to meet. It feels as though there is a general societal 'blame culture' with teachers and schools being viewed by many as 'baddies' with so much press and social media coverage of parental criticism along the lines of why don't schools teach x, y and z when generally they already do. The general public and sometimes government seem to feel that schools should fix all of society and
parental failings; we absolutely do our best but teachers are not the only influence in a child’s life.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

It's too early in my career to seek promotion and at the moment the role of HT seems even more impossible than being a teacher! HT role seems blurred with social work and the demands of the role are enormous.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I don’t think it’s any different in our school than most others. Our rural location may be off putting to some. I personally don’t like South Lanarkshire’s usual method of teacher recruitment in which applicants have very little choice of place of work and HTs are restricted in their recruitment choices. I used to work for West Lothian and much preferred their system of advertising particular vacancies so candidates can choose locations and roles and HTs can select candidates they feel will fit their team and balance skills.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

A salary review and maintaining salaries in line with rising living costs would help. In most areas of employment, staff shortages are usually considered to reflect unattractive jobs and/or lack of adequate financial reward. Enabling individual schools to advertise roles and therefore candidates to apply for chosen roles across all authorities, with HTs having recruitment accountability, as mentioned in response to Q7.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

These 2 schools had a head teacher each until about 6 years ago. I imagine the shared headship makes prioritising a challenge, but both schools are benefitting from the dedication of the HT in a very challenging role.

My role currently includes 2 days ‘additionality’ in which I team teach with the usual class teacher so we divide the class between us for literacy and numeracy. Certain areas, such as extended writing, are impossible for one teacher to teach across a multicomposite P1-7 or even P1-4. With two
teachers we can manage this and the HT has commented that she can see a big benefit to the children brought by this change of staffing which occurred in November last year. However South Lanarkshire Council has already warned that it is unlikely to be able to afford to maintain this into next year, which will mean a reduction in the quality of learning and teaching across literacy and numeracy.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
I feel general morale is quite low, see my response to Q5.

ANONYMOUS 30
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary teacher
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Renfrewshire Council
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
- Working with eager and enthusiastic learners
- Close relationship with work colleagues
Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
Recently started to consider alternative employment which as a teacher who has been working in the profession 10 years and previously loved my job, I shock myself and family members when I tell them I am not enjoying it anymore.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Work load and stress levels discourage me from seeking promotion.
Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Work load and stress
Lack of support
Behaviour of pupils (physical and verbal abuse)
Lack of manners/respect
Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Pupil support assistants, Non class contact teacher roles.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

There has been a reduction in the availability of classroom assistants which is having a detrimental effect on pupils learning and teacher’s ability to meet the needs of every child.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

There is very little or no learning support or EAL support due to a shortage of class teachers. The lowest performing 20% children are really struggling to work in big classes with no extra support from PSA’s or learning support teachers. More able children are not able to extend their learning because it’s easier for teachers to manage a class with three groups rather than having three groups with lots of individual children.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low. Lots of staff are considering alternative employment.

All of the above are the key factors.

ANONYMOUS 31

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Primary – full time

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Aberdeenshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

For me, teaching is more a vocation and, as a passionate life long learner, I want to instil this same enthusiasm in children from an early age

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Aiming to take phased retirement – still teach but with less hourly commitment

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Have already been a DHT with a previous authority. Discouraged now because of my age (57)

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Cost of living very high, staff morale low in general for long hours, ridiculous amount of paper work, poor pay (lack of pay increases or incentives), lack of resources, Curriculum for Excellence not living up to expectations as providing an 'Excellent' education system. Feeling of being undervalued as a profession. Due to staff shortages, nearly all CPD has to be twilight as little or no cover to attend day time courses.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Support for learning

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Pay more! Value existing staff more

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

We are so short of staff that our DHTs are both teaching in class - HT sometimes too, therefore no SMT support structure

If so:

• What are these measures?
• How well are they working?
• Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

Hopefully temporary

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Limited PE time is available; no Support for Learning Provision; No nursery teacher in the nursery

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low – see answers above as to why

Additional comments
I am finding it difficult to sustain my love for the profession due to all the pressure and stress that the job now brings. There is little respect from children, parents and those in authority for the stress and exhaustion facing countless teachers who just want to do their job!

ANONYMOUS 32

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
I am a Primary teacher currently working full time but my permanent contract is for 3 days.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Perth and Kinross Council.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I work in a well led school where the HT and DHT are very supportive and aware of what a difficult job it is. They are both motivational and encourage a good work life balance.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I cannot imagine teaching in front of a class in my late 60’s so I would hope to retire earlier than that.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I would love a promoted post but I have worked part time for 8 years since having children. This has affected my career prospects and I have been openly told that if I want a promoted post, I will have to work full time. I know of several other people who are in similar positions. One lady I know went from a part time Principal teacher to a full time DHT (a secondment) but will not continue beyond this academic year as full time work with young children is tricky. She asked if she could come in after 9am one day or leave early to pick up her children but was told this was not possible. Teacher training does not up skill you in the qualities needed to become a good leader. Some people get posts without enough experience and do not perform well.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
There are many vacancies unfilled including in my school but very few permanent contracts. I know of people who have wanted more job security and have therefore left teaching to get a permanent contract.
Teaching is tricky and in some schools, there is huge pressure on teachers and workload expectations are very high even though the government say less time is meant to be spent on planning now. Over the past few years, my school has seen some very challenging behaviour from children as young as 4 and 5. I have personally been threatened with being stabbed whilst a young child held a pencil at my back. I have been sworn at and head butted more than once in the past three years. I am experienced enough to know that this is not my fault but for a new teacher, this would be extremely daunting. I have come home and family members have been really annoyed at the way I have been treated by pupils as there are other jobs that pay well where I would not be in this position.

Several teachers in my school have chartered teacher status and do exactly the same job as me. In fact, I have taken leadership over whole school projects and so doing more work than them. This is negatively impacting on staff morale.

Q8  Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Within Primary, the McCrone cover jobs are hard to fill and ASN teachers.

Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Bring back incentives such as chartered teacher so teachers have something to work towards. If this is not possible, use that type of training to up skill class teachers so they can confidently go for promoted posts.

Teacher training needs to include aspects of social work, dentistry (as we are expected to brush teeth in school) and more work on teaching children with ASN. Behaviour management is also tricky for many new and experienced teachers and more needs to be done to address this.

Q12  How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite good. HT and DHT are amazing but they do a lot of stuff for staff off their own backs. As a staff team, we know we are valued by small things such as management organising special breaks with music, mince pies, Easter Eggs and the management team serving coffee to us at breaks at the start of meetings occasionally.

Factors that reduce morale and cause bitterness are the supply rate of pay when permanent members of our school staff help out and get low pay for an extra day. Sometimes, they even have a McCrone slot for 50mins in the middle of the day and this gets taken off the pay. You cannot leave the school as you are required to teach after 50 minutes so teachers end up doing work for no pay!

Chartered teacher status causes friction as staff who have not got chartered teacher status are doing EXACTLY the same job as those who do!

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:

To summarize:

There is no real promotion structure anymore now that chartered teacher has gone. **It would be great if teachers’ could work towards a promoted post by undertaking chartered teacher style modules in leadership.**

Teachers are not valued by the public anymore. I had a parent tell me that anyone could teach a child how to read in Early Primary! Not sure how this can be addressed!!

A huge issue is the supply teacher is no longer paid properly i.e. At their actual rate rather than lowest rate and therefore there are no supply teachers available - it's not worth their while to teach! **Bring back proper rates of pay!**

Perth and Kinross were very innovative this year and asked if anyone wanted a **voluntary transfer** for a year or permanently. I have yet to hear if this has been taken up but I think this is a MASSIVE step in the right direction as teachers have felt very stuck in roles over the past 10-15 years.

**Behaviour** of pupils towards peers and staff is totally unacceptable in a small group of children every day at my school. My HT and DHT cannot their jobs done as they are spending time every day with these children. There is nowhere else for them to go but this does not help morale. It is also very sad that other children who need help don’t get it as the ones with challenging behaviour are taking up so much time.

Thank you for asking teachers what they think. I would love to hear the outcome of this!

**ANONYMOUS 33**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)

I teach in Primary sector where I do Non class contact cover by teaching STEM

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?

East Ayrshire Council

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

The difference I can make to a child’s future and the fact that I like to keep learning which when to teach P4 to P4 Science, Technology, Engineering and Math you must do.
Q5  Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I am 7 years beyond retirement and continued to teach because I felt I was making a difference. I am retiring this August.

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I am a Principal Teacher and I became a Primary teacher in 1994 and a PT in 2001. I was unsuccessful in advancing further probably due to the management of that school not giving me the experiences or responsibilities I needed to go further.
If I was starting my primary journey today the poor pay for the amount of work expected in senior management remits, lack of funding, constant political interference and poor management.

Q7  What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
We do not have any problems in this area but if you do not have good quality, well chosen students given in-depth, appropriate teacher training you will not retain teacher. Recruitment is a challenge as the perception is - lot of work for poor pay, not a 9 to 5 job

Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Choose better candidates. Far too many students get to 2nd and 3rd year then fail, some even get through when it is clear they will not make good teacher.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
We have the usual composite classes when number force it. These changes are not permanent as pupils come and go, however they only change at the beginning of the academic year. They work very well as the pupil selection is done on learning levels.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
We have a very committed staff. There are always issues but morale is generally good for the majority. The key factor is the Head Teacher.
ANONYMOUS 34

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Full Time Primary School Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Aberdeenshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

- The job can be rewarding
- I love working with the pupils
- The feeling of making a difference or having a positive impact
- I enjoy planning and preparing exciting and engaging lessons
- The holidays provide a much needed break and time to rest and rejuvenate
- The ability to work collegiately with colleagues
- The feeling you when you get positive feedback from management or parents

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I am in my late 20s and have been teaching for nearly 5 years. I cannot imagine teaching until I retire as it is physically and mentally exhausting. It takes all my energy and by the end of term I feel like I am crawling to the finish line Teaching is a caring profession and we do a lot more than just teach children to read, write and count. It is incredibly stressful, especially with inclusion meaning we are trying to meet the needs of children with very specific and complex needs within a class setting, as well as the more typical range of pupils with differing abilities, behaviours and needs. The stress can be awful and when you have an especially difficult class every day is incredibly difficult and stressful. Dealing with children’s meltdowns and emotional wellbeing, their readiness to learn, impacts everything you do and the unpredictability of children’s emotions and behaviour can cause high anxiety for teachers and pupils. I absolutely agree with inclusion but there must be adults to support this (and the children) and at the moment there is not. Not due to unfilled vacancies but because there needs to be more support in the form of teachers or pupil support assistants. I cannot imagine doing this job for another 40 years. Although I love the job and the children I would not be able to teach a class like my current class with the amount of pupils with high end needs (medical and/or social, emotional, behavioural) due to the impact it has on my own health and wellbeing. I am a strong teacher and person but everyone has a limit.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

In my opinion the management team have to deal with the worst parts of the job – dealing with difficult parents and paperwork. I would not be interested in
promotion to management as I feel I would miss the daily interaction with the children you get as a class teacher. I would be interested in leading more things in school such as using my knowledge of ICT and would do something such as the chartered teacher scheme if it was available so I do not become ‘stuck’ once I reach the end of the scale which will be in a next few years. I would like to see more progression options for primary school teachers other than head or depute head, options that still include the core job of being a class teacher.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The inability to pay supply teachers at their true point on the scale means it can be very difficult to get supply teachers. It puts stress and pressure on teachers not to be off, meaning staff come to work when they are ill because it is easier than knowing there is no one to cover your class or perhaps that your colleagues will lose their mcron if the mcron teacher is pulled to teach your class.

I also think the hours needed and the high stress levels put a lot of people off being a teacher and encourage people to leave the profession for better hours/pay/work life balance. I work on average 50 hours a week but get paid for 35 hours. Every summer holiday you are expected to come in to move classroom and set up your new classroom during the holidays. At the INSET we often get an afternoon but it takes a long time to move resources and set up a new classroom – putting up backing paper, moving furniture, setting up library, tidying, cleaning, photocopying, laminating, creating seating plans, labelling trays etc.

The lack of money is also an issue as a lot of resources I buy myself. I buy a lot of games and activities for the children to use, pens, pencil pots, trays, stickers, fiddle toys, cds, books, certificates, rugs, cushions, stationery and so on. A lot of these things are necessities; others are not but are important if you want to create a nice, warm, welcoming classroom environment (which obviously you strive to do). Not many other jobs expect you to fund your job. We also cannot print colour at school so all colour printing must be done at home using my own ink and paper. It is small things like this that add up and I can see why teachers become fed up with this situation. I know this is a choice, but teachers do want to provide the best they can for their pupils. It should not be the case that to do that teachers have to pay for this themselves.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

In Aberdeenshire every role within teaching has issues with recruitment and retention.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Pay supply teachers at the true pay scale rate.

More support for teachers with support assistants to take some pressure of (eg photocopying, laminating, doing wall displays, filing, tidying). Possibly extending the time Pupil Support Assistants are in school as they spend all their time in school supporting the pupils (rightly) but they don’t begin till 9.15 and leave at 3. They should start at 8.45 and leave at 3.30 and use the time before and after pupils are at school to support class teachers with time consuming tasks. This would mean teachers could use their time more productively planning, marking, assessing, evaluating and so on rather than doing admin tasks.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

We are lucky not to be understaffed at our school currently, but are aware of the issues across Aberdeenshire and with supply. There are rumours of next year every class being filled to the maximum, even if this means composite classes with only a few pupils from one yeargroup and the majority of another year group. Also meaning if pupils move to the area during the year classes would have to be changed mid year. Considering we are becoming an enhanced provision school, and we have pupils with complex needs, and we know pupils will high end needs will be coming to our school I think it would be utterly ridiculous if the council filled every class full, then needed to change them during the year to create an extra class. This would be incredibly disruptive to the education of all the pupils, but especially those pupils who need routine and structure and don’t cope well with change. I don’t know if this will happen or not but it is something that has been mentioned. If this does happen this would not be about getting it right for every child, it would purely be about money and valuing cost cutting over children’s education.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Generally morale is good as we have a brilliant staff team and a supportive management team. There are a lot of issues within education and we face many challenges but we support one another as much as we can.
ANONYMOUS 35

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have
Full time Primary Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeen City Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The teaching profession is a vocation and you dedicate yourself completely to educating pupils and to try and develop the best in them. Believing that I can make a difference in a pupil’s life or their education is what keeps me wanting to be a teacher, despite the challenges and bureaucracy involved.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
At present, I plan on teaching until retirement age.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
What would encourage me to seek promotion to SMT would be to be able to make a difference in the running of my school and support my colleagues. What would and IS discouraging me from such positions, is the seemingly lack of support from higher levels of management e.g. at Council Level, the data/statistics demands and pressure SMT are constantly put under, which seem to serve no other purpose but ticking a box. Being SMT in a Primary School nowadays seems to be only an office job, with deadlines and forms to submit, which seem to place little importance on the actual pupils. Too much bureaucracy, workload and pressure with little support. No thank you, I don’t want a SMT job.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Some people have left teaching because they considered that other jobs pay far better and the stress is much less. We are not paid enough for all the work we do. We are meant to work 35 hours a week, when, on average, we work 55 hours. Who is paying for those extra 20 h? No one. Too often good will of teachers becomes an expectation and our willingness to do the best we can ‘for the sake of the pupils’ is abused and, unfortunately this has a very negative effect over time, which might push some into leaving the profession altogether.

In Aberdeen City, for example, the cost of living is expensive, which has made people move to other areas where it is cheaper. Obviously, the Oil & Gas crisis has had an impact, because many members of staff had to move to other areas in Scotland due to family relocations after job losses. But we had
also cases of Irish teachers wanting to come in to work in our City, but the paperwork has taken so long to come through and have felt so let down and on their own, that they gave up altogether and went back to Ireland.

Another big issue are the conditions for Supply Teachers. The change in the pay conditions a few years ago had a huge impact in supply teachers giving up. It seems nearly impossible at present to have a supply teacher in schools. This is becoming a huge issue.

