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SECONDARY SCHOOLS TEACHERS NAMED SUBMISSIONS

ALAN BARR

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary, Faculty Head

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Cathkin High School, South Lanarkshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Camaraderie amongst colleagues and the opportunity to guide and support young people into the next stage of their life such as into the world of work or into further/higher education.

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 continue teaching up until the official retirement age as I could not physically, emotionally or psychologically cope with the stresses and requirements of the job at that age, 67. If necessary I will take another job later in life which is less stressful. Teaching is a job of immense stress and pressure and to expect people to work until they are in their mid to late 60s is laughable. It is also a job that requires you to relate to the pupils and form positive relationships. How can a man at 64 years old for example relate to and form a positive relationship with an S1 girl of maybe 12 years old?

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I would only seek this type of position if it came with a classroom contact or teaching commitment. These positions seem to me to be more about politics than 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)
Wages are not at an appropriate level. Teachers have had well below inflation wage rises and as a result have seen themselves earn less as the cost of living increases whilst the demands of the job have increased. So more work for less money in real terms. The number of available, full time permanent positions in schools has decreased and we are awash with temporary staff who help ensure that pupils are able to learn. The number of permanent jobs must increase to retain staff. Also the methods of removing teachers from posts when they are unfit or incompetent has to be easier. Every teacher I know can tell the names of teachers who do the rounds in many schools but are not competent.
Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

We have had real difficulty over the last few years getting science specialists, physics and chemistry in particular. Home Economics, Computing and Technical subjects seem to have similar issues.

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

Better wages, especially for supply 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)?

We have seen our Advanced Higher courses reduced and now ‘share’ delivery of these with other cluster schools. This has been to the detriment to the mental wellbeing of our pupils as in some cases they do more subjects outside of their own school than in it. It has seen a drop in the morale of staff who are not able to deliver the top level of their subject specialism and we have seen upwards of 10 pupils from our school attend somewhere else for AH.

We have recently had a new system implemented by the local authority to prevent further breaches of the absence cover policy which has resulted in a new staff member being parachuted in to our school to assist with cover.

Staffing seems tighter than at any other time since I came into the profession.

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 quite low. This is down to increasing workload caused by constant changes to curriculum, which individual teachers are expected to design and deliver. Leadership is regarded as weak or distant with senior managers becoming further removed from the daily role of a classroom teacher and so the expectations and initiatives become less realistic. Also, as mentioned before, staff are asked to work harder for less financial reward.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I have been asked many times if teaching is a good profession and it is becoming more and more difficult to provide a positive response to this. In my opinion we have lost sight of what education is supposed to be about and we have become less pupil centred. Standards in the fundamentals have dropped but we are producing pupils with extreme confidence but with nothing concrete for this confidence to be based upon. We need to go back to basics in my opinion.
VICTORIA BARR

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?  
Part-time permanent secondary school teacher

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?  
Seeing the young people I work with progress in their learning and forming positive relationships with staff and 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)  
You have to be joking! There is no way that I will continue to teach until I am 60 nevermind retirement age! I have seen so many young, enthusiastic teachers turn into cynical older ones as the system wears them down and I do not intend to be one of them!  
Also, having children myself, I want the best for them and younger teachers who are enthusiastic, have energy and can relate well to them are much better serving the needs of our youth than a 60-year old, cynical teacher who cannot cope with the ever increasing demands of the job. The stress involved now in having to justify every decision you make is too great, the paperwork is too much and the children are becoming much more demanding, as are the increasingly high expectations on senior managers who forget what it is like to entertain full classes for 6 or 7 periods each day, every day.  
I will take early retirement and take on a much more relaxing job in my old age rather than work until I basically keel over.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?  
I did take on an acting faculty head job and had to give it up due to family commitments. They cannot tell you what it like to have to deliver the national qualifications when the pace of change is so immense.

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 some students that we get on teacher training that are never going to make good teachers, they don’t like pupils and think that teaching is a 9-3 job with great holidays. One probationer we had lasted 3 days into the new term before saying she couldn’t hack that the fact that we did not work from books, we made up every lesson ourselves and built up our own collegiate banks of material. She thought she could go in and spoon feed the pupils! How did she get through teacher training!  
For the good teachers, there is no more chartered teacher! What a disappointment! I want to stay in the class but work 3 days, burst a gut for all my pupils and colleagues and get £21,000 for the privilege of working 8.15 until 5 pm wed-thurs while working for an extra week during summer to
prepare (as we now have no downtime during exam leave and have to organise our classes during summer hols!) and working through October break! The pay is a joke, I do more work and experience more stress than what I get paid for, but I am one of a diminishing group of teachers who put pupils first. Increase the wages and root out the incompetent, system players who talk a good game but deliver nothing, attract more professionals who have a passion for pupils AND their subject and don’t make us work until we drop.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Physics and the more academic subjects are lacking in good teachers. Anyone could teach PE but really we need the academic subjects to be taken seriously.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Better pay! It’s a no brainer! Retention, well please, only retain the teachers who are actually wanting to do the best for their pupils, not ones who are in it for an easy ride and jump council to council with no intention of thinking about the weans!

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 in the nationals are a nightmare! It's like teaching foundation level kids through to higher in the same class. That might work in humanities where you assess by response from pupils but not in the content heavy STEM subjects where the knowledge varies so much at each level.

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)
Not due to staffing due to the SMT’s use of extra cash from the government to promote ‘numeracy champions, health and wellbeing champions’ within the school. By all means give staff time to fulfil these rules but a pay increase???? This has meant that we cannot run N5 laboratory skills or N5 electronics as the school cannot afford to buy us the equipment. Sorry they choose the use the money in a different way!

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, over worked, over stressed (for the teachers who actually care) and underpaid!

SMT do not have a teaching commitment and are so out of touch, the Faculty jobs are huge, why not have an assistant faculty head in larger departments to help them out?
Give your staff the chance to prepare good, meaningful lessons by not changing the timetables in May, for IDL and then again in June for new classes.

It is all too much to continue to do. I have been teaching for 14 years and I love my job when working with the pupils, not when having 2 meetings on an inservice day, no time to clearout classes, sort lessons, give us a break!

CHARLES BULLOCH

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary school teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Fife

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

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?
Make the posts more attractive from a position of 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)
Pay, discipline, workload, stress

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

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
More pay less scrutiny, workload and 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?
Very low due to stress and workload. Also cfe is an absolute disaster for Scottish education
GRAEME CAMPBELL

Q1. Principal Teacher of Pupil Support (also teacher of Physics)

Q2. Stirling Council at Wallace High School

Q4. What do I enjoy?

This can be simply put. I enjoy working with young people, helping them to develop into thoughtful members of our community. I support and try to help them resolve the difficulties they come across/endure. Whether this is a learning issue or in a wider pastoral sense, in conjunction with other agencies in the young persons life.

I also love my subject and have a passion to share the knowledge I have and love with the next generation. I also try to share the importance that these concepts have especially in developing the skills required in the future workforce.

Q5. Changing?

I love teaching and the interactions with the young people and have never seriously considered changing career but I have reduced to 4 days per week. After 25 years of teaching full time and due to the increasing demands placed upon the teaching profession I know it will not be sustainable to keep doing more with fewer resources and still be a good teacher in 15 years time. Teaching requires many things including vast quantities of energy. That energy is sapped not by teaching the pupils and the extra curricular and the supported study but by the paperwork. GIRFEC has added more layers to this.

Q6. Move to DHT/HT?

I have decided that this is not a move I would value. It means less teaching and more paperwork and spreadsheets. In discussions I have had with friends and colleagues other factors include the downsizing of pay grades as a money saving exercise by councils. Every promoted post has been introduced on a lower pay band than the one it replaced. In many cases a DHT salary will be less than a PT. Why put yourself in a position of extra work not devoted to your own classes / faculty to earn less? Therefore many experienced and knowledgeable staff are put off and their expertise is lost to the system.

Q7. Retention

Initially I was going to say that we don’t have many issues retaining staff but we have lost a few who have all moved to work abroad for higher salaries as they found they could not afford to continue to work in Scotland without an additional job. Schools in general have had high turnover in staff in the last 10 years as the large influx in staff from the 1970’s have retired. At 47 I am the sixth oldest teacher. This brings youth, vitality and energy to a school but also a lack of expertise and knowledge, which takes time to build. In science teaching we have had some issues getting suitable staff.
Q8. Areas hit badly?

Pupil Support – this area is not always valued by HT’s /councils. Over the last few years resources have been cut year on year and it is the vulnerable who need most who are affected by this. Cutting in class support is a big cost saving for councils. The SEBN services have been cut to the bone and there is no external support to be accessed. The in school staff have already massive workloads and this is becoming more and more a problem as the try to make everything work but not meeting the needs of the pupils.

Bi-level / Tri level teaching in secondary schools.

Within Science where the National courses are heavy on content compared with other curriculum areas can’t be taught in the same classes effectively. Both groups are being failed. These happen because there are less teachers and every class must be as close to maximum numbers. On paper it looks efficient unfortunately children aren’t quite like that.

Q9.

Currently most teachers, like the majority of the population live in the central belt and they want to stay where their family and friends are. Other areas have less population to call on and may require inducements to work in these areas. E.g. housing costs in Aberdeen are very high and due to oil industry lowly qualified people could earn twice a teachers salary in this industry. The package just doesn’t add up.

When I started teaching in 1992 I earned £13k per annum. My university friends all started on £25k as standard. Teaching has always been a vocation that has been less well paid than industry but this gap is increasing and will; not bring in enough really good candidates until the pay gap is closer.

Our standard of living has decreased over the last few years with no pay increase for 4 years followed by a couple of 1% increases. Inflation is currently above 2%, GTC membership up 30 %. (Not a big number in pounds per say but has wiped out any increase a younger member of staff will have had.)

In summary if you want the best candidates, pay has to match.

Q10.

Measures in place?

- Less support assistants
- Multi level teaching
- Increased class sizes
- Few options for students at lower ability levels
5 years plus of cuts – sorry budget savings are making it harder for the most vulnerable. The attainment challenge / bridging the gap funding is welcome but does not match funds taken out of the school this year alone as cuts. So there is less.
Q11. We have had shortages in a number of areas of the years but most notable has been in Home Economics. A popular subject which we have struggled to get any applicants for. We are now staffed with 2 young teachers but next years maternity cover is already looking difficult.

There are no supply staff! Due to the pay structure people will only do supply if its long term. Schools save money by covering internally as much as possible but this can become untenable at the end of the week. As a result staff go under their contractual obligations for the sake of the children but the system creaks more and more until eventually it will just break.

Q12. Morale?

Morale is variable. Young staff brings with it lots of energy and this helps maintain morale. Experienced staff see the schools they have invested in being eroded but are always doing the best they can for the pupils.

Big factors on Morale have been SQA changes and BGE.

The SQA changes to nationals has been a disaster. There is insufficient time for the courses and the various layers of assessment and the changes brought in will not do anything to reduce workload. The bi-level teaching again reduces the time to develop a deeper understanding. The courses feel like a race from the start to the end. Would they be better with 2 years to teach the course rather than one undoubtedly, but that then brings us to the BGE. It seems like a great idea but the pupils arriving are less resilient than before, their basic Maths and English skills are poorer and an extra year of BGE is secondary leaves them less prepared for the world of exams to move onto university/college/employment etc.

Additional comments:

In summary: factors which stop retention, staff/budget cuts leaving everyone with increased workload whilst getting poorer year on year. SQA changes need resolved and quickly before it affects more young peoples futures. BGE needs to stop at the end of S2 for most pupils. By this time they are asking for specialist teaching in areas of interest and to drop subject they see no future in.

ALEX CLOWES

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Faculty Head - Technologies – Business, Computing and Technical

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Positive interaction with pupils. Sense of achievement when pupils do well. Hardworking and supportive 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 will be retiring early. The demands of Faculty Head are unmanageable, particularly as the 6 subjects I am responsible for are constantly changing depending upon the political landscape.

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 has any desire to gain promotion beyond Departmental Head as this effectively takes me completely out of classroom teaching which I enjoy so much.

I think the removal of Subject Specialist Principal Teachers as well as Assistant Principal Teacher has greatly reduced the opportunities for young Staff to move up the promotional ladder. It is not a ladder now rather a huge leap to Faculty Head or Depute with little preparation or opportunity to gain 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)

Workload pressures. Poor salary for Graduate qualifications.

I myself have been off with work related stress illness issues.

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

Business Education.

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

Realistic workload demands. More Staff. Smaller class sizes. Appropriate support for ASN and SEN pupils. Considerable salary increase.

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)?

Faculty Head structure to reduce the number of subject specialist leaders.

No it has not worked.

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)
Upper school choice is limited now as many classes are seen as "not viable" due to Staff shortages.

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?
As low as I have experienced in 35 years.

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:
The decision to review every subject at the same time over such a short period of time was the wrong one.
Resources were not put in place either nationally or in each teaching establishment.
The National 4/ National 5 determination of pupil progress has been poorly thought out. It is confusing to parents and employers. It has resulted in a two tier system in which parents are understandably reluctant to have their children sitting National 4 with no final exam as it clearly carries a stigma.

I received this request for a return on the 18th April via my school e-mail system. The return was 20th April. This is indicative of the way the education system has been run over the last few years. Unrealistic deadlines and crisis management when things go wrong.

PAUL COCHRANE
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?  .
Secondary science teacher
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Port Glasgow High School, Inverclyde
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Subject of science is fascinating, challenging and straddles literacy, numeracy and analysis on a daily basis. I also have a mortgage and living expenses!
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)
Once my mortgage is paid off, I will retire early for the good of my health and seek another form of employment to augment my income. This has been a tactic that many colleagues have used in the last 4 years with at least 7 people I have worked with leaving the profession ‘early’.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Encouragement would involve a goof mentor who believed in one’s ability and a re-orientation of the expectations. Hearing senior managers who actually
enjoyed their job would be good too but since 2011 they have been asked to do far too much with far too little. A sense that you would be allowed to deviate from the stultifying HGIOS 4 document would be pleasing and a recognition that a professional could use their own approaches based on research would help.

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)
Salary has diminished by 16-25% since 2003. Meanwhile, workload has increased – much of it nothing to do with learning.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Sciences and Home Economics.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
The best single advert for teaching would be a well publicised increase in salary, followed by a massive improvement in working conditions. We have more class contact time than most. Retention would require teachers being supported more and challenged by on site and off site non-teachers as to the efficacy of their skills.

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)?
My last school had 5 DHTs in 2011. It now has 3 for just under 1000 pupils. My current school has 2 DHTs down from 3 despite the management function workload increasing. In both schools, this has meant massive remits that cannot be coped with. Much of these remits are then offered to ambitious middle managers who already have full time jobs that may then suffer as they take up the challenge of senior leadership tasks. In my view, this is keeping schools afloat in an illusory manner and 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)
Home economics I believe.

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 in secondary due to salary stagnation, workload overload and the quite appalling standard of support from Education Scotland and the SQA.

Additional comments
Schools in Scotland currently do not have the capacity to deliver what is expected of them. Developments are unsustainable as they tend to be add-
ons to what is already happening. I would describe the leadership at national level as having a Jenga approach. Pile it on, slot it home and pray for the best.

ANDY CRUIKSHANK

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Principal Teacher of the Technical Faculty in a secondary school

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Aberdeenshire Council, Ellon Academy

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

I have taught for 31 years and still get a buzz out of working with young people in the classroom, workshop, extra-curricular activities and foreign trips. I enjoy seeing them working hard, rising to the challenge and producing their best work. It is great when someone makes a wood work joint or drawing to as high a standard as mine, or performs well on the stage, or works really hard to get a PB at athletics or the team supports one another to get a win.

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 probably stay in 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?

There is no way would I become a senior manager, simply too much paperwork and hassles from parents who expect everything to happen for their child. If there is anything wrong it is the schools fault not theirs.

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 fairly lucky that we are almost fully staffed but we are short in Business Ed and English. One of the main reasons is that young staff cannot afford to stay in the area on the salary they will get. The cost of rent/mortgage, food, fuel is too high in comparison to the monthly income. There is a down turn in the oil industry now but many would make a lot more there than they would in teaching.

I have a friend who went through Northern College of Education at the same time as me but he went straight into a job in the oil industry. He was made redundant so came back into teaching a year ago. He says that as a teacher he is working three times as hard for one fifth of the wage.

Another young teacher put it a good way – You are expected to behave like a professional but have to live like a student, sharing a flat, living on cheaper food etc.
The hours that have to be put in to keep the head above water is crazy. The notion of a 35 hour week is impossible – probably nearer 50 or 60 hours.

Another huge problem is the way the government and SQA have handled CfE. I remember when Standard Grades were introduced. There were people seconded to prepare materials, pilot schools were used to trial the materials and schools could decide when they opted into the system. It was a similar situation when higher still was implemented – regular inset days when updates of the teaching materials were handed out. With CfE it has been here are the very bare bones – make it up and get on with it. We have been continually changing our courses from S1 to S6 for the last 10 years and we are still on the hamster wheel trying to get it right as the SQA are changing the exams and assignments again. We need to get a period stability so that at last we know what we are doing

For the Technical subjects the SQA have used the Chinese whispers method of handing out information. It depends on who you ask as to what information you will get. There is not a place where you can get the definitive answer. Yes there have been Understanding standards events but sometimes the presenters can’t agree as to what is acceptable and unacceptable. The delegates put their questions on a post-it and onto the board but they are never answered. Some of my staff have come away more confused than when they arrived.

The handling of the marking of the Technical assignments has been appalling – these count towards 40 – 60% of the pupil’s final grade. In all other subjects the assignments are sent off to the SQA so teachers mark them and are paid for it. In Technical the staff in the schools are expected to mark them and get paid nothing for it – grossly unfair. We are getting a small payment this time but there is no back payment for the previous years and we are still not getting paid for marking the Practical Woodworking or Practical Metalworking final projects.

I really feel that the SQA have treated all Technical staff like second class citizens!

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

In the North East of Scotland ALL subjects.

A month ago there were 8 Technical posts advertised in Aberdeenshire. I haven’t heard how many were filled but some have been re-advertised. This will only increase in the next 5 years as there are quite a few who are due to retire.

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

Start paying teachers a decent wage. We haven’t had a proper pay rise for 10 years but our pension payments have gone up as has our income taxes fuel, food and everything else.
They seem to think they are untouchable and never make any mistakes. There needs to be a whole new exam system which teachers, pupils, parents, employers, colleges and universities understand and have confidence in.

Parents have to take more responsibility for the basic education of the children – acceptable behaviour, manners, work ethic and resilience rather than just give them everything the child wants.

More teachers need to be trained in Aberdeen so that more young people are coming into the area and therefore likely to 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)?

Our S1 pupils do not get Home Ec due to a shortage of staff a number of years ago. The S1s have an afternoon of electives so get a 9 week block of cooking then.

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, the lowest it has been for many years

DANIEL DAVIS

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Teacher of Music in a Secondary School. I have had a number of short contracts, maternity leave cover and so on, interspersed with Supply teaching. I do not have a permanent role.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
City of Edinburgh Council, last role at Craigmount High School.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The sense of achievement at helping change young people’s futures.

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 due to the lack of permanent jobs, the often poor treatment of staff, the long working hours and stress, poor management, pupil behaviour, and the lack of opportunities for promotion.

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

My subject area of music is under constant downward pressure to reduce time and importance in the curriculum with many schools decreasing their staffing levels. This leads to very few job opportunities. Additionally the change from
Principal Teachers of subjects to Principal Teachers of Faculties, further reduces staff numbers and also reduces any chance of 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)

After a career break I returned to teaching in 2012. Since that time, I have had five maternity cover temporary posts interspersed with supply teaching. For most of that time there have simply been no posts to apply for, and when they do come up there are large numbers of applicants.

In every post that I have taken I have been laid off for the holiday periods and then re-employed for the next term. This is a cynical move by employers to prevent me from accruing service that might give me employee rights. At any point where I approach two-years’ service I have been automatically laid off. Generally, one is expected to put up with this as a temporary employee with the hope of gaining a permanent position.

I recently drew up plans to include a new subject at my school (music technology), including planning a phased start over three years, bringing in each year-group and examination level, and planning the purchasing of equipment to cover these levels. The school took all my materials, ordered the equipment, and then told me that they planned to get an NQT to fill the position rather than taking me.

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

Subjects where there may not be large class sizes are the easiest for schools to drop. Everything seems to be driven by money rather than focused on what might be good for the pupils.

In my last school, pupils can choose all three sciences, but cannot choose to study an obvious pairing like music and drama.

When I was at school (my school had a role of 1000) there were three people in my year who studied music at A level, and that was considered a good year.

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

I really feel that teacher training should be stopped for a few years until the current crop of trained teachers without permanent posts have been employed. It is a pitiful state of affairs that you are only attractive based on being cheap, rather than valued for your expertise. Schools should not be allowed to recruit NQTs for shortages, to be given one year of employment and then thrown out.

**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-level classes have become the norm. This means a poorer experience for the pupils as less time is available for pupils at each level, and there is less time to add richness to the course minimum requirements. It inevitably means leaving one or more level unsupervised whilst addressing the needs of another level.

The change to principal teachers of faculties has led to a permanent reduction in staffing in music departments. It has also led many experienced staff taking early retirement or leaving the profession as they have been demoted.

This of course means that there is very little prospect of a teacher being promoted to principal teacher, and still less of reaching management 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)

At my last school music, but not music technology was available. But music was only available in one column and a large proportion of pupils who wanted to take the subject were then not able to do so due to subject clashes. This leads to smaller uptake, which is then used by management to further downgrade the department.

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?

With experienced staff being demoted, departments shrinking, and prospects of both employment and promotion reducing, staff morale in music departments is very low. Vast numbers of hours have been spent above contractual hours to introduce and develop the new courses. Verification was carried out before standards were set. There are constant changes and initiatives. We do have to sleep sometime.

In the twenty years since I qualified, there have been constant changes to improve education. I am not faulting any individual drive, many of which I actually like, but the scale and speed of these initiative is sapping energy and preventing teachers from doing their core task. Twenty years of ‘improvements’ have seen Scotland go from having an education system the envy of the world to one slipping rapidly down the tables.

LIZ DIGHTON

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary Computing Teacher. (Also qualified to teach Geography)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
City of Edinburgh, Boroughmuir High School

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Fantastic hard working colleagues who really want to get the best out of young people.

Brilliant and enthusiastic pupils who really want to learn.

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)

As this is a second career for me I would like to think that I can teach until I retire but if we don’t get the chance to have some settled time in the curriculum so that we have the time to develop the “extra” tasks and investigate the new ways of teaching to strive to be a better teacher may take my skills elsewhere.

As a computing teacher who used to work in the IT industry it would be easy and more lucrative for me to leave teaching.

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 to senior management level. I’ve been a manger in Industry and the amount of responsibility and things that the senior management teams in school have to deal with would NEVER entice me to do their job. You are not given the support or resources to do a good job at this level. If I want the extra cash I’ll leave teaching and return to the IT industry.

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 barriers to getting into the profession are ridiculous. While I fully support having well trained and highly qualified teachers in the classroom my own experience of getting into the profession makes it really difficult for people in similar position to become teachers.

I worked in the IT industry at a senior level for 17 years before becoming a teacher. My first degree was in Geography and I then did a 1 year post grad diploma in IT before entering the IT industry. When I decided I’d like a career change and looked into pursuing a lifelong desire to teach I found that because my degree was in Geography I could apply to be a Geography teacher despite never having done any Geography for over 20 years but I could not apply to teach Computing as the 1 year post-grad I did at Napier was not considered to have covered the subject in enough depth and at a high enough level. (It was enough depth for a large multinational IT company to employ me though!) I had 17 years of direct IT industry experience which counted for nothing and I was deemed to have less experience in Computing than someone who had left school with Higher Computing and then did a 3 year degree course in Computing Science. They could have opted for particular courses in their degree which means that they have never written a program or have little programming experience or never used databases or
coded a web page. I had 17 years programming experiences and ironically worked as a consultant for the University of Edinburgh on some of the databases used for university applications! But according to Moray House rules I did not meet the entry requirements so they would not even look at my application.

However, I persevered and did at my own expense an Open University degree in which I learnt nothing new but I had a bit of paper. Ironically while doing my OU degree the software I had to use for my coursework was about 4 years behind the software I’d been using in my job and my OU tutor frequently contacted me for advice as I knew more than her but according to Moray House I would not know enough about Computing to be able to teach it.

I was prepared to spend the time and money getting the piece of paper from the OU but I know of a few other former colleagues who would not have done this and in a real shortage subject such as Computing or Engineering there must be a way to allow industry experience to be counted and not make it a barrier to very experienced and motivated people to enter the profession. I feel that someone like myself has a lot to offer pupils as I have contacts who come into my classroom and can also relate some of the theoretical content in the curriculum much better to how the real world uses it. In a workplace which is crying out for Digital skills this is very important.

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

I can’t speak for other specialisms but I know it is difficult to find Computing teachers and in an increasingly Digital age it is criminal that many schools do not offer pupils the opportunity to study Computing Science as there are many well paid and interesting jobs for young people in Scotland. If we don’t train people in Digital skills the jobs will go as it doesn’t matter where in the world they are situated.

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

See my response to question 7.

Find a way to allow qualified people to enter the profession without having specific degrees in that subject but have suitable experience. They still have to do a proper PGDE (no fast tracking) but at least allow them in. If they don’t then have the necessary experience to teach they can be assessed by the ITE lecturers as to their fitness to be a teacher just like any other student.

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 level classes. Last year I had a Higher class in S5/6 which also had pupils who were sitting National 5 and also 3 sitting National 4. The workload from this class was ridiculous as 5 times a week I had to plan 3 different lessons for 1 class!
Next year I will have an Advanced Higher class which also has another group of pupils who wish to do a NPA in another Digital subject. If we were not willing to combine the 2 classes we would not have either class running. Both will have around 10-12 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)

We only see S1/S2 pupils 1 period a week for half a year and are expected to cover the Computing and Digital Literacy benchmarks. I would like to do a lot more with pupils such as develop App prototypes, work with programming & robotics or do more physical computing using the Raspberry Pi which would help pupils realise that Computing Science is not about powerpoints and games programming in basements but is everywhere. However, we have no time to do anything in depth and so can only scratch the surface.

Have tried to do more Inter-disciplinary learning with colleagues but we are all on full timetables and these things take time to plan.

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 are surprisingly upbeat at my school (quite good) but we are all exhausted at the end of a term and spend a lot of time working outside the classroom.

We work hard and play hard and have a very good social and support structure in place at the school that the senior management team are supportive of.

JEAN DOCHERTY

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Secondary - Business Education

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

Working with professional, dedicated people who have a common goal

Interaction with most(!) of the young people

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 on retiring early next year (will be 55). Having taught for nearly 30 I am not convinced that the recent changes have been beneficial to pupils
and I am concerned at the low levels of literacy and numeracy in pupils coming to us from primary. Other reasons for leaving are:

Increased workload that does not benefit pupils I find particularly frustrating.

Lack of work ethic where pupils don’t work but are then upset when they don’t pass.

Diminishing value placed on what we do and a general lack of respect from some pupils and their parents.

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

Nothing!! Promotion means less classroom contact.

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 interfering with home life.

Lack of respect for the profession.

Lack of consequences for those pupils who disrupt/behave badly leading to worsening behaviour.

Lack of progression in pay for those who stay in the classroom.

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

More flexibility during training eg some choice in where probation year will be, two year course.

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)?

Many staff have not been replaced after retirement.

Our school has really struggled to provide cover for absent colleagues at various times so staff have been providing more class contact than contracted for.