Schools are at their tipping point and there seem to be no support from the Local Council, but a ‘symbolic’ pat on the back to thank us for our efforts, while there are no solutions or answers from their side. As employees of ACC we feel completely unvalued and unsupported.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Support for Learning and Nursery Teachers are the most at risk, since they are constantly taken out of their usual role in order to cover vacancies in classes. This is very unfair and contra productive when it happens on a regular basis.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

- A pay rise would be a good start, especially as a reward for dealing with the current crisis, which is stretching all staff at all levels to maximum stress levels.
- Reduce paperwork and workload for teachers. Give us time to teach, which is what we are meant to do in our 35 hour contacts.
- Improve conditions for Supply Teachers. This will encourage people to continue in the list and reduce SFL and Nursery teachers having to be constantly used as cover.
- Create some incentives for new trained teachers or new arrivals in areas hard to retain staff, such as Aberdeen City Council, so they decide to make a go at staying there, rather than make them leave.
- Reduce the time that paperwork takes to come through for new recruitment, so they don’t feel let down and they stay.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering In our school, one class had to be merged into other 3 classes; we have an Acting HT and Acting DHT (class committed 3 days a week) with a school of nearly 400 pupils. We don’t even have a PT anymore. SFL and Nursery
Teachers covering a class for the whole year; 2 vacancies are covered thanks to our willing part-time teachers who have given extra days to help out. These are supposed to be temporary measures, but are bringing things into tipping point, when reports will have to be written for double the amount of pupils etc. This situation is unsustainable.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable?
(please specify)
Support for Learning has suffered the most and pupils are losing hugely on that extra support in their learning. We cannot fulfil unrealistic demands on attainment when there is no SFL for those pupils who need it the most.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Reasons are as stated above and, the only reason I didn’t choose ‘very low’ was because at least we feel supported among ourselves in our own school.

ANONYMOUS 36

Let me just take a second to thank you for actually taking into account the views of the common teacher; whether this is going to make a difference. Only time will tell..... I have been a teaching for around 14 years. I started my journey in England as Jordanhill Campus had oversubscribed for the PGCE that year. So I was accepted at Northumbria to do the SCITT (School Centred Teacher Training Programme) which was brilliant.
So let me start this long dissertation as there are so many things that are wrong with Teaching/Education at the moment.

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (I am a class teacher with many years of experience I have worked in Newcastle upon Tyne and For Birmingham City Council before I returned home and now I am at Edinburgh City Council. I have also managed my nursery class for many years and brought it up from a good/ satisfactory rating to an Excellent rating.
My specialism is in Early years when I qualified and that's not taking into consideration by head teachers anymore. They just don't really take into account what you want. It's what they want.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Ratho Primary School Edinburgh City Council
I have worked in a multi-ethnic and challenging schools in Newcastle upon Tyne (Moorside Primary School) and In Birmingham I worked at Gunter Primary School.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The children and seeing them progress and the love of knowledge (I am always learning and children open up different perspectives to learning) keeps me there. Plus I have to pay my bills.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I am already considering leaving the teaching profession. I don't think management or parents appreciate how much a teacher actually does. Workload, extra kind caring things that we do plus I spend a lot of my hard earned money on resources for my classroom. Whether I buy a laminator, electric sharpener, guillotine, card or if it's time spent away from my 5 year old son the weekend to make stuff for my classroom and children in my class.

I am looking at jobs abroad the pay out there attracts me to move. Working abroad also has benefits too. They take into consideration if you have children, family etc.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Only discouragement at the minute.

I tell you something we have had so many head teachers at Ratho Primary that they don't know which staff has more experience as this information is not passed on.

I have had more experience and I have been applying for jobs in the Glasgow authority as that's where I have a home, my husband and I have been renting in Livingston as both of us work in Edinburgh.

I have applied for so many jobs through in the west and have not been successful at even securing an interview.

I was advised by Previous head teachers that I am more than capable of a management position but I have not been able to even secure interviews let alone a job. This does deter you and the fact that Local Authorities Head teachers are reluctant to employ outside (fresh blood) of their Authority. Management posts are usually given to teachers at the school or are known to the Head teachers. This again is nepotism.

It is very annoying when you call for feedback and head teachers just can't give you critical feedback or say how you could make your application form better. They get a bit flustered when I challenge them and ask if the Job was given to someone in the authority or someone at their school. Why? Should this not be transparent?
Another point is that there are not enough management opportunities for teacher's raising young families. There are not enough headship or Depute or even principal teaching posts that are job shared.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I don't think we have the quality of teachers. Managers don't have enough time to support new teachers and it is left to the normal everyday teacher who doesn't get the recognition and we are left to carry and support newer teachers or teachers that don't have the experience.

This is never recognised or supported in your PRD as Head teachers just expect that you will do this and this is usually in your own time which is never accounted for in your Work time agreement either.

Due to all the budget cut head teachers are recruiting more and more younger probationary teachers to work at schools and they have less and less experience. They don't want to employ anyone from the top main scale pay level as this costs them too much to do so. I think this is a scandal. I don't think they should be allowed to do this as this again becomes more and more unfair. Head teachers then have young 'yes' malleable staff happy to do anything for the acknowledgement and praise whereas the older teachers that have put in and sacrificed are pushed to the bottom of the barrel. I have seen some of this happen to some teachers before they retired and they were left very upset. Especially having sacrificed many years in the profession.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I think people join the teaching profession and think it's going to be easy. The holidays do attract youngsters but what they don't realise is that the enormous amounts of extra hours teachers work in their holidays and in their weekly tasks. The amounts up and in reality here are no real holidays. I haven't ever sat down to Sunday dinner since I came into teaching as I'm usually busy planning and prepping for Monday with 29 children in my class.

I don't know why teachers have put up with this as any other profession don't work one minute overtime without declaring it. I mean you can never get through on a phone-line to any council employee 10 min before closing time. They have shut down their systems.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I think truths should be told.
All this rubbish about new teachers having put in the same time qualifying come out with Masters degrees, still need support from me, who didn’t get the teaching masters degree as it wasn’t available then. This type of labelling causes more rifts than uniting teachers. I mean lets give you an example. I did many after school clubs and dedicated lots and lots of time and parent governing meeting (England) parent council meeting in Scotland. I was able to do this when I didn't have a young family to support. My opinions and contributions were accoladed but since having gone part time 0.6 of my contract. Management don't take into account your contributions. I feel I work twice as hard as a part time member of staff than when I worked full time which was hard enough. I feel that there should be stages of the profession and tick lists as a record to say well I have achieved this in the duration of teaching whether it was before or after having started a family.

There are so many challenges facing teachers and work load. Tackling bureaucracy has been great but head teachers still don’t get it.

They may slash something but add and delegate more and more onto staff whether it is now through the new term of collegiate working. Staff still feel the pressures and being able to sustain this is becoming more and more difficult.

I can say this as I am also the EIS rep at school. I see first hand the stress and support my colleague are facing and they never want to approach management directly and have asked me to do this anonymously on their behalf.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

Since our schools role has risen. There has been a rise in compositing classes at our school. Again there is not enough support whether it's from support staff or management. The onus then falls on colleagues (other teachers to support other teachers this can take it's toll too) if you spend 2 hours helping. Someone you're 2 hours behind on your own work.

I also believe that we have had such a high turn over of headteachers recently.

Headteacher should have to stay and maintain changes that they have implemented for a Minimum period of time to serve at school they secure jobs in. To follow through changes and vision they create.

Vacancies are covered either by supply staff or whoever can be spared usually a support for learning teacher. I don't think this is fair as children that need this support miss it when teacher’s have to cover.
Why can’t the councils employ permanently a bank of supply for covering schools? We have a few temporary covers at our school and 2 of these covers just secured permanent positions.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

As said above when staff are taken to steal from Peter to save Paul. Above I have outlined this.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low and some New teachers that have entered the professions are very stressed and are having absences due to anxieties and stresses. I just feel as the first point of union support at school. I try and support and keep morale up. But there are definitely times when it is hard and I have to support staff to take time off work when staff feeling over-whelmed, over worked and less appreciated especially when someone new with more time and they want to impress management swan in. Temporary staff or head teachers friends that he/ she may favour that never want to speak up against any unjust things that are going on in the school. I also find it very rude that when QIO’s come to walk around head teachers don’t introduce all staff only the ones that they favour. There are so many factors that result in low morale.

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:

Some of the comments and answers have been merged when answering a previous questions.

I love teaching but I have to say I feel very undervalued and demotivated for a long time. I use my own salary to replenish resources and buy things for the children in my class to have and use. I don't understand why the first minister has spent so much of our money swanning around Europe to keep us in the EU when she can't even get her front door organised. Just makes me angry. I am definitely looking into moving and teaching abroad especially to the Arab emirates where they do have an idea of the respect for the teaching profession.

One last point, do you think that carrying this survey out in the Easter Holidays was right? I mean you may get a good response again we are working in our own times to do this bu many teacher may be abroad or away on breaks and may miss this.
ANONYMOUS 37

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Primary seven primary school teacher)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? (East Renfrewshire Council)

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
  ● Job satisfaction
  ● Enjoy working with children
  ● Responsibility for managing and organising my own class
  ● Holidays

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
  ● Likely to teach until I retire
  ● Would look at other jobs within education in the future

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
  ● Enjoy responsibility, consider a change
  ● Not sure the money is worth the increased remit

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
  ● Lack of appreciation
  ● Little salary increases
  ● Workloads (at times)

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)
  ● Additional support groups for children with additional needs
  ● Extension groups

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
  ● Quite good - good working relationship with colleagues
ANONYMOUS 38

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Class Teacher (Primary)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Ayrshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with children and seeing them develop knowledge and skills.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
Will teach until I retire.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Happy to remain as class teacher. Only a few years till retirement.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Overloaded curriculum.
Teaching salaries have not kept up with other professions making it unattractive to young graduates.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Head Teacher

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Government should listen to class teachers.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
Temporary multi-school headship has now finished. New head teacher in place.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Morale lower than it has ever been.
ANONYMOUS 39

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have?
Full time, permanent primary teacher

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire Council

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
• The feeling that you are making a difference in a young person’s life.
• School holidays
• Support given from other teaching staff

Q5  Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I sadly will not be in the profession until retirement age. I have been teaching for 13 years and unfortunately I am currently looking at other jobs as I wish to leave the teaching profession. Staff moral within teaching has slowly diminished over the years. In my opinion this has to do with the increased workload, lack of resources, increased level of abuse from parents, lack of resources and support for children with severe educational or behaviour needs (i.e. for inclusion to work adequate resources need to be put in place. Unfortunately over the years I have seen several children with severe behavioural problems being put in large, main stream classes with no additional support.), wage rises which fail to keep up with the rate of inflation (as the pension rate doubled our last pay rise left me with £20 a month worse off than I had been before the pay rise)

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
• More power to deal with abusive parents
• Greater responsibility to manage school finances
• Reduction in work load/hours worked a week

Q7  What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
In our school we have a high staff turnover each year. This is due mainly to a high level of area cover teachers covering posts. Also a few members of staff have been off on long term sick due to stress. There seems to be little opportunity to get a permanent position to one school in South Lanarkshire if you already have an area cover contract. (I have known several teachers who have either moved to a different authority in Scotland to get a permanent contract or even moved out of the country to teach)
Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

More financial incentives for teachers to stay in the profession to ensure teaching remains an attractive career
Active steps to reduce teacher workload
Greater support and action taken from council/government to stop abuse both verbal and physical from parents
Active steps to support teachers facing work related stress

Q10  Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Over the last few years we have had significant problems covering long term staff absence due to secondments, maternity leave and sickness absence (due to work related stress). As supply teachers were in such short supply the management team had to cover all absences themselves. (temporary measure)
In addition to these measures, supports assistants are now to be used only to support children i.e. no admin jobs. They are also taking on the role of learning support where in the past a teacher would perform this role. (permanent measure)
CCC cover over the years has had to be flexible. If staff members are off ill, CCC time is cancelled and given at a later date which allows the CCC teacher to cover classes. (temporary measure)

Q11  Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Educational school trips have been stopped in the past as it has been difficult to ensure enough adults are present on these trips.
Some after school clubs

Q12  How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Staff morale is very low at the moment and at my school over a ¼ of teaching staff are thinking about leaving the profession.
Increased workload
Increased need for paper work and evidence
Education system that is constantly changing
Lack of resources
Increased level of verbal abuse from parents (without consequence)
Lack of resources and support for children with severe educational or behaviour needs
Wage rises which fail to keep up with the rate of inflation or match other graduates in other professions wages
increased class sizes and lack of support assistants
Rise in behavioural problems and reduction in support for these children
Rise in children with additional support needs and reduction in support for these children
ANONYMOUS 40

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Primary - I have a specialism in ICT as I did a degree in this alongside my teaching degree.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? Scottish Borders

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? The joy of teaching young people. The wow moment when something clicks. Turning up for work and not knowing what might happen that day.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role) Probably, I love the job but the thought of teaching until I'm 68 is rather daunting. There are many reasons why I would consider leaving such as a work life balance. I don't have children at the moment but this will be happening if the not too distant future and it will be difficult to ensure this balance when at the moment I spend most evenings, weekends and holidays doing school work.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion? I don't think I would ever seek promotion. I enjoy being in the classroom. As a class teacher you can see how disconnected management have become from the classroom and they forget what it is like to be in the classroom all day, everyday and then having to go to meetings, attend open evenings, parents evening. Life in the classroom is extremely demanding.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences) Pay. I joined the teaching profession in 2007. Since reaching the top of the payscale the payrises we have received have been minimal and in line with inflation it equates to a pay cut. It is harder than ever to make ends meet every month. This should not be the case for trained professionals. We work hard and work well above the 35 hours we are paid for. I generally work 60+ hours per week. Our pay needs to reflect this. Cuts to the budget. We are on a shoe string budget, we struggle to buy printer ink, pencils, paper and jotters. These are essential items and I often have to purchase these things myself to ensure I can provide them for the children. Cuts to classroom assistants and ANA hours are also a huge issue. I have no support in my classroom as a P1 child with severe needs needs 1 to 1 support. Support has been stripped from every school and we are failing children because we cannot give them the support they need. We have one classroom assistant for the whole school.
Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Value the staff that you have, look at our pay and conditions. Don't strip away our pension. Offer more permanent contracts. I joined in 2007 and was an alternative route NQT as a trained in England. It took me 5 1/2 years to get a permanent contract with SBC.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Joint-headships - these do not work. Heads are spread too thin and one school tends to lose out. Some days we have absolutely no management in school and when issues arise it is down to the class teachers to resolve them. We are a small rural school with 3 teachers but our numbers are borderline for going down to 2 teachers, if this happens it would be detrimental to the children and teachers. Large multi-composite classes do not work.

We have lost an ANA this term due to the child she was working with leaving, instead of her hours being looked and allocated elsewhere within the school, her hours were lost and she was moved to another school. We have so many children needing support and only the class teacher and learning support (1 afternoon a week) to support them. This is not enough.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low. I moved schools recently as I was being bullied by a member of senior management. I had a succession of children who were violent or displayed very challenging behaviour. My performance was blamed and I was bullied for several years. I went on to suffer from depression and anxiety because of this, I was offered no help or support. I never had a single day off sick.

The workload is never ending. I'm currently in the middle of my Easter holiday and I've already spent two days planning for next term and I'm still not finished. We work 60 hour weeks but this is not reflected in what we earn. Budget cuts have put a strain on how we run the school. Class teachers and management often have to cover lunch duty as if our classroom assistant is off (as she was for several weeks before Christmas) then we have nobody else to cover playtimes and lunchtimes.

ANONYMOUS 41

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Primary school teacher.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

East Ayrshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Making a difference in the lives of children.

Working with children.

Every day is different.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Yes I will teach until I retire.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Added pressures from above would discourage me, although I am actively seeking promoted posts in the hope of further developing my own skills and having a greater impact in children’s education.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Workload pressure I feel is the biggest challenge. It often feels as if more and more is getting added to our plate without anything being taken away. It is a highly stressful job and I feel this can often put people off.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

P.E.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I sometimes feel negative press coverage will impact recruitment.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Composite classes are a norm in our establishment. Classroom assistant support is limited which makes meeting the needs of all learners a challenge at times.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

German provision is difficult to maintain in upper primary as an L3 due to lack of staff specialism.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Having returned from maternity leave I would describe it as quite good, although coming in on KIT days last session I felt it was quite low. Key factors influencing it were lack of CA support, no supply teachers available, and additional workload and paperwork pressure.