Lack of suitable supply staff has not helped this situation.

No cover staff until someone has been absent for 3 weeks has a huge impact on the staff cover requirement and the quality of provision eg if a department has only 2 teachers and one is off there is no one to provide subject specific teaching and the staff member in school has lots of extra work trying to provide lessons for a cover teacher to deliver.
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)
Accounting
S5/S6 stand alone courses eg Spreadsheets

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?
Often low due to
Workload
Administration burden
Pupil misbehaviour – especially continuous disruption that prevents the rest of the class learning
Lack of parental support

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:
Particularly/continuous disruptive/disrespectful pupils should be prevented from impacting the learning of others even if that means exclusion.
Administration that does not contribute to learning should not be so onerous.

C DORIAN
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary English teacher - permanent

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire- Cathkin High School

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I enjoy my job still, after many years. Teenagers are fascinating and wonderful and hugely challenging. It is vital that our young people are given sound education not only in their academic or vocational subjects but in their role as young adults and citizens in our society. Schools have an important role in showing young in a balanced non-subject give way the importance of being involved in society, their rights, their responsibilities and more importantly that they are worthy of respect and should respect others. Of course, learning literacy and language and literature skills are very important too; passing exams opens the door to their educational and work future too. Vital I know.

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 can, health allowing etc. I would try to work to retirement. I do believe teaching is a job that isn’t for the elderly though. You need to have energy,
mental agility and be able to keep in tune with young people. That can be more difficult as you get older, even if you can still teach well and know your subject and pupils well.

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

Too old for all that now; was promoted for a little – pupil support. Loved it but it takes its toll. Family circumstances meant I stepped back. Easier to be a good teacher than stress and worry about not giving full commitment to a responsibility where your pupils and colleagues need you to be 150% involved.

If you want people to apply though give them decent money - but even more importantly give them PROPER time and PROPER training – ongoing and PROPER support. Stop giving us new stuff to do all the time. Let us consolidate what we are doing and do it well – whether exams or administration. People will break if you don’t and the profession will be damaged and young people will suffer however much teachers and schools try to avoid it. We are almost at breaking point now.

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)

Money and more importantly excessive work load, little support- promoted teachers have so much to do they struggle to provide support perhaps in some areas.

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

I don’t know, but we struggle to find English teachers if people are absent. Obviously Home Economics …

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

The ridiculous admin both probationer teachers and their mentors have to do- esp by certain times

Money and more importantly excessive work load, little support- promoted teachers have so much to do they struggle to provide support perhaps. Better training- make it more real. Less pointless in-service for young/ new teachers- better quality

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 reduced numbers in dept- larger classes, less individual support for pupils who are struggling, even pupils with specified difficulties; less ability to challenge the more able on a continuous basis.

Colleagues leave and not necessarily replaced

We have struggled to support student teachers
Staff are stretched – little non contact time affects development, new courses, only that which we have to do – or done in own time – holidays etc
No offers of extra curricular activities- clubs and trips - less enrichment for the pupils on top of their classroom experience
More ill health and stress
In general the huge reduction in ASN/ASD staff hugely impacts on our pupils and their success

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 cannot offer the range of areas for more senior pupils we would like- alternatives perhaps to N5 or H, because of lack of staff.
Reduced courses in other academic areas too and far less vocational course than we would like- across the 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?
At times it has been quite low; I work in a fabulous supportive collegial and extremely hard working dedicated and talented department. It I didn’t we would all be very low and struggling all the time rather than key times in the year.

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:

The government have to get a grip. Schools are suffering from lack of funding and resources. This makes teachers' lives very difficult and directly impacts on the pupils. We have to remember Scotland is still in some kind of recession; many Scottish families are struggling to pay bills never mind buy Ipads and laptops for homework, or supervise homework and support it. We have a divided society in this. Before we cold make up the difference a bit in school with good resourcing, smaller classes, lots of educational and emotional support, time to spend and to nurture. WE CANNOT DO THIS ANYMORE- there is no money, no staff, no time, no resources, no physical room – we are over capacity.

If they genuinely want to improve young peoples' chances of educational success they need to have some self esteem, to be secure, to be fed, to be loved or cared for and less stress and worry at home. Then in school they need time and support and resources. And the government need to listen to actual teachers and young people – not so called experts who don’t know classrooms or taught in them 10 or more years ago when life was different.

Stop giving us new stuff to do and teach. Stop testing and tracking pupils every 5 minutes. Let them grow and learn and not feel stressed or anxious all the time. Let us consolidate our current courses and exams and admin. Let us breathe and let us teach. Most people like their pupils and want to do well. Monitoring is fine and it is right but don’t Big Brother and question everything.
AMANDA ELVINES

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Principal Teacher of Modern Languages

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? 
Elgin High School, Moray

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? 
I still feel that I make a difference to children’s lives – as a teacher of Modern Languages, I thrive on inspiring children and young people to love my subject as much as I do, and to see its value and worth for their futures.

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 don’t feel that I have enough time to do a good job and to do justice to my pupils a lot of the time. I do wonder what I will be doing in 5 or 10 years’ time, as I don’t know that I can continue with this amount of relentless pressure and stress that takes me away from what I love doing best – teaching children, inspiring children and enabling them to succeed. As a PT, I have so much else to do, and my days are jam-packed with SQA bureaucracy, local authority bureaucracy, school bureaucracy that should not be part of my remit.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
My husband is a headteacher, and I would never want to do this. I see the huge pressure he is under – even keeping on top of his emails is an impossible task. Again, he loves the children in his care, but he could work 24/7 and never feel like he is doing his job good enough. Somewhere something has to give to allow teachers the time we need to do a good job and be in front of the 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)
Moray has huge problems in attracting teachers – especially language teachers. We employed a new staff member last year who then pulled out just before the school holidays because she had found a job in the central belt. Scottish Education and recruitment etc. are far too Glasgow-Edinburgh centred. We don’t get a look in up here.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
The Scottish Government have promoted the 1+2 Languages policy, but have not made learning a language a requirement for primary teachers – who are the ones who are supposed to be teaching it. This adds yet more work on my
desk, as I have to try and support the primary schools, which I physically cannot do, and again, I do them a huge disservice.

The Scottish Government feels that languages is vital for the future of the country, and yet does not require learners to learn a language beyond the BGE. If we followed the English e-bac model, this would help promote languages and show that the government is really invested in their development and worth for the country and for learners.

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

Bursaries for teacher training in shortage subjects – this was how I became a teacher when I was in England. The GTCS has a responsibility to look into this – I got a grant to study and a golden hello when I qualified and took up a post. This is needed for authorities like Moray as well.

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 lost huge numbers of pupil support assistants, so support is now given per class rather than to individual pupils who need it and who brought in the funding.

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 am the only German teacher now in my school – I cannot physically teach all the German, which remains the most popular language, so pupils will eventually not be able to be taught by a specialist. We cannot recruit German teachers. Moray has the constant problem of employing staff from its own schools and never has new staff come in from different authorities.

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?

Personally, my morale is very low. I hate that I never have time to do a good job. I hate that I feel that I am constantly waiting for the next change from the government or SQA and that I lose faith in my own abilities. Teachers need to be allowed to teach – Education Scotland still talks down to us, as if we are the problem. Education Scotland should be led bottom-up and not dictate to us top-down. It also needs to realise that the central belt is not the only part of Scotland.

Additional comments

We need higher pay and more time. That is the bottom line, in my opinion.

RACHEL GARRETT

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary High School Teacher - Chartered Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

*East Lothian Council*

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

Love of my subject (Psychology and RMPS) enjoying working with young people.

Enjoying being involved in the education system.

Enjoying developing new materials

Enjoying being involved in SQA- marking, verification, qualification design 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 am intending to 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?

Discourage- lack of promotion opportunities (promoted posts), taking me out of the classroom/away from my subject.

Encourage- if there were more promoted posts available to apply for.

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 promotion opportunities due to the introduction of the faculty system-no PT’s or APT’s of individual subjects.

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

Computing, Business Studies and Home Economics.

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

Give incentives to encourage people into the profession- clear promotion pathways etc. Without this certain subjects may simply die out.

People need to view teaching as an attractive career in which they can progress.

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)?
Less pupil support assistants than there used to be - limited only to key subjects (Maths, English etc) and to pupils with exceptional needs.

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)

Certain subjects being covered by supply teachers as a teacher cannot be recruited (eg: computing)

New subjects cannot be introduced as there is no room in the timetable/staffing/lack of funding 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?

This really depends on the school/teacher - some people get frustrated due to constant changes in the curriculum / lack of support / huge amounts of paperwork and bureaucracy. Also pressure to get involved in constant initiatives can make some people feel overburdened. Lots of tasks which take people away from actually teaching their subject (what they went into the teaching profession to do)

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

Subject Support - there is no lead teacher in some councils so these meetings are not worthwhile.

They need to be led by a paid member of staff. They focus on only a limited number of courses and are not accommodating of all subjects/courses. I currently have to go out with my own council to collaborate with teachers who teach my subject. No support is available within my own council for my subject despite it being delivered in several schools.

JENNIE HARGREAVES

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Secondary Physics Teacher, previous PT Physics who never got promoted to PTC despite trying for many jobs within this Region and in others. I did an acting PTC which I loved and got compliments from the Faculty that I was doing a good job. I have come to decide that working for the students in this current climate is probably more rewarding, although my teaching career has been a battle against the bitterness of the 2000 changes to Scottish Education

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

The students positive reaction to learning and the delight on their faces when things go well. The chance to give students in D&G, where there is little opportunity, something big, like going to the Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition, taking a trip to Houston Texas for the Space Camp, working with Police Scotland, being original in thinking, and being recognised by the IoP, the support the IoP gives Scottish Physics teachers.
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 just had my 50th birthday and I am so tired. When our Director of Education started he made comments about getting rid of “older teacher” i.e. those over 40 as they weren’t very inspiring, he wanted fresh blood. This was so offensive. I have always given more than my 35 hours, way more. It is the Region and the Government that have put me off and I would like to retire as soon as I can get my hands on my pension pot. I don’t suspect a long retirement if I last until retiring age in school. We are also sending in teachers who were taught by people of my generation with no training in grammar etc, so standards are rapidly falling. I thought my standard of English was poor, but compared to many current NQTs I seem quite literate.

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

I have tried unsuccessfully for many years to reach a higher level, but I feel the system is rigged against me. I am not any good at answering the jargon questions in interviews and know that I do not do myself justice in an interview. I cannot see how being able to give an interview in anyway demonstrates my ability to do the job. These days promoted posts seem to go to “Yes men” with little originality, but who can talk the talk. Is this what we really want? Where are the original thinkers in Education? Where has the promotional structure gone? We are promoting 25 year olds to PT so that they can make HTs before they’re 40, these people have not really done anything exciting, rarely take the initiative, but from day one want to get to the top of their profession for themselves, not for students. I seem to think that this does not make for a good education system! I think a proper recruitment system should be put forward. I believe they have done research that shows pulling people’s names out of a hat is as successful in recruiting good candidates as the current recruitment process.

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 lack of appreciation, a lack of money. Staff have been cut.

All the NQTs in this Region, this year have been told they will not be taken on. This will be bad news in future. No one will want to tick the box for £8k if at the end of the day they are shown the door so that the Region can take on the next lot of cheap NQT labour. Our school lost several Science teachers over a two year period as they left the region. Our staffing in Science was cut and has not been re-instated. We were told that staffing had to be cut and it was a last one out didn’t get replaced. We are now told that we don’t have the numbers to recruit more Science staff, and yet our numbers are capped. We cannot offer more course as we don’t have the staff. People leave as there are not the internal promotion jobs.
Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

There are not enough promotions to go around. It is PTC or PTPS, many of these want to go on to be DHTs, but it seems that these jobs are “allocated” to the chosen few, who are anointed early on in their teaching profession.

I have been in the situation where I was having a French teacher covering lower school classes in Physics, these students are now doing their N5 and the problems that this caused are still coming up in lessons.

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

Don’t go for short term gain, by not appointing NQTs will discourage young teachers from coming to this Region. The central belt must be more open to staff from other areas and not just recruit from their own pool of staff. Things other than interview should be taking into account, what about getting parental submissions for candidates. Look at what they have achieved and promote people who have contributed positively to Scottish Education, not just people who have studied at home for their SQH, but have they really done something original and added to the improvement of Scottish Education, because currently it is in rather a mess.

I think there also ought to be more independent people on the panel. So many posts seem to be about an inside job, and you know who'll get the post before the interview.

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)?

I am told that I cannot run AH classes and that N4 classes are more important. Students who have given so much over the years deserve the opportunity to do AH. We have had students from join AH classes but our school says it cannot afford this as our school gains nothing and they are expensive classes to run. It seems silly that we cannot offer this course when I am on the Examining team for AH, have written 4 exam papers. Why waste that experience? I suspect this coming session I will have a mixed class of N4 and AH from a range of schools. How is this the best for our students.

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)

Yes our Physics numbers are capped at what I can teach as I am the only qualified Physics teacher. If I don’t teach the students lower down in the school I also can’t inspire them to take the subject at NQ level.

However, we have created an education system where students opt for the easy subjects as we don’t appreciate the more important subjects for the economy. We have 46 students taking drama, but I was capped at 20 for N5, although squeezed in a couple because I didn’t feel we ought to turn any
away. Until Scottish Government appreciate that some subject produce students who are more valued for the economy then our education system will continue to deteriorate to the point of embarrassment, and it is nearly there anyway.

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

We are being asked to do too much, so much of it is irrelevant (I am trying to update my GTCS files to log all of my CPD) I was unwell for a time and was using the time to catch up. The time to fill in these forms is incredible. I am only about 1/7th of the way there but spent most of yesterday filling it in. Isn’t it more important that I “do” rather than form fill? I have been engaged in promoting Science Reading, promoting maths literacy, getting Space on the agenda, working with Royal Society on Partnership Grants etc. and producing a website for the students. To me this is useful stuff which engages students and their parents, yet I have to spent hours filling in forms. I have tried to get professional recognition from the GTCS for work that I did with Police Scotland that won a European Road Safety Award in 2016, meant that students spent 10 days at the Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition, which was life changing for many of the 17 students that attended, yet I am told my submission wasn’t good enough.

Every year there are changes to the education system, the advice being taken is often wrong, for example, it was not the unit assessments that were a problem, but the WAY the unit assessments were run. By taking these out a new set of problems will arise which will be detrimental to students. We need time for these changes to bed in, although the education system is in a mess, from a “do what you want!” attitude, which when we did we were told “but not like that” to a no one has a handle on what is going on. SALs Es and Os Benchmarks, jargon jargon jargon. Jargon will not make a good educational system, actions and interest will.

Please state taking advice from people on the coal face, that are having to deal with the daily problems of people who can’t read, write, know their tables, use a calculator, know that people’s names should start with a capital letter when they come to secondary school. Ask the students who are going through the school system what they make of the limited choices for subjects at N4/5 level.

Make Scottish Education the pinnacle of European Education that it was when I started my teaching 29 years ago, and not become an embarrassment to this country.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:
Teachers used to be tired by Easter, now many teachers are struggling to get to the October holidays as they are exhausted. The LEAs provide little help, just more jargon and barriers.

When the idea of CFE was mooted I had this silly idea that subject specialists would gather around a table and talk about what skills, attributes and knowledge was needed for each subject at each level. The CfE teams from each subject at different levels never even spoke to each other, with a result that skills needed in one subject are not delivered until it is too late in another. What a disaster, CfE could have been so good.

DR SHAUN HARLEY

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have?  
Faculty Principal.

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?  
St. Luke’s High School, East Renfrewshire Council

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?  
Teaching young people.  
Seeing young people grow and develop.  
Keeps me mentally active.  
I am good at it.  
Colleagues and their support.

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?  
Encouraged: appointment by evidenced merit rather than by interview alone.  
Discouraged: lack of authority support.  
Overly political authority agendas. Salary is not commensurate with the responsibility or 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)  
Salary.
Lack of time for in-service training and mentoring: teacher need to be constantly reviewing teaching methodologies and use of resources. Too many ‘initiatives’ are ‘top down’, and teachers are not sufficiently aware of their own professional body of knowledge to assimilate and determine what is good for their learners. Teach teachers how learners learn, and then how teachers teach, and then how to use the resources to support that learning.

Lack of promotion opportunities.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Computing Science.
But probably all of them.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Increased salary.
Increased ‘teacher voice’ being recognised.
Discipline issues in some schools need to be dealt with effectively.
Increased promotion pathways.

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)?
The posts tend to be temporary, as per the budget that supports them.

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)
Teachers tend to give their maximum output to support course delivery and course options.
Probationer teachers are being used as ‘core teaching staff’ to deliver courses, when they were originally intended as ‘extra’ resourcing for schools. Without the probationer teacher presence, some schools could not offer core courses.

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 camaraderie. But poor in terms of course changes, workload issues, and general demands of modern schooling.
Morale in relation to SQA is at an all-time low in terms of confidence in the SQA to lead us through course and assessment changes.

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:
I have taught for 39 years at all levels.
I love teaching and I am happy to take the rough with the smooth.
I would recommend teaching as a fulfilling career if prospective applicants love working with others and particularly children.

JAYNE KACZYNSKI
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Special school class teacher.
Q2 Whereabouts do you work? City of Edinburgh
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? Working with children. Seeing the progress they make and being in a position to help their development.
Being able to use professional development to further enhance skills and having opportunities to be creative and develop my abilities as a teacher.
Working with other professionals to better understand how to support the children in our care.
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)
This will depend on how the role continues to develop. Recently it has been particularly challenging to maintain a feeling of being valued as a professional due to constant changes to the role and although I only trained 10 years ago a sense that the training I received does not match the type of teaching I am sometimes asked to deliver.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
A sense that in a promoted I wouldn’t find myself forced to be in an office and distanced from the day to day classroom 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)
The challenging role of working with special needs children and the lack of appropriate, good quality training.
Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Working with children who have high levels of behaviours that are considered challenging especially those who demonstrate high levels of aggression.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Better quality training to ensure all staff working with such children understand the reasons that might affect behaviour and to ensure that teams don’t engage in things that might escalate or only have short term benefits for the behaviour of the 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)?
More mixed classes with more attempt to place an emphasis on the needs of the children rather than chronological age.
Tried to have “floating PSAs” who could go where needed.
Not well – classes still too large.
Absence amongst staff too high – shortage of supply 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)
Pupils in our setting would benefit from much more 1:1 support and to access to staff with specialist training e.g. in PECS/ Signing/ Intensive interaction.

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 – short staffed, too large classes, too many changes/ new initiatives without enough time for anything to fully embed.

**STUART KENNEDY**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Principal Teacher of Geography

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Moray Council – Milne’s High School

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
1. The knowledge that I am a well respected member of my school and within my community.
2. That I am able to exert a positive influence on the young people I teach.
3. It’s a job that I am highly skilled at doing and have been recognised by my SLT and HMIe to this effect.
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 see myself in the classroom 10 years from now. I see myself as having either been promoted or have left education completely.

Teaching is physically and mentally exhausting, as a teacher you have to be “on show” and ready to deliver, there is very little down time (time which is valuable to gather your thoughts and spend time researching new teaching methods/resources, time to digest new research, government advice, school policy/communications, monthly tracking, weekly tracking, report writing). The creation of new teaching resources takes time for the concept to be conceived and thought through, then created and finally delivered and evaluated. Then there is the demands to add value to seek out and arrange guest speaker, outside agencies, school excursions/events. There is a lot to do in the day job and as I get older I am finding that I am lacking the stamina and enthusiasm for the job as a whole.

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

Removing the burden of administrative work would be a start but having had SLT experience I am aware that many of my days were spend “fire fighting” and I did not have many opportunities to think or act strategically as a result. I do not see myself as head teacher material but I do see myself as someone who would make a successful DHT.

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 case there are many factors. Firstly we are geographically isolated from the main centres of population and there are not that many young people who are willing or want to settle in the north east and forge a career here.

We have had problems in the past where weak leadership resulted in an exodus of experience staff who no longer felt valued and were able to secure better paid work or full time work elsewhere.

There is nationally a situation where most authorities have a very slim management structure and the opportunities for promotion are greatly reduced. Teaching is not an enticing career to a graduate when they are made aware that in 6 years they will be at the top of the pay scale and with very little chance of promotion. When I went into teaching the route was very clear if you wished to be promoted within a school 1) Teacher 2) PT Subject 3) AHT 4) DHT 5) HT. Post McCrone this structure was replaced (along with APT/Senior Teacher posts being abolished). I feel very fortunate to be in a PT Subject position and I have worked in another school as a faculty PT.

An unspoken issue is that in secondaries the mantra of being a “teacher of children and not a subject” has meant that at no point ever in my 17 year
career have I received any direct professional development in how to improve teaching my subject. What I have received is professional development training on schemes that authorities have invested in as a blanket approach to all teachers at all levels or all subjects and frankly it doesn’t work. We require tailored support. I should make it clear of course that no teacher would deny that they were not a teacher of children but my point is that subject support has something I’ve lacked, yet have identified as a professional development need.

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

1) A pay rise above inflation that is in real terms and not taken away with increased taxation or pension contributions.

2) A total overhaul of the pay structure – a single pay spine for unpromoted teacher and another for Principal Teacher and another for DHT/HT isn’t good enough. The English system of awarding additional pay increases that reflect the level of responsibilities you have been delegated. As a principal teacher I have some whole school commitments and I am not paid for doing them, unlike my brother who works in England and has additional management points added to his salary point thereby increasing his pay.

3) Give school the freedom to pay staff what they feel they are worth whilst retaining a common pay spine for promoted and unpromoted staff but have a system of points that reflect the full nature of a teachers remit. As things stand the size of school you work is the dictating factor (amongst others) at a promoted level that determines how much you are paid. I feel deeply frustrated that I am penalised for working in a small school where I get higher grades and have a wider remit than colleagues who work in a larger school with a smaller remit and have worse results – Where’s the reward for me?

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, composite classes exist in my school but this is a reflection on low uptakes in the senior phase – almost all examples have a negative impact on attainment. One class has Higher, N5, N4 and N3 candidates all in the one room at the one time. Is it any wonder the attainment gap isn’t being reduced quickly enough.

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)

No but subject uptake is being impacted on by the 3+3 structure – I have S4 leavers with a handful of qualifications who would have benefitted from a two year national but don’t because their S3 BGE experience did not and does not support NQ work.

We do not have a computing or drama teacher and as a result we do not offer these subjects in our school. Our Business Education department is cutting
the number of NQs it offers due to the school being unable to fill a long term vacancy.

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 education is at an all time low. The reason being is that since the introduction of CfE teachers have been bombarded with information and not clear rationale – the whole point of CfE was never clearly explained, the four capacities were never exemplified in a concrete vision that could be easily understood and shared. The E+O publications made things worse as departments / faculties / teachers go on with the business of trying to figure out what was being asked of them, how they were going to assess it and how will this help pupils make progress into the new NQs which we had no idea about in terms of content, structure or assessment.

So we were planning a curriculum blindfold and the argument thrown back at us was always that so long as we covered the E+O and offered Breadth, Depth, Application and Challenge then we needed worry about NQ’s it would all work out as a seamless transition. Well it hasn’t because while the SQA have come in for a lot of criticism of late, to be fair to them, they were simply doing what they’d been asked – to design a set of qualifications around a BGE curriculum that was badly understood and at no point before or since has anything practical in terms of explaining the vision of CfE been issued.

Teachers understandably asked for more clarification and they got it from Education Scotland and the SQA but what this amounted to was more documentation, more things to read (I’d argue that if Education Scotland and SQA had to pay from printing costs rather than e-mail or upload another pdf file of yet more pages and pages then maybe they’d have been a bit more succinct).

We are being driven to a death by outcome curriculum within the BGE and Senior phase. We have a crazy 3+3 structure that narrows choice in S4 and has a knock on impact to S5/6 – We are told that more and more are staying on at school and this I accept but why straightjacket everyone into one year courses? Why not have S3 and 4 as a long run up to a qualification. That was one of the key strengths of Standard Grade (along with the fact pupils were dual presented for two levels and gained practical experience of sitting an exam) was that as a teacher I could teach at depth and build a solid foundation for the higher. What I have now is a broad sweep of a BGE where most finish up at Level 4 cfE equivalent to SCQF 4 (National 4) and the irony is that most could be working at SCQF Level 5 (National 5) in S3. But we cant let them sit any NQ experience because somehow the BGE is meant to be this entitlement of breadth.

A three year BGE would be better served by looking at what happens in England where instead of Primary 7, pupils move to secondary instead. I would have no issue with having pupils move up to Secondary after P6, most are ready to start and we could cover a three year BGE and give our younger people the time needed to gain a NQ through what is currently S3/4. The three year BGE is a cause of low morale and needs to be revised. It has
turned the NQ’s of the senior phase into two term dashes at all levels and this is not suiting most of our young people and certainly not our staff. The senior phase is crammed and I am running through the higher and National courses at break neck speed and going into depth is a real struggle when compared to the old standard grade and higher courses that I taught previously. The standard grade course as a structure was fine, it did not need changing. The course needed revising and what we didn’t need was the straight jacket of N3,4,5.

ELIZABETH KING

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary English teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Larkhall Academy South Lanarkshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Interaction with young people
New building - big improvement in working environment from previous site
Long summer holiday

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 state pension date which for me is aged 67 - because finances dictate this - but will only work part time as the job is too detrimental to good health to be able to sustain this occupation full time in late fifties of sixties.

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 in 20 years had any interest in any Management position - prefer my life/work balance being less committed to evening/holiday school events and have adjusted my finances to suit my particular needs.

I am aware of colleagues who would like promotion being asked to do too much and being very stressed because of it. I also have anecdotal evidence of colleagues feeling pressurised into doing more than they are comfortable with and then not even being promoted which has led to poor morale.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
An immediate improvement in salary and working terms and conditions.

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 an increase in Support Assistants but as they aren't qualified teachers, they aren't able to assess pupils. Naturally, their knowledge of subject and curriculum outline is poor and in my personal experience I have no preparation time to try to explain to them what work the class is doing. The reality is a hurried exchange between me and them to tell them about the lesson as pupils are coming into the room. Not very professional. These colleagues do provide an excellent support within the limits of their training.

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 general morale among staff is quite low in our school. Teaching and non-teaching colleagues I have spoken to have said that the atmosphere is quite tense - an example would be staff being almost afraid to talk to each other in communal areas as they fear being criticised for not working at all times. I would say it is a commonly held view that it is not much 'fun' working in Larkhall Academy and pupils also complain about the atmosphere not being much 'fun' as teachers are bad tempered.

LIEGHA LAING

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Faculty Head-Modern Languages

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? Aberdeenshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the profession?
Positive relationships with colleagues and pupils. Can do a lot of work from home which cuts down on need for child care. The variety. The challenge. The security.

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?
I would seek promotion if I felt I had the experience and a post came up within commuting distance. The political side of the job would put me off.

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)
Rural location. Other jobs pay better. Lack of affordable housing in the area. In the case of Modern Languages, we have had several French/Spanish
students and probationers who have had no intention of taking up a full time post; they get their training then look to go home.

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

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Better pay. Tie students/probationers in for a minimum period. More promotion opportunities. Experienced staff need to be valued more. The confusion regarding National Qualifications needs sorted 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?
Usually good as we are a strong staff in a well-led school.

SUSAN LISTER

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
I am a maths teacher at a secondary school (I am a Principal teacher )

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Dunfermline High school – Fife council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I feel that young people are often given a bad reputation in the press, however, on a daily basis I see kind, curious, ambitious, hopeful, funny people who I am pleased to know will be our future generation.

I teach maths which is also receives a very negative reputation in our society. I love to be able to share how enjoyable and accessible this subject can actually be.

At the end of the school year when we say goodbye to our senior pupils I feel proud of how far they have come and hopeful for both their futures individually and ours as a nation.

This is what makes the job so incredibly 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)
I think teaching is far more exhausting than you would imagine. To teach well requires both physical and mental stamina. I am not sure that I will be quite so energetic at 65 so I think I may possibly retire early. I will wait and see how I feel when I get there.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I would really love to be able to influence some of the policies and structures that affect daily life at school. Timetabling, curriculum offerings, behaviour policies etc are all things that I would love to have input to.

However to move forward to head teacher or even depute would remove the teaching aspect from the job. Building relationships with pupils and teaching maths is (as discussed above) the rewarding part of the job. I don’t want to give that up.

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 in industry for over 15 years previous to teaching I can say the following:

I earn a lot less money than I did as an engineer. (I knew this when I decided to make the change and this is not a job you do for the money. It’s a way to contribute to society and your local community)

The public in general don’t have a lot of respect for teachers (I didn’t either before I was one)

The biggest issue and one of the reasons I have often wondered about leaving and going back to industry is this. (I work really hard – above and beyond what is required – because I love my job and feel that it’s important we give our young people the best possible chance at a good future. However, with constant budget cuts and lack of local control this hard work is not encouraged or rewarded. Any time I have a chance to use my skills to improve learning and teaching, attainment, pupil confidence etc this time is taken away and I’m asked to babysit other classes. In any school you will find some teachers who do not perform any additional tasks activity (which of course is fine) and those who do.

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

A subject like maths suffers because with a maths degree there are a lot of other (more lucrative) careers one can follow. Additionally the job involves larger class sizes, more marking and homework than some other subjects. English departments suffer in the same way.

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

Better links with universities would be good. Not just with the teaching degrees but with departments themselves. If I took a class to the maths department at a university and the students there were involved they may consider teaching if they had not before.
Retention – allow teachers to do professional development. It is frustrating to know how something could be improved but not allowed the time to do it. We have no time to share information on implementing new curriculums etc. Obviously we do the best we can but if some time was given for professional development (with real projects with actual tangible aims) this would benefit everyone.

In industry I found that it was assumed I knew how best to do my job and was a respected professional. I was able to do whatever I thought was best and produce the desired outcome. In teaching it often feels that we are not viewed as professionals and regularly decisions are made which don’t appear to make sense to us but we have no power to change.

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?

Less support staff, larger class sizes, less supply staff

Our period lengths and daily hours were changed to ensure minimum teachers required.

- How well are they working?
The lack of supply staff is a real problem that needs to be addressed.

With less support staff more use is being made of digital aides and I feel this is a real benefit. (for example pupils using digital assessment instead of having a reader / scribe)

- 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)
We are unable to offer a number of advanced higher options because class sizes would be too small to justify.

We offer less levels but I think this has not been a bad thing as expectations can be set higher.

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 this varies throughout the year. Currently I’d say it’s quite good. It is mostly affected by:
Workload - Busy times of year (new curriculum means we do a lot more test admin and marking that was previously done by the SQA)

Staffing – Covering other classes for absence is fine now and again but when the school relies on it (because they have no money to do anything else) people become a bit more resentful

Results – despite everything when we see our pupils do well we feel that it's all been worth it.

Resources – we have not got enough of the basic tools we need to do the job. We are forced to buy essential supplies such as pencils and jotters from overpriced suppliers when we know we could get them elsewhere cheaper. Printing is expensive but we have to print so much for the current assessments (again the decision about how many pages of paper used in assessment is decided by someone else who doesn’t have to worry about printing it)

Additional comments

I genuinely love my job. I really want to contribute everything I can to the pupils I teach so that we can send out young adults into our society who will make decisions and take journeys we can be proud of.

I often find myself frustrated by procedures and barriers put in place by people who have possibly not envisaged the practical implications of these.

I look around and see that it would be easier to be a teacher who doesn’t go above and beyond but who just clocks in and out as a factory worker.

As a human being and a professional person this would bring me no satisfaction so it’s not really an option for me.

NEILAN MACLACHLAN

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.

Secondary school teacher - Teacher of RMPS/ Philosophy and Social Subjects

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Angus – Montrose Academy

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

Teacher-pupil relationships.

Knowing that a positive impact can be made for some pupils.

Subject knowledge.
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)
Not anymore – Will look to work within further education

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
No
  - Unattainable expectations
  - Bureaucracy
  - Pay Scale
  - Political Nature

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)
  - Primary focused PGDE – many secondary specialists felt that their degree was focused on areas which they wouldn’t use and only their subject day was worthwhile. For students paying for this post grad the degree shows very little value for money.
  - Not enough pedagogy on classroom experience and what teaching is like. There is too much focus on theory made by people who have not been in a classroom for 10 years which is not applicable.
  - Very little support for PGDE financially.
  - Unsupportive placements who did not want students but were forced to take them.
  - Bureaucracy and red tape
  - Lack of public support
  - Lack of responsibility placed on parents
  - Undervalued

Q8  Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
RMPS/RME – being taught by none subject specialists at BGE level and phased out. For a subject which by law has to be taught till 18 many schools do not. In a rise of religious and political extremism, fake news, and conflicts young people should be given this time to make sense of their own views and develop opinions which are not their own as well as others.

Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
  - Pay structure needs to be investigated. While the 35 hour working week is a lovely dream, when I worked as a probationer, when calculated I was under the living wage.
  - Leaving CfE alone. Every year there are new changes or removals which lead to development work needed, which then causes more workload.
Es&Os, then SALs, now Benchmarks. How can you advise if a structure is working when it is constantly in a state of flux.

- Promotions – the removal of promoted posts and the change into faculties has not had a positive impact on education and learner experience. More are being asked to take on promoted responsibilities to gain ‘experience’ without the pay structure.

- More dialogue between Education Scotland/ SQA with teachers as their understandings and expectations are on another world from the realities of teaching.

- Attainment – Attainment is not being met because it can’t. Rather than looking at the tracking and grades it should be the progress that a pupil has made. Teachers will never be able to fix attainment gap, this is a societal problem and should not be put to our workload.

- Support – currently due to the rigidness of Local Authority policies on expulsions and suspensions there is time when a teacher will still have to teach a pupil which has been violent against them. The rise of violence and aggression against teacher is a main factor of at least 4 teachers I know personally leaving the profession. At an SLT and LA level there is little support for teachers.

  If relaxed schools would become a more safer and positive experience for not just teachers.

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, in the sense that we band together, but attitudes towards teaching and the current state of teaching is very low.

JOHN MACLEAN

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Secondary teacher. Physics.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? St Matthew’s, North Ayrshire.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? Interaction with pupils, their interest and willingness to learn. The opportunity to make a difference to young people’s lives, opportunities and chances.

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. (Only started aged 53!)

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
No plan to seek promotion. This is due partly to my age but also I wish to improve 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)
Many from outside North Ayrshire would consider Saltcoats to far to travel.
Some may not wish to teach in a denominational school.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
In my school the Sciences have been OK. At present it is probably English that most needs staff.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Ensure that changes to curriculum, which are more or less constant it seems, are accompanied by plenty of opportunity to make changes without undue pressure. It can seem hard to get on with the job of teaching itself.

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 are about to change to S4/S5/S6 classes next year. Time will tell.
Split-level (N5/Higher) classes are hard to deliver in Physics but we typically have them from May to September. This leads to a loss of learning time for 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)
Don’t know. Pupils cannot take Physics + Biology and cannot take 3 Sciences in general. This restricts career choices for them, and might be ameliorated if more staff were available.

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
ROWAN MARTIN

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
I am a Secondary English teacher at what I would argue would be a senior level, if such a level existed.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
St John Ogilvie High School

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
- The sense of serving the wider public and reducing inequality. I very strongly believe in social justice, so being a teacher means I can try to mitigate the effects of inequality (reducing the attainment gap, raising awareness of how society systematically discriminates, for example) as well as literally helping young adults achieve their goals in life. This is probably my main reason.
- Security of role; bearing in mind Brexit etc, having a job that does not rely on market forces provides peace of mind.
- Creativity; being an English teacher means accessing all subjects through the written word. I am also interested in literature as well as the mechanics of linguistics, so this satisfies my personal interests, meaning I can be genuinely creative in the classroom with how I teach.
- Autonomy in teaching. In this respect, I am very lucky to have worked in schools which respect my professional opinion on how to format and present curriculum.

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 teach until I retire but, simultaneously, at times, I do not see how living with constant workload increases, reducing wages and an ever more distant retirement age will continue to provide me with job satisfaction. I am doing the profession no favours by asserting that I will continue to magically do more with less for the rest of my working life. There must be a red line; if I had to teach without any learning support assistance, or access to ICT, or if we were expected to continue to do unpaid work for the SQA, or if we were expected to pursue further education and responsibility without any recognition or reward (as we are now, essentially), then I do not see how this is sustainable in the long run.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Seeing any opportunities in middle management would be a start. At the moment, Principal Teacher roles seem to be in very short supply. Such is the imbalance between the very high numbers of fully qualified teachers and possible career progression, I (along with many other teachers) do not see any possibility of progression with the faculty structure we have now. Middle management positions are very much reduced from what they were – the leap
from teaching to senior management seems enormous verging on insurmountable.

The old roles of “senior teacher” – even “chartered teacher” – and APC were excellent in that they provided alternative paths to teachers interested in career progression, thus reducing the size of the intimidating leap 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)

Headteachers are dreadfully constrained with budgets, meaning there is no room for manoeuvre. They are conscious of the commitment made in hiring a member of staff permanently, meaning it is preferable to work with staff on a “cover basis,” followed by offering a job. This means that Probationers struggle.

I joined the profession in 2009. Despite performing well during my probation year and interview, I was offered no work by my local authority, meaning I left for London.

After that, despite my good performance as a teacher, I remained on Permanent Area Cover until 2013, meaning I had job security but no progression.

I finally gained a permanent job in a school 4 years ago, 4 years after I qualified. It seems that, due to sheer luck or lack of supply, other probationers fell into jobs, while others are left to struggle. For a few years at the start of my career, moving around on the supply register, I felt the process lacked fairness. Headteachers seemed desperate to keep me but simply couldn’t.

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

We need more Learning Support Assistants who are dedicated to sitting alongside pupils in the classroom helping with reading and written work.

We need a more active program for promoting reading for all children aged 5 – 15. Library programs, free book programs, more government / LA sponsored writing competitions. Parents need this too.

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

Bring back Chartered Teacher or an equivalent programme to recognise those teachers who take on unpaid, unrecognised responsibilities and / or who pay for their own Masters’ level 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. Unpaid work for the SQA, constant media criticism, constant shifting of assessment goalposts, a lack of respect for the profession in some areas of society (not necessarily in deprived areas), the use of the profession
as a political football, the reintroduction of old-fashioned assessments for Primary-level kids, the lack of equality between education buildings (which schools have gyms and swimming pools? Why are they so often in the wealthiest areas?), the lack of external assessment for those children who gain Nat 4 instead of Nat 5 (a clear signal that some children are not worthy of external assessment), the reduction of school transport access, the increasing class sizes.

**CRAIG McCALLUM**

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

Classroom teacher

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

The children. The odd moment still exists where I realise why I entered the profession. These are becoming rarer and rarer.

**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 imagine leaving on a very regular basis. Each time I am threatened with losing my job or having to do more to justify my existence I consider the possibility of leaving on my terms. I don’t deserve, given the job I do, to live in a climate of fear, drowning in a sea of bureaucracy and having to deal with being in a school where there is no discipline and where gangs of pupils roam the corridors, when they ought to be in class, causing disruption. DISGRACEFUL.

**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 relationship, whatsoever, with the head teacher. I have never felt I would receive a worthwhile reference from her. I am completely undervalued. Another factor is that there are no principal teacher roles available. We only see faculty roles, which are a complete disaster for morale.

**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)

Being told to ‘f-off’ on a regular basis and not seeing the pupil punished. There is no disciplinary policy worth speaking of in my school. We are told to accept completely unacceptable behaviour. My department was told 4 weeks ago that someone was surplus, we weren’t told why, as we are all on full timetables we were perplexed. A volunteer was required and when someone volunteered we were told there had been a change of heart, some ‘money’ had been found and we were to forget the whole thing! People are dispirited – completely. Money is also an obvious issue. We deserve a decent rise now after the last five years of receiving basically nothing.
Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I can only really speak about my subject – Modern languages. In spite of the 1+2 primary initiative, we are being marginalised within secondary schools. We have to compete with 'soft' alternatives for numbers. Tariff points mean everything now and if ‘cake decoration’ and it’s like guarantee good passes then head teachers are happy to see pupils choose these dumbed down, non-academic subjects. This serves to completely contradict the ‘academic excellence’ the politicians tell the public we are achieving. The system is built on a complete lie.

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

Treat people with respect. Promote people with a personality. Respect good teachers by negotiating a decent pay deal. Stop speaking in vague, generic language when producing SQA documentation – ridiculous!

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?)

Changes are permanent. Tri-level classes! Non-specialist faculty leader. No classroom support for classes which contain 5 or 6 ASN pupils. There are lots of Guidance teachers? These are promoted posts and I don't see the results of their work. All of this increases stress levels to breaking point. I am genuinely concerned about my health.

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 was scrapped in my school. Given the economy, surely this would be more worthwhile than ACE, PSE, Learning to learn, Skills for Life, Leadership and all the other garbage the pupils are forced to take.

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. This school has been destroyed. People are jumping ship as soon as they can. Teachers genuinely fear for their health.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:
Only in education would it be possible to be promoted to less responsibility. What is the Guidance teacher budget?

Who believes restorative justice makes sense? The world doesn’t work like this. By refusing to punish wrong-doing, are we really preparing kids for the world of work? Are we really creating responsible, successful people?

Is the government going to continue to lie about our excellent standards? We have dumbed down to such a degree that my Advanced Higher class couldn’t even begin to attempt my old 1980 O level paper. If anyone reads this, what does that say to you?

GERRY MOORE

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Teacher of Modern Studies - Secondary

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The satisfaction of seeing pupils learn and achieve good results.

Excellent holiday entitlement.

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 probably teach until I retire, but if not certainly stay in education in some capacity.

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

Encourage – chance to make real change and pay.

Discourage – hours and bureaucracy.

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)

Teachers arrive at school with very little preparation as university PGDE courses are not fit for purpose. Student teachers are overwhelmed when arriving in a school and may leave given the insufficient training.

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

Home Economics and English (workload issues).

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Better training and pay. Knowledge of education is severely lacking in graduates, much more observation required before being allowed into a classroom. PGDE courses have to improve and university tutors must take more notice of school feedback when student teachers are failing.

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?)
Less support assistants and library facilities difficult to use now that librarian is part-time. Strange to throw so much money at attainment yet cut library 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)
More choice in Social Subjects – Politics, Sociology, Economics – to better prepare pupils for university.

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 main factor being constant changes to the curriculum and teaching practices. Lack of communal staff rooms are also an issue in new built schools where staff go to an individual subject ‘base’ and rarely get to have professional dialogue with colleagues outwith their departments.

Additional comments
I would still recommend teaching as a career, but only to those who are genuinely interested in teaching. Those who are not retained are not necessarily bad, just not suitable for a very intense vocation. Standards for those coming into teaching should be raised, along with pay, in order to attract the very best people to the job and subsequently achieve the best possible outcomes for our young people in Scotland.

KELLY MORRISON
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
History Teacher, Secondary, Part-time (0.6)
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Elgin High School, Elgin, Moray
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The positive feedback from pupils, I love being able to enthuse young adults with my subject – history. I enjoy working with teenagers. I enjoy performing and talking about history – bringing it alive. I enjoy planning and organising lessons. The flexibility of being able to work part-time while bringing up a young family and still retaining responsibility for senior classes with career development.

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 expect to be teaching until I retire or early retirement (my husband is older than myself). If not teaching I would be surprised if my role was not something in education.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I am discouraged from seeking promotion because this would take me out of the classroom to a certain degree and away from my primary subject – history. It also concerns me the huge amount of hours I see other professionals putting in when I appreciate a work/life balance.

Because I am at the top of my scale the amount I would be paid more a month in a Principal Teacher role does not make it work it for the huge amount more work, hours and responsibility I would be taking on. Yet PT is my only option of promotion if I was to stay in the teaching profession. I also cannot go to senior management level without first being a 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)
At my school our problem is recruiting teachers into the area – Moray.

More and more people are leaving the profession due to the pressures, unrealistic expectations of the profession and poor pay with lack of improved pay opportunities.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
As far as I am aware nearly all subjects in this area – Moray, are finding it difficult to recruit. However we have recently appointed a full-time English Teacher (NQT who was with us this last year) and a full-time Maths teacher (from another school within the authority). For support staff it is the lack of job security (either having hours cut at various points in the year) or poor pay that means it is an unattractive job.

Guidance/pastoral teachers are also difficult to recruit at the moment due to the huge responsibility and accountability they face.

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

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There needs to be a better organised system of placing NQT’s. Looking at where an NQT is based and the needs in that area. Recently we had an NQT traveling into Moray from Highland and the same subject NQT traveling from Highland into Moray and were not allowed to swap their placements! This is ludicrous.

Teacher Training must also be reviewed. Although we need numbers coming through training we also must attract the right people for teaching.

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)

YES! We now have Advanced Higher History delivered in our school with many students from other schools travelling once a week for this morning session – often 30 – 40 mins traveling.

The consequence of this is:

- lack of teacher/pupil interaction.
- 1 teacher having responsibility, planning and marking from a large number of advanced higher pupils (possible 20+) with no more time available. This makes other less experienced staff unwilling to take it on and pupils unwilling to sign up.
- It also reduces the possibility of skill development opportunities for teachers in the schools without advanced higher classes reducing their options for future promotion.

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 at present. This is mostly due to the last few years of uncertainty and constantly moving goal posts of CFE and now we must deal with changes to National Qualifications.

For the last 8-10 years we have been trying to develop CFE while experiencing constant changes to and development of the documents we need to work from (now 4 in total – benchmarks, SALs, E’s and O’s and Framework) Every time we work from these documents and try to develop new course/assessments there are more changes made. We are tired and have lost our faith in all bodies concerned. Teachers are frustrated and demotivated. We feel unsupported and devalued.

Class sizes increase year on year with ability levels becoming more and more mixed. Yet we have less time to plan for this and less money/time for CPD to support us in catering for these levels. On top of this support teachers and PSA’s are constantly being reduced. We are expected to develop assessment for CFE and tracking systems (while benchmarks are still being produced!) Make changes to National courses, start teaching these courses when the changes have yet to be confirmed and published! All this while also being asked to cover classes for absent colleagues as there is a lack of supply teachers and refused development opportunities due to a lack of
funding or supply staff to cover. To top it all off we have had a pay freeze, have the lowest non-contact time in Europe, are expected to work late into our 60’s before we can retire and receive a constant public bashing for our “unrealistic holiday expectations”

Yes morale is low – are you surprised?

Additional comments

I took my only non-contact period today to complete this questionnaire in the hope that someone, somewhere will take on board that we are a profession of well-educated people doing an extremely difficult job with impossible expectations being paid less than we are worth. As a result I will mark my higher essays in my own time when I could be doing something else.

EOIN NEIL

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Permanent Teacher of Computing Science - Secondary

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Midlothian Council – Secondary School

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

- Every day is different
- Working with Young People, helping them achieve their best
- 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)
Most likely I shall remain in education – however not necessarily in the classroom

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level?
Increase in Salary

What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Increased Stress
Requirement of Headship Masters Qualification
Less/No Teaching Caseload

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)
Computing Science is an in-demand subject – therefore graduates can be earning a lot more in industry that they do in school – so ultimately a teacher’s salary.
Changing and unsecure curriculum / qualifications – people are losing confidence in them, particularly when the government is constantly changing in them.

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

STEM Subjects and Computing Science
Computing Science (along with Digital Literacy) is a key part of the world we currently occupy and more so of the future world – government needs to realise this and be investing more in Computing Science specialists.

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

Funding Packages

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 to the use of support assistants.
Two senior maths classes has been combined – and taught lecture style due to shortage of teachers – short term.
Librarian (chartered) teaches literacy classes, because shortage of English Teachers – however because not teacher she has to have a teacher with her.
All English & Maths teachers are teaching maximum due to shortage.
Across the board a large numbers of teachers are on maximum timetables – this means that when covering for non-existent or absent staff it is very difficult – Senior Leadership have banned all not essential out of school activities for teachers – including CPD events and class trips – because of the cover implications.

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

DR IRENE NICOL

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.
I am a Faculty Head of Sciences in a small secondary comprehensive, managing 4/5 subjects and 7 staff.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Lesmahagow High School, South Lanarkshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I find my job incredibly rewarding, I work locally to my home and find it is usually possible to maintain a good work life balance, although at certain times of the school year this is not feasible. I have worked in industry and
never found as much fulfilment in my day to day working life – teaching allows me to make a real, lasting and positive difference to people’s lives.

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 teach until I retire, but I am aware that science teaching can be quite a physically demanding job, and my health and physical ability may affect my effectiveness in the role in future. In this scenario, I would consider trying to find alternative contributions within education.

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

I have already considered applying for DHT posts, which would be the next natural promotion from my current level. If the SMT role was more widely spread, with more opportunity for DHT and HT roles to have time to teach, I would consider it.

The main deterrent for me is the lack of time in the classroom which this is likely to involve – my vocation is teaching and I would miss the classroom role very much. The level of legal and social work responsibility required for the remuneration offered is also a deterrent.

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 reality of the job comes as a shock to many probationer teachers, which is why so many do not then enter the profession after qualifying. Additionally, many probationers do not immediately gain a job and become weary of the years on the supply treadmill attempting to gain full time permanent work. I love my job, and was promoted quickly to FH after gaining a full time job, but I had to work for two years on supply, with a mortgage and children to support, before gaining reliable work. If I did not have a husband in full time, well paid employment, I would have been forced to leave and return to my previous career in engineering.

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

STEM subject teachers are traditionally difficult to find and to keep. This is because STEM graduates will be practically minded, hands-on, problem-solvers. They are traditionally high paid graduates in industry and will be turned off by the pay scale and the amount of bureaucracy currently involved in teaching. In my experience, some of the best science teachers are those who have experience of STEM industries before they enter teaching. To gain these types of teachers, pay must be competitive and the job role must be more practical and less bureaucratic.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Teacher recruitment could be vastly improved by an ethos change in the cultural attitude to teaching as a profession. This will take time and an increase in the starting salary and incremental rewards given to teachers. A performance based pay scale as employed in industry may also help, as too many members of the public are aware that poor teachers are paid the same as good ones. This has a detrimental effect on the status of teachers as professionals. Better quality graduates would apply for ITE courses if the status and pay in the profession was better - this is perhaps obvious but needs saying.

Teacher retention is likely to improve to a degree if the above issues are addressed. However, very many good teachers leave the profession at various stages during their career due to the heavy workload and stress of the job. Many are unaware at the outset that the hours almost always work out 30% higher than they are contractually led to believe in order to do their job well. More teachers per pupil in schools would mean more time to develop, mark, moderate, verify and communicate. All of this would mean more teachers stay in the job for longer.

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?
- Area Cover Teachers for secondary – a school within the authority has an ‘extra’ subject teacher who teaches a collapsible 50% timetable.
- Support staff in classrooms and technical support have been cut across the authority and therefore the school has seen some of the influence of this. A bidding system is used to assign learning support to those pupils most needful.
- In terms of technical support, the staff is provided purely on the basis of numbers of pupils in a cluster.
- How well are they working?
- Schools’ priorities are the learners and their ability to understand and communicate their subject in secondary. LA priorities are the legal requirements for the minimum cost. Learners are too often being left without subject specialists because there are none at LA level to cover - to make this work there MUST be a surplus of subject specialists in all areas and in every local authority or cluster of schools e.g. a spare chemistry or HE teacher for every 3 or 4 schools. This type of system would address the absence cover situation AND help address the workload issues, as timetables would be written to allow all staff to have more development time, with a timetable which collapses back to the ‘core’ staff if the ‘spare’ teacher is needed elsewhere. This type of area cover system already operates in some LAs, but the area cover teachers are spread over too many schools and there are not enough of them across all subjects.

Learners with support needs will always benefit from an extra teacher or teaching assistant in the room, and the bidding system obviously means that
some pupils are left without any support, especially if they are unlucky enough to be in a class where no one else needs extra support, as this means the bid is unlikely to be granted.

In terms of technical support, the division of labour based purely on numbers does not take account of the types of courses being offered by schools e.g. a school which is innovative in STEM provision and offers a wider variety of skills based courses will need more technical support than one who offers a narrower range or completes more academic or less practical work. Additionally, the lack of any surplus technical support means that in the case of staff absence, a school may be left with no technician at 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?)
  
As far as I am aware, these changes are long term policy.

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)

This depends entirely on how you define a staff shortage. As a small school, we do struggle to offer the breadth of subject choice which would be available in a much larger comprehensive, but despite the limited staffing numbers, the school is currently diversifying its curriculum rather than cutting 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?

Staff morale at present is quite low within the profession, mainly due to the speed of change, the effort that has been put in and the fact that there appears to have been degeneration in the perceived quality of education within Scotland despite our best efforts! In all of this, there remains a sense that the profession was not listened to at the outset of CfE, when teachers warned that the removal of SOME of the traditional assessment methods employed at Standard Grade would lead to a drop in standards.

Despite this, the teachers I work alongside are still willing to embrace further change if they are convinced that it will improve outcomes for our young people. To do this, the Scottish Government needs to employ more teachers (not just recruit more onto ITE courses), direct funding to schools more directly (which has begun to a degree) and be seen to act on the basis of what teachers are saying with respect to qualifications and assessment.

Additional comments

There is concern within the profession that the need to quickly recruit more teachers will lead to ‘fast tracking’ teachers into the profession. The experience in England and Wales has taught us that this does not lead to high quality teachers staying within the profession. Political expedience may suggest fast tracking is an answer, but the profession knows that fixing these issues properly will take time.
CHRIS NOBLE

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?  
I am a secondary physics teacher at an independent school. Being the only physics teacher I am effectively a principal teacher.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?  
Lathallan School, Johnshaven (Independent)

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?  
Working with young adults is immensely rewarding and constantly interesting. In addition I have a passion for my subject and I really enjoy sharing that passion with others, especially if they may one day go into a similar field.

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 staying in 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 currently seeking promotion to faculty head of science. I would consider further promotion in the future.

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 the sciences (and physics in particular) there is a distinct lack of supply. Very few teachers are available to take up posts. For physics and other science graduates there is little incentive going into teaching, the pay is noticeably less and the workload/stress considerable when compared to other typical science graduate careers.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?  
Physics certainly faces massive problems finding teachers, as do the other sciences (including computer science).

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?  
Aside from a blanket increase in teacher pay (which would need to be very large, likely 15% or so) and reduction in workload (primarily in secondary this comes from the SQA and in the past has included Education Scotland, though they have improved of late) the government could offer ‘bounties’ for shortage subjects to improve recruitment. Retention is harder, though employee benefits (childcare, pension, healthcare) and increasing number of points on the main teacher scale could help.
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 are very lucky to have avoided most of these issues due to being able to attract staff and being a relatively small school. However I know from experience that composite classes in the sciences are disastrous.

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)

Not at present in my school, though we are seeing more and more pupils moving at the end of S3 to us because they cannot do three sciences in their local authority 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?