ANONYMOUS 42

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Permanent primary teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeen City Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The children that I teach and the wonderful teachers/PSAs I work with.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
No, I do not, I intend teaching for one more year (and that will be part-time!) then I will take what pension I have and find a less stressful part-time job. I am 54 years old.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
A gun to my head! I am not prepared to work long hours, be even more stressed, deal with threatening parents and disruptive children. I value what free time/health I have left.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Terrible wages for a graduate (my son is an engineer and his starting wage was £35k!) The price of housing and living in Aberdeen. The shocking lack of support – no SFL in 4 years and do not always get non-class contact time. The behaviour issues – how many people does a child have to assault before he is removed from school permanently?

Our wages have fallen even with the meagre few percent rises we have had – taken off us for pension and national insurance, not to mention the GTCS putting up their fees yet again! The cost of living goes up but our wages do not. I am the only earner in our house and it is tough going.

Lack of support due to staff shortages, teachers leave our school because of continuous inspections and the fact they are not supported with behaviour management issues.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Support for Learning and nursery teachers – we have none of either!
Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Pay more, smaller class sizes, SFL teachers – all round better conditions. We may seem to get lots of holidays but these are usually used recovering from term-time. A few flexi-days would be good – for morale and things like helping aging parents and moving kids to universities, looking after your own sick children etc. A 4 day working week may solve lots of issues – do children actually need to have the same teacher all week? Do the children need a 4 day week? – It would do them good too, they get tired towards the end of term. Get rid of day to day stresses like - actually have paper and ink available to load in printers when needed so we don’t waste an hour finding there is actually none.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

They have been happening since I came to ACC and it is steadily getting worse instead of better.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Nursery teachers and children not getting proper support for learning!

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Rock bottom, discussions on how to make ends meet in the staff room among the younger members of staff. Lack of support staff, lack of resources.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I loved teaching when I first started and slowly but surely my health has suffered. I have had ME but got well again thanks to Mickel Therapy, it was caused by stress. Emotions must be listened to and acted on otherwise symptoms will persist. And I must say, a little voice inside me was saying for a long time that I had to cut down on work (I had two boys to look after at the time too). I did train as a Mickel Therapist and I do treat a lot of teachers.

My brother-in-law has been a maths teacher for over 25 years and he has been signed off with stress for the last 6 weeks. He was called in to work last week and asked when he would be returning as they were very short staffed. It was another horrible experience for him as he is dedicated. I doubt he will return, he is a broken man, no support from management in a very tough school in Greenock. He can only get well by removing himself from the situation, he will try supply or tutoring as he cannot retire for a few years yet. A very sad way to end a career helping thousands of children!
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have
Primary teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Renfrewshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Helping children to achieve their full potential, colleagues, professional learning, pension scheme.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I am considering an alternative career in the next 5 years due to work load issues, lack of additional support within the class and a worsening in behaviour within schools.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Excessive workload would discourage me.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details
Excessive workload, behaviour issues, poor management.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Acknowledge that problems behaviours and violence against teachers does exist within the East Renfrewshire authority and address these issues. More pupil support assistants required to help improve both learning and safety of pupils. Behaviour units required in this authority. Parents to be urged to take on larger responsibility for anti-social behaviours exhibited in primary schools. Realistic expectations for teachers and less focus on standardised tests.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
If so:
  • What are these measures?
    Number of pupil support assistants has decreased
  • How well are they working?
School is struggling to have enough people in place to support high profile children.

**Q12** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low. Teachers feel undervalued, over-worked and powerless to impact the increase in problem behaviours. It has become the norm to come to work in a primary school and be faced with things being thrown at you, being kicked and being sworn at etc. We have no tools at our disposal to discipline these children within my school and not enough people to support them one on one. East Renfrewshire’s figures for violence are false because head teachers encourage their staff not to fill in incident forms. Children are not sent home, parents are not brought into the school as a result of incidents and so teachers feel like they are teaching with their hands tied behind their back.

**ANONYMOUS 44**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have?

Full time primary teacher with over 20 years teaching experience

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?

Glasgow City Council an area of high social deprivation

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

The children and the difference I make to their lives.

I love making a difference and watching children thrive academically is rewarding but watching them thrive socially and emotionally is the real prize.

If it wasn’t for my colleagues I wouldn’t still be in my school as we have an holidays help me to have some sort of work/life balance as during term time I am working 50 - 60 hour weeks.

I teach lots of vulnerable children who rely on school and teachers to keep them safe from the chaos of their home life.

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I couldn’t continue to work until I’m 67 as I’m already burnt out. More of my holidays every year are spent sleeping and recovering from colds/ infections etc. Even as the last days of the holidays approach I’m busy writing or evaluating forward plans / HWB wheels or planning lessons as the primary curriculum covers so many areas.

The pay in no way reflects the work we do and I’m considering leaving in the next 8 years. I have yet to work out what I would do for the 10 years until I can get my pension but from a health perspective I know that physically and emotionally it will be time to leave.
It does anger me that the pension goal posts changed. When I entered the profession I knew that my school pension was achievable at 60 or earlier if I was willing to take a sanction. The fact that my school pension is now linked to state retirement age enrages me as for those of us already in the profession shouldn’t have had the goal posts moved 7 years into the future!

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Nothing would encourage me to go for promotion unless you bring back the senior teacher role where experience was what was valued.

Promoted posts are all now away from the classroom and lots of paperwork. In the past senior management still used to be in the building and used to take learning support groups etc. There is no learning support in my school and hasn’t been for nearly 10 years now and I can go days without seeing my DHT/HT as they are always out at meetings or drowning in paperwork so can’t be disturbed,

In my opinion you either have to cut the workload expected in promoted posts or double the management positions to ensure the work can be covered and management spend quality time in classrooms. By quality time I mean they have teaching duties and are responsible for planning and implementing the curriculum for at least 2 days a week.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (Please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The pay does not reflect the hours that are worked by teaching staff.

PSA are expected to carry out a lot of medical /personal care issues that they aren’t comfortable with or in many cases trained for.

Planning and reporting to parents are onerous and need to be stream lined more.

Violence towards staff is at an all time high and there is an increasing expectation now that it is should just be accepted as part of the job. Two of our support staff have had to be off work with fractured/ broken bones as a result of violence towards them by 7/8 year olds. There have been numerous other acts of violence towards staff, most of which are carried out by children with ASN. The children were spoken to and in school the next day; this sends the wrong message to the seriousness of the event to the individual child and the rest of the children who have witnessed the attacks.

Children who we have managed to place in ASN schools after 2/3 years of mainstream are known to be thriving in their new schools and the level of violence and aggression has dropped significantly as the ASN schools are able to meet their needs in terms of class size and support workers. The level of attainment in the classes they were in is amongst the lowest we have ever had as the first 2/3 years of their schooling they were evacuated frequently from their classrooms and most of the teachers time was spent on trying to
contain and keep the individuals in question calm that they couldn’t concentrate on teaching.

Forget putting teachers into school to raise attainment the easiest and quickest way to raise attainment and close the poverty gap is to ensure children are able to go to schools/units that best suit their needs. Nursery schools should be allowed to start the process and they should scrap the presumption to mainstream policy as in the majority of cases it is detrimental to the individual child and the majority of the other children in the class.

Lack of consequences for unruly, disrespectful and violent actions. HT are encouraged not to suspend children by GCC as it looks bad!

Lack of structure within the curriculum as there is no longer a framework of what is taught at each stage in the primary curriculum and the benchmarks and E/Os are open to interpretation. In maths and language a clear progression of skills needs to be introduced at each primary stage not each level.

Lack of support for the large number of ASN children who are sitting in each classroom – we have one class with 5 diagnosed autistic children in it and 2 who we are sure are but the parents don’t want to pursue an assessment. The class has PSA support for ¼ of the week! In years gone by every one of those children would have had some level of support – 3 of the children are high tariff and regularly have violent episodes. As a teacher it is frustrating and demoralising as you worry about the individuals who you can’t help and you also worry about the rest of the class who you aren’t helping when you concentrate all your efforts on ensuring a ASN child is getting their needs met.

Many of my friends work in areas which aren’t as challenging yet they all seem to have levels of support for any ASN children they have and they don’t have as many high tariff children. It seems that in the more socially deprived areas there are higher numbers of children with ASN needs in mainstream schools without adequate 1-1 support for them. I have taught many autistic children but as much as in some ways they have been the most rewarding children to teach I also felt that I failed many other children in those classes as most of my time was spent on meeting the needs of 3 or 4 children in order to maintain a calm safe environment for the rest of the children.

Aggression and lack of support from parents. A number of parents who take little or no responsibility for their children’s actions and think it’s acceptable to accuse teachers or wrongdoing at the drop of a hat. In our school for example we have parents complain about simple things like the teachers picking on their child when all they are doing is asking them to do class work/bring in PE kit/work together with a child they don’t want to etc.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I know many student teachers across all sectors are dropping out of teaching within the first few years as the workload and lack of respect is demoralising.

Government is placing more responsibility on HT as are the authority at council level. A lot of it is development work, bureaucracy tasks etc and it all takes HT away from the children which should be their most important role.
I work in an area of high social deprivation and my day to day job is a million miles removed from some of my friends who work in schools that are only 4 or 5 miles up the road from me. They are shocked at the level of abuse and daily disturbances to lessons that go on in my school and others like it.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Increase pay – after 6 years you are at the top of the scale unless you want promotion. They should introduce a pay increase for class teachers who remain in the classroom for a number of years. For example scale 7 should be after 15 years service (unpromoted) and scale 8 after 20 years service then every 5 years thereafter.

In other countries there are incentives after you have been teaching a number of years like the 3 months paid leave on top of school holidays they get after teaching 10 years in Australia and thereafter after every 7 years. This would definitely help prevent burn out and ensure experienced teachers stayed in the classroom longer.

I think that the first year of every teaching degree should require you to work in a school at least 4 days a week as a teaching assistant and they should be paid accordingly. On the fifth day they should be at college to learn about ASN, child protection, ITC, playground games, first aid etc. They should spend a term/ day in an infant/middle/upper school class throughout the year and given PSA duties alongside some teaching responsibility. At the end of the year/term the 3 teachers of the classes they worked in recommend/don’t recommend them to continue on the course. This would give prospective teachers a more realistic idea of what the job entails so they make a more informed decision about whether or not they wish to continue with the course whilst also providing more support in schools.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Assessment for Learning teachers employed but only work with individual/small group of children in lower stages. More time is spent on paper work or meeting with parents than actually with children as have to justify and record if input is making a difference.

All of the infant classes have at least PSA support for half the week and the P1 classes have full time support but the rest of the school has had most of their support taken away.

HT and DHT spend more time away from school undertaking authority work/initiatives

More expectation placed on teachers to take over ECO/ Pupil council/ health/ road safety/ Rights respecting etc duties in their NCCT

Initially when we amalgamated we had a split campus with the HT/DHT moving between both schools. This didn’t work as there was often no-one in
the building when they were needed to deal with issues with children / parents etc.

Class sizes have increased with wider ranging needs and less support available.

No supply staff available and frequently when a teacher is off the class are split up and you are expected to go over the maximum class size on these days.

There are more composite classes. There is no longer additionality given to children with ASN diagnosis so they count as multiple children in order to ensure they are in smaller classes so their needs and the needs of others can best be met.

Often PSA are used to carry out administrative duties as we are understaffed in the office. This has been ongoing for over a year but the council haven’t advertised to replace the job, put in an agency worker or moved anyone from schools that have 2 or 3 clerical staff.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

We used to have specialist teachers that taught children music etc but that just doesn’t happen anymore.

In my opinion it would be good to see secondary school teachers deliver some aspects of the primary curriculum. This would be particularly beneficial in P6 & 7 and assist with transition to secondary if the same staff members taught S1 & S2 classes. This would entail covering the NCCT for the primary teachers in areas like PE, science, music, drama, art that they are specialists in so delivering good quality teaching in the area that they are solely trained in.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very Low

Indiscipline and lack of consequences. If a child threw something at me in the street I would report them to the police but in school a ‘sorry’ seems to be the answer to every misdemeanour these days.

The primary curriculum lacks structure, I wasn’t the biggest fan of 5-14 but at least it had more structure than CFE and I wasn’t receiving classes at the start of a year who hadn’t been taught basics from their previous teacher. Now I get children in who can tell me what is needed in a report and can talk confidently in front of others but can’t write a basic sentence or sit still for 2 minutes to listen to the opinions of others. As for handwriting it is practically illegible as they spend very little time writing in jotters also.

As the government are telling us to concentrate on the 3 key areas of language, maths and health and wellbeing this message isn’t clear at authority and school level. There is still an expectation to teach science,
expressive arts, undertake lesson studies, put on assemblies, undertake rights respecting/ eco/ etc work and keep displays up to date!

Additional comments

Process to get children the additional support they require is too lengthy. There are many illiterate parents who are bamboozled by the system and there is no-one available to help them to fight to get the support their child requires.

ANONYMOUS 45

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
   Primary

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
   South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
   Money to pay the mortgage.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
   Currently seeking new employment options outwith education.
   Could not see myself teaching another 20 years until I retire as it is getting more stressful, overloaded and not as enjoyable. Job satisfaction is at an all-time low.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
   Never consider it or advise it to anyone. Stress. Workload.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
   In Primary everything. Curriculum is overloaded and government keep adding more.
   Resources are very limited and dated.
No money for up to date technology in classrooms – none of our classrooms have interactive technology to teach.

Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Education needs money to pay for human resources and tangible resources (more teachers in the classroom) with the curriculum today and the expectations each class needs 2 teachers to share the workload.

More support staff in classrooms also.

More technology to assist lessons.

More resources to assist teaching and learning.

Q12  How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Morale is very low indeed.


Additional comments

I personally advised my niece not to go into teaching when she was applying for university. She is now studying criminology and loving it and regularly comments on how she is glad she did not apply for teaching as she sees it in the news a lot about how stressful it is.

I could rant and rant on about how stressful and overworked teachers are however I honestly feel no-one will do anything about it.

I strongly believe this questionnaire will not make any difference.

The government has a problem as we are witnessing that teacher numbers are declining but they know and we (the teachers know) nothing will get done about the issues that people are reporting within this questionnaire.

Morale is so low teachers can’t even be bothered to complain about it any longer as we have been complaining for years with no success just more work.

ANONYMOUS 46

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have?

Permanent Primary

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?

East Ayrshire Council

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Teaching is a worthwhile profession and working with children can very often be very rewarding. Reward can be, for example, when children make general progress in their learning, when a struggling child understands a new concept or his /her skills improve, when children become more confident in their own ability.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Teach till I retire - I am in late fifties and have taught for almost twenty years.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Would not now seek promotion. If I was considering promotion extra workload would be the main discouraging factor. Also lack of personal knowledge and skills would discourage me.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Not sure as most staff have been in this school for many years.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Reduce the workload for all teachers.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Support in respect of qualified teachers from the council team has been greatly reduced. This in turn means children who need most help are not getting the support they need.

Classroom assistant time has also been greatly reduced and now their time is being almost exclusively spent on supporting children, which is good, but less time to help with administration such as displays and helping make resources.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Workload is the main factor in staff having quite low/low morale.

ANONYMOUS 47

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Principal Teacher of a large primary school

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
North Ayrshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

There are very few positives that keep me in the profession. I worked for NHS for over 20 years and then retrained to teach. It was a big move and one that I have not regretted until this past year or two. I love my job but find it increasingly stressful and frustrating.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I will teach until I retire but I will not continue until state retirement age. I will retire as soon as I am 60.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I would consider applying for promotion to Depute Head level but never Headteacher level. No job is worth the stress that HTs are under. As a Principal teacher I have very limited time out of class and that can prove stressful when there is so much to do. As a Depute I would have more responsibility but also more time to spend on whole school matters. I feel I have not had a good life/work balance for the last 13 years and at my age (55) I don't want to make it any worse by going for promotion.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

There is too much expected of teachers now. We have so much planning and preparation to do along with keeping parents/carers happy and totally involved in their children’s education. I don’t know of any other job where members of the public can question and complain so much. The general public has no idea of the work involved and feel that it is their right to complain for the least little thing. Teachers are totally fed up with it.

There is no money to buy much needed resources so teachers are making and buying resources for their classrooms themselves. Personally I buy something at least every week for my class/pupils. We have no money for resources but are expected to deliver exciting learning experiences for our children.

I really don’t want to go on as I get so frustrated and angry about the situation

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

We can’t get pupil support teachers and those that we do have are being used in the classrooms because of staff shortages. However the government wants us to raise attainment but are not providing the resources or support needed to achieve this.

Staff don’t want to stay because of the pressures and expectations on us and because we have to be so positive to parents/carers regardless of the situation.
We have very few sanctions open to us for unruly behaviour and the children are all very aware of their rights so behaviour is poor. Parents don’t help the situation by usually siding with their children which simply encourages worse behaviour.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Provide more staff in schools. Staff aren’t getting their non class contact time as they should so are working even longer hours. Reduce class sizes and provide more support within class for children with additional support needs. Stop piling on more and more paperwork and expecting teachers to be the ones who are responsible for so much in a child’s life. We only have the children 5 hours a day and are there to teach them, not bring them up.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)? If so:

Support staff are limited also. We don’t have the support needed to help the children. We end up putting the needs of a few above the needs of many. We have composite classes, we miss our time out of class, we work longer hours than we are paid for. None of these measures work! This has been getting steadily worse for the last few years.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

As a parent I have witnessed my daughter’s secondary education suffering due to lack of suitably qualified staff. Children are not being given a wide subject choice and are having to travel to nearby schools for some subjects. Members of the management team simply don’t turn up to teach assigned classes as they are stretched so thinly.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Staff morale is very low.

Additional comments

I think I have made my feelings very clear about the situation. I would love to stay in teaching longer if I had the support and resources to provide an education that I agreed with. CfE was meant to ease the burden and reduce the ‘cluttered curriculum’ but it has made things so much worse.

ANONYMOUS 48

I have been teaching for 30 years. The first four as a Secondary biology teacher, one year with profoundly handicapped children and the remainder in Primary School.
The job has changed profoundly since I began, with respect to paperwork and justification that I am actually doing my job. Why oh why is it necessary to justify everything we do? Evidenced up to my ears. Every benchmark must be covered...even although the Infant Benchmarks are unachievable.

We gather ideas from other countries and shove it into our system without looking at the whole picture. Our system is becoming a mish-mash of other people's ideas...ideas that may not be appropriate to our children.

I am sick to death of acronyms. These have blossomed inexplicably in recent years...hgos..girfec..shanarrri...to name but a few. Are these necessary? My school actually produced a leaflet on jargon that they assured us Hmi would possibly question us on! We have to know these words. (I assume we will be better teachers if we do!)

Over the years we have become Health Promoting SCHOOLS, ECO schools, Fairtrade Schools, Making Rights Real Schools and all the while, our core subjects are being squeezed out. We introduced one foreign language, soon to be two, outdoor learning, two hours of quality PE per week, we do science, drama, religious and moral education, topic, art, ICT, music, oh...and we try to fit in Maths and Language.

In my opinion, language, reading in particular is the most important, master this and every other area can be accessed. There is less and less time available for this essential area.

Morale is low in schools. In ours, a large primary with ASD Base and Nursery, staff shortages have resulted in many difficulties. We have been fortunate to rely on a few recently retired staff to help out, but this is far from ideal.

Incidentally, two out of three of these staff retired in their early 50's as they found the job had become far too demanding and the hours too long. In order to cope with demands, most staff I know work a 50 hour week. We have little time for family life and ourselves. More and more staff are suffering from stress related illnesses.

Our pay does not justify the hours we work or the demands of our job. No wonder we can't recruit new teachers. Long hours and poor pay. The chap who has given me a quote to repair my garage roof has a better hourly rate than myself!

I am 51 years old and am desperate to leave. I am exhausted after a day's work, but still have to mark, prepare and do paperwork in the evenings and at the weekend. Work/life balance is poor.

My teachers' pension has been tampered with and I know there is little chance of me retiring before I'm 60.

I'll still be outside in the playground, doing my 2 hours of quality PE and my 45 minutes of OL each week...as well as all the other add-ons I have to do.

Teachers burn out before they reach 60!

The 6 week school summer holiday is no longer our perk. As most of my colleagues and I spend about a week in school tidying and preparing for the next session and at least another week at home continuing with preparation. Another major issue us class size. I usually teach a class of 32 or 33 pupils.

This is far too many to allow a good teacher/pupil ratio where every child will receive attention. I go home at nights worrying that the only thing I have asked some children is their lunch choice! No time to speak to everyone and give
each child quality time. These kids are our future population and we should invest in them in terms of staff. You can buy as many games and resources as you want, but it's real qualified teachers who make a difference. To sum up, if the Scottish Government wishes to retain and recruit teachers, follow these simple suggestions:
1. Cut class sizes
2. Pay teachers a decent wage
3. Declutter the curriculum
4. Tell our Education departments to cut bureaucracy...as in the Scottish Governments recent document. These guidelines exist...but my council and HT certainly doesn't follow them.

ANONYMOUS 49
Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am a probationer teacher, just passed all of my observations and been offered a full time contract with Fife Council for after the summer.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Fife.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

Having studied law at Dundee University, I had been working in litigation for 2 and a half years at the time I decided to quit and enter the teaching profession. I helped to co-ordinate a Mock Court Project and it was through this work that I realised I wanted to work with children. I worked as a PSA for a year, topping up my wage by working 4 evenings a week in a call centre, allowing me to save £2500 to aid with my PGDE studies the following year.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Most definitely. The constant interaction, wide range of issues that you encounter, the challenge and the fun to be had from teaching has only served to reinforce my belief that I will be working in education for the rest of my life.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Abject disappointment. Not in the teaching profession (I love it) but at the conduct of the GTCS and lack of support from the Scottish Government when I approached them regarding the matter below. In a nutshell I have real issues with
- The ‘pot luck’ local authority allocation system and handling of this process by the GTCS,
- Internal applications thereafter for qualified probationers
- The tick the box scheme

In 2014 I applied for Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee Universities’ PGDE programmes. Accepted onto all three, I chose Edinburgh not just because it was my place of residence but also because its teaching staff and reputation were highly regarded by teachers I had worked with. At University, I was a class rep, gave the end of year speech at the Universities closing conference, attended every lecture, seminar and never missed a day of placement. I got A and B grades in my written assignments, passed all my placements and 2 out of the 3 schools where I had those placements emailed me later in the year to say they were looking out for my name of potential probationers for when the GTCS allocated local authorities.

However, when local authorities were allocated (through a so called ‘pot-luck’ system) I was given my 5th choice of Fife, whilst fellow students who had not fared as well on the programme (some having failed assignments and with attendance just over 80%) were given their first choice of local authority. Moreover, 3 students who had failed placements were also given their first choice of local authority (Edinburgh). Upon contacting the GTCS to query whether those who failed would be able to take up their placements in Edinburgh, I was told these places would simply be ‘binned’ - students would have to resit the year at University and be reallocated a local authority. I asked if it was possible to take one of these ‘binned’ places but was flatly denied not just this request but (worryingly) the opportunity to discuss it further with another member of GTCS staff. I was bluntly told there was no way of swapping a local authority allocation and to ‘just get through the year’.

I have since spoken with 2 probationers who did manage to change their local authority. I have heard stories from fellow practitioners of others who changed their local authority allocation.

As I am sure you can imagine, this frustrated me somewhat. I wrote to the Scottish Government and received what I can only describe as a patronising reply from someone I will choose not to name at this point, making it clear he didn’t care about my circumstances, nor of my fellow students who had worked tirelessly and achieved highly on the PGDE but now faced uprooting their young families to take on their probation year in local authorities miles and miles from their homes.

Since August of 2016 I have been getting up at 5:30am to make the journey across the Forth Bridge to Carnock Primary School. I have always been an early riser and I love my job so much that I don’t mind not getting home until 6:30 every night. However, I have now been invited to interview for 2 schools in Edinburgh and will be jumping at the chance to work in my home city. I feel a real sense of regret about leaving the 22 children I have developed meaningful and productive relationships with and feel that they will lose out somewhat as a result of my relocation.
Moreover, this makes for an awkward transition, as Fife Council had interviews very early in 2017 and being successful with these, I was told I had to accept my contract within 2 weeks of being informed I would be offered a position. I have had to effectively ‘sign’ a contract despite the Council not being able to tell me what school I will be working in. This will only exacerbate recruitment issues for the Council should I get a job in Edinburgh.

I would have applied for Edinburgh Council (or Midlothian, West Lothian etc) but all these authorities only open to internal applicants. I could maybe understand the need for a ‘pot luck’ system so that authorities who struggle to attract teachers can meet their staffing needs but it seems ridiculous that, by design or not, probationers are shoehorned into a local authority not of their choosing.

What irks me further is that the GTCS, in order to try and fill vacancies in the remote areas of Scotland, offer a ‘tick the box option’ where probationers are paid £7000 extra on the condition that the GTCS will locate them anywhere in Scotland. I totally understand the intention behind the scheme and think it is valid. However, a fellow probationer who ticked the box and lives much closer to Fife than I, was allocated a school 5 miles from my own. This means that she is being paid a substantial amount more than myself to travel a shorter distance to work. She didn't even have to invest in a car, something I had to do as the quickest route to my rural school using public transport involves two buses, a train and a journey of over 2 hours (that’s one way).

To drive the point home, a number of my friends (specifically, two solicitors and an engineer) have asked me about entering the teaching profession as I seem to rave about how much I love my job constantly. However, when I explain to them that if you want to enter the profession you risk being allocated to local authority miles away from your home, regardless of your achievements, to then face the prospect of being ‘stuck’ with a local authority due to the internal application process, all of them have said it is too much hassle and wonder why anyone goes into teaching.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

In my local authority, another probationer I know quit due to commuting distance. She seemed to be a fabulous practitioner but having a young family made travelling so far a real problem.

I would lay a huge part of the blame at the GTCS’s front door. The ‘pot luck’ system is grossly unfair and if parents were to know that some of the most talented, dedicated and creative new teachers were having their mental and physical wellbeing strained by a reckless and uncaring placement system, I am sure they would have a lot to say. A merit based system would not be hard to put in place. I dare say that I would have stood a much better chance of securing a position in Edinburgh if the probation year was not guaranteed and graduates had to apply for teaching jobs straight out of University (similar to, well, almost every other profession in the world).

Everyday I wake up motivated, optimistic and hopeful for what my day will bring for both myself and for the children I teach. However, at such an early
stage in my profession I already have developed a deep mistrust of the GTCS and Scottish Governments ability to understand and tackle the challenges facing the teaching profession.

Many of my fellow probationers on social media and at conferences seem to cite pay, workload and CFE as reasons for a decline in teacher retention. I do not sign onto this. As newly qualified teachers, we were aware of the pay, curriculum and vocational nature of teaching prior to signing up to a career in education. Yes, teachers deserve a wage increase but so do a great number of public sector workers and unfortunately there is not the money currently to fund this. Accordingly, the only ‘gripe’ I have is knowing that undue strain is placed upon excellent practitioners due to the GTCS’ lazy allocation system (and their deceitful line that authorities cannot be swapped when they themselves have facilitated such) that this undoubtedly will lead to some graduates not taking up vacancies next term due to their location.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Having worked as a PSA, the pay is not enough to ensure that dedicated, committed and qualified staff are available. PSA’s are so, so valuable but this Government does not appear to value them as much as they claim to. In my opinion, they are in need of a pay rise before teachers.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

As explained above, a pot luck system for allocating local authorities completely devalues the efforts of new teachers entering the profession. This is then compounded by the internal application process. I take the principles of GIRFEC to heart and work countless hours over and above my contract to ensure that systems and scaffolds are in place to ensure all children in my class are receiving the very best education I can muster. My only hope is that leaders at the helm of my profession would try their best to get it right for every teacher too.

Additional comments

I would only ask that you consider the matters I have raised and thank you for taking the time to read them.

ANONYMOUS 50

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

I am a class teacher.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

East Ayrshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I enjoy the holidays and I enjoy working with children,

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I find the workload of being a teacher too much at times and it can be quite stressful trying to keep on top of the job. I have often thought that I would like a change of career and have a job which I can walk away from at the end of the day and forget about. Work/Life balance is important and at times difficult to achieve in the job of a teacher.

**Q6** What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I have no inclination or desire to become a head teacher or any sort of promoted post. I trained to work with and teach children and aim to stay class committed.

The role of headteacher is a management job which very removed and different to the role of class teacher and involvement with children.

**Q7** What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The role of a class teacher is constantly changing and there is constant pressure to stay ahead with new initiatives and implement changes. The curriculum is far too wide and as a class teacher we are striving to constantly train and update ourselves on the ever expanding curriculum. Specialist Teachers seem to be a thing of the past and the onus is on the class teacher to teach subjects/topics which could be better suited to teachers specialised in that area. The role of the teacher is now more than just teaching and learning and it is at times stressful trying to do your best and stay on top of all the jobs demands.

**Q8** Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

PE, Music Modern Languages

**Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

More Money, less paperwork and a narrower curriculum. Help make the job more manageable and less stressful within reasonable working hours to facilitate better work/life balance.

**Q12** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Staff morale comes and goes between ok and quite low. It is at times a struggle to stay on top of the job and it can often feel like you are losing control and trying to juggle so many different things at once. Stress levels are often high and it is a job that is very difficult to forget or switch off from.
ANONYMOUS 51

1) Primary
2) South Lanarkshire
3) Anonymously
4) Trying to make a difference
5) I intend to teach until I retire but find the workload almost impossible. Every holiday I crawl over the line.
6) A work/life balance is difficult enough as a class teacher but I don’t think promotion would be for me. I always expect 110% of myself and I don’t think I would ever be able to switch off. Also I am demoralised that no matter how many hours I work I never reach the end of the to do list.
7) People are generally demoralised. I have never before this year worked alongside experienced teachers who have opted to work in a supermarket so that when they go home they don’t have to start working again.
8) I worked in nursery for years but the moral there is even lower with people thinking that nursery teachers are there because they can’t teach. Something definitely needs to be done about the expectations put on nursery and primary teachers. The whole system would fall down if it wasn’t for goodwill. I have been teaching for many years but never before have I had to go into my own pocket so much for basic resources…books, paper, pencils, paints. It is way out of order now.
9) Teachers wages to come into line with inflation and not having to use your own money to be able to teach efficiently. There is not a month goes by that I don’t have to buy resources to teach with the quality of resources that is expected by parents and society generally. This would be a great start.
10) No, other than having a probationer.
11) We used to have a music teacher but she retired last year and has not been replaced.
12) As I have mentioned the morale is low to very low. I just don’t think people realise the pressure and expected paperwork and evidence that is necessary in the teaching profession nowadays. I would definitely not advise any of my family to follow me into teaching.

ANONYMOUS 52

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
   Primary – Principal Teacher 2 – 0.6 class committed

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
   South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
   Holidays and working with children. Pay does not reflect the job and workload has not been reduced, increasing every year. The job is more stressful than it was 10 years ago.
Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I would consider leaving for another job that is not stressful.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I am going to be honest, I applied for Into Headship course lately but was not even given an interview by South Lanarkshire Council.

I have been a PT2 for more than 11 years with 2 occasions, undertaking acting Depute roles in a large mainstream school, with a base and nursery. I looked for permanent Depute roles two years ago but there were none in my area. I then got a new job in a smaller school of a role of 125. This allowed me to work closely with the HT as there is no DHTs. I undertook many HT jobs to build on my leadership development against the standards for Headship, which I used the GTC reflection and self-evaluation wheel. I did not feel the Middle Leadership course would benefit me as I do more in my job, therefore, I would not be gaining experience, therefore, I applied for the Into Headship course, which I could develop under the guidance and support of my HT. SLC said I need to do the Middle Leadership first, so basically experience counts for nothing now. They said I need a university qualification first, even though some people do not????

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Too many large classes and too many children with severe ASD in mainstream, with little support given. Other authorities do not have as large classes as we do. A lot of ASD children (not all) can disrupt a class, this is difficult for a teacher to teach other children when this goes on. Teachers again have the pressures of attainment without adequate support.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Primary

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Better Pay

Reduce workload – Paper work…concentrate on teaching.

Less inclusion – mainstream children affected….not enough support given to these children.

Schools interview for all their own posts.
Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

NO – no additional measures

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

CPD…no class cover!

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very, very low morale. As previously stated, we have so many children with ASD alone, which disrupt classes. No support. No space to take the children to. No specific resources to help, e.g. sensory room etc. We also have many children with ASN needs, these all create additional paperwork but no extra time given. Too many things to teach. Additional 2 Languages, not enough training given by SLC, we also have to get children to brush their teeth through P1-7…more time taken and also 2 hours of P.E. Staff have nowhere to work during CCC, no quiet areas.

Staff also looking for clear examples of planning and assessment, all schools still doing a variety…not consistent. Expectations/modelling of what is expected would be good.