At our school the morale is quite good, we are insulated from budget cuts and local authority red tape. The SQA provide most of the grievances from staff.

JULIE O’SULLIVAN

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .

Secondary Science Teacher (Biology & Physics)

Probationer mentor

SQA marker

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Angus Council

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

The children.

Excellent working/social relationships with my colleagues.

Passion for my subject.

Enjoyment of learning.

No two days being the same.
Opportunity to be creative.
Active; couldn’t do a desk job.

Q5 Do you consider that you will teach until you retire or do you consider leaving early or for alternative employment?
I will probably teach until I retire / feel that I am too old, or tired, to be an effective teacher.

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

Encourage:

- An idealist might think they could actually make a significant difference to a school; I have been teaching only 7 years and I know this is an impossible task. Too many “priorities” to be tackled efficiently.
- Money?

Discourage:

- Lack of teaching time. I teach because of class time with the kids.
- Despite earning more I don’t think it works out as a relatively good hourly pay given how much extra paperwork/responsibility/hours/stress involved in being a PT subject.
- Cannot please everyone; you are put in an ever increasingly difficult position to implement what is coming down from government/council level, more often than not, at odds with what is right by the individual school/kids/teachers.
- Not worth mental health to take on the additional burden.

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 salaries. More money can be made in other sectors. For example individuals with the qualifications to teach STEM subjects can earn significantly more in the field. I think this rings particularly true for men; regardless of the times we live in they are still the ones who bring in the biggest income to a family. It is clear we have a distinct lack of men in teaching; something which I believe is also having a negative impact on the behaviour and achievement of boys in school. Our boys need strong male role models in their classrooms; someone they can look up to and relate to.
- Constant changes to CfE and SQA qualifications; and the workload implications.
- Lack of clarity on assessment of levels.
- No money for resources; I know my kids would not get to do half of the experiments and “active learning” activities I do if it wasn’t for money out of my own pocket! It’s daft. Teachers can literally not implement the curriculum to the standard expected via the pedagogies of today
without subsidising it themselves (but we’d be hauled over the coals by HMIE if they observed anything less?!). Several times I have been asked not to print.

- There is little/no respect for the profession in the eyes of the public; we are portrayed as strolling into school for 9 and leaving at 4, not to mention all of our holidays… maybe if it looked like we were respected by our government it might have knock on effect for parents and pupils.
- Declining PISA reulsts.
- Rising violence and aggression in school. I am lucky in that I have an excellent working relationship with my pupils however there has been several incidents in my school over the past year for which nothing has been achieved. Ultimately the kids are in control of the school because they cannot be punished effectively.
- Based on the amount of time I put in to developing courses/assessment I know I do not make a good hourly rate. At the beginning of my career my thought process was “if I put all these hours in now then it will just be a case of small adjustments/additions in future” since I qualified (2010) I have worked flat out…. Luckily for my school I do not have a family to go home to and look after; if I did there is just no way I could sustain my current, excellent, level of teaching.
- Rising mental health issues. I have seen several, including very young, members of staff go off on long term sick this year due to work related stress/anxiety. I myself have developed IBS for which the doctors cannot find a physical cause of and have put down to “stress”; symptoms significantly lessen in the holidays.
- Lack of appropriate courses for learners. National 5 is too hard for many kids. It is a massive jump from BGE, particularly for those kids we would have assigned foundation/general at Standard Grade. We are doing them an injustice and their behaviour is suffering as a result. National 4 is simply not challenging enough. Similarly I have worked so hard with kids to get them a C at National 5 but Higher is just too much of a jump… an intermediate is needed.

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

- All of them.

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

- Without meaning to be flippant; give us money. Teachers need to be paid more, and they need to be provided with more money in order to bring about all the changes that are being asked of us.
- Give us time. The working time agreement is laughable. If teachers actually stuck to it then the government would then realise just how far above and beyond their staff is going for them right now.
- Please stop with the changes.
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?)

SSAs are now having to work in ASN roles and vice versa. This is not working well at all because these are not the posts these individuals applied for; creating more animosity within an already volatile/stressed environment. So far as I’m aware this is permanent.

All members of staff are working at minimum most weeks to cover shortages. I also know of several non-specialist staff teaching another subject (to my knowledge with no subject background).

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)

S2 receives no input in technologies (and S1 only 1 period a week) because we cannot fill a post.

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?

Fairly low; due to unobtainable targets set in all aspects of teaching life.

Additional comments

Scrap the new qualifications and admit defeat. I’m sure most teachers would be relieved if they were told they could pull out their old standard grade / intermediate / higher materials (well older teachers would… I would be gutted after all my hard work!).

Or just give us a break for the next couple years. I know I am desperate to go back and redo our BGE courses in light of the national qualifications, and the release of benchmarks, but there is just not enough hours in the day. Senior school is getting all the attention and this will continue to be the case until the barrage of changes from SQA stops.

NIGEL OTTLEY

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .

Principal Teacher of Maths

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? East Renfrewshire
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I believe I am good at my job (when I am allowed to be) and can make a difference in the classroom. I really enjoy the sense of achievement when pupils do well and when I know I have made a difference to someone’s moral and sense of worth.

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 leave early. The job is becoming unbearable. I teach too many children with the wrong attitude and the wrong desires. I cannot teach children who don’t want to be taught. These children spoil the education of the majority and spoil my enjoyment of teaching.

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 further promotion. The only enjoyable part of the job is teaching children who want to learn. Further promotion means less teaching time and more bureaucracy.

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 are worn down by the constant challenges of managing bad behaviour and under achievement. Pupils have too many alternatives in their private lives that they would rather do than school study or homework.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
I cannot get Maths supply cover.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Not all schools are the same. The job can be completely different in one school than the next. Areas of deprivation are harder to work in and much more challenging to work in. They will always struggle to attract the best available 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?
• 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?)

Authorities are pulling the wool of the governments eyes when it comes to teacher numbers. I know of many schools that bring in 3 or 4 supply teachers for two to three weeks at census time. In my position and with my limited knowledge of staffing, I don't know why this is the case. In my own school we were left short staffed and had to combine classes and put all staff on minimum time or beyond. Results suffered and moral declined.

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 go beyond where they should, to make sure pupils do not miss out and courses do not run.

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. My department and I have been under enormous pressure over results in the last two years after the introduction of the new National 5 qualification.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

CFE has been a disaster in maths. Pupils are coming up from primary schools unable to do basic maths, unable to sit still and unable to concentrate. Although the principles of CFE are good, the reality has been the opposite.

Behaviour in some schools is causing huge issues and is not being dealt with by SLT and local authorities. Inclusion means some pupils who have no idea how to behave are disrupting the education of many other pupils and destroying the experience for pupils and staff alike. They are doing this repeatedly and nothing is done. I spend hours every week on discipline matters meaning less time is spent on the jobs I should be doing (preparation, marking, extra help etc).

CLAIRE PATerson

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary Teacher (English)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I have a genuine love and enthusiasm for my subject and I enjoy teaching all aspects of it.

I enjoy the relationships that I can build with young people and seeing them make progress and realise their achievements.

Simply seeing a child achieve something no matter how small is rewarding.

I enjoy the variety that each day brings – even the tough days!

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 am able to teach until retirement but the workload pressures and constantly moving goalposts do make me wonder if I can sustain the job in the longer term.

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

I object to this question – it devalues the role of the classroom teacher.

I have previously held an acting PT post and did not enjoy it. I felt unsupported by SMT and felt swamped by needless administrative tasks. The uncertainty over the National Qualifications and the paucity of clear and timely information from Education Scotland and the SQA made this a very difficult period for all staff, never mind a leader of a large department.

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 am not aware of any challenges in my subject area or school. Any problems relating to retention have arisen because people have been appointed on temporary contracts.

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

STEM subjects / Home Economics

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

Treat teachers as valued professionals – respect our professional skills and abilities and listen to us

Increase our pay in line with inflation

Re-evaluate initial teacher training courses – give prospective teachers more time in schools

Increase the number of permanent contracts
Bring back the Chartered Teacher scheme

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?)

Class sizes have increased and despite the research of Hattie et al. appearing to show that this makes no difference to attainment, myself and many of my colleagues would beg to differ. Larger classes means increased workload for the class teacher and increased pressure to ensure the needs of all pupils are met.

The number of Deputes, Pastoral staff and PTs have declined over the years resulting in increased workload and pressure. The Faculty system means that departments are being led by people who lack specialist subject knowledge which is stressful and has an adverse affect on teaching and learning.

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)

Drama

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 quite low.

I believe many people feel under valued and quite simply exhausted by the constant change, shifting goalposts and lack of support and clarity from Education Scotland and the SQA.

I don't think we have been listened to, particularly with regard to the implications of the new Nationals and the lack of an externally assessed exam at N4. What are we saying to N4 pupils about the value of this qualification? The burden of assessment has increased – we are doing the work of the examination authority for free.

The cost cutting measures are now beginning to take an effect in classrooms – there are shortages of vital supplies.

CATHERINE RICHMOND

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 

Maths teacher
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I enjoy being a professional and progressing my skills in the craft of teaching. Also, I enjoy being able to work part time as it provides a good work-life balance for my young family.

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 cannot teach until 67. It is impossible.

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 focussing on family life so am not interested at present in personal career progression. I am enjoying adding breadth and skills to myself as a class room teacher for now.

Longer term, I have seen little to reassure me that there would be any point pursuing promotion. In Aberdeenshire, young, inexperienced teachers are promoted over those with experience. I think that when I am ready to prioritise my career, I will not fit Aberdeenshire’s recruitment ideals by being too old. Also, my English qualifications have not been welcome at application stage so far, so I see little chance of being valued for the skills that I have when I am interested in applying.

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 feel valued at work. I recently left employment at [name] Academy after applying three times for the job that was doing on a temporary basis. The jobs I was applying for were still temporary but extended longer than my current contract. The head chose not to progress with interviews the first and second times, the third time I was interviewed and not appointed for reasons that were entirely wrong. (I was applying on a job share basis and the head said I should have arrived at interview with the job share arrangement agreed with the other candidate so we could be interviewed as a full time position. This is wrong, and I raised it with my union but she was able to say she was acting in a non-discriminatory way and it was accepted). The head at [name] then dealt with a complaint from a parent in a completely unprofessional and unsupportive manner, so I chose to leave.

At [name 2] Academy the maths department struggles as the head does not value us on account of poor results. The results are in line with national expectations which are problematic on account of the changes to the National exams.

I only work part time. I am not in the job for career progression at the moment. I just want to be valued. I absolutely do not feel this in Scotland. For me, this feeling would make me leave the profession if there is no sign of improvement coming.
I dislike the lack of a functioning discipline system in either [name] Academy or [name 2] Academy. Restorative justice has its place, but it needs time and it isn’t reasonable to have no consequences other than a good chat after some behavioural incidents. The schools seem afraid of parents complaining about punishments rather than being confident to inform parents that their staff are trusted professionals and it’s possible their child has been out of line. This is wearing and confusing and contributes to the feeling of not being valued.

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

There are specific gaps in all academies in Aberdeenshire. Even if a department is fully staffed, the lack of competitive interviews isn’t healthy in the long term. In [name 2] we are struggling for computing staff and also ASL is constantly in flux.

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

Respect me. Pay me a respectful wage. Allow me to progress on merit when the time is right. Allow me some career progression opportunities that aren’t just Faculty Head or Guidance.

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?

Classes that really need PSA support don’t get it.

- How well are they working?
- Clearly, supported classes of pupils who need it function far better. I find it extremely stressful being in charge of 15 pupils who have little concentration skills and can be very aggressive and unpleasant for 1 hour and 20 minutes. With another adult in the room I feel safer and we all progress considerably more in the lesson.

- 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?)

- PSA support is in total flux. These pupils who need consistency, and me for planning purposes are hugely let down.

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 do not teach Lifeskills maths on account of staffing shortages. Now, it is an awful qualification with far too much literacy (how can my pupils from
[name] not cope with the literacy demands of Nat4 lifeskills yet be getting Nat5 English???)). When it is rebranded and revamped it is a worthy qualification but with current staffing it is not an option. And until people accept it is as a qualification it has to be a reasonable compromise to make.

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 don’t like being thought of as being in a ‘troublesome department’ when I turn up, plan interesting lessons, develop myself professionally in my own time and for a while in a week, put my children second. I just want to feel empowered and respected.

CfE and SQA are the main drivers behind the poor morale. Yes, there’s also the layer of disappointment about our head being able to victimise departments, but her wrath stems from the SQA exams. CfE is too broad and vague and this adds stress to teachers. Pupils coming up from primary have appalling numeracy skills that we have to fix in very little time and then prepare them for appallingly thought through exams. Trouble is, the pupils from primary are often not classroom trained thanks to their experience of CfE at primary and are turned off maths by then so it’s a rather tall order to fix, yet we have to take the blame.

Also, I cannot stand the reports in the media (often English, but up here too) about what schools ‘should’ be doing. By allowing a platform for people to think we are failing at providing mental health help for the pupil as an example there’s the insidious message that schools aren’t good enough. Negative portrayals of teaching in the press must be curtailed. We work hard, the people writing the stories are never teachers. It would put anyone sane off from entering the profession.

Additional comments

Thank you for the chance to contribute. Please do listen as teaching in Scotland used to be excellent and it’s not now. I hope some good will come of your questionnaires.

NICOLA ROBERTSON

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

I am a secondary school teacher of Design & Technology. This means I am qualified to teach and must be willing to teach Graphic Communication, Engineering Science, Woodwork, Metalwork, Engineering Skills and Design and Manufacture. I have been teaching for 6 years and will reach the top of the pay scale in August.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Aberdeenshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The only reasons that I remain in the teaching profession are firstly that I love working with the pupils and secondly that the holidays suit me as a mother of two. Every day is unpredictable and the job is never boring.

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 believe I will continue teaching until my children no longer need childcare during the holidays. At that point I will be looking to change my career as unfortunately the amount I am paid does not nearly cover the hours and workload required to do the job successfully. It is a very stressful job and with my skill set and qualifications I could seek a different role that would have a more reasonable pay.

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 to seek promotion as I have been teaching for a number of years now however the introduction of the faculty system has made this very difficult. My next step would be to become a ‘Faculty Head’ not a ‘Principle Teacher’ as it was previously. This would mean managing a subject I have no experience of and managing potentially a very large team. Schools do not give faculty heads adequate time to do the job properly and they still have a heavy teaching timetable. This makes the job extremely difficult, stressful and it would upset my work life balance greatly. Due to the faculty system there are also far fewer promotions available. There is very little scope for career progression, this is one of the reasons that I will leave teaching before retirement. Ultimately my career goal would have been to become a principle teacher and then a depute head teacher but not now with the faculty system.

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)

Recruitment is a very different story depending on what part of the country you are in. In my area we don’t train very many teachers and it is too expensive to live and work in Aberdeen on a teachers salary. It was very difficult for me to get my mortgage on a teachers salary. Teaching is not seen as a desirable and respected career anymore. I have had pupils ridicule me because of the low salary we are paid and graduates come back to visit 5 years after leaving my classroom and earning 10k more than me.

Retaining teachers, again salary is an issue. There are no options to earn more other than promotion to senior management, which as I explained above is difficult and undesirable. There was no plan put in place for when the current ageing teacher population begins retirement. Every year our schools become more and more short staffed, this adds huge workload and stress. The job gets harder every year with no financial reward. Due to the faculty system normal teachers are doing the work of a principle teacher, again with no financial recognition.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
In my area Design & Technology is particularly short staffed. Every year of my career has been spent in an understaffed department, even in training I was covering for others and my workload was unmanageable. Our subject has a very high age average of teachers so our situation will become worse very quickly.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
If the faculty system was to revert back to having a principle teacher for each subject I would consider staying in the profession longer as would others. This would reduce workload, increase promotion opportunities. I think it would also benefit pupils as each subject would have a specialist covering those examination subjects. Failing this, faculty head posts should not have a teaching commitment, this would allow normal teachers the time they need to teach and would make the faculty head position more appealing. To recruit more teachers, I do not believe this will improve without a change in our pay structure.

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)?
Subjects have been lost. Support assistants have been stripped back and only the most supported pupils have the support they need. Subjects have only been taught at examination level. Normal teachers have been completing management duties. None of these strategies have worked and all cause more difficulty, workload and stress.

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 too many to mention, but every single year I have been teaching we have not been able to offer all our subjects due to staff shortages. I have had to remove extra curricular options because due to increased workload I do not have time to give up my ‘free’ 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?
Morale is very low. Everyone is overworked, younger teachers take up the slack for older teachers who were used to the days before the short staffing and constant curricular change. Older teachers can’t wait to retire and younger teachers just pray for the holidays to come quickly. It is at breaking point, most of us can’t keep this up for much longer. There is no promotion goal to aim for, no increase in pay to aim for, no respect from the public, no sign of the first minister or SNP making any effort to even discuss the issues. The curriculum is a mess and we aren’t being listened to.
Additional comments

I love teaching! I love the pupils, I love school and I would love to work in one until I retire. I gave up a career in Architecture for this, but I won’t break my back for the same non changing salary for much longer.

CHRIS ROSSI

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary Teacher of Physics, Full time

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Dumfries & Galloway, St Joseph’s College, Dumfries

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Support from line management and school management. Positive behaviour in classes. Clear expectations. The opportunity to work with and inspire young people both within and beyond my own subject. The opportunity to serve as a positive role model to young people. Flexible working hours beyond the set school opening times. Goals are not financially driven as they often are in commercial sectors.

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 age 35, I am undecided. Teaching and the changing curriculum and management structures over the past 10 years or so have been quite stressful. While I am not actively seeking employment in another sector, the level of stress does leave me considering other options at some point in the future. Should thins in education settle down a bit, I may choose to remain 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 a natural leader of other adults and do not wish to pursue this type of career. My skills and my level of happiness in work are related to the fact that I actually enjoy my job. Seeking promotion to management reduces the time I spend teaching which is the part of my job I love most. I don’t think that the assumption that all teachers should be seeking promotion is either fair or realistic. Since the removal of chartered teacher, there is no line of promotion that allows teacher to remain in the classroom and teach.

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 unwritten expectation that we will always do what is best for students even when it means personal financial expense or time at work or in work related activities well over and above our contracted working time.
- Tedious and unnecessary paperwork, recording and reporting.
- Substandard materials supplied by SQA and Education Scotland which are often filled with vague language and ill-defined goals.
- Uncertainty over job security, pensions, retirement age.
- Lack of career progression beyond teacher pay-scale without reduction in teaching contact time.

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

In rural communities or areas further from the central belt, retention of probationers beyond their induction year can be difficult as many wish to return to the central belt. I am not aware of any major problems in recruiting science teachers in my area although I know some schools have struggled in more rural areas.

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

Retention is most likely to improve with increased job satisfaction which will come by giving the challenges currently facing the profession more attention. Having the time to do the job of teaching well is what lets us do it well. Where more layers of management and paperwork are added, this simply leads to less time spent planning effective and high quality lessons.

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 has been a real terms reduction in our support staff over the last few years making it harder to provide in class learning and behaviour support to students in classes. Our support assistants have continued to provide as much support as they can and do a great job, but not all pupils or classes who would benefit from support get it. We have in some cases supplemented support staff by using senior pupils as class helpers. This has been a success, but they cannot be expected to provide the same quality of support as an employed adult. As I understand it these are permanent changes.

Classes with a lower uptake (eg some AH subjects) are now either not run, run on a reduced timetable (below suggested class contact) or are run on a networking arrangement with other local schools (pupils from one school travel to another to take the class). To some extent this has always been the case, but it seems to be happening more frequently in recent 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)

None that I know of, but I am not in a position to be aware of such things. Physics is taught at all levels from N5 to AH in our school and general Science is taught at N3/N4 in S4 as well as throughout BGE. While our department is fully staffed, it can be hard to find short term supply teachers with the correct subject specialisms to cover staff illness, trips or paternity. Longer absences are usually well covered by 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?

Morale is quite low, but I think we are through the worst of it. The magnitude of the changes over the past few years have instilled a lack of respect for management at authority and national level.

In our own school these effects have been amplified by the upheaval of a school refurbishment, a change of timetable and of curricular structure. While the excitement of the “light at the end of the tunnel” is near (our new building should be completed in Feb 2018) the increase in stress on staff and pupils has taken its toll on morale. On a more national scale, we (teachers) have appreciated the protection from most of the public sector cuts, but have noticed a tightening on school budgets and many curricular enrichment services (outdoor education, music for example).

Most teachers still recognise that our core working conditions are good, we enjoy our jobs and job security. We recognise that we get good holidays and some flexibility and predictability in working hours which employees in many other professions are not afforded.

It would be nice to get some recognition for hours spent on extra-curricular work, but this is often done (and is most meaningful) at school level.

LINDSAY SALVAGE

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

I am a Principal Teacher of a Faculty of Health and Well Being (which includes PE and HE) at a secondary school within a local authority.

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

I have a passion for my own subject (PE) and enjoy trying to help young people maximise their learning within PE. I enjoy managing and working within a faculty team that does the same; we like to see and share the enjoyment and success some young people experience within our subject areas.
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 am planning on an early retirement at 54, hopefully working part-time prior to this target.

I have no wish to seek promotion (see below) and I feel the stresses and energy required to teach and fulfill the demands of the job will become increasingly harder to cope with as I age.

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

I sought promotion about 7 years ago and was successful in securing a depute head teacher post. However, this was not a role I enjoyed for various reasons. I missed day-to-day teaching in my subject; I struggled to concur with my head teacher’s views and decision-making which was challenging within a far smaller team than exists within a faculty head’s job; I felt that I was less able to work effectively as part of a wider team due to the overloaded expectation on continuously raising attainment and meeting the extensive learning demands that I was expected to acquire from my link departments.

There are considerable factors that would discourage me from seeking promotion again – senior managers have reduced autonomy within their role and the bulk of their job is dealing with discipline issues of pupils but within a culture that increasingly looks to find fault or error with professionals. The government or local authority demands continual new practices that senior managers are expected to lead but which have not been properly considered. Head teachers now have an impossible role in managing school finance within budgetary restrictions or cut backs and the local authority sometimes adopts practices or policies that are not beneficial to education or schools but which must be implemented by 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)

Challenges with young people’s conduct and behaviour is a major barrier – while most teachers enjoy their job, there is frustration in the lack of support (financially or culturally) to enable them to fulfil their role effectively.

The qualifications system and Curriculum for Excellence has put an inordinate amount of pressure on teachers in terms of development and workload with seemingly unending changes to both without any evidence that these are improving teaching and learning – the frustrations and stress of this is evident.

There are increasing numbers of young people with additional support needs that cannot be effectively addressed within full-time mainstream schools. This places in increasing demands on teachers.

Aberdeenshire is an expensive area for housing which adds an additional factor to difficulties in recruitment.
When the above suggestions are considered, it may be that teachers’ salaries are not a sufficient enough attraction for those who can earn far higher wages within other areas of employment.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Since my time at my current school (6 years) we have had considerable difficulties in recruiting teachers in: maths, science and English.
Within Aberdeenshire both technical and HE teachers are highly sought after or these subjects are being withdrawn from the curriculum.
More ASN teachers are badly needed but there is not enough funding within a staffing budget to allow for this.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Streamline the expectations for education within the BGE and qualifications system.
Invest money into the resources and facilities within schools.
Invest in ASN teachers to support pupils with specific needs.

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?)
Due to a lack of maths teachers, pupils were given additional time in technical education. This is temporary – it placed strains on technical staff who did not have time to develop alternative course/units.
Within Aberdeenshire there have been measures to recruit former oil workers – I am unsure how successful this has been.
Additional money has been made available to teachers who move to this area – I do not believe that this has been successful in addressing the recruitment difficulties.

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)
Higher psychology & advanced higher computing was initially offered at the start of the session – no teachers were available to teach so some temporary
measures were put in place including self-study but it is unlikely that these qualifications will be offered again.

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 – for the reasons outlined in previous responses but also because there is no indication of a positive change to stress or workload in the near future.

JULIE SANDILANDS

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Glenrothes, Fife

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
- Making a difference to young people; in terms of education, self-confidence, and positive destinations.
- I get immense job satisfaction when I am teaching.
- I am passionate about my subjects: English/business

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 over 20 years teaching experience but there is only a 20% chance that I will teach until I retire. The reasons being:
- Lack of robust behaviour management systems. I feel the restorative approach (which has been brought in by stealth), is contributing to falling standards of both behaviour and attainment, as boundaries are blurred and expectations lowered. Teaching and non-teaching staff now have to deal with daily situations which are not only unacceptable (they would not be tolerated in any other sector), but increase stress levels, and decrease self-respect and self-worth. Senior managers who simply tick the ‘restorative conversation’ box on the referral form and returning the pupil to class, without including the classroom teacher in the ‘restorative conversation’, is indicative of a lack of respect for both the teacher, and the other pupils who had to witness the incident. This practice does not reflect or prepare pupils for the World of Work.
- I have taught in state schools in Botswana; New Zealand; England and Scotland. The new wave of Scottish qualifications are not challenging enough, and low mark questions do not give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their academic knowledge and understanding, especially at Higher level. The National 4 qualification has neither credibility or portability, and is most certainly NOT comparable to a grade C, two year GCSE course. Overall, Scotland’s school examinations are not as challenging as other qualification systems outwith Scotland.
• There is a lack of quality educational managers. The teacher recruitment and retention crisis is resulting in relatively inexperienced teachers, especially in human resource management, being propelled up the career ladder.

• More forward thinking/planning is required to ensure schools, and their pupils, actually do make progress, rather than ticking boxes for the sake of the latest edition of HGIOS! Much more focus on attendance, time-keeping and a positive work ethic will not only close the attainment gap, help pupils into positive destinations on leaving school, it will reduce costs, as courage of conviction and consistency is all that is required – not tax payers’ money!

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

A system that appreciated and respected experience would encourage me to seek promotion. The lack of autonomy for head teachers to manage their schools that reflect the focuses outlined above, resulting in LAs over riding decisions on discipline, school uniform and assessment has already discouraged 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)

As already identified: a strong, positive culture of respect and work ethic by both staff and pupils would help new teachers to settle more quickly, and retain quality staff. Older teachers (some in PTC roles), taking early retirement means a lack of experience within faculties. Bringing back department principle teachers instead of principal teachers of faculties would provide more immediate, specialised support, especially in the first term.

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

• The system does not have adequate accommodation for pupils with SEN. There are pupils, who for various reasons, do not settle or thrive in main stream. Their needs are being neglected, just so the “inclusive” box can be ticked. I have seen pupils arrive at secondary school barely able to read and write, and leave at the end of S4 with minimal progress. What positive destinations await them? More Off-Campus facilities with specialised staff are required to ensure that these pupils’ needs are not only recognised, but met. Currently, the system is failing a raft of pupils in this category. This lack of provision also affects the teaching and learning within the classroom, so we are once again back to the ‘attainment gap’ for schools in catchment areas where the number of SEN pupils can be higher than average.

• The recruitment and retention of more level 2/3 LSAs. Reward with respect, recognition, and remuneration, as these support staff are worth their weight in gold in a large, challenging classes.
• In my school, we have been unable to replace both permanent and temporary positions in several subjects. There is also a severe shortage of supply teachers.

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

• Recruit more experienced (with a proven record of accomplishment) SMTs.
• Allow head teachers to manage their schools to the high standards required to create a conducive learning environment where both staff and pupils thrive.
• Re-evaluate the current qualifications so that teachers do not leave/retire stating: “I do not believe in what I’m doing anymore!”
• An annual salary that reflects both inflation, and respect for the profession.
• Reinstate (the individually) reached salary scale payments to supply staff from day 1. Pay supply staff 4 weeks in arrears instead of 8/12 weeks in arrears, creating financial hardship for supply teachers. Most agency/temporary workers in other sectors get paid 1 week in arrears!