ANONYMOUS 53

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Primary classroom teacher, currently teaching P6

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Fife Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Working with children, helping them discover things and seeing the world through their eyes; seeing children blossom/achieve when given the opportunities; being a member of a great staff team; the holidays and the pay

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Up until 3 or 4 years ago I would have continued to teach even if I won the lottery. Now, I would leave at the drop of a hat. I am constantly looking for a different job. I have no desire to keep teaching until I reach 67!
The job has changed so much over the last few years for a number of reasons (in no particular order):

- Increasing numbers of children with ASN but fewer and fewer ASN support hours
- ASN children with more complex needs
- Poor parenting skills = more parenting from nursery/school. Children who cannot tie shoe laces in P6 and their parents can’t teach them because they don’t know either. Lack of nurture at home = we have to provide it instead. More and more parents seem to absolve themselves of responsibility for their children then expect us to wave a magic wand once they come to school.
- Being asked to give children experience of an outcome but, due to pace and challenge, being forced to move them on before they have secured the learning that would have previously been required. I see it as trying to build a brick wall with more and more of the bricks missing in each level. When a child’s learning is lacking a secure foundation, they have nothing to build on.
- Everyone’s opinion matters except ours. Parents’ opinions/wants/needs are paramount along with Pupil Voice. That’s fine but what about what we think? What about teacher judgement/professionalism/opinion?
- Being asked to provide more opportunities for active learning but then not having the basic resources e.g. whiteboard pens.
- More instances of children with mental health issues but with no support
- Hardly any opportunities for secondments to build skills/try new things.
- Scripts – I realise their value in promoting the development of self-regulation but they are not always appropriate. Pupils need to know/feel that your comments are particular to them, not just the same churned out platitudes you use with everyone.
- SMT who have no idea about the reality of teaching in a classroom nowadays

**Q6** What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I would NEVER seek promotion. There’s no amount of money that would encourage me. Not why I came into teaching.

**Q7** What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

See Q5 responses

**Q8** Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Anything that is not full-time and/or permanent
Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Address the issues from Q5!

Q10  Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

We have gone from 2 classes at each stage to composite classes and in September last year we had to lose a teacher so classes had to be restructured again. Whoever thought that 3 or 4 weeks into a new school session was the ideal time to do this has clearly got no clue about what it is like to teach! Things have settled down now, of course, but all of the work I did over the summer organising for my new class was a complete and utter waste of time, never mind the upset caused to those who had to leave their friends behind.

Q12  How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low. I can’t speak for others, but I certainly feel undervalued and that I am just a number. My experience/judgement doesn’t seem to matter any more. Nobody really cares about whether a child has achieved a particular outcome, just whether or not they have experienced it and how quickly they can be moved on. I have raised my children so I shouldn’t have to parent other people’s children now. I appreciate that there has always been care/nurture/counselling as part and parcel of teaching, but it is getting ridiculous now. I actually had a parent ask me to give her daughter a telling off because she had been rude to her in the playground!

ANONYMOUS 54

Q1  Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

Now in probationary year. About to qualify as primary school teacher.

Q2  Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Aberdeenshire

Q4  When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

For: making a real difference to people's lives.

Q5  Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I entered as a mature student with experience working in many cultures in many different countries with a strong science background.
Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?
Reasonable as I live in a rural area so expect some travel.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Four key reflections:
Primary teaching, like nursing, has traditionally (for centuries now) been a profession predominantly taken up by women. I think this is part of the reason that it has still to be hauled into the 21st century regarding being properly paid. Teachers are often providing the second income in the home and have, in a number of instances, not spoken up being afraid to rock the boat when they have received poor pay and working conditions. Instead they vote with their feet.
The teaching support staff (PSA) are very few and far between and have many different tasks, making it hard for them to be in the class with the children. If the intention is seriously to address the attainment gap then it is time spent with each child that will really make the difference. More PSA time per class is my biggest request!
Coming in to teaching, it has been eye opening to see what teachers are expected to pay for to properly equip their classrooms. This is no reflection on any particular school but is extremely widespread. Do parents know that the tissues provided in the classroom for their children’s health and hygiene are provided from the teacher’s pocket? Craft materials and equipment? Science experiment equipment? Christmas/Easter treats? The list goes on....
In my particular case I was unfortunately in a car accident. Because I was in the start of my probationary year, I was docked money for every day spent in hospital and four days recovering with no sick pay. When I asked about this, as I was on a work related trip, I received an email to say that I could claim fuel costs for the journey from my home to the point of the accident. I found this proposal bizarre. If you are made to feel that you are of no value, why would you stay in any given profession?

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Reviewing pay properly, in line with other essential professions.
Providing adequate levels of teaching support in the classroom (and a small budget for necessary items) would make things much better.
Being treated professionally at all times is important.

ANONYMOUS 55

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary teacher – complex learning needs primary school.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Glasgow City Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Seeing the progress the pupils make no matter how small this is from day to day. Support from SMT is a huge factor and whilst we don't always agree with decisions made by SMT in my current post I feel I DO get support when it is sought and they are very approachable.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I expect to be teaching until I retire as I did not enter the profession until in my forties.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Nothing would encourage me to seek promotion. I came into teaching to teach children not deal with paperwork and bureaucracy and the prospect of being a business manager with the tentative governance proposals.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Student teachers are not offered the opportunity to gain experience in Additional Support for learning and presumed they will only work in mainstream. It is assumed by most that they cannot apply for jobs in a complex learning needs school without vast amounts of experience. And whilst it is true experience is advantageous if teachers are not given the opportunity to have even a short placement in this specialist sector they will shy away from it for sure.

Pay is a factor for Support for Learning workers in this sector - these are essential members of staff who offer a real support to teaching staff when assisting pupils but no enhanced pay for what is so much more than helping with displays, photocopying, listening you a group reading and the like. Without these members of staff actively supporting pupils, sometimes on a one to one level, it would be an even more difficult job for the teacher who may have you deal with some extremes of challenging behaviour on a regular basis.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

ASN/CLN More people are shying away from this sector as they have experienced pupils with additional support needs in mainstream often with challenging behaviour and decide it’s not for them. However when managed
well in the correct environment it can be all together a different rewarding sector.

Supply teachers are non existent and probably due to the pay structuring of short term supply. Supply needs to be paid at a premium as it is in other professional that way there will be a bank of teacher available to cover a short notice.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Lack of supply can result in pupils not receiving adequate leading and teaching for periods of time. Or SMT are taken away from their duties on a regular basis in order to cover classes.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

I would say in our school morale is quite good due to the SMT trying their best to keep everyone informed of staffing situation and trying to offer solutions.

ANONYMOUS 56

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
The Moray Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Suits my outgoing personality.
Influencing young people & making a difference to their lives
An element of feeling like you are your own boss, that you are in control of your own class & how you use your working hours
Enjoy creating and putting together creative lessons for my pupils
Being able to be off during the holidays with my own children

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
Teaching until I retire

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I currently have no desire to seek promotion but this may come with more experience and with age. I feel that head teachers are put under too much pressure for the pay they receive. The reintroduction of Principle Teachers to
some schools in Moray may help teachers by giving them a stepping-stone to management.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I studied at Edinburgh University and I feel that the BEd course was looked down upon by many lecturers who thought we should have 'real degrees' to teach in the Primary School (ie. All do a PGCE). I do not think this has helped recruit pupils out of secondary school. I also do not think you need to be a genius to teach primary children, you need to show you are a capable learner (shown by secondary school grading) and that, most importantly, you can engage pupils! If you only try to recruit people who already have a degree in other subjects, there is a danger that they are not as dedicated to their career path and choose teaching as they 'can't think of anything else to do' with their degree or that they will feel their skills should be better paid than that of a teacher.

Teaching is a highly stressful job. This is mainly due to the massive pressure of continuous 'professional development' which makes you feel like you can never be good at your job. It is the kind of job you can never feel fully fulfilled because you are always questioning whether you got it right. Everyone has different opinions on what you should be doing from government, to head teachers, to other members of staff.

Moray is particularly struggling; I think this is due to the lack of young people in the area. Many want to move to the cities. It would make sense to try and train local people at the college (they may already be doing this). It is putting a lot of pressure on teachers as we are missing out on McCrone time, and our management team is being pulled into teaching. There are often occasions where we need a member of management in an emergency and we can’t get hold of them because they are covering classes. I don’t know how anyone expects them to run the school when they have to teach most of the time. Our pupils definitely feel the effects of this too.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

We struggled to get specialists like Art & PE covered. Maternity cover is difficult to fill.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Reduction of support assistants due to budget cuts rather than staffing issues. Obviously a massive loss.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low
If you were to do everything the Government and the school want you to
achieve as a teacher then you wouldn’t have a life. Planning from scratch (including differentiation in most lessons), pupil assessments, creating amazing resources, reports, open afternoons, personal development, staff meetings……….. The list goes on. But we all know that in the next staff meeting there will be another ‘document’ released about something else we should be doing on top of it all. It’s a tough job.

Additional comments

Everyone in Scotland is reinventing the wheel with resources etc, this is a massive annoyance for all members of staff. Why is everyone in Scotland spending hours and hours creating lesson plans, IDL planners etc…. the government should provide an easy accessible data base. I personally spend £50 on Twinkl every year just to give me some sanity, this should be a free resource for all teachers as it is AMAZING & exactly what everyone needs for some stress relief!

ANONYMOUS 57

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (please specify if you are working at primary or secondary school or other, if you are a supply teacher, and any subject specialisms or other roles)
Primary

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Renfrewshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with motivated and committed staff
Trying to work to create an equitable provision of education
Relationships with pupils and parents

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
Leaving early-feel that for the first time in over 20 years I am not happy with the direction of Scottish education. Too much teaching time used to find resources / social issues very distressing / lack of learning support / lack of support assistants

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Not interested in promotion

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Behaviour in schools, mental wellbeing of pupils, parents and staff, changes to curriculum/pedagogy/social issues

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Better support for all staff in schools
Smaller class sizes—especially for schools with behaviour issues
More attention given to discipline—better relationships, better behaviour, better learning
Learning support—seems to have disappeared

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
Changes in use of support assistants

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Quite low—quite good—very determined by current class situation (discipline) and number in class

ANONYMOUS 58

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have
Full time permanent class teacher (primary)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Ayrshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Making a difference
Autonomy within class; scope for creativity and taking advantage of opportunities
Every day is different, never watch the clock

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I am not actively seeking another job (partly because I am exhausted) but if I saw an opportunity I would take it. The thought of teaching until I’m in my 60s is unbearable. If I continue to work the hours I do with the intensity involved I will not be fit to enjoy retirement. I love my job but I deserve a life out with work and for the last few years my life during term time has been work and
sleep. During holidays I'm planning and resourcing to ease the pressure for the next term.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
The application and interview process is more 5-14 than CfE and does not value thinking outside the box. I love teaching and wouldn't want promotion to a role which cuts my teaching commitment. Promoted members of staff do not seem to recognise that they have been promoted for other qualities and not necessarily their teaching ability or experience.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Nothing specific to our school - everything is as in other areas.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Pay rise commensurate with responsibility, hours involved and professional standing - rather than rises below inflation with increased NI and pension contributions which have eroded pay in real terms.
Inclusion - where support is needed we need the support - so stop cutting support staff's hours!
Stop talking about closing the gap - yes target support, but we also need to extend the more able. With behaviour issues and pupils needing support for inclusion - and large class sizes it is difficult to get it right for every child. We try so hard to do just that but it actually isn't achievable.
Lack of respect in society for teachers.
Recognise when experienced teachers are burning out and have a plan in place to deal with it.
Centralise or organise banks of resources and assessment more effectively.
Why is everyone downloading from Twinkl? We all teach Time and Fractions...

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
In recent years we have struggled to fill maternity leave vacancies and have had complicated job sharing arrangements to cover which included HT, DHT and PT teaching (not a bad thing if it’s planned but when out of necessity the teaching staff pick up the slack by doing things the management team would usually do, e.g. organising sports day or having PRD or tracking meetings as part of the Balance of Time rather than class being covered. ) We also lost a day a week of Pupil Support as the PST was teaching a class - so pupils lost out, but teaching staff lost out more as we tried not to let pupils suffer. Similar situation with absence cover. Everyone is scared to be off as you come back from illness - before you're actually better - and have to catch up at work too.
Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Morale is very low. We are already working at full stretch and barely surviving - then we have a staff meeting after school, or a pointless inservice - and new things are raised so we have to assimilate more and feel overwhelmed. At times our HT is in a very bad mood which affects every person in the school. Everyone avoids him but it depresses everyone. Support staff are frequently diverted to other duties and we're left waiting for support when we've planned for support and they don't turn up.

In short:

Lack of support

Overwork

Reinventing the wheel

HT peccadilloes (HT is otherwise very good)

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I wholeheartedly believe in inclusion but I have seen the damage done to a class by children who need support. Some of them are entitled to support but don't get it - or don't get enough as others' needs are prioritised. Some aren't officially entitled to support, but really need it.

I can support anyone. I can challenge anyone. Can I do both at once? Well, yes but I'm spreading myself very thinly.

Active learning is great - but look at Heinemann Active Maths, for example - look at how much adult input or support is implicit in many (most?) of the activities.

Put money into education - give each class a Teaching Assistant (cut unemployment while you're at it...)

Please fix things. I love what I do and I don't want to leave.

ANONYMOUS 59

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Primary teacher who teaches in nursery 3 days and 2 days in P4-7.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Falkirk Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The children, every day is different, seeing a child achieve something which they couldn’t previously do.

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Until I retire.

**Q6** What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I would like to try a management role but the paperwork and added stress is high plus being put into class to cover regularly results in having to work more at home to complete your remit.

**Q7** What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Recruiting - Ensuring you say the buzz words in an interview. I think more emphasis should be on the observed lesson.

Retaining – Paperwork. Children’s behaviour. Treatment from some management members. Teachers wanting to experience different schools.

**Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Less paperwork/hoops to jump through. More support in schools for staff/pupils.

**Q10** Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Voluntary transfer options for staff.

More support / EYO's in P1.

Less planning paperwork.

**Q11** Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Learning through play – a more active approach in early years of primary.

**Q12** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very good – management team are approachable, value their staff’s ideas and opinions, try to take the stress off their staff by allowing time for extra activities and reducing planning paperwork.
Additional comments

I think the main issue within teaching is the amount of paperwork required, e.g. planning, assessment, preparation, marking, training, meetings etc that needs to be done and given to SMT/Council takes away from challenging, supporting and teaching the children in the class. There is also very little opportunities for the children to experience real life situations, e.g. baking as there are no resources or staff for this.

ANONYMOUS 60

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Primary: pupil support/ nurture teacher.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? North Ayrshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? Working with children is challenging but rewarding. I want to make a difference. I have invested a lot in my career- cpd and professional accreditation

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I would love to leave teaching and I am actively seeking work outwith the profession. I have become disillusioned with the whole system. Frequent changes to how the curriculum is to be planned, assessed and recorded lead to a constant feeling of uncertainty and undermines teachers confidence in their own abilities. We seem to spend so much time in meetings tinkering with the curriculum. Bundling E’s and O’s onto SAL, Collecting and collating assessment portfolios only to be told that we’re not doing that anymore, its too bureaucratic . So now we are spending more time looking at benchmarks- and devising rich assessment tasks. Assessment grids etc. It doesn’t feel less bureaucratic! It is almost impossible to switch off from the job because the volume of tasks that we are expected to do is simply not achievable within our contracted hours. 4 page reports for each child! Come on. Its not realistic. I already work 0.8 FTE because I simply cannot manage the job full time. I literally do not know a single teacher who is happy with their job. Teachers want and need to spend more time preparing high quality lessons. That is the whole point of our job, yet that is the area that most teachers feel they quite simply do not get to. If anything is going to raise standards, it is that.

The crisis in teacher retention/ recruitment is compounding this situation as remaining teachers are being stretched to breaking point. I have frequently been covering for absent class teachers, leaving my own post unfilled.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Nothing would encourage me. Management have to give up any life out with school.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Extremely challenging behaviour from a few troubled children has resulted in staff absence through stress. It takes a long time to get support in place for these pupils and in the meantime class teachers bear the brunt. This on top of all of the above.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Actually reduce bureaucracy by devising a manageable curriculum, along with appropriate assessment and planning tools which make the task simpler and quicker for teachers allowing them to spend more time on planning, delivering and assessing high quality learning experiences.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
In my authority any non-class committed teachers, i.e. Pupil Support Teachers are being used as Peripatetic Class Teachers. Under the circumstances this is unavoidable, but will do nothing toward closing the attainment gap.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)
Additional Support for Learning.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
Very Low. Reduce workload.

ANONYMOUS 61

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary Teacher – currently working 3 days Support for Learning and 2 days Primary 6/7 cover

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeen City Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Enjoyment in working with children and seeing pupil progression
Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I would leave teaching if I could maintain my salary; however, without retraining in another profession which I cannot afford to do I do not have a choice.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I have no inclination to seek promotion as I am currently a Chartered Teacher. The next step up to Principal Teacher may result in a drop in salary, Depute Head level is not significant enough to make it worthwhile, and from what I see in schools, the pressure on Senior Management is huge – no amount of financial recompense is worth the stress that goes with the job or the fact that you essentially give up your personal life!

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

In my current role I was asked to do Support for Learning; however, on Day 1 I was advised that I would also be covering a class for 2 days per week. In the first fortnight in post I have also been withdrawn to cover for an absent colleague. ASN/SfL teachers are seen as ‘additional’ and are the first to be taken for cover elsewhere in the school, devaluing the role and increasing the workload as you have prepared for a day that then changes requiring additional preparation. People do not want to work in Aberdeen due to the cost of living and the fact that the authority has a negative reputation.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Value staff – increase salaries in line with inflation; reduce workload and meaningfully encourage a positive work/life balance for all levels of teachers and management. Reward those teachers who are already in post rather than just new recruits!

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low – staff do not feel valued at local or national level; staff are overworked, constantly having new initiatives thrust upon us, and underpaid with a constant erosion of salary in line with the cost of living.

ANONYMOUS 62

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Area cover teacher in primary
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Seeing children becoming exciting about something new they have learned or achieving something they didn't think possible.
I like learning about new things before I teach them eg IDLs / Rich Tasks / Spanish
Encouraged by the confidence teaching has given me
Being able to afford a mortgage and a car

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I have considered leaving to work for a charity or other organisation such as Girl Guiding as I can use the skills I have from teaching, but wouldn't have the same pressure on workload (eg CATs, forward plan, report card, parent's night etc.)

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I would be discouraged by the lack of respect from some parent and pupils with regard to SMT (and class teachers); the level of work; the level of stress; lack of resources to achieve things that you want in the school and the dedication of the other teachers who have low morals.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Work load and pressures
Not being permanent to a school so never knowing where, when or how long you will be some where
Parents and lack of respect towards teachers
Behaviour of pupils meaning teaching can be disrupted
Voicing opinions in meetings and no changes happening
Lack of resources to be able to deliver good lessons and spending lots of your own money and time buying and making resources to present a lesson.
Too many pupils in class / class physical size

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Make area cover and supply teachers permanent in a school and then fill the spaces after that not before.

Build more respect for teachers within the community

**Q10** Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

In the school I am in just now only certain classes will get a support assistant at some point in the week. The class (P6) I am in at the moment doesn’t have anyone who has an ASP so we have no time with a support assistant yet there is a small group of children who are still at first level reading and do not has ASPs.

**Q12** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low – parent’s attitude, pupil behaviours, work load and pressures, lack of resources

**Additional comments**

I think something remarkable will need to happen before we actually see these changes happening in class.

**ANONYMOUS 63**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have?

I am teacher at a primary school, currently responsible for Support for Learning and covering teacher’s RCT.

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?

Dundee City Council

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Smiles of the children, you can see children progress, being creative

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

NO. I think the expectations of the job are too high and they put a lot of stress on the teachers. I have experienced severe violence in my classroom, fearing for the other children’s safety and their learning. I also think that even though GIRFEC is in place, we are not getting it right for every child as we have too many children with severe issues who take up a lot of our time and energy and make us leave the children behind who are well behaved and we assume we can let them get on by themselves. We are expected to be mediators, detectives, bank clerks, coaches, mothers, doctors but we can’t do everything
properly as we don’t have the time. Inclusion is causing another problem as the children with ASN needs are mostly not ready to be in mainstream classes and are left unsupported due to lack of support staff.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
No.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Lack of support, management not making themselves seen when there are issues → they ask support staff to deal with too many issues so they are not able to support children that they are timetabled to support

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
The pay scale shouldn’t stop at scale 6 as after 20 years of teaching there is no incentive to work as a teacher.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)
Support for Learning staff are constantly pulled out to cover a class so that children timetabled to get support are losing out.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
I think before the holidays the staff at my school were really demotivated. This may have changed because of the holidays but I still don’t enjoy coming to school.

ANONYMOUS 64

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Primary Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
West Dunbartonshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Want to make a difference in education and help all learners, no matter where they come from, to achieve to their full potential.
No two days are the same and the challenges faced are rewarding.
Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Yes, I entered teaching late, therefore consider that I will teach until I retire.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I am actively seeking promotion to senior management level, however am finding it difficult to move on due to lack of vacancies or posts looking for substantive experience in a promoted post such as PT.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Lack of supply teachers is a huge problem and has a knock-on effect on development of permanent teaching staff. Budget constraints and staffing allocations.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Increased salary, availability of specialist Professional Development to suit the needs of individual schools without blanket budget constraints.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Head Teacher with no other SLT support. Composite classes due to lower staffing allocation and smaller numbers in school. Measures are putting strain on all staff in school as they work hard to try to meet the needs of all our pupils.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Nurture Group within school.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very good and this is due to excellent leadership skills of Head Teacher.

ANONYMOUS 65

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Full time primary teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
- School holidays with my children
- Striving to make a difference

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Currently, I would leave teaching if the right opportunity arose. I do not foresee myself teaching for another 40 years. My main reasons for considering other professions are:

- The pressure of accountability (this is becoming more and more of an issue)
- Too many new initiatives
- Still not confident with Curriculum for Excellence
- Discipline and complete lack of respect
- Bureaucracy and sheer workload
- Working up to 60 hours per week
- Never feel fulfilment (always something to be done)

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I do not anticipate ever being management as the stresses seem to outweigh the positives. In my experience, headteachers seem further and further removed from classroom reality and seem too bogged down in social work / child protection issues. There also seems to be difficulty in striking the appropriate ratio of work/life balance.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Problems in retaining staff:

- Most contracts are advertised as temporary
- Discipline
- Inclusion of children who would be better suited to special / ASN education
- Larger schools tend to have ‘cliques’ of staff
- Working in areas of deprivation/ poverty

In my experience, the management of my school have been brought through the ranks having started off as probationers then senior teachers to depute to headteacher. Promoting from within seems to have a detrimental effect. Fresh perspectives are needed and experience brought from outwith. They seem reluctant to change as ‘that’s the way things have always been done’. This is another factor that is enhancing my decision to move school.
I also feel that when I look at job advertisements, there doesn’t seem to be anything ‘better’. From speaking to friends/colleagues who have moved schools, the same problems still arise or exist.

**Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I think that workload pressures need to be considerably reduced so teachers have time to teach! I also believe that Fife, as an authority, needs to revisit the restorative approach to discipline and behaviour. Whilst it is sometimes effective, I now consider this to be in the minority of cases. Too much time is spent daily sitting with children holding restorative meetings. Meanwhile, children in class are losing out on teaching.

**Q10** Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

- Composite classes
- Two classes with two teachers within one classroom
- Increased class sizes in Fife due to lack of teachers (meaning recommendation of 18 in infant class, doesn’t happen)
- Support staff withdrawn from class and pupils as they cannot do certain tasks depending on their level/grading so more work for the teacher
- Reduction in hours for support staff
- Support staff used for children with medical needs, not educational needs (meaning that they have to be with these children constantly, although they need no support with work or in class)

**Q11** Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Staff in our school rarely get the opportunity to attend any CPD events as it is difficult to get supply cover. Personally, I do not want to take part in any CPD that is a twilight or weekend session. That is my personal time and I always have additional school work to do on top of that.

**Q12** How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Morale is extremely low and has been for a few years now. I have taught at the same school since my probationary year in 2007 and in 10 years I feel exhausted, burnt out and I have lost all enthusiasm for a job that I once loved.

The main factors are the lack of respect and the behaviour of the children. Restorative approaches does not work in some cases but it appears there is no contingency/back up for dealing with these children. I share my colleagues’ worry that we are not preparing these children for the outside world, where actions have consequences. They are allowed to be violent and threatening. In my school it is frowned upon if a member of staff speaks out.
about certain children or wish to seek advice from their union or speak to Police.

Recently, I have been spat on and called names. Other members have been physically abused by being hit or kicked. In order to ‘prevent’ this, these children are rewarded with 1 to 1 support, treats, reduced workload etc. Other children have commented to me that ‘they might start being bad to get to work on my own with Mrs X’. The children who come to school every day and work hard do not get the same rewards.

Parents are also quick to question teachers and their professional knowledge and judgement. They are quick to point the finger at the teacher. I don’t always feel I get the support of my headteacher as she wants to please parents.

Testing and attainment pressures are also a huge part of the unrest.

Additional comments
In terms of ‘bridging the attainment gap’, I can see/predict a new gap appearing. While we try to close the gap between our poor and middle road attainers, the more able children do not receive our support as much. Whilst it might not be apparent in schools in areas of deprivation, it will certainly become apparent nationally when children who could have achieved more didn’t compared to the same ability of children from affluent areas.

I really hope that the information we provide is acted upon to prevent further crisis. Things need to change and for the better.

ANONYMOUS 66

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Class teacher, primary

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Can be rewarding when children have ‘light bulb’ moments.
It pays the mortgage.
Support from colleagues.
Challenging – keeps you on your toes as every day/class brings something new.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
Probably, as I can’t afford to stop working. At the moment I don’t see me looking for other employment.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Possibly to Principal Teacher however no further as I feel the pressure and expectations put on Senior Management is above and beyond the job description.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

In general I think the man challenges for retention of teachers in ANY school is the lack of recognition that teachers are professionals. There are too many situations where as a professional we need to prove we are teaching rather than being given slightly more freedom to utilise our professional judgement. Copious amounts of paper work for the sake of a ‘paper trail’ leads to demotivated staff and evaluation of most subjects is excessive. In some schools, class teachers have been asked to complete daily plans a week in advance, which diminishes the ability to plan responsively and to the needs of the class. This is also time wasting as plans inevitably need to be redone. Other schools that colleagues have worked in expect evaluations to be written for every lesson taught which seems extreme: where is the trust?!

Lack of quality resources: due to budget cuts we are using poor quality basic equipment and materials or buying our own as these last longer. This seems like a false economy to me.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Unsure

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Moving away from the ‘big brother is watching’ environment we are working in. I appreciate that we are accountable for the education of our pupils however we are not left to use our professionalism to its best. The vast majority of teaching staff are there because they care about the children in their remit and want to do the best for them. Take a step back (politician, parents press etc.) and let us do our job.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low. We are working under increasing pressure of paperwork and general workloads. Our accountability seems to have grown exponentially over the past ten years or so with more and more assessments, evaluations and feedback (written and verbal) to be given in the same 5 hours a day of pupil contact. We have swung back to working/teaching to assessment rather than using assessment as a guide for our next teaching and learning steps.
The time we use to mark homework, give feedback on daily work etc. depletes the time we use to plan meaningful and contextual lessons for the children.

**Additional comments**

I really enjoy my job – I have been teaching for 10 years coming to it as a mature student. However, even in these 10 years, the job has changed quite significantly. There is definitely more paperwork involved. I also feel that parents have too much say in what happens in school which is having an impact on daily teaching and learning with too much interference often a negative impact on the child long term. There needs to be more of a balance.

There also seems to be an expectation in many schools for teachers to put in way more hours than they are contracted to. It is highly unlikely that any teacher could complete their weekly work within their designated paid hours.

**ANONYMOUS 67**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have?  
Primary Teacher working in infant department.

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?  
East Ayrshire Council

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?  
Enjoy working with the children and watching them progress.

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)  
I will retire from teaching at the appropriate time.

**Q6** What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?  
Pressure of work and parental issues would discourage me.

**Q7** What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)  
Excessive workload in the form of paperwork

**Q8** Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?  
Probably science and maths
Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
    Salary obviously and trimming paperwork

Q10  Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
    Extra staffing while waiting for a Head Teacher to be appointed but was taken away as soon as new Head Teacher came.

Q12  How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
    Quite low due to all the fast changes in education and an overflowing timetable.

ANONYMOUS 68

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have?
    I am a primary teacher.

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
    Working with children. Seeing them learn and make progress. Feeling like you are making a difference in your job. Working alongside a great team.

Q5  Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
    I am planning to teach until I retire. (Not necessarily full time). However, a couple of years ago I had a head teacher who was bullying staff and I did consider leaving teaching. Instead, I moved local authority.

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
    I have been teaching for 12 years but am not interested in promotion at all. I would rather stay teaching in the classroom with the children as it is rewarding. Senior management have even more paperwork than us!

Q7  What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
    There are not enough teachers out there. I trained at a time when there was an oversupply of teachers. Some of my friends have left teaching or gone to work abroad.
Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I work in [ ] and we have been short of a teacher 0.2 per session. My friends in rural areas say that it is much harder for them to recruit staff.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Improved pay. My salary used to be fairly in line with friends in other jobs. Now it is below.

Take steps to actually reduce teacher workload rather than just talk about it. All of my friends who have had children have cut down to 2 or 3 days per week. There is no way that I could do my job full time and have a family too. I have to spend too many evenings and weekends working to manage that.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

We have been short of a teacher one day a week since August. Either the depute or head teacher has to cover this each week. It was meant to be on a temporary basis but the authority hasn’t managed to find extra teachers yet. This doesn’t sound a lot but we are a relatively small school and it has an impact on the workload of senior staff who are required to be in class more.

After our depute left for a new job, we were given a supply teacher who trained in another country and is completing her probation via the alternative route. She is struggling to control the class and teach effectively. Consequently, the management team and nearby colleagues have to provide a great deal of support on a daily basis. This adds to everyone else’s workload and does not help with closing the attainment gap. It is vital that we do not let the professional standards drop just because we are short of teachers.

Last year when I worked in a different school, one teacher left and the 2 deputes had to share the class between them for 6 weeks. This was really tough going. Then they managed to find a teacher on supply who was waiting to start his probation year and he took over.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

If the senior management were not in class, they would be able to take small groups to support them with closing the attainment gap. (They try to do this already on some of the other days.)

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
General moral in this school this quite good. Everyone works well as a team. The management team are effective. The heavy workload is the key factor that prevents morale from being very good.

I have worked in several schools over the past few years, some with good morale, some with low morale. The key factors affecting it are relationships between staff, effectiveness of leadership (and personality of head teacher), teacher workload and pupil behaviour.

**ANONYMOUS 69**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
I am a full-time primary teacher.

[for supply teachers answering these questions, please feel free to answer questions below on ‘your school’ providing more insight on the different schools you have worked in, or feel free to skip questions you don’t feel relate to you]

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? Highland

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I like working with my class, building relationships with them and supporting them with their learning. Every day is different and I am motivated by my pupils.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I have been teaching full-time for 18 years and feel burnt out. I'm not sure I will make it to retirement. We are expected to do more and more every year with less support and no rise in pay. I have children in my class with complex needs and, although I am very experienced, I have never been trained to deal with such needs. I am now expected to teach French, although I don't speak the language. I am getting two days training on this. It’s the same with changes in technology - no training but expected to do the job. Things are changing too quickly and we are expected to move with this, without training. Everything is done on the cheap.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I think there needs to be more structure. There are few principle teaching jobs and it's a big jump to go straight to DHT or HT. Workload, responsibility and cutbacks are huge pressures for promoted staff. My HT hardly has time to speak to the children anymore.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
New teachers are waiting longer for permanent contracts and are getting moved around more. We have different probationers every year and they don’t hear about their next school until June every year. There is a lot of uncertainty for them.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Supply teaching and covering CCR. We are also losing specialist teachers for art, music and PE.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Giving people permanent contracts sooner, pay increases and recruiting good candidates. I feel there is a recent drop in the standard of recruits. We are just not attracting professional people anymore as they can get paid more elsewhere for doing much less.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Not at my school, but children’s school has a multi-school headship. Why would you give a HT even more work? I think this is a terrible idea. There schools are close together, neither has a gym hall. One of the schools has under 30 children and both schools have poor accommodation. I think they should be merged.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

A lack of specialist teachers - art, music, PE and science.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

It is mixed. Sometimes good but sometimes low. The pressure comes from the top down.