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 is a shortage of LSAs which mean changes to their availability. This is not always communicated to staff, which can influence the learning outcomes and progress of an individual lesson/pupil, which has been planned around the support being present in the classroom.
• Being unable to recruit teachers in several subjects has resulted in teaching staff working on minimum non-contact. Covering subjects on a long-term basis is difficult as pupils become disengaged and disillusioned with the subject.

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?

• Reasonable, considering both the short and long term challenges to school systems, and education as a whole.
• The majority of colleagues I have worked with over the past 20 years are committed classroom practitioners whose sole objective is to deliver a quality education in an environment conducive to all.
• Currently, a lack of confidence in education policies and professional organisations such as the SQA and the GTCS, is also creating barriers to effective communication channels with the teaching profession.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

Let practising and retired teachers make decisions on curriculum and assessment, not politicians who then move on with their political career, leaving the teaching profession to try and fix any problems which arise as a result in ill-informed, poorly implemented changes to the education system.
Implement basic literacy and numeracy indicators at P4, P7 and S2 to ensure that pupils are prepared for the next level of their education, and to target support to pupils in most need.

KIRSTY SCOTT

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Faculty Head of Science

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
North Ayrshire Council; Auchenharvie Academy

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The students – working for them to help them achieve their best/potential. Seeing them developing as individuals and growing in 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 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?
It has taken me 15 years to move to FH position. I do not see myself going to DHT level as I do not like the idea of not 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)
Behaviour management and curriculum changes/work pressures that come with it. The changes in Education Scotland work load has pushed a lot of teachers to take earlier retirement.

I do personally feel a lot of people enter the profession with the wrong idea about the job (ie see the holidays). The retention is partly due to people finding out what a challenging job it is.

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, not necessarily in my school. I have a number of friends in other schools, authorities and across the board morale is low. Behaviour and continual changes to curriculum is causing significant issues.

IAN SIMPSON

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Principal Teacher
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Auchmuty HS Fife

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
In no particular order:
Helping, inspiring and advancing young people.
Raising awareness of career options
Helping youngsters acquire new skills and make 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 it relates to your enjoyment of your role)

Teaching until I retire is going to be difficult. You only need to see older colleagues struggle with the intensity of the job and trying to maintain integrity with teenagers, to know that this is only achieved by the few and not the many.
I don't think I will leave early but it depends on health and finances. Alternatives are limited yet an area I consider to be under utilised i.e. opportunities within authorities to do alternative roles that support schools and allows staff to 'wind down' etc

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

It is an area I'm already considering, though torn as I do love my job. Senior management positions ironically take the best staff further and further away from the classroom interactions with the pupils which in my opinion is wrong as you gradually start to lose touch with the realities of the day to day teaching role.
There needs to be a clear divide between the teaching and business side of schools and thus I think instead there are opportunities for school management administration posts like business managers currently undertake but these posts can be reduced salaries to what a deputy would have and different holidays, which makes financial sense and frees more administrative time.
As for moving towards headteacher most are put off by the sheer scale and demands of the post. For a similar post in business (indeed much lower posts) there would be substantial perks such as company car, personal secretary, bupa options etc. It is a vocation and you lose the work life balance. Perhaps that is the price you have to pay but those are the reasons it doesn't appeal to 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)

Whilst joking with friends about teacher holidays, I always use my get out clause which is "the profession is always looking for enthusiastic professionals " to which they all say no chance as they couldn't work with teenagers "these days". Everyone recognises there is very little the profession can now do with
unruly pupils. Parents know from their own children's stories. Is this the perception in other countries!

Regarding young people leaving the profession, it is a strange one as I'm yet to encounter this in secondaries. Once staff are qualified and in post they stay in my experience. Retaining staff is only a difficulty in schools with a poor unsupportive culture. Aberdeen is the classic case in point where probationers are given there because they are struggling to recruit. The probationers go into a department that is already struggling due to a lack of consistency and staff and then get a terrible first years experience because they aren't in a settled department getting the critical support they need in their first year. It comes as no surprise that they did not stay in Aberdeen thereafter. In the case of Aberdeen I can only imagine recruiting from a broader area such as down in England or even abroad is the answer.

Authorities should recognise high turnovers quite easily and take action accordingly because it is a steep downward spiral once it begins. However, too many authorities seek the opinions of the management instead of the teaching staff.

At University recruitment level there needs to be good statistical analysis of the ongoing numbers game to ensure supply meets demand. Classic oversupply in Art / PE etc seems futile against the shortages. One solution I think is to address graduates doing their degrees, weighing up their options and falling into teaching which I despair at. There is no option to choose teaching so consider this. What if like Technical education a graduate can teach three subjects? Why is this possible? Is Technical easier or less worthy, I don't think so. Educated professionals should easily be able to teach two subjects to Higher level, but the 'can do' mindset starts at university by having the option available. The option is a three year teaching degree in either Technical, Social Subjects, Sciences. I'm not sure how the other subjects can be combined but I think there should be an expectancy of multiple subject capability in Secondary. The other benefit of doing a teaching degree is you get much more on the pedagogy than in a crammed pgde. But also and probably more importantly, you get someone committed to teaching as a career firstly and not as a fall back option.

Another problem with staffing is the guidance conundrum. No one gets into teaching to become a guidance teacher. You have a love of your subject, and the reasons I gave at the beginning for becoming a teacher. Yet many teachers move sideways into a social work role. My solution is to create school social worker posts, using trained social work professionals who don't command the same holidays as teachers, are quickly intertwined with the inner workings of social work and the needs of children. If a teacher wants to become a school social worker then they can change their post towards this contractually. I think you'd find many guidance teachers wouldn't take this option and you'd have to ask why.

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

This changes through the years, but consistent shortages are in the STEM subjects which are critical to the well being of the country’s future skill base.
Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Solutions and ideas are above it Q7. The key lies with it being an attractive professional n, university programmes that attract the right type of people and meet supply/demand.
The final aspect is the comparable time Scottish teachers spend teaching compared to available preparation time, with other successful countries such as Finland. This is a hard reality that would increase the need for even more teachers.
Has anyone mentioned salary?

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? All of the above. Management teaching more than they should because we have no cover I. School which comes at the expense to f preparation and development work.
• How well are they working? Multilevel. Classes means the lower ability pupils get less attention which is a hard reality. Stress and absence increases. The least able and most needy pupils don't get the support they need which impacts on classes which become more disrupted.
• 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?)
It would seem the impact is long term until the cutbacks are reversed. In my experience, once you bottom out, that becomes the standard as we have never returned to the times of the 80/90s budgets when schools had more money to spend, there were more 'special' schools etc.

JO SOUTAR
Q1  What type of teaching role do you have?
Chartered teacher, Secondary sector, Physical Education. Previous experience in PT Guidance for 11 years and 2 years PT PE. Previous SQA marker and currently SQA nominee verifier.

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Currently the satisfaction of seeing children develop their knowledge and skills in my subject specialism but this is rapidly diminishing as a result if curriculum change, workload and management and increasing deterioration in pupil behaviour. Teaching was once a vocation but no longer so.

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 50 working weeks to go before I reach the age of 60 and will have completed 38 years. The fact that I have been counting down from 100 weeks is indicative of my current working experience which has built up since the introduction of CFE and National Qualifications and the new management structure in schools. If a job in another field gave me the same salary and half the holidays, I would leave immediately. It is at the stage that I may retire early just to get out. The enjoyment has been destroyed by changes. There were changes with Standard Grade but the excessive dumbing down, internal moderation and lack of clarity and direction in CFE and NQs has destroyed the profession.

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

I have held posts in middle management and gave them up as the workload is ridiculous. I counted the total hours I actually spent on my job in a week both in school and at home and it amounted to 70 hrs. That was a typical week where there were no reports to be written. That is an hourly rate if £10. There are no incentives to progress. You decide if you want to work to live or live to work. The choice is career or life. I have taught in the same school for 30 years as I wanted to contribute to the community and make a difference. It was once a vocation but I have the benefit of having two careers. I am also a SNCO RAF reservist and have been for 30 years. That's what keeps me sane! I can compare the working life in the Armed Forces to the teaching profession. In the armed forces, in promotion, you must attend a trade training course and pass. There is no structure in teaching and some senior management have no personnel management skills.

Senior management lose touch with the reality of problems at the chalk face or should I say, smartboard face. They tick boxes regarding the latest phases, eg Numeracy and Literacy starters, traffic lights, thumbs up, higher order thinking, pupils writing evaluations in your lessons. I have 50 mins a period. It takes 5 mins to reach the PE department. The changing rooms are overcrowded as a result of poor time tabling and max class sizes. The number of non participants in PE is increasing as a result. That wastes another 5-10 mins. I have to register a class on a netbook and half the time there is no wifi signal. 5 more minutes gone issuing non participants with written work, 5 mins in a starter which is totally unrelated to my subject, 5 mins on learning intentions and success criteria, at least a 5 min warm up, I would need a 5 min cool down and a 5 min plenary with hot questions, evaluations, thumbs up etc, 5 mins to get changed. That a total of 50 mins. That a lesson where there is no equipment to set up or issue. There was no time to actually teach and we wonder why childhood obesity levels are increasing and our national sporting teams are failing to succeed.

I'm not a cynic, I'm a realist.

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

Maths, Business, Home Economics, Physics, Behaviour Support. Careers where these subjects are required pay more in other civilian occupations and
are less stressful. They are not subject to the challenges of having to deal with pupil behaviour at the same time as working.

Pupil indiscipline is a huge challenge and the sanctions for dealing with this are ineffective. Some schools exclude pupils for persistent disobedience, some don't. There's no standardisation. If a pupil tells me to 'f-off' he gets a 15 minute detention. If they say the same to a Depute, they are excluded. That undermines the teacher.

Pupil support assistants are almost canon fodder. They get no respect. In my school, some were left with a class and expected to teach with no teacher present due to staff shortages.

Teaching salaries have fallen so far behind those of equivalent professional, the holidays are the only incentive but half of them are spent preparing for the next term and mine are spent completing my annual requirements for my reservist service as I'm not entitled to paid leave for my Reservist commitment.

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

Improved pay scale

Return to previous management structure with subject PT and APT as PT curriculum/faculty posts do not work.

Standardised protocol for indiscipline

Tackle bureaucracy

Eradicate bi level 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? Senior management teach at least 6 periods a week.

• How well are they working? They don't as it increases their workload.

• 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?)

Covering vacancies as school is understaffed.

Pupil support assistants used as taxi drivers as not enough staff available to drive mini bus if pupils are in visits in school time. No one in my school is what used to be a Learning support teacher. The focus is on behaviour support therefore no diagnostic testing carried. Behaviour is addressed and not cause if behaviour which may be learning difficulty.

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)
Subject choices within subjects where there are staff shortages are limited. If pupils are not academic, they are dumped in PE and do not want to be there. Additional subject being dumped on departments without staff consultation. Eg I have to teach Skills for Work with four structure and some lessons being loaded on the system the day you teach the class. One teacher in my department was a qualified PE teacher but also taught Business Studies, Skills for Work, Youth Award, Hospitality, Home Economics and Behaviour support as well as taking cover classes due to staff absences in any excess free periods she had left. She is 24, was appointed in Aug, stayed for 9 months and has now left to teach in Dubai with a take home pay of £2600/month, accommodation provided free of charge, gym membership, smaller class sizes, medical cover, a shorter teaching day, less bureaucracy. There is no comparison.

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?

Worse than very low. It is at rock bottom and if there was a basement it would be sub basement!

Bureaucracy
Salary
Lack of clarity and direction in National Qualifications
Indiscipline

JULIE STIRLING

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Teacher of Business Education in a Secondary School

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Lesmahagow High School, South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I love working with young people and enjoy watching them progress from the early teenage years to the later teens. I like seeing them progress as people, learning new skills and becoming 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)
I intend to teach until I retire but will be starting on the phased retirement scheme from August.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I was never interested in becoming a Senior Manager as they have little or no class contact and I came into the profession with the aim of teaching pupils. I think their roles are far too big and all the senior managers I have been in contact with over the last few years have spent more and more time in school
from early in the morning until later on in the evening, as well as spending part of their holidays in school too. Their work-life balance is not acceptable.

**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 it is difficult to recruit teachers to the profession as the salary is not attractive enough for some graduates, who can make a much better salary after 5 years in other professions than they can in teaching, especially since posts of responsibility are not easy to come by in schools. I think that the amount of work NQT’s are expected to do causes burn-out very early on. I had an NQT a few years ago who was in work an hour early every day and stayed every night until between 6 and 7. On several occasions I made him go home as I could see that he was becoming stressed by the long hours he was working. He is an extremely talented young professional, who is still teaching but his working day has not decreased over the past few years. Those hours are not sustainable and I worry that he may leave the profession. Schools often ask NQTs to get involved in a lot of extracurricular activities and to join committees, these activities can be enjoyable but there is a certain expectation put on them that they will not be employed if they are not involved in several of these whole school community activities, which also take up a lot of their time. I also think that indiscipline in schools affects staff morale and causes some teachers to leave the profession as they find it too difficult to deal with poor or challenging behaviour with little or no real support.

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

Maths, English and HE.

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

Ensuring that all teachers adhere to their working time arrangements and don’t become over worked. If every teacher did this, more teachers would need to be employed in every school to ensure they could run smoothly. Stop the culture of expecting teachers to work far longer hours than they are employed to do. Get rid of the Faculty system. I have had a Modern Languages teacher as my faculty head and through no fault of her own she was not able to support me through the introduction of CfE as she was not a subject specialist. In a small school with small departments most teachers were responsible for creating all the new courses on their own or with maybe one other colleague. The workload was not quite so onerous in bigger schools/departments. I now have a subject specialist in charge of me and this has had a huge impact on my general health and wellbeing.

**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 as staff feel overworked and undervalued and are working on timetables which are constantly filled to capacity. The fact that we are public sector workers and have had pay cuts in real terms over the past 6 or 7 years
and are suffering under austerity measures with no prospect of our salaries being reinstated to the levels they were at previously. The fact that CfE is still being constantly changed and courses are having to be rewritten again and again. Indiscipline with few, if any sanctions being used to improve the situation for the vast majority of pupils who do behave well in school having their education disrupted on a period by period basis.

ANNIE SWAN
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary school – Modern Foreign Languages

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Falkirk Council – Grangemouth High School

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The fact that no two days are the same / The rewarding nature of time in the classroom / relative employment security as a single Mum / having the same holidays as my child so childcare is not an issue / the chance to use my foreign languages every day / opportunities to be 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)
I imagine I will seek alternative employment before the retirement age of 68 because the job is extremely demanding both physically and mentally, and I cannot imagine having the energy to keep going. I also cannot imagine that many teachers in their 60s are particularly well motivated to keep up the same levels of creativity and enthusiasm in the classroom that I would like to produce as 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 been approached about this several times and have always demurred because the PTC role is not one that works well unless the person in question is happy to work themselves into an early grave. I would be happy to take up a PT role, but most schools now have gone down the PTC route due to councils wanting to save money, and this has not been good for either staff or pupils. In recent years I have seen and heard of all kinds of bizarre combinations, eg an art teacher acting as Head of Department for the Languages Faculty / an RE teacher in charge of the Science Faculty / a PE teacher in charge of maths and music. It never works well when the head of department knows very little about the specifics of the job of their 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)
I have been in my current school for just over a year and it has renewed my enthusiasm for teaching to be in a school that is so well run by the senior leadership team. They are all younger than I am, but they all treat staff with professional respect and help to engender very positive relationships between staff and pupils. Communication within the school is also much better than what I was used to. I was in my previous school for over a decade, and when the new head teacher was appointed (2 years before I left) things went downhill rapidly as he did not enforce effective discipline, leading to a marked deterioration in behaviour and his attitude towards staff was to blame them for everything. Eventually I (and many others) left, with many of us not seeking promotion but just a change of school. Therefore I feel that good management is crucial in retaining staff, and it seems to be a remarkably slow process to get rid of poor school head teachers.

More generally, I have personally met 3 people in the past year who are qualified teachers but decided not to pursue a career in teaching due to the excessive amount of paperwork involved and the lack of a decent life / work balance.

Personally, I am also fed up with the constant changes that required me to re-write entire courses regularly. It seems that all political parties want to score points by claiming that education has improved under their leadership, and they frequently impose plans / qualifications that are poorly thought out. This puts unnecessary strain on teaching staff as we try to get to grips with the new course requirements and grading criteria.

Finally, I know from collegiate discussions that many of us are disillusioned and fed up with the increasing pressure put on us to teach new courses at the same time as we are expected to report on pupils’ progress with increasing frequency and assess our pupils for national qualifications too. I wanted to be a teacher, not an assessor. With mixed level classes there is sometimes very little time left for teaching in between all the constant assessments across different skills and different levels, and this dramatically reduces our enjoyment of the job.

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

It can vary by region, but I believe Maths and Physics have been particularly hard hit, along with Home Economics, the other sciences and Modern Languages to a lesser degree. The academic subjects are suffering now because so many easier qualifications are available and given equal status by schools.

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

- Stop loading more work onto us, especially internal assessments, so that we can focus on producing and delivering good quality lessons.
- Give us a decent pay rise to reflect our professional status and years spent studying. We have been given only one pay rise of 1% in 6 years, and since this coincided with a higher cost of pensions it actually worked out to be a pay
decrease. Factor in inflation and we are really beginning to suffer financially. I would not advise new graduates to go into teaching as there are plenty of jobs where they are treated with more respect and given better pay, eg prostitution.

- Stop changing things just for the sake of it. It would have been far cheaper, easier and more effective to tweak the issues with the Standard Grade exams instead of introducing the new CfE qualifications.
- Make life easier for Probationer teachers so that they are not put off going into the profession. Currently they are expected to tick so many boxes and still produce excellent all-singing, all-dancing lessons that the pressures can be extremely off-putting for them.
- Put measures in place to protect staff from bullying by school leadership or from a lack of support with discipline issues. Currently staff have very little recourse if they are not supported.

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?)

Difficult to answer for my current school as I have only been there for a year, but what I can tell you is that in my subject we are losing a member of staff from next year and have been warned that our senior classes for both French and German will be multi-level (most likely Nat 4, Nat 5 and Higher in both, but possibly also Nat 3) I know from previous experience that it is impossible to meet all learners' needs with these types of 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?

Generally very good; I believe I have been exceptionally lucky in finding a school that has both excellent leadership and a relatively high proportion of supportive parents. Communication is another key factor: if staff feel that they have been consulted and/or ‘kept in the loop’ about things (including issues with individual pupils) then they feel more valued. It also helps to have whole school events and opportunities for staff to meet as a group regularly throughout year other than inservice days as it fosters better working relationships than only knowing colleagues through emails.

Additional comments

I really, really hope these questionnaires are actually being taken seriously and not just filed somewhere so that the government can claim it consulted us. Sorry to sound cynical, but… CfE!
KAREN VAUGHAN

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Secondary Supply teacher, Maths, ICT registered but also extensive experience as a teacher of the deaf, Behavioural Support, and general supply cover.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? South Ayrshire Council, (worked at every school both as ad hoc supply and temporary contracts), North Ayrshire Council (general supply & historic 1 year on contract), East Ayrshire Council (general supply, and historic teacher of the deaf)

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? Pension arrangements, and the flexibility of supply being able to pick and choose the days and amount of time I work. I do a great deal of work as a private tutor outside of school days, and that is amazing – doing real teaching, and doing whatever it takes to get a young person to have success and feel so proud of themselves when they have managed to grasp something especially like maths!

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 had several “career breaks” from teaching to pursue other roles over the last 20 years, and its apparent with developments if I don’t keep teaching I will lose a great deal of the pension benefit I accumulated working full time without break early on. I am happy to teach part time now until I retire but I will never accept a full time contract or work 5 days a week supply, even though my colleagues at schools are desperate and overworked, as my mental & physical health, and family/work/life balance come first.

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 towards promotion as its all full time and I won’t work in an education establishment full time now. With proper resources, more empowerment to act and not have to take the abuse from students, parents, councillors and so on when the school doesn’t quite shine as we would all like – then I would consider a part-time promoted role!

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) Recruitment isn’t a problem I don’t think, I speak to many young people who want to be teachers, as well as mature students coming from other careers. Retainment is the biggest issue. If someone makes it to 5 years then they are doing well and chances are they will stick at it. This is based on anecdotal
evidence I have seen over the years, throughout different schools, regions and disciplines.

Burn out is a big issue and just coping with the pressures 5 days a week. I do think you would get more ex-teachers back with part time contracts or job-share.

Discipline and parental dealings is also a big issue. Not necessarily the “throw the chair at your head” type behaviour. Little stuff like the girls who sit and put make up on and know all their rights, that you can’t take it away from them, the parents won’t let you give them detention and punishment exercises are thrown in the bin on the way out the door. We are powerless as teachers and as a school as a whole. And the kids know it.

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

Schools in this area seem to be struggling for English, Maths, History in that order. Every week there are two standard emails that do out: One from depute apologising that cover is really tight and some people are on full contact days and two please takes. The other is from head of pupil support which says “we still have a number of support staff off ill, so there will be changes to support in classes. We will try to support where possible but we require a number of readers and scribes this week for assessments.” In that school at particular there is a pupil with complex needs so if someone needs to take him and change him in the toilet in between periods that effectively takes them out of most of the end of last period and most of the start of next period – he takes priority when their help in those two classes could potentially benefit many. Support assistants are not covered by any supply or bank facility which doesn’t help.

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

More non-contact time to allow for quality teaching prep as well as coping with demands of paperwork, reporting, marking, mentoring of student teachers & probationers, taking a turn in the “alternative to exclusion” room, and helping whoever has appeared at the room door needing your help with something.

Everyone finds the 7 period day (Mon – Wed) a real drain on energy levels at the start of the week. (Kids struggle as well so period 5 on these days is a waste with little learning happening). Coupled with a twilight session, multiple please takes, and a parents evening, staff quickly become worn down and susceptible to all the colds and splutters, and then off ill and problems spiral.

6 period days and a 4 day contact week. Like Drs have every Wednesday morning for staff training, if we had every Wednesday morning as non contact (not in-service as you never get anything done on these days as its all meetings and developments) that might provide enough respite to give staff the energy to keep going.

Need areas/resources where we can place the children who are continual barriers to everyone else learning. Some of these kids have deputes at their
beck and call as well as the class teacher, the PT and sometimes the campus
cop when they decide to have a moment (there’s a least 1 every day – and
that’s in a “non-deprived” catchment school) that’s 4+ adults caught up in 1
student who does the same every day, while the other 29 in the maths class
sit watching the chaos. The proportion of young individuals who have no
respect or boundaries and will wander in and out of class at will, when it suits
them is definitely increasing dramatically. Because they have “anger issues”
we aren’t allowed to speak to them or try and co-erce them to co-operate so
they get away with it. Day after day. There is some great work going on in our
schools and some very talented teachers and some pupils with great potential
but its so rare that we can connect these 3 together and if we do its for maybe
15 minutes a term!

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?)

SMT are taking classes when there is no supply staff. (Temporary) and we
are about to lose a depute due to cuts.

Support assistants have been reduced over the years.

There are often head or PT sabbaticals where the staff goes on secondments
to a non-contact role at council head office. This results in a very prolonged
unsettled situation e.g. 1 depute becomes acting head, one PT guidance
becomes acting deputes, 1 PT dept become acting PT guidance, 1 dept
teacher becomes acting PT and the teacher post is left uncovered. This takes
6 -8 weeks to put in place, then it works for a just over a term, then with little
notice everyone is bumped back down again when the secondment has come
to an end and kids/staff everyone is unsettled again.

Classes have been merged and placed in one room, and due to subject
specialist shortages in long term absences, the exam students often get 1 or 2
periods a week of the PT in the actual subject who is now effectively teaching
the subject to every exam student and every exam student gets half a week of
a changing supply teacher who doesn’t really know much about the subject.

Its constant fire-fighting and re-active teaching rather than planned, pre-
empted teaching

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)
Yes, my daughter (S3) has had a keen interest in history but spent most of the year without a teacher. As a result she has become very demotivated in the subject.

Opportunities: there are so many available now, that it can be rare to have a full class attend for a full week. Learning and teaching is constantly interrupted requiring a lot of repetition. The opportunities for most part do offer something valuable to pupils but sheer volume is having a real impact on learning due to their being groups of half a dozen out on some visit or work experience or competition of some sort each day.

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. Discipline & workload being key problems. The reality is there is no money, not enough resources, and no legislation or sanctions that allow teachers to teach. Lot of pressure on us to “make” the children perform but the old adage you can take a horse to water..

Additional comments

Many of my friends who have left teaching have refused to do supply ever since the regulations were changed so they had to go back to point 1 on the payscale for the first few days. Supply is a hard demanding job in its own right and when you can't guarantee the number of days you get, you need the higher rate (assuming experience means you have earnt it!) to ensure you have enough money put by to cover the periods when there is no supply available.

School inspections do not reveal the true identity of a school as its all cherry-picked situations and manipulated to show the best. I would be delighted to wear a body camera for a day as a supply teacher so people could really see what is going on in our schools. Only when we are open and honest about the situations without fear of “punishment” for the failings, can we start to fix things. One size won’t fit all. Teaching and resources need to be allocated on practical terms not on size of role with a small “plus pointage” for certain special needs/deprivation areas. Then we can get class numbers down and more kids with nurture or behaviour specialists so the class teacher can teach! Parents need to have less “power” in telling teachers how to teach or insisting their cherub has the right to break all the school rules in full view of everyone else. At break, inside the building when they pour drinks on the floor, tip crisp bags out and chuck packets of biscuits at each other, the deputes or any staff should not be going around with bin bags picking up after the kids as this sends completely the wrong message about society. We need the ability to enforce the kids to respect themselves and each other again and it starts with basics like looking after your surroundings.

DAVID WATKINS

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary school Principal Teacher (Maths). Also worked as the school’s cover co-ordinator for 2 years dealing with arranging cover and supply for absent colleagues.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Midlothian Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Most of my pupils. Being part of an excellent team with my colleagues. The opportunity to make a positive change. Seeing progress in 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 enjoy my job and feel I am good at it, but workload, stress, pressure of SQA demands, pupil behaviour, unauthorised absences and external pressures mean I can’t see myself being able to continue much longer. This is not a criticism of my line managers, who are excellent.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I feel I could do the job (with a bit more experience), but am not sure if I am willing to submit myself to the level of workload, scrutiny, and potential criticism from parents/media/pupils that would come with a management position.

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 three biggest factors are:

- Workload. Year upon year since the credit crunch, I am led to believe that school budgets have been cut meaning that every year workload has increased steadily. Each year, you end up teaching either more periods, or larger classes, or multiple levels within the same class.
- Low level disruption by pupils; and – in my opinion – lack of backup to schools from parents/local authorities/politicians to deal with this.
- Constant changes required for CfE and SQA which are poorly communicated and based on vague criteria meaning that every practitioner in Scotland has to spend hours duplicating each other’s work because there is no central co-ordination.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
We have really struggled in maths this year. Permanent full-time vacancies have regularly attracted zero qualified applicants in our authority in the last year. Every secondary school in our authority has been operating with vacancies in their maths department this session. Numbers on teaching
training courses seem to be very low, as there have been fewer trainee teachers coming to us on placement than there used to be.

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

- Removing the significant gap between pay and bonuses for newly qualified teachers in England compared to Scotland. Financially, new teachers are much better off moving across the border rather than staying in this country. I chose to stay in Scotland because I liked living here, but I had to make a financial sacrifice to do so: if I’d moved back home to England I would have had my entire student loan paid off and been given a golden hello.
- Introducing a scheme for one-year or six-month unpaid sabbaticals every 10-15 years for teachers to take time off to relieve some of the workload pressure on them. Better to give teachers a formal route to take “time out” than for them to try and leave the profession entirely.
- Conduct an investigation into the jobs that graduates go into after University. Is the salary being paid to teachers competitive compared to other occupations? If not, what can be done to address that gap? Teaching *is* a vocation; but you people are increasingly more likely to choose the better paying job. Is teaching this job?
- Meaningful action and support for schools and teachers to deal with behaviour, and to be supported in dealing with that behaviour. For example, there is pressure on schools to reduce the number of exclusions. Whilst I’m not trying to say that exclusions (or other punishments) should be handed out lightly; it’s crucial that schools should be able to uphold discipline; and not being able to use sanctions means pupils see that they can “get away with” more and low level disruption continues to increase. Schools need to be able to set clear boundaries for what behaviour will not be accepted; and then need to be backed up by local authorities and politicians when they enforce these boundaries. Currently, my perception is that local authorities and politicians are more likely to back up parents and pupils than teachers. However this is just my perception and I can’t back it up with evidence.

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?)

Average class sizes have increased. Learning Assistants are having to be used to support the admin department as well as supporting in class, meaning in-class support is lower than it used to be. I do not know whether these changes are temporary or permanent, or whether they are dictated by cuts to
budgets, so it would be wrong of me to speculate on this when I don’t know the facts.

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)

Meeting the needs of pupils with Additional Support Needs. More staff needed in general: both dedicated ASN teachers; but also increased staffing in subject specialisms so that, for example, pupils with ASN can be taught in smaller groups in order to get more focussed help from the subject teacher.

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, but we’re still managing to put in full effort. We’re tired, workload has increased year-on-year, and the demands from the SQA have made this more difficult. But we still do our absolute best for our pupils.

**Additional comments**

If you have any other comments please include them below:

Supply staff are very, very hard to come by. The few staff who are available for supply tend to be snapped up fast.

I know the teacher unions won’t support this, but I think that the English system of employing non-teaching staff specifically to cover classes is worth considering. I think it could work, so long as it was clearly defined that these staff were not teachers, and would not be able to undertake the duties of a qualified teacher.

It also can’t be underestimated how crucial the support staff (admin staff and Learning Assistants) are to the work of a school; but they are paid a comparatively low wage for the work they do. If those staff start to leave for better paid jobs, the whole education system could begin to fall down.

**ISABEL WILSON**

Q1 What type of role do you have?
Secondary School Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
[name] Academy Aberdeenshire

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

I would be torn if asked this question. I love teaching and very much enjoy the work of a classroom teacher. There are however, aspects of my work which are now becoming really challenging. A great deal has changed in education just in the last decade or so and some changes have been poorly conceived and badly implemented. In particular, experienced teachers have not been listened to, and reasonable professional concerns have been consistently ignored. I don’t think the situation is irredeemable and I actually think that
small changes might have a positive impact, but teachers are demoralised and there is an ongoing issue of trust which will need to be addressed.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

There is a lack of progression in the career structure now. With the removal of the Chartered Teacher qualification and the introduction of the Faculty system in Secondary Education, there is a complete lack of recognition for teachers who could be described as time served or experienced. I mean those teachers who make a significant extra contribution to a school by their classroom work. (This could be a teacher who consistently gets excellent exam results or a teacher who works creatively and constructively with underachieving children or has a whole school role to develop the young work force for example.)

There’s no recognition for staying in the classroom and doing excellent work. To progress in career terms, you need to follow a managerial path and do less and less actual teaching.

Discipline is an issue. It is wearing and contributes additional stress.

Some assessment procedures within Curriculum for Excellence are not fit for purpose and need urgent review.

Pay is not keeping pace with inflation and new pension arrangements are a disincentive to people thinking of joining the profession.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?

These are possibly two separate questions. I’m currently exploring leaving teaching. I would seriously consider staying (without a pay rise), if assessment arrangements were less overwhelming. The sheer amount of what could be described as “box ticking paperwork” which is pointless and doesn’t contribute to pupil success needs to be reviewed.

I would like better CPD. A great deal of what is offered as CPD is not actually helpful or relevant. I’s like more autonomy in choosing appropriate CPD for myself.

Recruitment I’m less sure of but it certainly seems to me, as someone who has worked with teachers in training, that they are overloaded with rather silly paperwork and need more actual class time working alongside qualified teachers. They seem stressed and unable to enjoy practising to teach, and some of the expectations of their sending colleges and universities seem out of step with the realities of education today.

Poor rates of pay must act as a disincentive to young people in STEM subjects in particular because just about any other profession would mean better remuneration.

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)?
I think we have all been doing extra for some time now. There is more cover needed for classes where a teacher is missing and this eats into the time available for work within the remit of your own subject and contract. All teachers work more hours than they are contracted for and I think this will always be the case, but the actual hours are creeping up to an alarming point.

Q8 Have any measures been put in place as a result of changes to staffing numbers at your school (this can include not just classroom teachers but measures at other levels such as multi-school headship/leadership teams)? If so:

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

I think my school has made every effort to recruit staff to plug gaps. Where this has not been possible, I am aware that managers at my school have made extra support available from within the school to support pupils “suffering” from ongoing vacancies. They will for example rotate teachers within a subject specialism to ensure classes get some time with a specialist teacher, but I think it has taken its toll on staff generally (and on senior managers).

At my school we are also looking at reducing the number of subjects on offer because of problems staffing some areas.

I’m going to be honest here and say that despite the best efforts of my managerial team, it has impacted on morale. There’s less goodwill I think now, about covering vacancies. It has gone on for too long.

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?

Very tricky question. I think there’s a loyalty amongst staff to the school and to its pupils. Teachers are tired however and feel ignored. There’s a feeling that no one is listening to the teachers who are actually doing the job day in day out. There’s an anger that pay, in real terms feels as if it is being cut. There’s a tremendous willingness to try to make things work for the sake of the children, but there’s also a feeling that we aren’t making progress.

There is anger that Curriculum for Excellence is so obviously not working. You see in when pupils arrive at Secondary School. They are simply less well prepared for learning than they used to be. They are less able, less well equipped. It’s frustrating because we are watching them struggle and that in itself has a pretty disastrous effect on morale.

Additional comments

I had hoped I would be teaching for another eight years or so. I have a broad experience in education. I’ve taught in other countries and I’ve worked in Mainstream and ASN provision. I’ve worked with a wide range of abilities and aptitudes and in a variety of settings. For the last twelve years, I’ve been a subject specialist delivering BGE core and preparing youngsters in the senior
phase for SQA qualifications from Nat 4 to Advanced Higher. I mark for the SQA at Higher.

If I leave education, it will be because I basically feel undervalued. The salary isn’t my main concern, it is the ponderous paperwork and general deterioration in working conditions. You have in Scotland, a well-qualified and trained teaching workforce and that’s a tremendous resource. Yet when it comes to redesigning the curriculum or making constructive plans to address discipline issues, or even when it comes to how money is spent or what educational developments need to be prioritised…. the last people you ask are teachers. Everyone seems to agree on the importance of education yet educators are the least valued of the professions.

SECONDARY TEACHERS ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 1

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.
-Secondary school teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Perth & Kinross Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The Children’& 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)
Teach to retirement-3yrs

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacherlevel? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Nothing would encourage me to do 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)
Workload & poor salary
I teach a STEM subject ,these issues need to be addressed to attract and retain talented STEM graduates in teaching.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Science ;Maths ;Tech ;HE ;English Music ;languages

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Substantial pay increase
Make sure teachers make the decisions regarding CfE
At the moment decisions are being made without consultation with teachers
This needs to happen to avoid more workload issues

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)?
Faculty heads save money but increase workload for staff
Bi and tri level teaching inevitably lowers attainment and increases workload and stress

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)
Human Biology

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 for all of the reasons outlined above

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:
I have been teaching for 34 yrs and this is the worst time I have experienced in terms of the quality of the curriculum; excessive workload; high levels of stress; level of dissatisfaction about our job and poorest status level partly due to salary

ANONYMOUS 2

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary Teacher of History and Modern Studies

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Lothian Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
• The young people I work with!
• Colleagues
• Variety of profession, every day is different
• Rewarding to help young people achieve success with qualifications, skills and confidence
• Love and interest for my subjects

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 aim to 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?

- Encouraging: Diversity and experience in a different role, opportunity to work with a broad range of people, development of skills and CPD opportunities, increased salary and pension contributions
- Discouraging: Lack of opportunities for promotion due to faculty restructuring in many schools, high cost and time required to complete Masters, and equivalent qualifications, that are required/desired. Removal of Chartered Teacher also makes promotion increasingly difficult.

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, lack of time for planning and support for ASN, associated admin
- Lack of qualified STEM teachers.
- Stress
- Location- high cost of travel and limited salary growth
- Supply pay
- Frequent use of temporary contracts leads to uncertainty and pushes people to look for jobs elsewhere

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

- STEM subjects
- Home Economics

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

- Less time spent auditing and carrying out bureaucratic tasks and more time allocated for planning and teaching.
- Increased school budgets to allow for effective learning and teaching to take place. Use this to supply schools with resources (in particular IT) and staff (smaller class sizes).
- Teaching needs to be returned to being a respected profession in the same way that a career in law or medicine is regarded. Secondary teachers most often complete an undergraduate degree before their PGDE and this can mean they spend 5 years at university. Universities, schools, local authorities and the Scottish Government all need to promote the profession and make it more appealing.
- In order to recruit teachers, especially those in the STEM subjects, teaching must become a competitive and attractive career. 1% pay rise, in real terms a pay cut, is not sufficient. Teachers final point 7 salary is often less than some engineering graduates start out on. Whilst I recognise that teachers are public sector workers, teaching needs to become more financially attractive to attract applicants.
• Supply teaching pay scale is a disgrace. This leaves teachers with experience starting off at the same rate as a teacher who has just finished their NQT year. This alone helps to highlight why supply is a major issue.

• Increased use of temporary contracts (out with sick/maternity/paternity/secondment situations) puts people off either working in certain areas or staying in teaching as there is reduced job security.

• Lack of recognition, training, time for extra-curricular opportunities. Many teachers give up their evenings and weekends to help with extra-curricular clubs. There must be a greater budget and more opportunity for teachers to receive training to help run these clubs e.g. sports qualifications.

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?)

• Faculty restructuring (permanent measure). I am part of a Humanities Faculty which includes Geography, History, Modern Studies and RME. This appears to be purely a financially driven change. Geography for example can be considered to have more in common with the sciences than with History. Change to faculty structure has meant that I have been teaching RME this year, I am not a subject specialist and am not confident with this area of teaching.

• Reduced numbers of support assistants (permanent measure) can make teaching very challenging. For example, I have an S3 History class with one autistic learner who requires one to one help and have no learning assistant due to lack of availability in support timetable. This has been tricky as I do not feel confident that I have been able to meet the needs of all learners in the 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)

• Outdoor Education. Vital that young people have the opportunity to explore outside, learn new skills and build confidence. Whilst many school offer a 5 day excursion during Activities Week it would be very useful to see this as a subject that is more embedded within the regular school timetable. East Lothian have an Outdoor Education centre with very helpful staff but there are sadly not enough of them for the local authority.

• ASN support severely affected by lack of support assistants and teachers. To ensure schools are following the policy of inclusion and meeting the needs of all learners this should be addressed urgently.
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.
Influenced by positive working relationships, willingness of staff to work together, initiatives such as health and wellbeing in-service day.
Can be affected by stress, persistent CfE changes, lack of SQA communication over course changes,

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I absolutely love teaching and find it a rewarding and satisfying career. I am only at the start of my career and it is frustrating for me to have to write such a negative questionnaire. However, I strongly believe that unless key areas such as workload and school budgets are addressed, then it will become increasingly difficult to draw high quality graduates into the teaching. That said, I would strongly oppose a move to allow Teach First or a similar programme to start in Scotland. This programme only provides limited training and fails to retain high numbers of teachers. I think it is especially important to maintain academic standards suitable for GTCS registration in order to ensure teachers have the required skills to educate our young people.

Questionnaire should be online, easier formatting and submission. Email about this consultation should be sent out to ALL schools before the Easter holidays to give enough time to complete.

ANONYMOUS 3

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have?

Secondary – Faculty Head Technologies

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?

East Renfrewshire

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

Too few now – I am too old to change career – if I could I would do so.
There are still some elements of job satisfaction when pupils are successful
And you have guided and supported their success.

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)

See above

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
A more appropriate salary – with clearly defined duties and responsibilities that are achievable.

Workload and stress associated with these roles is the main discourager.

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)
Salary, workload, career opportunities

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Computing Science – numerous changes to content and assessment and the need for appropriate training for staff

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Improve the salary to a level that is comparable with other graduates
Stop the endless changes to the curriculum and increases to workload that

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)
At senior school if there are 4 or less wanting to do a particular course it will not run. Despite staff being available – they are used for 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 low – the lowest I have ever saw!!!

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:
The problem of workload have not been addressed despite the government saying it has – more and more teachers are off with work related stress. The curriculum is at its worse in terms of content / structure and progression that it has ever been. CfE has done more to damage pupils and staff than any other development in education. Change is a constant feature of our education system – nothing is allowed to develop gradually and there are endless new policies and practices to incorporate to tick a box. My salary is lower than it was 4 years ago – how is that meant to motivate me and justify the extra hours that I and my colleague put in every year!

ANONYMOUS 4

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
[Secondary School Teacher]
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

- My passion for teaching Latin and Classical Studies to young people. The enthusiasm that the ancient world can stimulate in pupils and young people from every background turns my job into a passion and a privilege.

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)

- Would like to think that I will be teaching until I retire, but I would consider moving into Teacher Training and University Level education.

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

- Encouragement: Ensuring there was a positive voice for Classics at a management level. So many schools have lost their Classics departments due to the ignorance of Senior Management.
- Discouragement: There no opportunities for Classics teachers to enter the State-Sector/ few opportunities in the Independent Sector to enter senior management due to the lack of teacher available to cover the classroom requirement of a member of staff in management. This is due to the lack of Teacher Training Provision in Latin and Classical Studies. By leaving the classroom for management, the risk of the Classics department reducing or folding is too great for many Classics teachers to embrace.

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)

- For Classics – there is no PGDE programme in Scotland for new teachers to be employed into schools. Non-Scottish Trained Teachers are the only source of Classics teachers now and the process of registration with the GTCS makes it very difficult and for these teachers to be registered in time to start at the beginning of the new term.

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

- Latin
- Classical Studies

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

- Re-launching a Classics PGDE Course in Scotland.
- Highlighting to schools the invaluable contribution Latin and Classical Studies can make to Literacy, Language, Cultural Heritage, World History, Philosophy, Politics, Philology, Etymology, etc.
ANONYMOUS 5

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Teacher of Geography

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Love of subject, enjoyment of interaction with students, positive role model for teenagers.

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 desperate to leave. I haven’t had a pay rise now for 5 years!
In 2018 I am due to get a pay cut of 20% thanks to [education authority] cutting all PT subject posts See notes at end.
I have a faculty head who is trying to impose ill thought out strategies that do not work. She has less experience than me and does not listen to experienced teachers. I am drowning in paperwork and changing courses and am not able to get on with the job of teaching and learning.
‘collegiality’ means that non promoted staff are now having to share the tasks which were previously done by promoted staff (ie subject heads). They are not getting paid for this but are expected to do more and more paperwork and roles.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Not at all. The promotion structure in Scottish schools has changed so dramatically in the last 5-10 years that promoted teachers are now being asked to take on huge, huge roles with impossible workloads and accountability. There are no real routes to promotion now…..someone with only a few years teaching is suddenly in charge of a faculty of 3-6 subjects without the knowledge and experience to do it. There are not enough experienced staff in promoted posts. Promoted teachers are doing the job for 2 years and then trying to jump up the ladder again……without the correct skills to do so!!
DHT and HTS and faculty heads have to work ludicrous hours to earn a wage…it is burning many out !!! This in turn is pressurising teachers below them to do more and more without pay rises !! resentment builds up and stress continues.
Promoted posts holders are bullied by authorities and parents ! Not worth the extra pay !

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)
Posts only available on temporary contracts, posts only available as part time contracts, lack of smaller level promoted posts. Staff not valued by the
authority, promoted post staff not qualified enough to do the job and only interested in further promotion and then leave after only a short time in post….perhaps there should be some sort of requirement to stay in post for a minimum of 5 years??

HR don’t seem to know where the suitably qualified teachers are. In my school, we were looking for a geography teacher for 3 days a week, the authority said there were none but there was !! We found her (in another school in the authority and desperate to teach her own subject !)…..I had to do my own searching to find someone on 3 separate occasions.

Incompetence of HR departments in authorities…..must be the most incompetent department in the whole authority!

With regards to teacher training. 2 years ago, the responsibility of sending students to schools was taken on by the GTC. This has not proved to be successful as they have been unable to place students in schools. Several weeks after the placements had started there were still some students without schools, yet there were schools willing to take them. There seems to have been a breakdown somewhere!!

Also, the fact that many schools teach integrated social subjects in BGE (all down to cutting costs !!), means that may students are unable to obtain experience at teaching their own subjects while on placement, effectively meaning that a teacher can start as a probationer without experience of teaching their own individual subject.

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

In my subject of Geography, the problem is that schools are looking for teachers for part time posts and not full time ones….therefore schools are unable to recruit.

I am not sure which other subjects are facing the greatest problem ….in my case it is the lack of jobs that are actually available for the numbers applying. There is a shortage in the north of Scotland and a surplus in the central belt.

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

Reduce paperwork, make more full time and permanent jobs available (lack of jobs is putting people off trying), re introduce subject heads, improve the promotion structure, improve pay (I haven’t had a pay rise for 5 years!!!!!), improve job security, improve the publics’ view of teachers, increased clarification from the SQA.. improve discipline in schools by giving schools more authority but, above all, STOP THE NON STOP CHANGES TO EDUCATION AND INTRODUCE A PERIOD OF STABILITY !!!!!

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?)

Yes, too numerous to go into in great detail. School only has 2 deputes and 1 temporary depute. This is not enough for a school of 1050 pupils, given that other authorities have 4 or 5 DHTS in schools the same size. No PT subjects exist now and faculties are large....4/5 subject sizes. Also faculty heads have whole school remits in addition to faculty management.

In addition, lack of pupil support assistants to help increasing numbers of pupils with additional needs.

Lack of administration staff to undertake admin tasks so teaching staff are doing more of this , as well as teaching.

Composite classes , multi level teaching ......all levels \, from non readers and writers to gifted pupils in classes of 30. Teachers not trained to deal with this and don’t have time to prepare materials .

Principal teachers losing their jobs. Many teachers on temporary contracts......no job security. Authorities lose track of supply staff and therefore don’t allocate to correct schools. HR in councils seem to hate teachers. HR do not communicate with teachers properly, some new teachers go unpaid and Hr do not seem to know what is going on anywhere in schools!

Many teachers unable to secure permanent posts as they do not want to create any to allow for future flexibility.....therefore, good teachers becoming demoralised and leave the profession.

In our school we do not even have a PT learning support .

PSE is treated badly in our school, as those who are supposed to teach it often have meetings arranged and don’t turn up for class !! Their pupil support roles have so much form filling that they do not plan PSE classes. Some department shave had successive years with a probationer in the department as authorities are unwilling to give them full time teachers on permanent contracts, As a result, there is no job security for the teacher and no continuity for the pupils or staff in departments .

The lack of subject principal teaches and huge faculties with faculty heads non specialists , means that there are many teachers in one teacher departments, teacher the full spectrum of course from BGE to AH , and running fieldwork trips too. When that teacher is a probationer, they are often drowning in workloads , as well as not being fully aware of procedures, SQA guidelines and having less of a subject knowledge ( which all of gain through time). Many are becoming demoralised and leaving the profession. 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)

My subject ( Geography ) is almost systematically being wiped out in the authority because it is only being placed in 1 option column and this means pupils are unable to take it as it clashes with maths or a pure science.

Complaints from pupils and parents that they are unable to take the subjects of their choice and carry it forward from the National to Higher because of
subject choice forms. Pressure from guidance staff and parents to do 3 pure science subjects …..partly due to staff being available there. I am not party to all the decisions that are being made.

The biggest reason for the lack of choice that young people face is the decision by the government and the authorities to reduce the number of subjects from 8 – 6…..yet private schools are able to maintain subjects at 8.

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 ; discipline is poor…senior management and parents do not back teachers up. Verbal abuse from pupils and parents , especially parents.

Online bullying of staff from pupils and parents.

Because there are hardly any promoted posts, young staff are going for promotion very early , with hardly any experience and flounder in their new roles. ‘whizz kids are being promoted who ‘talk the talk ‘ but are not capable of doing the job. Little training available for staff…..lack of adequate, cheap CPD.

Far too much paperwork from SQA, within schools and from the authority. Every few years the authority changes systems,from recording reports to absences etc…… [education authority] is always changing things and staff are not given adequate training,

Loss of PT subjects in [education authority] and staff being treated like dirt by HR department and the education department…..see comment below.

Teachers have always been asked to work on a voluntary basis eg running trips, supervising concerts, parties etc but when we are asked to do so much more in our ordinary job , this then has pushed many over the stress limit. In my subject, teachers are expected to organise field trips ( which I think are exceptionally worthwhile ) but are now asked to do this with less and less staff in the department

Additional comments

16 years ago I was appointed as a PT subject in a job that I believed was for life. [education authority] began to employ faculty heads but only on the understanding that PT subject retained their jobs, roles and salaries. One day, during the Easter Holidays in 2014 , all Pt subjects received a letter , signed by the head of education , via the HR department , telling us that we had 2 years left on conserved salaries and that we would no longer be Principal Teachers. No further details were given, other than ' consult your headteacher'. The headteachers knew nothing about this at all. We tried to arrange meetings with HR and they refused to meet with us…..eventually, after a long argument , they met with some of us. They were not aware that we were still doing the job of PT subject . They were subsequently forced into giving us 1 more years of a conserved salary and then told we would no longer be employed. Unlike other authorities we were not guaranteed faculty head positions. You can only imagine the distress and humiliation that we feel. To say that we are ‘demotivated ‘; now is an understatement, given that many of us are really too old to be considered for faculty head posts. Also, in [education authority] the faculty head posts are huge remits which would
mean vastly increasing the workload, much more so than faculty heads in other authorities.

As a result, why should we give anything more than what is legally required of us.

If you have any other comments please include them below:

ANONYMOUS 6

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary Teacher (Modern Languages)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Glasgow

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Desire to share love of language-learning and help pupils achieve their potential in the world.

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)
Would consider leaving early as pace of change is too great, subject I teach is not valued by management, indiscipline, lack of respect for teachers. Pupils in Senior Phase not given opportunities to broaden their horizons (only 6 subjects in S4) and forced to study for exams in b-level classes. No motivation for pupils in S3 when they know they will drop the subject in S4.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Too much asked of management for too little financial reward. Management spend days on emails and reports instead of being with pupils.

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 status in society, indiscipline in schools and poor pay, particularly in relation to older, unpromoted staff who have reached top grade in the pay scale. Young teachers poorly equipped to deal with workload. The most able are not coming into teaching. Poor training from non-subject specialists eg Primary teachers mentoring Modern Language specialists. Teacher not equipped to deal with number of pupils with serious mental health issues in class of 30 in particular.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Move away from CfE, better pay structures, financial rewards for extra hours
and extra-curricular activities, more classroom assistants, better discipline procedures and psychological services.

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)
Access to foreign languages. When I was on long-term sick leave last year pupils were not taught for a term because it was impossible to find a language 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?
Very low. There is not enough time to prepare and reflect. There are too many new initiatives imposed on teachers by people who have been out of the classroom for too long. Teaching 7 periods in a day is too much for staff and pupils. It becomes like a conveyor belt. We barely have 10 minutes for lunch. It is particularly difficult to teach modern languages as pupils do not value the subject, and this situation has become worse since Brexit.

Additional comments
I value the opportunity to give my views on the current state of Scottish education. The pupils coming from Primary are not equipped to access the secondary curriculum in terms of literacy and numeracy. As a languages teacher, I have to teach grammar and how to tell the time in English before I can do so in the foreign language. The Primary curriculum is overcrowded and the basic are not being embedded. It is also a nonsense to expect Primary teachers to teach foreign languages. This should be done by specialists who are passionate about the language and have lived in the country concerned.

ANONYMOUS 7
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
FH Science - Biology
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeen City
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Challenge of finding ways to inspire young people and making a difference in their potential futures.
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 expect to be teaching until I am 60. The strain of full time teaching in the future might mean that this is “early retirement”

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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 DHT or HT posts due to the increased demands placed on senior staff in a school which has very challenging pupils.

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 in Aberdeen and around is too high for people new to the area or starting off their teaching career,

Constant changes and uncertainty to education practices may put people off.

Behaviour management and the challenge of inclusion for people with little or no training.

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

Physics, Maths, Technical, Languages

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

Relocation packages/Affordable housing to attract new recruits to an area.

Extensive CPD and training for new and current staff on dealing with certain behaviours.

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?)

Shortages to staffing in Physics has resulted in temporary staff covering classes (5 teachers over one year) and these staff have covered 2 schools and multiple subjects. I have had to cover a senior class in another school for 4 periods a week when they were short staffed.

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)

Physics and technical subjects which have not had permanent staff for the past year.
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?

In this school morale is high as there is a very supportive atmosphere and great communication. In other I know schools changes to staffing has created a lot of stress and morale is low and compounded by a lack of support.

ANONYMOUS 8

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

I am currently working as a Modern Studies teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

West Dunbartonshire Council

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

I enjoy working with the pupils and seeing them progress. I take delight in seeing them do well

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 remain in 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?

Nothing I enjoy the classroom environment

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)

Location is one difficulty and a fair proportion of the pupils can be challenging

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

I think retention can be a problem across the school

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

I feel the rewards regarding pay have been diluted and that the lack of progression for pupils has made the situation worse. I also firmly believe that curriculum for excellence has a considerable way to travel before we can say it is a success

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 authority wide classes at advanced higher but it can involve travel which many pupils are reluctant to do.

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 has fallen over the years as staff find it increasingly frustrating taking on board the frequent changes that are being implemented

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:
I enjoy teaching but new entrants are finding it difficult

ANONYMOUS 9

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.
PT Subject (Art, Design and Photography) in a Secondary school.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Moray

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Teaching young people and offering opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in Art, Design and Photography. Teaching skills that can be used in other areas of the curriculum. Preparing pupils for life and not just the subject or exams. Each day is different. The support 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 am within one year of retirement and have enjoyed teaching for the vast majority of the time. The last few years have been challenging with all the changes made. As far as my subject is concerned these changes were unnecessary as there has been very little if any improvement to the structure. If I was entering teaching now, I do not think that I would have continued as long as I have.

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 higher than PT level.

The extra hours and responsibility. The fact that you are getting flak from above and below. I don’t see the attraction in that I would struggle to see where any job satisfaction would come from.

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)
Education and the teaching profession are used as a political football. There is always some article in the media about Education and teachers and this is often not positive or moral boosting. The pay has suffered over the past 8 years or so and is now not an attractive salary in relation to other professions. How anyone in their right mind thinks that a teacher in their mid to late 60s can still do the job effectively is beyond me. Too many jobs are offered as part-time temporary and this will put people off. No one will want to up-sticks and move for this type of appointment.