Additional comments
I think new recruits are spending less time in schools. We had a student in their 3rd year who was on her first placement. People need to learn on the job more and get to grips with expectations a lot sooner. Also, we need to recruit good candidates and we are not going to do that with the pay at the moment. Teaching is not attracting the right people because of this.

ANONYMOUS 70

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary school class teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Midlothian

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with children, helping them, making a difference to their learning. Variety. Great colleagues.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I used to think I'd want to teach for ever but the job has become more and more stressful and pressured. Classes are too big, accommodation in older schools is inadequate, the pay is not commensurate with the responsibility or with the sheer volume of work and the hours we put in. I now can’t see myself teaching for the next 5 years. I’m 54.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I would not seek promotion. The volume of work and consequent stress levels would not be worth it for me. As you are promoted you also have less and less contact with children and seem to be drowning in paperwork and attending endless meetings.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Supply teachers are now like gold dust, because teachers voted for them to have a separate and, frankly, insultingly poor pay structure. Supposedly half of all teachers suffer from mental health problems. And I’m sure those were not pre-existing! Curriculum for Excellence puts an intolerable burden of paperwork on teachers. It is patently obvious to anyone working in a school that you cannot possibly cover all those experiences and outcomes within a level. So how do we choose? We are conscientious people who care about children but the priorities seem all wrong.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I can’t answer this fully as I work in the primary sector but I know that our authority is struggling to get/retain Modern Language teachers and both we and the Borders have difficulty recruiting and retaining Maths teachers

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
1. Cut back on paperwork
2. Offer better pay
3. Stop adding more and more layers of bureaucracy to CfE - benchmarks? Are they instead of e’s and o’s? As well as?
4. Stop eroding the benefits of teacher's working conditions such as "school closure periods" instead of holidays and changing our pensions.

5. Teachers should not be required to work until they are 67. It's ludicrous. Although some people may be sprightly and full of vim and verve at that age, I think it's highly unlikely that anyone who has been teaching for 20 or 30 years would feel like that.

6. Give us back our learning assistants. How can you insist on inclusion and simultaneously cut back the support staff?

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?

Learning assistants have had hours cut or lost their jobs. Meanwhile the number of children requiring support increases year on year. Why?

Bleating about inclusion is all very well but it's hardly "GIRFEC" to leave children with dyslexia, emotional and behavioural problems, or visual impairments, without adequate support, is it?

When supply teachers are needed to cover, the learning support teacher often has to abandon her timetable to cover classes. The entire management team is also used as supply.

- How well are they working?

See above. Not well!

- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low. I have outlined everything above. Stress levels are too high, both in newly qualified and experienced teachers.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

Please, please do something about this. Teaching is a wonderful job when it's about being allowed to use our creativity and professionalism to engage and enthuse learners, without getting bogged down in bureaucratic nonsense.

I am very saddened that I hear young teachers being cynical and saying they are stressed and overworked.
We all want the very best for the young people in our schools. Let's give them an education system to be proud of!

ANONYMOUS 71

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
North Ayrshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Every day is a different day. Working and educating children is fulfilling and fun.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role) Teach until I retire.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion? No, I would not like a management position. Too many difficult decisions to make with too little pay. You also do not get to work closely with children.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Staff morale is at an all-time low. Staff are demotivated and drowning under pointless paperwork which is often duplicated. So good for tackling democracy. The actual job is brilliant it’s the extras, collegiate which is pointless, in-services where it doesn’t even affect teaching and learning. School Improvement Plan – do we really need to keep on hashing it out. Everyone works at least a 50 hour week that means 15 hours unpaid – not many people would do this!

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Stop burning teachers out. We are shattered and use our holidays to recuperate. We need to feel appreciated by society and head teachers.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)
Learning Support has been taken away from pupils when supply staff are not available. This is not fair on the pupils.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?
I’ve been teaching for 13 years and the morale lowest ever in that time.

**ANONYMOUS 72**

**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary class teacher

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?
Glasgow City Council

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The children.

**Q5** Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I am near retirement.

**Q6** What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
The stresses on my headteacher and the senior management team that I have witnessed discouraged any ambition to apply for promotion.

**Q7** What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
The outrageous workload on class teachers, students and probationers - a lot of which is due to the Working Time Agreements being completely out of date. They were formulated at a time when resources/lesson materials were made available to teachers. Now we are making lessons/scouring the internet and social media for ideas and resources for hours in our own time but still having staff and departmental meetings and curriculum development sessions after school (and all our CPD is after school too.) Added to that we are creating assessments, recording results and evaluating those results and other clerical tasks.

**Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Reduction in workload and trust in our professionalism.

**Q10** Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
‘Support for Learning Workers’ were originally employed as Classroom Assistants to reduce the amount of time class teachers had to spend creating...
displays, filing, recording and carrying out other clerical tasks. They are now being 'trained' to deliver 'lessons' to groups of children as there are less Support for Learning teachers available.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

The opportunity to be taught in classes of less than 33.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low because of the workload and also the constant monitoring that is required to be executed. In the past 10 years every member of the teaching staff has been observed teaching approximately 20-30 times. It is demoralising.

I have never had anything other than excellent feedback so why do I have to be observed again and again? What am I suspected of doing? Slacking if I’m not under surveillance?

ANONYMOUS 73

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I have been teaching for nearly 11 years now in primary schools in Aberdeenshire.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

For
Variety of experiences involved in being a teacher- no day the same!
Holidays
Sense of professionalism
Good starting salary

Against
No flexibility in term time
Long working hours
No overtime
No time for a social life in term life
Difficult to arrange childcare around placements
Q5  Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)
I am considering leaving the profession because unless I take on a managerial role and leave the classroom I can not earn anymore or receive promotion. There is no incentive to keep on with professional development. The chartered teacher scheme would have kept me on board as I would have felt that my experience and skills were respected.

Q6  What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?
When I did my training we had no say at all where we were put and many students had to travel long distances and were not happy. My placements were nearby and I had a variety of country/ urban settings. I enjoyed my placements.

Q7  If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)?
(please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
Retaining good classroom teachers is difficult as many teachers feel that they do not have the support staff that they need to cope with inclusion of children with learning difficulties in mainstream schools. Retaining support staff is difficult because it can be a lonely job to do and not well paid. It always get the chance to mix with other staff( especially in small schools)

Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Bring back chartered teachers’ pay scale to enthuse and retain experienced teachers.

ANONYMOUS 74
Q1  What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary school class teacher

Q2

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
• Being able to teach young people who are willing to learn
• Being able to see progress in individual children.
• Supportive colleagues
• Holidays

Q5  Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
I consider that I will teach until I retire although given the demands of teaching at the moment I feel that I will seek to retire early.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

Encourage

- Increased salary
- Being able to implement change
- Being able to seek promotion without having to gain further qualifications – should be awarded on experience as Higher Education is not for everyone. It currently feels that teachers that have no inclination to further study at university level are being frozen out of any further promotion. Personally I feel at an early stage of my career that I cannot seek promotion past a PT post.

Discourage

- The job being too bureaucratic and having to have different roles and responsibilities.
- Lack of support
- Budget constraints to what could be achieved.
- In some schools the current salary for a Principal Teacher is not a lot more than a top of the scale class teacher because of how the sizing is worked out.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

- The amount of work – teachers are increasingly pressured into additional tasks. We have been promised that workload would be decreased and I certainly feel at the moment in my school that planning formats etc. have been scaled back but we are expected to complete a Teacher Leadership plan to lead across the school and a Practitioner Enquiry. Completing these tasks then save Management from having to complete these tasks as they are being completed by school staff with a massive gap in what teachers and management are paid to complete these tasks.
- Working Time Agreements – has become a paper based exercise and if school staff were to follow this then everyone would have completed their hours very early into the first term of school.
- Pay – the Living Wage has increased year on year as the cost of living increases year on year. However, teachers were awarded a small amount and this does not compare to what other graduates across the country receive for less hours.
- Working hours – teachers have very little time in their day to plan and RCCT time does not cover the amount of time needed to plan work for following days, weeks and terms. We then need time to mark the work of the children so that they get informative feedback which all takes time.
- Maternity pay – does not reflect the income which teachers get in a month and can make it very difficult for teachers to stay off with their children. I feel that it is not good that you can be off ill on full pay for 6 months and half pay...
for 6 months but yet you go off on maternity leave and get 3 months full pay. Why are we being 'punished' for having a family?

- GTCS fees are increasing by a huge amount every year.
- The Scottish Government are bombarding teachers with new documents which are constantly changing the goal posts of education e.g. the Benchmarks should have been published long before Curriculum for Excellence was expected in schools and this now means that there is additional workload for teachers as we need to re-think our school policy and procedures.
- Teaching as a profession needs lots of resources but teachers are finding that they are having to fork out money to buy resources as schools are not funding these materials.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

- Day to day class teachers as there is no supply.
- Additional Support for Learning
- Specialists of the Expressive Arts
- EAL support

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

- Look at the workload of teachers and dramatically reduce it.
- A major re-think of the current salary scales
- Working time agreements need to be monitored

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

If so:

- What are these measures?
- How well are they working?
- Are these changes a permanent or a temporary measure (ie is it covering vacancies at present or is it to reflect the number of teacher/other posts has reduced?)

- ALN support is now no longer taking groups of children for targeted support it is now a role which is based on completing appropriate paperwork. This has been the case for some time and it impacts upon the children. When short targeted support has been given it is usually reduced due to ALN teacher needed to teach due to staff shortage.
- ALN & Nurture teacher constantly being drafted into class because of teacher shortage and teacher illness.
- More composite classes within school.
- P.S.W. needs to be used for individual children and they cannot attend or support various class outings.
Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

- Expressive Arts tuition
- Nurture
- EAL

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Very low – many teachers are thinking about giving up on teaching to pursue other interests and sometimes just to get away from the job.

- No support given for behavioural problems
- Pay increases do not reflect the amount of work.

ANONYMOUS 75

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Primary

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Renfrewshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Day to day job satisfaction, teaching and learning with my pupils and seeing the progress they make. Witnessing how the children grow and develop under my care, the satisfaction in creating and planning stimulating learning experiences which my pupils enjoy and benefit from. Knowing that you can make a difference, even to just one pupil in your class, and the compliments I receive from some of my parents when they are also genuinely pleased with their child’s education experience.

As a primary teacher I enjoy the variety of teaching across all curricular areas. I enjoy the flexibility to plan my day with my class and make the most of our environment/climate. I love being able to take learning outside on a sunny day, taking my class on educational trips, enjoying fun activities like Health week and STEM week, planning class and school shows and working with visiting specialists.

The holidays are of course a big incentive for me also, I know that I could not keep up the pace and manage my current workload without the opportunities I get to recharge during holidays and catch up on work.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

I would like to move into Further Education – working with BEd or PGDE students at university level.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

In the past I have considered applying for PT posts, however I have decided that the work/life balance would not be worth it, and that the satisfaction I get from my job – working with children- would be reduced. Having taught now for 9 years, I still find it difficult to juggle all my work commitments and I think that a promoted post would just increase my stress levels.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Having worked with a number of BEd and PostGrad students, I think that the entry into these courses needs to be more rigorous –a number of students are just not prepared for the workload and struggle to manage the pace. I think local authorities are also responsible, keeping staff on temporary contracts as long as possible. As an experience teacher I found it very difficult to relocate between education authorities. Having secured a temporary job on supply to cover a maternity leave, I was constantly told that my next terms employment was not guaranteed.

As a teacher at the top of my pay scale, I was overlooked for permanent jobs as less experienced teachers, at a lower pay scale were favoured. There is also a lack of opportunities for experienced teachers to develop their skills and make sideways moves.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?

Our SFL provision is almost non-existent. When I started in my current school last year, we were without a DHT so our PT was taking on extra responsibilities and also covering absences, this meant there was no SFL provision for two terms. This year, the staff member who was responsible for NCCT also provided some SFL, she is now on maternity leave and therefore again we have no SFL provision.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

Dedicated one-to-one support for learning. Motor skills programs and Nurture groups.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Quite low -generally due to heavy workload, raised expectations in terms of attainment figures without any additional support. A heavy focus from SMT on tracking and monitoring rather than a balance between support concerns and realistic target settings.
Additional comments

I have now been teaching for 9 years and I am beginning to feel frustrated at the lack of opportunities for variety and development in my career other than moving into SMT. I have self-funded my own MEd with the Open University hoping that it might open up some more opportunities to explore secondment roles within my local authority. If the Chartered Teacher program was still available then I would happily commit to that, however, I resent the emphasis on 'shared leadership' which forces class teachers to take on extra responsibility without providing them with any extra planning time or pay increase. I have the responsibility of both Numeracy champion and Science co-ordinator in my school, having to organise planners and resources and specialised learning during STEM and Financial Education weeks. I get no extra time to fulfil these responsibilities, and I am expected to lead staff CPD on a regular basis. I find it very difficult to keep up with my existing class responsibilities as well as these commitments.

I also find that CLPL opportunities are increasingly at the weekends or evenings, with staff expected to make the commitment without question. On top of that, we are also expected to attend school and community fundraisers organised by Parent Council, in our own free time. It is my choice to take work home from school most evenings and weekends to catch up and allow me to facilitate the smooth running of my classroom, I resent being expected to give up the precious free time that I have.

ANONYMOUS 76

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?  
I am a primary teacher.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?  
Dundee.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?  
After 28 years, I still enjoy working with the children and helping them to make progress in their learning. I work in a poor area and it is rewarding to see children learning and progressing and it is very heartening when we hear about ex pupils who have done well for themselves and are making a good life for themselves.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment? (If you consider leaving, please specify why if it relates to your enjoyment of your role)  
I currently have 10 years until I am due to retire. Presently, I don’t think I will be able to last that long. The current working conditions are extremely demanding and stressful. I have little or no time free time during the week and most of Sunday is used to prepare for the next week at school. This makes for low morale and little or no job satisfaction. It really is a case of getting from one holiday to the next. In fact, I have done some school work every day of this Easter holiday just to try to catch up with what I didn’t manage to
complete before we came off. The paperwork is horrendous and a great deal of time is spent on a daily or weekly basis searching around for suitable resources etc. to be able to deliver the lessons we are expected to teach. I have one daughter about to finish at university and another about to apply, but once she is through her studies, I expect I will look to retire if the current conditions persist.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I have never sought promotion as I prefer the relationships within a classroom setting and don’t feel I’m suited to meetings etc. I have had reduced contact several times when mentoring new teachers, but each time I have been delighted to get back into the classroom.

Q7 What do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff) at your school? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
The current practice of working with very little leadership from our authority presents a challenge for us. We are frequently visited for observations and reviews etc. and often criticised for our efforts, but then given little or no advice on what they are actually looking for or how they suggest we deliver. This is demoralising for myself with many years of experience, but even more so for young teachers. We work very, very long hours yet are frequently told we are getting it all wrong. On top of having to work with reduced staff numbers, the situation is in meltdown. We are simply told that we have to absorb all the extra duties that specialist teachers (eg PE, art, music and drama), SfL staff, support staff etc. would have done in the past. I have recently had fourth year students who have said that they feel they simply couldn’t keep up the work rate required to be a teacher and so only see themselves as lasting 5 or so years. I find that horrifying to think that we are spending time and money training these teachers knowing that it’s unsustainable. I can’t see how we improve this situation using current practice.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
We have to work without specialist teachers (PE, art, music, drama) etc. Our SfL staff no longer take groups for extra support, one reason being they often have to cover staff absences. We have some support staff in school but they are spread very thinly across the whole school and, for example, my class is desperate for ASNA help but there is none available. We have had several staff shortages in recent times but there are no candidates for the posts so we are left to run as we are.
Our authority has issued a literacy resource for us to deliver in setting and we are told that results in early stages have improved, however, it was simply thrust in across all levels and the upper stages have struggled to slot in successfully. Having said that, we can’t understand why the success of setting in literacy is simply banned in numeracy and we’re not allowed a programme of work either, so we are floundering around on a daily basis trying to create a
differentiated programme from scratch. I, at least, have experience I can draw upon to help address these needs, yet the time involved is overwhelming. We have very limited resources available to us and a great deal of time is spent creating activities, games etc., that’s why I have so little free time in the evenings or weekends, that is why we are so exhausted before the new week begins. When I try to discuss these issues with SMT, I’m told I have to “work smarter”. When I ask her to model for me, she tells me that it’s not her job, it’s mine.