Greater need for each region to ‘grow’ their own teachers. Budget cuts that affect Per Capita expenditure for departments eg in my own department the per capita in 2004-05 was £2613, last year it was £1100. Costs have gone up, expectations are higher. It is becoming impossible to do the job effectively because of this. I regularly spend about £200-£300 a year out of my own pocket.

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

Regions training their own teachers either in a college with teacher placements or in schools that become training centres for new teachers. Salaries that are commensurate with the demands of the job. Teaching is not a 9-5 job, teachers never switch off. Reduce the retirement age to a realistic and effective age.

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 been lucky in our school in that we do not have many, if any staff shortages. Moray use Moray College as a venue for the Moray wide delivery of some Highers and Advanced Highers.

In my subject we have always had composite classes, some years we range from National 3-Higher in the same room.

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)

Pupils in my school have a wide range of opportunities. In my department we offer National courses in Art and Design, NPA level 4 and 5 in Photography and Higher Photography.
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.

Key factors—workload, having to re-do work/forms to reflect the changes in assessment/reporting/tracking already completed.

Constant changes/meddling/interfering imposed on us.

Not having a voice at national and local level. Reduction in salary in real terms, changes to pension age and contributions. The good will of the teaching profession that goes beyond our contract being taken for granted and in some cases used against us.

**ANONYMOUS 10**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Secondary English, part time (0.6)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

South Lanarkshire

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

Job satisfaction, enjoyment of working with young people, love of my subject and being able to engage with pupils through this. Opportunities for professional development.

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)

As I left a previous career to retrain as a teacher, I would hope I will teach until I retire. I work part time for health reasons but find preparation, planning, tracking, marking and resource development takes up more and more of my own time outwith the school day. Therefore, there have been and I am sure will continue to be times where I would consider leaving teaching due to ongoing and increasing workload commitments.

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 have any interest in seeking promotion to senior management level and will continue to develop my skills as a classroom teacher. However, with Chartered Teacher no longer available as a qualification with renumeration, there is little incentive to retain high calibre teachers 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)

My experience of recruitment has been at an Authority level rather than an individual school level where council-wide interviews are held before
successful candidates are allocated a school. I have found this process demoralising and it took me a number of years to secure a post, even though I had very good references. There have been many more applicants than posts (in my experience) and authorities choose whether to appoint internally using their NQTs/supply or advertise externally. There is a lack of supply teachers available but again, in my experience, some authorities don’t hold onto supply teachers and overall, the pay rates plus access to CPD aren’t favourable. As I work part time, I had registered with several authorities for extra supply work. One such authority seemed to have a policy that if you turned them down twice for work in a session, they removed you from their supply list. Another, in the 3-4 years I have been on their list, have only ever given me 1 day’s supply work because they tend to use retired teachers or their own part time staff.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
I’d imagine some of the subjects with the bigger marking commitments eg Maths and English. However, in my experience, people will move on for promotion or to leave a particular school for a variety of issues rather than leave teaching altogether.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
A more balanced picture of recruitment across all authorities, with feedback provided to applicants. Eg Glasgow appears to give applicants their scores from interview but other authorities eg South Lanarkshire do not and feedback on performance as an unsuccessful candidate has been (in my experience) difficult to obtain. Also, the issue of short term pay for supply teachers should be addressed.

Workload issues in secondary education 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)?
Restricted use of the school library as we don’t have a librarian 2 days a week as he is working in another 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?
It depends on the time of year. Most recently, in my department, morale has gone to quite good/quiet low due to workload issues. However, everyone has continued to make sure deadlines are met but this is having an impact on staff in terms of physical and mental health. This pressure seems to be increasing year on year too which is really concerning. I worry about the future. I should, as a part time teacher, be able to manage my workload but feel I am unable to do so without it encroaching into a lot of my own personal and unpaid time. I do undertake more than I need to in terms of professional development and resource development work for my department, however, I do enjoy this and it
is necessary in developing best quality learning experiences for our young people.

ANONYMOUS 11

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary History/Modern Studies teacher, permanent.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Glasgow City Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Seeing students feeling happy and safe in your environment. Helping pupils achieve a goal. Getting to know different people. Encouraging people to believe in themselves. Bank 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)
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 have two different interpretations of this question (apologies)
I do not feel confident enough for interviews. I don't feel there are enough opportunities for interview preparation but also that there could be some form of shadowing opportunities to allow people not only to gain experience to talk about in the interview but to decide if the job is right for a person. More autonomy no how your department or school would run would be a nice concept but I feel at certain levels you would be dictated to? I am discouraged by the interview scoring system which is being used ad discouraged at how HR departments can move people around different schools and not be held accountable for the difficulties this places on young peoples learning as well as the teachers ability to continue their development.

I would like to be able to build my own team of people I am working with. I would like to have some more choices in courses covered and also help implement a positive behaviour strategy that works. I would not like to be constantly

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 a 15/20 minute interview does not determine your ability as a teacher. In fact, some interview processes where a teacher has to go and teach a class while being observed as part of their interview, whilst this is a move in the right direction I don't feel it truly reflects a realistic situation of the
classroom. Someone coming and watching you with your own class would however. In addition, submitting one reference that only gets looked at, there should be 2 or perhaps 3 references from different people who have a different work capacity. A Senior pupil, fellow colleague, department head, remit manager (school improvement group organiser for example) and finally a head teachers report. Lots of options. Retaining staff – not being given enough support emotionally. Not being offered appropriate contracts. Being given part-time hours when looking for full. Not being welcomed into the work place.

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?)

Recently small changes. New PT posts to cover Literacy, PT Numeracy etc etc... PT Raising Attainment I feel has worked as it has been organised for non-attending pupils to have some tutoring and complete some assessments so they do not leave with no qualifications whatsoever. These posts are temporary for several years.

There are leadership groups within the school but have limited impact I feel as finding time within WTA to meet is difficult and to find a time suitable out-with which suits all.

Support assistants: massive changes, I feel there are so many new pupils with different needs entering into S1 that more and more time is being taken on one-to-one programmes such as Toe by Toe and Nurture. Whilst I highly appreciate these courses and programmes are vital, I feel the availability of support assistants in a classroom has thus been effected. More staffing mixed between EAL/SfL/PSA is vital. I feel these programmes should be offered in all Primary schools also if that would work.

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)
N5 or Higher – Politics, Sociology, Psychology.

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 – very influential never static. I think positivity as a person accounts for a lot of this however I do feel staff deadlines are a very testing period of time. I also think a lack of whole school opportunities makes this difficult in large schools. Super-schools are big enough that a faculty can feel
like a staffing, smaller schools are just that but schools around 1200 I feel is quite difficult to get a whole school staff morale and difficult to gauge.

ANONYMOUS 12

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
I am a Curricular leader in Modern Languages

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? 
West Dunbartonshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? 
Interaction with pupils.
Feeling that I am making a difference to pupils' lives.
Sense of fulfilment in leading a department.

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 intend to teach till 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 already promoted to Curriculum Leader level. I was not mentored at any point during my career, nor was I encouraged to apply for Depute posts, despite being a very effective teacher and Head of Department. There is no 'buddying' or mentoring process in teaching. As a result, able staff do not feel valued or encouraged to improve their skills and knowledge. I feel that good and very good practitioners are not encouraged to seek promotion. Often it is in the school's best interest to retain these people at their current level. I also feel that those who do seek promotion, are not always the best managers or leaders. The promotion system in teaching seems to reward persistence, not merit..

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 promotion opportunities for teachers; burgeoning workload; discipline issues, lack of support with these from SLT and subsequent high stress levels; difficulty of achieving an acceptable work/life balance; constant development work; lack of respect from society in general and parents and pupils in particular. I am sorry to say that I would think twice before encouraging anyone to enter teaching nowadays. At times it can be a very rewarding experience but it exacts a heavy toll on those who enter the profession.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
All subjects face a problem sourcing effective subject specialist supply when needed. English is particularly hard hit in our school this session.

Vacancies attract few applicants in English and Modern Languages. More and more often, Curricular leaders or Principal teachers are expected to ‘source’ their own applicants.

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

Increased support for new staff; reintroduction of promoted posts within faculties/ departments to assist Curriculum Leaders and to get the best out of staff, affording them an opportunity to take on substantive responsibilities. The move away from this structure has seriously damaged the teaching profession because it has made it less attractive to new entrants.

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?)

In our department, we are currently covering a long-term absence and, because of a lack of effective supply teachers, the remaining members of the department have absorbed that timetable into their own, resulting in increased workload and stress. Last session, a maternity cover could only be filled by a supply teacher who, quite frankly, was disaffected and confrontational with pupils. That experience gave me a great deal of worry and stress and the pupils and parents a less than ideal experience.

Support staff are spread very thinly across classes and vacancies are not filled. This leaves pupils and staff unsupported.

The introduction of faculties and the reduction in the number of Depute posts in each secondary school in our authority has led to a reduction in promoted posts and some staff taking on faculty leadership without the experience to do so. It has also resulted in a lowering of overall staff morale, as Curricular Leaders take on duties which were previously seen as a Depute’s. Discipline has been the most obvious casualty of these moves.

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)

Not in our curricular area

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 – I have been teaching for more than 30 years and can honestly say that it is very hard to motivate staff. We feel burdened by continuous curricular changes and a lack of support regarding indiscipline.

ANONYMOUS 13

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

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Scottish Borders Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
- Working with the pupils
- Seeing the pupils develop over the course of their school career
- Contributing to the community
- Being inspired by other colleagues
- Instilling a love and interest of the subject
- Feeling like I’m making 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)
I would like to teach until I retire, but as the retirement age is constantly increasing, I’m not sure if I’ll physically/mentally be able to teach for the whole of my career since it is such a physically and emotionally demanding job. It might be that I have to switch to another form of employment.

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
- More responsibility for changing the things I want changed

Discourage:
- Having to deal with problem parents and students
- The beaurocracy associated with working with the council and adhering to their box-ticking and accountability structures
- Work-life balance
- Not really being a classroom teacher anymore
- Not trained for that job currently

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 is not competitive compared to other fields graduates might choose to work in. Also, because there are few promotional opportunities, teachers
find that their unpromoted salary is not competitive compared to other fields, so some then choose to move to other sectors of employment. The axing of the chartered teaching system means that there are very few options for people to develop as professionals and have their pay reflect this. Also, since department-head roles have been amalgamated into a smaller number of faculty head roles, it makes the role of faculty head a massive, often unsustainable or unachievable job. This discourages many people from remaining in the profession, preferring to change to other jobs that have a similar pay to faculty head but with a more sustainable workload. At the moment, teachers are expected to either work their allocated hours and not do the basics of the job (e.g. marking, planning) well, or they are expected to make up the hours required in order to do their job to a decent standard in their own time. This is very demoralising and many do not want to have their personal lives encroached upon by their jobs. Since most go into the profession for the right reasons (to improve the life chances and educational ability of their pupils), many feel guilty if they feel they haven’t put enough of their own time into these things and feel like they are letting their pupils down. Teachers need more time in school to do planning, marking etc properly so that they can do their job to the best of their ability without having to sacrifice their personal lives in order to do so. This is not currently achievable, hence why people leave.

The paperwork and box-ticking associated with CfE is unsustainable and does not help pupils progress. It simply takes lots of teacher time and reduced the amount of time in class devoted to the actual teaching of the curriculum. The documents produced for secondary CfE exams are a joke – so vague, so lengthy and so many of them (with updates not being widely publicised) that it’s really difficult to know what we need to teach. I am a marker for the SQA and it’s only through that that I vaguely know what the kids need to know/how to write in order to get the grades. The SQA don’t communicate that information outside of marker meetings and markers are forbidden from passing on their knowledge to colleagues. Cutting of additional needs budgets mean there is much less support for these students, both in and out of class. This places extra burden on the class teachers to cater for the needs of these students on their own in addition to everything else required, which is very draining. Teachers are not respected in the same way they used to be, reflected in the pay not being competitive with other “respected” jobs.

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

• Non-core subjects as their pupil numbers are decreasing as a result of CfE subject choice restrictions
• Subjects that require high numbers of teachers (e.g. English, Maths)

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

• Better pay in line with other “respected” careers
• Better attention given to addressing work-life balance issues and the amount teachers are expected to do in order to achieve the basics of their jobs
• Better, clearer communication from the government and SQA about curriculum requirements

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 assistant numbers have plummeted. Not working well - the majority of additional needs pupils are now not getting the level of support they need, which is not fair on them and also puts additional pressure on classroom teachers to give these pupils enough 1:1 support whilst teaching the other 29 pupils in the class too

• Non-teaching roles like librarians, admins staff have decreased in number and their responsibilities have been allocated to remaining staff members. Not working well – those staff members already had challenging workloads and are finding it more difficult to achieve their increased workloads as a result. For example, the library is only open part-time as the librarian has to run the library, the IT services and reprographics. Key roles like business manager are not filled on a permanent basis and therefore do not get the best staff doing them.

Some changes are permanent (e.g. number of AN posts – result of budget cuts, not reduced need for these posts); others are temporary whilst the council reviews the non-teaching employment structure, but this review has been on-going for the past 3 years with no progress having been made, which is useless.

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 could always do more if we had more staff (e.g. more trips, after-school clubs etc). I have not had an direct experience of this but believe other schools 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?

Quite low. Influencing factors:

• Too much to do and not enough time to do it
• Unclear, inconsistent communication from SQA re CfE requirements
• Behaviour of pupils not being addressed
• Parental expectations of their children and their teachers
• Accountability for exam results in an unclear, high-pressure, beaurocratic curriculum.

Extended Response

I would be happy to be called before the committee to comment further if needed.
What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

The pay is not competitive compared to other fields graduates might choose to work in. Also, because there are few promotional opportunities, teachers find that their unpromoted salary is not competitive compared to other fields, so some then choose to move to other sectors of employment. The axing of the chartered teaching system means that there are very few options for people to develop as professionals and have their pay reflect this. Also, since department-head roles have been amalgamated into a smaller number of faculty head roles, it makes the role of faculty head a massive, often unsustainable or unachievable job. This discourages many people from remaining in the profession, preferring to change to other jobs that have a similar pay to faculty head but with a more sustainable workload. At the moment, teachers are expected to either work their allocated hours and not do the basics of the job (e.g. marking, planning) well, or they are expected to make up the hours required in order to do their job to a decent standard in their own time. This is very demoralising and many do not want to have their personal lives encroached upon by their jobs. Since most go into the profession for the right reasons (to improve the life chances and educational ability of their pupils), many feel guilty if they feel they haven’t put enough of their own time into these things and feel like they are letting their pupils down. Teachers need more time in school to do planning, marking etc properly so that they can do their job to the best of their ability without having to sacrifice their personal lives in order to do so. This is not currently achievable, hence why people leave.

The paperwork and box-ticking associated with CfE is unsustainable and does not help pupils progress. It simply takes lots of teacher time and reduced the amount of time in class devoted to the actual teaching of the curriculum. The documents produced for secondary CfE exams are a joke – so vague, so lengthy and so many of them (with updates not being widely publicised) that it’s really difficult to know what we need to teach. I am a marker for the SQA and it’s only through that that I vaguely know what the kids need to know/how to write in order to get the grades. The SQA don’t communicate that information outside of marker meetings and markers are forbidden from passing on their knowledge to colleagues.

Cutting of additional needs budgets mean there is much less support for these students, both in and out of class. This places extra burden on the class teachers to cater for the needs of these students on their own in addition to everything else required, which is very draining. Teachers are not respected in the same way they used to be, reflected in the pay not being competitive with other “respected” jobs.

Hardly have time to teach what’s in the spec never mind trying to be innovative at the same time.. as one colleague often said at every meeting " where's the time?" the narrowing curriculum in secondary schools is a challenge – 6 subjects at Nationals level has reduced pupil numbers in non-core subjects drastically. This has led lots of teachers to feel completely demoralised, feeling like it’s their bad teaching that is resulting in reduced numbers, and seek alternative employment where they feel more valued.
Probation year salary does not reflect the amount of hours that teachers do to prepare and get on their feet. University programmes are not in touch with the real world of teaching. Some teachers are not welcoming to students when on placement.

Do you have views or insight into the process for recruiting the right number of teachers to satisfy the demand for teachers in Scotland’s schools (including the availability of up to date information such as on supply and demand)?

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 – they will compare the payscale, equality of pay between men and women, promotional opportunities etc

Work-life balance – many perceive the hours of teaching to work well with childcare. This is not the case, however, given the workload expectations of the profession – teachers take work home all the time or have to stay late/go in early in order to meet the basic requirements of the job

Holidays with your children – many see this as an attractive option that wouldn’t be available with other professions. Work often needs to be completed during holidays, however, so this perception often does not end up being completely true in reality

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

My training left me feeling inadequately prepared to be a teacher. The training relies heavily on placements to teach you how to do the job, but the quality of placements varies hugely, with some giving less-than-satisfactory experiences for trainees. I very much felt whilst on my placements that I was an extra pair of hands to give the existing staff a break and that the basics of the job were not really seen as something that needed to be taught to me.

Looking back, I find it amazing that I was not really ever taught how to actually plan a lesson – one lesson plan that the university lecturer had devised was shown as “the way” and that was it. Whilst on placement, there was no opportunity to sit down and discuss how to use this to suit my students or what other options were available. The result was me spending ridiculous amounts of time on each lesson and little knowledge of how it could be done more sustainably. Most of the information taught at university was not really practical for the “nuts and bolts” of the job – it was more theoretical. Whilst this is an important part of the job, it leaves teachers without the fundamental practical skills required to undertake the job. Whilst this is personal experience, it appears to be a common experience as a result of talking to other colleagues. As a result, many choose to leave the course or not pursue the profession after qualifying.

What is the impact of teacher shortages in certain parts of Scotland or in specific disciplines?

Negative impact on student experience and achievement.

Negative effect on student uptake of a subject to examination level, resulting in the decline of that subject in that school

Additional stress on colleagues, since cover teachers/supply teachers are merely “bodies” in front of the class, but do not have the subject knowledge required to be effectively teaching the class. As a result, subject timetables change in order to lessen the impact of this on particular classes by spreading
existing subject colleagues to cover some of these classes, but this spreads the impact of the shortage across more classes. This is particularly marked in English and Maths in my school currently. How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools? Since cover is so expensive, schools are not keen to pay for long-term cover unless absolutely necessary. They would rather exhaust all cheaper options before this (e.g. internal cover, other department colleagues teaching above their allocation etc). Having local authority influence on this does not help – it is difficult to advertise vacant positions as permanent or full-time, meaning fewer people are interested in applying for vacant positions. What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave? All of the above. What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level? The job of senior management does not seem appealing to many, since it is so far removed from teaching. Having to deal with parents, behavioural children and moaning staff puts many people off.

ANONYMOUS 14

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? secondary

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? Aberdeen city

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I enjoy sharing my knowledge, developing my knowledge and working with most of the young people I teach. I also feel I am paid reasonably well and I enjoy the hours and 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 considering early retirement

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I would only consider promotion to department head, as I feel being in charge of a faculty is too large a remit and so too stressful. I am not interested in being a head teacher as I like teaching in the class and I do not want the responsibilities and stresses. I also do not wish to manage that many other adults.
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 behaviour management of teenagers is the primary deterrent to people considering teaching. I think pupils tend to be very aware of their rights, but reluctant to always consider their responsibilities. I think it is very difficult to manage unruly pupils as teachers have very little they can do to control or punish bad behaviour. For example if a group of pupils decide to continually undermine a teachers authority (often with low level disruption, e.g. talking, moving about, chewing gum, using mobile phones in class) this can be very difficult to control, because of a pack mentality of the pupils and it is very demoralising and stressful for the teacher.

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

I think the sciences, home economics and CDT are the most difficult to recruit as Science graduates can earn more in industry and in CDT and home economics pupils are often less academically inclined, interested in education and so behaviour is more challenging.

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

If there was a way of publically applauding the teachers more often. If there was more support in behaviour management of pupils, and if the public could see how most pupils behave – the positive side this might encourage more people to consider 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?
  Fewer classroom assistants and learning support staff. Having more pupils with barriers to learning in the class.

- How well are they working?
  Pupils with difficulties are less supported, and so can be more disruptive.

- 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 changes appear to me to be permanent.

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)
Home economics. Some of the languages. Less well supported creative subjects e.g. photography, pottery, cake decoration.

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, as our new head teacher seems to acknowledge our work. The previous one rarely did this.

ANONYMOUS 15

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Permanent secondary school Modern Languages teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?.
North Ayrshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The pupils and making sure they achieve the best they can.

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 don’t think I will have a choice but teach until retirement. At the moment, I am 45 and fit to teach but after 55, teachers usually struggle. If I found alternative employment at that point, I would take it.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I have decided long ago not to go for promotion. In my area, subject-specific principal teacher jobs have disappeared in favour of faculty leader posts. I can see on an everyday basis how poor a job people who are not subject specialists do and I would not like to be in the same position.

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)
- discipline
- lack of support from senior managers
- unmanageable workload (if you do your job properly, you can’t have a life outside school)
- poor pay

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
- effectively reduce the workload (not the way it is done at the moment by SQA since the changes will actually increase our workload)
- address discipline issues nationwide
- offer better 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?)
  - composite classes (3 levels in classes, S4, S5 and S6 in the same classes or National 5, higher and advanced higher in same classes)
  - faculty leaders instead of principal teachers for each subject
  - reduction in classroom assistants and admin support staff
None of the above measures are working.

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 was taken off the timetable.

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?
Extremely low. The factors influencing it are stated above.

ANONYMOUS 16

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Full time permanent – secondary school teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Scottish Borders Council

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

Continue til I retire at 60 but if I was younger I would be looking to do something else – not intending to do supply thereafter

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

Nothing – the workload is far too great, no actually impossible and the pay is not enough compensation for giving up your 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)

Workload – from teaching multi level classes and constant changes eg introduction of higher still followed by cfe which led to changes in the whole system – ie standard grade to N4 and N5 new higher arrangements. Lack of coherent information on what we are supposed to be doing. Having to spend hours looking for information on websites to try to find out what we’re supposed to be doing. Language in documentation – not clear what it actually means.

Poor pay and conditions of service.

Changes to the pension scheme – having to teach to 67 to get the pension – most people cannot do this job for that length of time!

Lack of support with discipline issues from senior management.

Negativity – nothing you do is ever good enough eg I had a class who all achieved the highest grade they could and I was asked what was I going to do to improve!!!!!!!!

Doing away with the subject principle teacher – who was a subject expert and could provide appropriate support to new teachers – the faculty PT cannot do this.

Pupils being allowed to dictate to teachers how they teach in their classrooms.

Being asked to present pupils you know are going to fail – then being put on an action plan because your results are not good enough.

I could go on and on and on!! It is not an attractive option.

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

Maths, physics, home economics, music, business studies – that I am aware of.

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

Increase in salary – to bring us back in line with level we were at as a result of the McCrone agreement. Due to increases in national insurance
contributions, pension contributions, pay freezes and under inflation pay rises teachers standard of living has fallen considerably.

Increase in the number of senior management in schools so the workload can be shared and made more manageable.

Re-introduce the subject PT post – to offer subject specialist knowledge to teachers within the department – particularly student teachers and NQTs to hopefully keep them in the profession.

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? Faculty PTs
- How well are they working? They don't – I have a faculty PT who knows nothing about my subject area and therefore cannot help or support me with subject issues – this is particularly important when changes are taking place.
- 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?) Permanent

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 areas which would be valuable eg Administration and Computing (employability) but these are not being taught in my school due to staff cuts because of reducing LA spending not because of staff shortages.

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?

Lowest I've seen it in over 20 years.

Reduction in disposable income – decline in standard of living.

Workload.

Constant change.

Poor management.

Constant pressure to improve.

Pupil/parent power.

**Additional comments**

Around the time of the McCrone agreement teaching was an attractive option – the pay was competitive and the speed of change had slowed a little.

Now the pay has fallen back to pre-Mccrone levels and the speed of change has increased considerably – workload is a major issue. We are paid for a working week of 35 hours – to be a good teacher you need to work well in excess of this – until you actually try to do this job you have no idea of the
work that is actually involved to get young people to reach their full potential and get the exam results they want.

The profession is under-valued and is surrounded by far too much negativity.

**ANONYMOUS 17**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary Teacher of Design and Technology

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Taking pupils through Secondary School, giving them an appreciation of the varied courses we teach them. It has also been good to see where they have gone when they have left school, the positive contribution they make to society, and how they end up using the skills and knowledge they acquired in Design and Technology, although not always in the way that was expected.

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 would tech until I retire, but the curriculum is in such a mess, the hours we are forced to work to keep up with our job are at times double what we are contracted to work and this is just not sustainable. I thought it was maybe because I had been doing this for 25 years, but I have now seen too many NQT come into teaching, and leave as they felt the job was not secure with continual year on year contracts that they could not plan their life ahead. I also see that what a teacher has to accept during the working day, with insolence, threats, violent behaviour in and out of class is wearing down even the most enthusiastic of teachers. I have found it harder and harder to recommend teaching to people who have indicated an interest in becoming one.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I enjoy teaching, the faculty route many schools have gone for has robbed a lot of opportunities for promotion within subject areas which for many is where the desire to teach comes from. I know several people who have taken a downward step to go back to the subject teaching they love, and away from the box-ticking they find at the top of a schools organisation.

If you do not fit the profile for some councils (ageism is rife in some councils), it is also pointless in applying as they are very upfront about the fact that they will not promote the over 50’s.

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 school I now work in is in central Scotland, and is seen by some as too far away from the population centres. Staff will work for a few years and move back to these population centres as jobs are easy to come by for them. The
staff that stay the longest are the ones that stay in a 10 mile radius and know the area and accept it. The areas that need teachers need to recruit trainee teachers into Universities and they will be the ones that will stay and give stability to the schools. Aberdeen City is the logical conclusion of this pattern at the moment.

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

The shortages that I am aware of are in Design and Technology/Sciences/Home Economics. These are the subjects that seem to get the fewest (or no) applicants when advertised in the region I work in.

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, Though I have heard this will be happening very soon.

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 do not get to offer the full range of Design and Technology subjects as there is not enough staffing, this has always been a fight, but now we have classes with 3 and occasionally 4 levels in the one class. I do not see this changing, and is ruining what is taught to each level within the class, as each level has different teaching requirements. It is crippling attainment as each level cannot get the best teaching available as it is split across so many levels. The narrowing of curriculum is something which is highlighted every year, but staffing is always too tight to do anything about 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?

I have never found morale as low as it is at the moment. I was union rep last year and got to know more staff on my rounds, who all expressed the opinion that the job was taking too much from them. Too much paperwork, putting new courses together, and not enough, or any help from the SQA to clarify introductions and revisions to the courses, were the major issues that I heard time and time again. The level of support given to teachers nationally, the cuts in money given to departments to run them and the general poor perception of teachers in the media are also factors which have hit morale amongst teachers where I work and in other schools around Scotland.

The one thing that comes up time and again is that when teachers speak, nobody listens. Fix that and things might to start to get better.

ANONYMOUS 18

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.

I am a secondary English teacher

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with young people, my colleagues, extra-curricular activities
Developing resources, plans and units of 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 continue teaching until retirement with promotion to head of department or year head in due course.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
The most encouraging thing would be a relevant opportunity arising in my school plus support from my colleagues.
Increase in salary.
Lack of opportunity and time to actually develop learning and teaching in my department due to increasing administrative workload are things that would discourage me.
In the state sector, the movement away from heads of department to the faculty system - I feel that it is extremely challenging and therefore stressful for an English Teacher, for example, to also take on responsibility for Modern Languages with no prior experience teaching these subjects. These curricula are very different and there is no time allowance for sufficient training on how to effectively manage such a range of responsibilities.