We are frequently reminded these days that our attainment has fallen badly, yet when we try to suggest looking back to find when things started slipping and getting back to what was working, we’re told that’s not appropriate. I don’t understand why we are persisting with current trends and practices when we see quite clearly that were are failing. Unfortunately, when we try to direct professional discussions with SMT we have been told “No, you are wrong and I am right”, but then we are told we are failing our pupils.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
I feel better guidance for our local authority would help steer us in the right direction, or at least have someone taking the lead. As things are, we are left floundering and frequently blamed for getting it wrong. Our HT visits lots of conferences etc. then tells us to try new ideas, but we get no real input into what she has learned or what she expects from us, then we are criticised again for getting it wrong. We all work extremely hard and we are all in the job for the sake of the children yet we meet these problems very, very frequently. When we try to suggest how to move forward in our own school we are talked down and told that we are being too traditional and we need to move forward, yet we see that our standards are far below what we used to achieve in the same school.

Q10 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers in recent years at your school (examples include multi-school headship/leadership teams, composite classes, changes in the use/availability of support assistants)?
We have permanently lost the support of specialist teachers and have to rely upon supporting each other with these fields. Obviously, the lessons we can deliver are less effective than those from a specialist and children with a talent might not be identified or encouraged to develop.

We no longer get SfL support for groups. All SfL and support staff are used to deliver RWI in early stages so upper stages get no help. SfL are also used very, very frequently to cover classes for staff absence and when others are called to development days, training days, assessment weeks etc. I find this a problem as I have several pupils with real needs and I have to accommodate them within the class while juggling everything else. I have children with diagnoses of conditions who should get support, but don’t. I have several pupils with demanding behavioural issues but get no support. I’m told there is no one available to help, yet I am constantly held to account for the safety of my class while dealing with these often violent pupils while, of course, ensuring that all children are challenged and progressing in all curricular areas. Our class sizes are more or less full to capacity apart from P1.

We have also has a fairly large influx of non-English speaking pupils recently
and they, unfortunately get very little bilingual support as, once again, they are spread so thinly across the city. We have lost several staff members to staff tutor posts without sufficient staff to cover these losses.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils as a result of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)

I feel all Exp Arts areas suffer from the withdrawal of specialist teachers. I also feel that my time is monopolised by the behaviour issues in my class and the needs of my children who really need SfL or support staff support, this detracts from the time and support I can offer the rest of my class I order to push them forward in their learning. I have a class of 28 with 18 of them with specific needs and many of the others with behavioural needs, and we come from a poor area of the city which brings other problems re family background etc.

Q12 How would you describe general morale among staff (very good / quite good / quite low / very low) and what are the key factors that influence it?

Morale in our school is low. We are a good team of classroom teachers, with many young members of staff, but we are often on the receiving end of criticism and complaints. We all work very hard and we support each other well, but find it difficult to operate efficiently when the goal posts are frequently moved around. We need better guidance for SMT and our authority to know where we are heading and how we are going to get there. The paperwork we have to complete has been slightly reduced recently, but we are still in the process of revamping our school procedures. It’s been given over to the staff to sort, but having had our working groups work on what would be useful to us, the HT then said she wants is to be uniform across all curricular areas. This is typical of how we are expected to work – we are told to go and work on something then told afterwards that it’s not what she wants. It would be more time efficient of she issued us with what she expects, but we frequently have issued things issued by DHT that HT then rejects once we’re well into adapting to using it. A collective vision from SMT and/or our authority would dispense with all the time we have wasted in recent times but have still nothing useful to work with.

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:
We were recently sent on a 5 week twilight course in aimed at Attainment Challenge Schools. We hoped this would offer us advice on how we were going to move forward as an authority. We were basically issued with lists of research sites and links in relation to LI/SC, feedback and growth mindset etc. When we feedback asking for more practical examples of how to develop these ideas within the classroom, we were left disappointed and told to consult the research. While we all understand the need and place for research, we are so exhausted in the daily organisation of our classrooms that we have no time or enthusiasm for extra research work. Unfortunately, the
tone of the whole 5 weeks was pretty demoralising for those who attended. Our staff attended the whole 5 weeks, but numbers dwindled as the weeks wore on. Rather than feel energised by the experience, we felt “blamed” again for the attainment dip.

GENERAL COMMENTS NAMED

AMY RALSTON
My name is Amy Ralston and I graduated Strathclyde University in 2009. I have been employed by North Lanarkshire Council since then as a Primary Teacher. I think it is great that the Scottish Government is taking steps to find out the opinions of teachers around the country as our children, staff and country have enormous potential!

I believe that teachers (myself included) have been given a raw deal in the last couple of years. Pay ‘increases’ alongside pension increases have meant that I have no extra money to my name compared to a few years ago - although the cost of living has dramatically increased. I now work more hours with more stress with no financial bonus.

My job is more demanding now that ever with curriculum demands that are almost impossible to meet, planning, reporting, assessing, marking, preparation of materials (notice that the prep is last on the list, as this is often thing I find rushing due to lack of time, energy and coffee!!). This breaks my heart as a class teacher I want to spend my time planning and resourcing fantastic lessons that will engage, challenge and support the children in my class. The priorities are mixed up at the moment and that is something I believe needs to be addressed in Scottish education.

Working my way up the career ladder was always something that interested me in the past but I see the Senior Management Team in my own school run ragged by aggressive children, parents and ever-increasing demands and this is now something I have put on the back-burner. I have a thirst to learn and would have loved to undertake the Chartered Teacher studies, but this is something that has been removed. This now leaves me effectively ‘stuck’ at the top of the pay scale with nowhere to go. I appreciate not all SLT will be run ragged but working in a few schools over my time as a teacher I have nothing but admiration for the Senior Management who have the weight of the world of their shoulders with little support from the council or parents to back them up and address real needs.

I know this may sound fairly negative, but I do believe that there is a way to fix all of these problems. More pay, power and support for teachers (and all staff in schools) would go along way in helped to not only attract GOOD teachers but keep them in the profession!
MARY MATHIESON (Retired primary teacher)

In August 2014 I gave up my full time teaching post, taking an actuarial hit on my pension, in order to save my health. I was 59 years old, so a long way off receiving my state pension.

As soon as word went out that I, a teacher with decades of experience was available for supply, I started receiving calls directly from head teachers offering me a variety of positions. As a primary teacher in Aberdeen City I could pick where and when I worked and little wonder.

Teaching is not a desirable profession for a plethora of reasons:

1. Constant frustration and lack of job satisfaction. It is impossible to meet the needs of an increasingly complex and challenging client group without relevant training and appropriate levels of resource being put in place, neither of which are ever acknowledged by those promoting change and innovation. Teachers gain no pleasure in seeing their pupils set up to fail.

2. An overcrowded curriculum coupled with demands to solve all of society’s ills places unrealistic demands on the profession. Doctors and nurses are not blamed for the crisis hitting the NHS, but teachers are held accountable for any failure within education. Graduates are not going to queue up to join a profession whose members are routinely portrayed as failures.

3. Tackling Bureaucracy is not truly happening in too many authorities nor alas in many of our schools. It remains nothing more than a tick box exercise for too many managers who have not really engaged with the serious workload generated by bureaucratic processes. The 35 hour working week is purely notional, all those who signed up to TP 21st Century need to start working out how to make it a reality!

4. Salary! You cannot keep paying paltry wage increases and expect people who are working in excess of twenty hours per week unpaid overtime to feel valued. If you look at the evidence around weekly hours worked, multiply it by number of weeks worked and divide by 35, I suggest you'll find that the average teacher actually has, at most, two weeks holiday per year.

5. You need to address staff morale. Collegiality was a key part of TP 21st Century but it is sadly lacking in most schools. Far too often initiatives are done to staff and not with them. You must start treating teachers as professionals, valuing their views and recognising their daily reality. The real experts are those who spend their days with the pupils, not those who educate from a distance!

6. Deal with the SQA!

7. Change and the pace of it must be properly managed and resourced. The Scottish Government needs to take a long, hard look at the role it has played in the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence and its failure to respond to the concerns of the teaching profession.
8. If you are genuine in your desire to be inclusive you need to look at class sizes. Speak to any parent who has a child with special needs and they will tell you not just about the joy they bring but also about the demands they bring in terms of support, attention, managing risk and developing life skills and then consider how one teacher can possibly meet those demands for several children within a class of up to thirty-three pupils whilst also delivering the curriculum.

9. A number of colleagues have given up because they felt their work was not valued. I speak here of nursery and ASN teachers who have increasingly been removed from their specialist roles. In the secondary setting no-one would suggest that literacy should be taught by a librarian but, at a crucial developmental stage, it is deemed appropriate to remove teachers from nurseries. This does not represent equality for the pupils as one age group is treated differently from another but also sends out a negative message to those who have dedicated themselves to further professional development in this area.

10. Proposed governance changes are ill advised and will further discourage deputes from applying for head teacher posts.

11. Finally, don't pay lip service to these comments and those of the other teachers who take the time to respond to you, actually engage with their concerns.

GENERAL COMMENTS ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 77

I have been a primary teacher since 2001, qualifying in the year before probationer support was formalised within the McCrone Agreement. I was part of an increased cohort of PGCE students trained to address the predicted shortfall of qualified teachers as the ‘baby boomers’ approached retirement. Since completing my probationary period on supply I have worked in the same school in Fife, so have seen the recruitment and retention dynamics play out over the past 14 years.

From my perspective, barriers to recruiting and retaining teachers include: Pressures on funding - schools are having to do more with less. Larger class sizes make it impossible to deliver GIRFEC. Societal pressures mean a greater proportion of pupils are coming to school with more complex support needs than ever before. At the same time the lines between childcare and education have become so blurred that the expectation is that every aspect of a child’s development is the responsibility of the school. Add to this the fact that parent choice outweighs professional opinions of teachers and it is little wonder that teaching staff feel undervalued.

Conflicting priorities - closing the attainment gap and reducing teacher workload are not easy bedfellows, particularly under a climate of increased class sizes an reduced pupil support.
Increased expectations with diminishing rewards- the world is changing at an incredible pace and the education system will always be playing catch up. Almost every teacher I know came into the profession to help children reach their full potential, whatever that may be, and in spite of the obstacles life throws at them. Problems of retention occur when teachers no longer feel able to deliver the standards they set themselves.

ANONYMOUS 78

Are you a teacher, a student in teacher training or someone who left training/the profession early? The Education Committee want to know what you think about teacher recruitment and retention, and how the teacher workforce is planned for in Scotland.

I am a Primary Teacher and have been teaching for approx 14 years. I have worked in Scotland, and abroad. I have been back in Scotland for 2 years. I have been in promoted and middle leadership roles and have taught different curriculum’s.

- What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

I am a family man and basically have very little free time to spend and focus on my family. Most evenings and weekends I am working. Recently i went 7 weeks without a break due to my school reports being due, having a student on placement, doing a middle management course as well as the day to day running of my class. That is not a work/ life balance. After doing all this work i have very little money to do anything with my family or to spend on improving our house. There is no chance of going on holiday. I have had to act as a mediator for parents who have fallen out ( police involved ) and this has taken place out of school. It is seen by parents that they can come to me to try and resolve these issues. There is frustration at ever changing policy and guidelines. There is very little recognition or understanding of the role in society.

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

They can be put off by the realisation of what lies in store. You can get a job in Lidl for example as a store manager and earn more money.

-How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?

Schools have restricted budgets and authorities have less staff to fill in these posts. The system has relied on good will of teaching staff but this cannot go on. Students have been used on placements to end up covering. Often staff are given little or no notice and expected to step in and deliver lessons with no preparation time.

-What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?
Workload. Working hours. Salary (Lack of) , Poor management, lack of support, lack of recognition, Bureaucracy.

-What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

I recently applied for and had an interview for a HT position at a small school. I was not successful but asked for feedback and got none! I then was not considered even for an interview for a DHT position. No explanation for this. People may already be in the post temporarily but basically 'have the job'. People have been put off by previous leaders they have worked with who were not suited to the job. I worked for a HT who was bullying, discriminating, no leadership or social skills. The authority was alerted and nothing happened. Many good teachers left because of this. Only 2 years later after the initial complaint was something done, after a community, pupils, staff had been made to suffer. The consequences were huge. Dealt with badly by the authority. You see this happen and you think 'hold on I would be working closely with these people!' and that may be enough to dissuade a person?

ANONYMOUS 79

I am a Scottish primary teacher that trained in a Postgraduate Certificate in Education and qualified outside of Scotland.

On return to search for work in Scotland I found it difficult as there is a degree of uncertainty with regards to temporary contracts, which I am currently working my way through.

I am actively looking and willing to work, I believe that there should be a pool where prospecting qualified teachers can be entered and allocated work, this would result in staff being deployed to where the need is.

ANONYMOUS 80

In response to your Facebook post, as a primary teacher with 10 years’ experience, in West Lothian, here are my thoughts:

- What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

Workload increases every term. We dread staff meetings as by the end of each meeting our to do list is longer. We usually feel that we could have used the time we were at the meeting working through the things already on that to do list instead of the often useless tasks we are given to fill the time. Things are always added but very rarely removed. Sometimes I hear things that I think sound good and worthwhile but don't know when I'm going to have time to do them.

Pay doesn't increase and therefore once you reach the top of the scale, no matter how hard you work, you won't earn any more. The recent increase in GTCS membership was not optional and went ahead despite a huge disagreement of it.
It is very difficult to raise attainment when what we need and continue to communicate, that we need, is never given. We need more support for learning teachers. For children who are not achieving, seeing a support for learning teacher for 30 minutes a week is not enough. I have a pupil support worker for 2 hours per week and she is often called away for first aid during that time. We need human support in every class. We do not need more stationary.

I am often wondering what else I could do. I don’t know many teachers who are happy in the profession. When we get together, we all voice the same concerns/things we are fed up with. I enjoy the time in class with my children but feel under so much pressure as soon as they go home, to try and work my way through my never ending to do list.

Many parents have very little idea of the time constraints teachers face. They can be demanding of our time and some think their option is more valuable than ours, as professionals and therefore we spend a great deal of time justifying our actions to parents.

- Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

As above. They go into schools and see the reality that most people have no idea of until they are in the job.

- How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?

There are no supply teachers available. If a teacher is off sick, support for learning teacher covers and I’ve already mentioned the issue about the lack of support for learning teachers before any absences. When a number of teachers are off, we don’t get our contracted non class contact time, which has a huge effect on morale.

- What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?

Supportive colleagues in the same dire position and holidays are what keep us in the profession.

- What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

I have no intention if ever applying for promotion as it is a management job, not a teaching job.

I hope these responses are valued and used to make a change.
ANONYMOUS 81

Following the recent post on Facebook I would like to make a few important points with regard to teacher retention as well as some general points:

Lack of additional support: The working day for teachers is increasingly becoming more difficult due to inclusion policies. Although I do agree with inclusion, there is a complete lack of support for teachers and children. Children who need support aren't getting what they need due to cuts in additional support in and out of school. This then has a knock on effect on the rest of the children as teachers struggle to plug the gap. This is putting the profession under great pressure and often it feels as if it is impossible to get it right for every child! I can only speak for myself and my colleagues but this is becoming very demoralising and making excellent teachers reconsider their career choice.

Lack of supply teachers: It is becoming increasingly more difficult to gain access to CPD courses during school hours due to a lack of supply teachers. Management are continually forced into class to cover even long term absences (particularly in my school which is denominational). This is again leading to a lack of support for teachers and pupils as management are in class.

Pay & Promotion: Salaries have eroded in real terms meanwhile the workload increases, support decreases and expectations of teachers are at an all time high. Additionally, there is no real way to be promoted other than into management. Many teachers wish to remain in class and further their career by gaining additional qualifications such as Chartered Teacher.

Curriculum: I have been qualified for 5 years and at times it still feels like schools are making a stab in the dark. Moderation in learning communities only highlights the difficulties we are having to ensure consistency for pupils. The publication of benchmarks has finally set us on our way to a more consistent approach, but even these are pitched far too high at Early level.

Bureaucracy: Teachers are spending a lot of time on paper exercises rather than planning wonderful and engaging lessons. Also, we are often spending more time evidencing learning than actually teaching!

To summarise:

Teachers are feeling very devalued due to the increasing challenges outlined above. Many of my colleagues and friends have considered leaving the profession as there is little job satisfaction. Thankfully, most teachers are in it to make even the smallest difference to the lives of children. For me, this is what keeps me going on a daily basis!