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)
Long term job security due to fluctuations in the economy which affect people's decisions to send their children to independent schools - fall in pupils numbers = fall in staff numbers.
Salary (not just in my school but in general)
Due to size of school, limited promotional opportunity.
In the state sector (where I have also worked) the faculty system is putting increasing pressure on middle management.
Curriculum changes and lack of transparency in dealing with the SQA.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention
I think the challenges in recruitment and retention are across all subjects and specialisms.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Increase the starting salary for teachers to the national average and revise the scale for unprompted teachers accordingly.
All qualified teachers have a basic degree plus PDGE which is set to become a masters qualification. A great number of teachers have masters degrees and even doctorates- amounting to upwards of five years of study. In addition many come to the profession with valuable commercial experience. However, the starting salary does not reflect commitment to study and the added value teachers bring to their profession from prior work experience. A junior doctor, having studied for a similar number of years, starts on three times the salary of a teacher.

Allow designated time for teachers to develop in their professions- not just hour long crash courses on in-set days where learning is neither retained nor built upon. To become more effective practitioners time must be allowed for learning followed by discourse and reflection. In my experience there simply isn't any time during term to have these discourses with my PT and management; PRD meetings are squeezed into a few available gaps and follow-up is cursory. This is not the fault of my colleagues and management, there is simply no time to do this effectively due to the pressures of delivering the curriculum.

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)

Cuts to the Modern Languages Dept in my school mean that pupils will be unable to study German in 2017/18.

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?

While I feel that my colleagues and I enjoy the day to day job, morale is low. There are concerns for the future in the short and long term, the lack of transparency between management and staff, increasing workload without adequate remuneration, cuts to holiday entitlement.

**Additional comments**

I am encouraged by the fact that the Scottish Parliament is seeking teachers’ feedback on this issue and hope that the points I have raised will be considered. Thank you.

**ANONYMOUS 19**

I completed a 4 year BSc at University of Glasgow followed by a 1 year PGDE at University of Strathclyde to become a Secondary Science and Biology teacher. I completed my probation year at Knightswood Academy in Glasgow, which was a great experience and while I found getting to grips with teaching tough at times, I realize with hindsight that year was very useful. My husband is also a teacher, completing a 4 year BDiv in Theology and 1 year PGDE in Secondary RE teaching, and completed his probation at Shawlands academy. We left Scotland in 2011 as neither of us could find permanent teaching jobs together, and therefore moved to London where there are plenty of permanent jobs. We were sad to leave however, as we feel that we invested in the Scottish education system and really enjoyed our time there.
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Edinburgh City Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Helping others.
Positive outcomes for young people.
Sharing love of subject.
Positive feedback from pupils, parents and line managers.
Enjoyment of teaching the subject.
Every day is different. Not a boring job!
Job security.

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 continue teaching until retirement provided the profession doesn't become too stressful and taken over by bureaucracy.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
It would be nice to make a difference on a bigger scale in a school. It is discouraging at times because it is a high pressure job and you become answerable to so many groups of people – parents, council, staff etc. Also, the type of things you have to do to get promoted are sometimes very “tick box” and involve doing things sometimes just for the sake of doing them. People in promoted posts don’t often stay in them long enough to follow something through properly.

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 there is a lot of pressure in the job. The pay scale is disappointing especially if you get to 6 years experience. It feels like people think you don’t improve after 6 years which is ridiculous as it takes a long time to become truly talented in this profession and if think that you are perfect at any point, it’s probably time to quit!
Sometimes it feels like your hands are tied when it comes to behaviour. There is much more verbal abuse from pupils and just general disrespect in schools and there is little response from management as they are very worried about their exclusion statistics. It is also unfair that due to cutbacks, pupils from special schools are being put in mainstream education and the excuse is that it is more inclusive for them but this is at the exclusion of everybody else. Some of these high tariff pupils cause huge disruption and consume a lot of time and energy from everyone and it feels unfair on the rest of the pupils.

Parental expectations are sometimes unrealistic. Some are not supportive enough and threaten the school with complaining to the council or newspapers if they aren’t getting their way.

Many of the teachers I know feel there is a lack of support from managers. We have had a high staff turnover in our school because the atmosphere wasn’t nice. There was low morale and staff didn’t feel supported. There also wasn’t many development opportunities and if they came up they would only be offered to select people. It has improved since but people are still unhappy as they feel that the people in promoted posts aren’t very experienced, there is a lack of communication and staff don’t feel appreciated.

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

I think that since there are faculty heads instead of principal teachers, smaller subjects suffer because they have a huge workload and are not paid for it. Their line manager isn’t a subject specialist in their subject so they end up having to go to the subject meetings and curricular planning. Very often they are told that it’s all a ‘development opportunity’.

There are different challenges in all subjects.

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

- Better pay scale system.
- Teachers valued for staying as teachers and those who stay as teachers shouldn’t be thought of as not good enough just because they don’t want to work in a promoted post and enjoy the classroom.
- Young teachers are especially under pressure to look for promotion as it seems experience isn’t valued anymore.
- Bring back a program similar to the Chartered Teacher so regular teachers can hone their skills as teachers and feel more valued.
- Bring back various levels of paid promoted post as it seems a huge step going from classroom teacher to faculty head.
- Allow for change to happen and analyse the results over time and not constantly trying new initiatives all the time.

ANONYMOUS 21

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.

- Secondary Principal Teacher
Q2  Whereabouts do you work?
- East Ayrshire

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
- I have just handed in my resignation today.
- I have always enjoyed teaching and caring for pupils.
- But the constant changes and workload issues have increased dramatically over the last few years. Added to this is the constraint of budgets which means new course material cannot be printed. Also the constant changes in SQA documentation and the huge volume of paperwork that must be read and implemented. Plus the fact that every school is doing something different, heaven help the pupil who has to move 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 have resigned today and may seek employment elsewhere, but teaching bureaucracy is grinding everyone down.

Q6  What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Nothing would make me want to be a DHT or HT.

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 constant changes and workload issues have increased dramatically over the last few years.
- Added to this is the constraint of budgets which means new course material cannot be printed.
- Also the constant changes in SQA documentation and the huge volume of paperwork that must be read and implemented. Also the mistakes that are in the NAR’s etc. We change timetable in May, course changes out in August – not helpful.
- Lack of guidance about new courses and assignment marking. Seems that it depends on marker what mark a pupil gets.
- Stress on pupils due to constant monitoring and assignments at same time of year.
- Plus the fact that every school is doing something different, heaven help the pupil who has to move school.
- Guidance issues, the new Seemis well being tile is clunky, hard to use and not a working document that can be easily used.
- Many different IT systems being used, then changed, then changed again.
- Constantly saying it’s the teachers fault that pupils do not do well.
• Forcing children into courses because there is space, but not what they want to do.
• Bi level teaching of Nat 5/Higher does not work in science classes in senior phase.

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

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
• Listen to teachers and give them time to do their job properly.
• Decrease class sizes.
• Increase staffing in school.
• School nurse full time in schools
• Campus cop full time in schools.
• Constantly giving more and more paperwork increases stress on all.

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)?
• A staff member died and their job responsibilities were just added on to other members of staff. This happened during the very busy Jan to March term.

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)
Home Economics and Hospitality. Our school is in a deprived area and pupils need this life skill.

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?
• Extremely low due to constant changes of Senior management and along with this all paperwork changed every year. New Senior management also seem not to consider discipline a priority and think that PT teachers should give up their breaks to do discipline.

ANONYMOUS 22

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
I am a permanent History teacher and acting PT Pastoral teacher.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The satisfaction of making a difference. I love working with children.
I love teaching my subject, History, I feel it is important.

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 don’t think I can maintain my effort levels until retirement. Discussion in the staffroom often centres around - 'what else are we qualified to do?'

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Encourage:
time to do the job well
financial reward
personal development
CPD to support me (I’m completing a Post Grad in Middle Leadership and Management at Glasgow Uni)
opportunities in Catholic schools

Discourage:
lack of time resulting in errors or incomplete work that adversely affects children and my career
poor financial reward
lack of opportunities for promotion - they are few and far, especially in Catholic schools in my area. My faith is important to 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)
I have no comment on this as I am not responsible for recruitment.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
I have no comment on this as I am not responsible for recruitment.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
I have no comment on this as I am not responsible for recruitment.

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 have a Doctor of History in my school who is keen to teach advanced Higher History. Pupils are sent to other schools. We have a man with a PhD who has taught at university who clearly has the appropriate skills and experience and it is not being used. Crazy.

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 it is low. We are a dedicated but tired and exhausted bunch. We have little time to our self, to put CPD into practice or celebrate each other's
success. Discussion in school is often centred on business talk as we have little time and energy for personal interaction. This does not make a healthy workplace.

**Additional comments**

- What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?

Exhaustion - good teachers are overworked. You can avoid feeling this way by doing the bare minimum and clocking out with no marking or development work when the bell rings, but let's be honest - that behaviour doesn't lead to good quality learning and teaching. Expectations are high and the amount of marking required to do your job well (when teaching senior classes of 30) involves working on average an additional 8-10 hours per week in my subject area which is History. This is unsustainable - I often find myself working in school from 8am-6pm, returning home for dinner and resuming work from 8pm-11pm. I have not enough time to complete marking in school and this is the basic marking of homework and classwork needed to give students meaningful feedback to improve. Peer marking is done but to complete coursework prep for exams it isn't done as often as would be required to lighten my workload significantly. This does not include the Saturdays and Sundays doing additional work for midterms/prelims and gathering SQA evidence, both of which I have no power over as it is dictated by SQA or by my school that I must do it. I am exhausted.

As a pastoral teacher I have 1 period of 50 minutes extra a day to complete my role, however, as much as I love doing it, these responsibilities take 2-3 hours per day minimum (with no child protection issues - it can be much longer) resulting in very few breaks and lunches being disrupted. I can find myself in TAC (team around the child) meetings, children's panel meetings and such for at least 5 hours per week. I find myself firefighting rather than helping to genuinely prevent issues due to my lack of time. As I have no control over my timetable and am the mercy of my faculty heads with this it leaves me and therefore the children vulnerable. I have found that high profile children have been involved in preventable incidents had I had more time to spend with them immediately when information came to my attention rather than waiting or the next day when I have a free period reducing their ability to learn effectively and increasing my workload.

This ongoing onslaught of relentless demands from pupils, staff, parents and on myself (i.e. I am not lazy - I take my responsibility and vocation to teach seriously and believe our children, Scotland's children, deserve the best) mean that I am exhausted and often working myself physically sick and on the emotional edge. This isn't good for the pupils in my school nor for my relationships with family or friends.

Did I mention I am pregnant? So how can I sustain this work rate to maintain standards while being advised by my midwife to 'take care of myself'. Do I tell my faculty head that I don't have time to mark my higher essays weeks before the exam? How do I explain to parents I am too exhausted to mark S2 tests or appease by boss who expects reports to be done? How do I balance my work-life balance when I have the wellbeing of my own child to worry about
and I cannot be working a ridiculous number of hours per week? Do I not send reports to reporter's meetings? Do I ignore requests for TAC from parents? How do I make time with a full timetable and massive classes while resources are diminishing (such as school counsellor hours/ed psyc availability and lack of CAMHs support - 18 weeks is NOT an acceptable waiting time).

So I have a decision to make. Do I accept that with the time and resources I have available to me that I plan to provide mediocre learning, teaching and support for children who deserve and have a right to have much better than that? Or do I step aside, find a new career which may give me the time and space to have a better work life balance? One in which my relationships with my customers have a much more limited impact on my emotions, because good teaching is all about relationships and quite frankly I constantly feel guilty about the lack of time and effort I can afford the children I am responsible for. This is why I am working during the Easter holidays. Maybe I will be better off in a career where these relationships are fleeting. Where my impact on someone else's life is more minimal and so results in a smaller impact on my and their wellbeing if something goes wrong. Perhaps in the private sector I might actually get wage increases that match or are greater than inflation rather than the slap in the face we get as public sector workers at the moment. It is demoralising, insulting and ungrateful.

-What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

As mentioned, I am a pastoral teacher. It's actually an acting position. It is a job I love and have spent hundreds of hours completing CPD to do well over the past few years, yet I find myself looking forward to the day my colleague returns from her maternity leave so I can get a 'break'. It is a huge responsibility with the added complication of very little time given to you and little financial award. I am often receiving abuse from parents and pupils. Why would I want to do this in a full time basis? Why is such a position with such a massive responsibility not protected by a minimal contact time that reflects the number of students and whole school remit that is dictated by the Scottish Government? The promoted post is undervalued and not understood by teachers not doing the role and even less by government ministers. If a full time position came up would I apply for it? Possibly not, especially as my teaching commitment is likely to continue to be full with a large amount of responsibility for seniors sitting exams. I had allocated to me 60 higher pupils and 60 S4 pupils last year-that is a huge undertaking which I had no control over. Would I survive another year like that with pastoral responsibilities? Quite possibly not.

**ANONYMOUS 23**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.

Secondary School - English

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeen City Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I have always enjoyed classroom teaching and dealing with youngsters from S1-S6. I particularly like seeing how an individual pupil develops and grows into a fine upstanding member of society and gain in confidence although this is increasingly difficult with the huge range of ability and increase in pupils with additional support needs in the everyday 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)
to three days or so depending on finances and my husband’s work in the oil industry!

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Nothing! As an ordinary member of the teaching staff I do my best but already I feel the workload impinges on my family life and I can only do so much and am not prepared to do 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)
Aberdeen has a huge problem in attracting and retaining teachers but one of the main reasons I think is ordinary teachers do not feel valued in any way. After 36 years of teaching I am still made to feel I can do more and what I do is never good enough! I feel I do a good job and certainly have dedicated my teaching career to one school in particular but after 30 years of continuous service, I have not even received an acknowledgement of my service! I also feel my opinion does not count for anything and am ignored because I am nearer the end of my career than the beginning. This irritates me profusely because my (much) younger colleagues say the exact same thing.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
In Aberdeen I would say it is all subjects and certainly as an English teacher I feel we have a raw deal with class-sizes and workload. The new curriculum does not cater for all pupils but because everybody speaks English (to a varying degree although this is also a problem with increasing numbers of EAL pupils being added to any class throughout the year), we cannot turn any pupil away even though it is obvious they will not succeed at National 4/5/6 Level. What this means is the pupils are being set up to fail which is demoralising for both teachers and pupils alike!

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Obviously a pay increase might help attract some people into the profession but even an incentive in Aberdeen to attract people from the oil industry has
not exactly worked as it is too demanding a job and the pay is not worth it so most of these recruits have given 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:

- 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?)

Support for Learning provision is woefully inadequate in the school I teach in although it is certainly better than in the past. However the problem now is there are too many pupils who have Additional Support Needs so it is still far too thin on the ground. I worry that pupils may have had some provision of support in Primary School but receive nothing is Secondary!

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)

Pupils rightly or wrongly are being given the idea that a University place is possible and somehow a pupil is seen as a failure if they do not stay on to S5 and S6 when there are few if any suitable courses available to them. Subjects are too academic and there is little provision for life-skills or Home Economics to teach pupils how to look after themselves and cook a nutritious and economical meal when they become students or live on their own. There are no Home Economic teachers available in Aberdeen and as a result this subject has just disappeared from the time-table.

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 – see all of the above but also there is a huge discrepancy in workload between classes of 20 or less for some subjects when most English and maths classes are at 30. No-one can convince me that smaller class sizes make no difference – it can only help reduce my workload and stress levels. I certainly felt I was making a better job of things when I did have 20 pupils in S1 and S2 all those years ago!

Additional comments

I think this is perhaps the very first time I have ever been given an opportunity to express my opinion freely so that is good but the time-frame is so short that I doubt you will get too many responses as it is such a busy time in preparation for the SQA Exams. I am disappointed the time-scale is so short and hope it is not just a cynical ploy to limit responses!
ANONYMOUS 24
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?  
Full time permanent teacher of Home Economics
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?  
South Lanarkshire Council
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?  
Holidays and the fact that I only have 2 years to go
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 only have 2 years before I can retire from teaching at 60. I think about leaving early but I cannot afford the 10% drop in pension that this will incur particularly since I won’t qualify for the state pension for another 6 years after that. Physically I do not think I can work till I am 66 as I am in a practical subject where I am constantly setting things out, clearing them away, moving round the classroom, dealing with extremes of temperature. Constantly interacting with children is tiring and I find that many more pupils have no respect for adults. They also expect to be spoon fed and do not take responsibility for anything, whether it is minor e.g. bring a pen to class or or more serious like completing assignments prior to submission dates. This all leaves me physically and mentally drained and with quite a bit of pain at times. Some days at the end of the school day I can barely walk, I have headaches, I am exhausted. I feel it will be a real struggle to stay till I am 60 and impossible to wait till I am 66.
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 wish to be promoted. I feel that the responsibility for those in promoted posts at senior management level is huge and involves a lot of extra hours. The salary does not reflect this. Teachers generally have the best interests of children at heart but ironically those in the senior positions often have to sacrifice family time to do their 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)  
I’m not sure about the recruitment of teachers, perhaps there are other potentially better opportunities out there. In terms of retaining them I think that most people underestimate the time and energy the job requires. I know of 2 teachers who have left industry jobs for a better work life balance despite having to take a drop in salary but have found that they don’t get more time with families in teaching. One has since returned to industry. There are often pupils in classes who are disruptive and this can be very wearing and the extent to which this is dealt with varies depending on line managers. This can increase stress in a teacher and also delay the progress
of a class which puts further stress on the teacher. Even when a class are well behaved there can be a lot of noise which not all people can deal with.

There are also a lot of pupils who have identified additional support needs but it falls on the teacher to amend work to fit the child and this is time consuming particularly where there are different needs and abilities of pupils in the same class.

There is an awful lot of admin and ‘tick box’ activities which interfere with teaching and I don’t think it is what most people joined the profession for.

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

Home Economics has a significant problem in recruitment and as a result the department in my school has been reduced from 3 full time members of staff to 1.5. To facilitate this S1 pupils will no longer be taught the subject and S2 pupils will only get 1 period a week. A few years ago both year groups got 2 periods per week.

Pupil support staff are also thin on the ground and this may be due to cutbacks but they are also often undervalued in terms of what they do and in their salary. Since many special education schools have shut down in recent years and pupils who would previously been sent to them are now included in mainstream schools, it makes more sense to have more support assistants or specialist teachers to help.

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

Reduced admin, more support staff, less assessment.

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 assistants are not always available

Reduction in the size of the Art and Home Economics Departments

Move from principal teachers of a subject to a faculty.

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?)

• As far as I’m aware the reduction of the Home Economics department is a reflection on the lack of availability and it has been suggested that if staff are available we could increase the department again. However I think this is unlikely
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)

S1 Health and Food Technology

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 work, getting work in on time from pupils. Assessing the work, completing paperwork to show how you have assessed the work, feeling undervalued.

ANONYMOUS 25

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.

I am a secondary teacher in Business Studies and Computing

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

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

Working with the young people and seeing them develop from first year to sixth year. Hopefully seeing them develop into young adults taking an interest in their careers and their communities.

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 probably continue until I retire or until I can no longer teacher. My current service is 27 years.

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 encouraged to seek promotion if the promoted job allowed me to directly work with students if the job was simply more paperwork and meetings (usually without and outcome or a purpose) I would not see this as something I would want to 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)

The challenges in retaining staff is reducing workload and stress within the profession.

Paperwork is increasing within establishments and demands on teaching staff are greater eg. increase in reporting, greater out of school support for students. In teaching deadlines are real deadlines you cannot leave doing something when you know the class is going to arrive needing a coherent lesson!

Demands of Senior Managers are increasing. Many of these Managers will not have taught a full timetable for a number of years and may not realise the day-to-day pressures unpromoted staff face. Although there is a Working
Time Agreement this varies from school to school and, because we are not naturally clock watchers and we want to do the best for our students, we don’t always stick rigorously to this. Also Unions within school vary so with a strong Union you may get a very different approach to WTAs.

Positive recognition for good work would assist morale within a school especially at crunch times eg. Prelims, final exams, unit assessments, folio pieces etc. Goodwill can sometimes be one-sided and can run out.

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

Staff, whether new or existing, need to be supported ie. with time, resources, mentors etc and those mentors need to be given time to do this, it should not become a tick the box exercise. Proper financial rewards should be given in recognition of what is an ever-changing job with no ‘overtime’.

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?)

Supply staff are difficult to come by therefore many staff with ‘extra time’ on their timetables are covering classes. These classes may have no subject specialist teacher for a number of periods during the week.

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 extra curricular and extra help is less likely to occur if staff are stressed and under pressure to do the ‘day 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?

I feel morale is very low at present.

Additional comments
The changes made to the SQA systems of unit work etc will make a difference when it beds in but this is only at the fringes of the workload issue.

ANONYMOUS 26

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
I am a Curricular leader in Modern Languages

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

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West Dunbartonshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Interaction with pupils.
Feeling that I am making a difference to pupils’ lives.
Sense of fulfilment in leading a department.

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 intend to teach till 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 already promoted to Curriculum Leader level. I was not mentored at any point during my career, nor was I encouraged to apply for Depute posts, despite being a very effective teacher and Head of Department. There is no ‘buddying’ or mentoring process in teaching. As a result, able staff do not feel valued or encouraged to improve their skills and knowledge. I feel that good and very good practitioners are not encouraged to seek promotion. Often it is in the school’s best interest to retain these people at their current level. I also feel that those who do seek promotion, are not always the best managers or leaders. The promotion system in teaching seems to reward persistence, not merit.

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 promotion opportunities for teachers; burgeoning workload; discipline issues, lack of support with these from SLT and subsequent high stress levels; difficulty of achieving an acceptable work/ life balance; constant development work; lack of respect from society in general and parents and pupils in particular. I am sorry to say that I would think twice before encouraging anyone to enter teaching nowadays. At times it can be a very rewarding experience but it exacts a heavy toll on those who enter the profession.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
All subjects face a problem sourcing effective subject specialist supply when needed. English is particularly hard hit in our school this session.
Vacancies attract few applicants in English and Modern Languages. More and more often, Curricular leaders or Principal teachers are expected to ‘source’ their own applicants.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Increased support for new staff; reintroduction of promoted posts within faculties/ departments to assist Curriculum Leaders and to get the best out of
staff, affording them an opportunity to take on substantive responsibilities.
The move away from this structure has seriously damaged the teaching profession because it has made it less attractive to new entrants.

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?)

In our department, we are currently covering a long-term absence and, because of a lack of effective supply teachers, the remaining members of the department have absorbed that timetable into their own, resulting in increased workload and stress.

Support staff are spread very thinly across classes and vacancies are not filled. This leaves pupils and staff unsupported.

The introduction of faculties and the reduction in the number of Depute posts in each secondary school in our authority has led to a reduction in promoted posts and some staff taking on faculty leadership without the experience to do so. It has also resulted in a lowering of overall staff morale, as Curricular Leaders take on duties which were previously seen as a Depute’s. Discipline has been the most obvious casualty of these moves.

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)

Not in our curricular area

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 – I have been teaching for more than 30 years and can honestly say that it is very hard to motivate staff. We feel burdened by continuous curricular changes and a lack of support regarding indiscipline.

ANONYMOUS 27

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Secondary School Teacher – Geography & History

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

Feel passionate about my subjects and educating young people
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 probably stay til I’m 60 but have considered leaving recently after 33 years in the profession.

The increasing amount of internal assessments, recording of information, tracking and monitoring, workload demands regarding new changes to courses etc over and above the day-to-day teaching/preparation/marking have led to the job becoming unmanageable.

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

Too old for promotion now. And I have no desire to increase my workload any further.

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 no incentive for young teachers to stay. There is a very limited chance for promotion due to the nature of the structure of promoted posts.

Teacher – Principal Teacher- Depute Head- Rector.

In most other professions there are a wide range of options for promotion or to increase your responsibilities in the workplace.

The limited structure in Scottish Education often means that people are promoted too young and lack the experience to do the job properly. This leads to a lack of understanding of those they are managing and dissatisfaction of the teachers in the school.

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

All of them to be honest at the moment.

A full-time Maths post in our school that was advertised nationally attracted only ONE applicant!!

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

There needs to be a radical overhaul of the current promotion structure in education. Saving money by streamlining promoted posts (e.g. creating Faculties) is not the way to encourage teachers into the profession.

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)?

Staffing numbers are always under review and actually it is the marginal subjects that suffer.
Take languages for example. If a child is particularly gifted in languages the opportunities to study them are reduced due to their being a poor uptake by other pupils. So the Higher French or German class may not run.

This is just one example where “personalisation & choice” for every pupil fails to meet pupil needs. This is a real problem particularly in small schools where full course options are not available and can seriously impact a child’s future.

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)

It is not so much staff shortages as budget constraints – see above

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 in my opinion. Staff feel undervalued and overworked. Staff feel that parental and pupil viewpoints are often more important than what staff say.

There is a lack of time to support and encourage each other – many staff often don’t leave their classroom from start of school til they leave the building.

Most staff are at work from 08:00 – 17:00 and still take marking etc home with them.

The goodwill of staff to run lunchtime and after school clubs and activities is being eroded. Due to changes in our school day (compressed working hours to 4.5 day week) lunchtime is only 50 minutes and this will mean many lunchtime clubs will not take place due to lack of time. In my case I will no longer be running the school Debating and Public Speaking club as there is insufficient time to do so. I have run this club for over 15 years and find this particularly sad.

Staff want to do the best for the pupils in their care and want to offer them the best opportunities they can. Pupils are always at the forefront of our profession but sadly this is becoming increasingly more and more difficult due to the pressures placed on us.

**ANONYMOUS 28 C GRAHAM**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Secondary Teacher – Home Economics

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

South Lanarkshire Council

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

Rewarding Career despite many challenges

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 retirement age.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Discouraged to apply for any promotion due to workload already being too high and taking up time at home.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Shortage of Home Economics teachers means non – subject specialist teachers covering any long term absences.

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 fairly good due to positive minded professional colleagues, however most colleagues I know are working too many hours at night as there are not enough hours during school day to keep up with marking homework, assessments etc as well as constantly developing courses in line with SQA updates.

Additional comments
Home Economics teachers would benefit enormously from having support staff help with setting up practical lessons, preparing ingredients etc in the same way as Science teachers have technicians. Very rarely is it possible to have a full lunch break due to setting up ingredients for practical lessons.

ANONYMOUS 28

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary School – Design and Technology

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Renfrewshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
It can be very rewarding, nurturing future minds, developing interests and seeing pupils move on to hopefully have a fulfilling and successful career.

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 don’t know! The age of 68 is way too high for a practical subject, no one wants to be taught to forge and weld by an old women. I don’t think it’s physically practical or mentally be possible to ensure the safety of every pupil in a workshop environment.

I would leave if I didn’t think I could mentally or physically carry out my job.
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 to prevent someone less qualified than I giving me instructions. I do not want the extra pressure or stress that comes with the 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)

I know some very good D&T teachers who cannot find work because they crumble during a formal interview. Teaching evidence would be a far better system to questions on developing the wider school or inclusive approaches.

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

If a teacher feels supported they will stay, if they feel accused they will leave. It sounds simple in theory but falls down badly in practice.

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 mixed or I could say very good at the start of the year and very low around this time of year.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

Today is the first day back after the Easter Holidays, I need to -

Complete tracking for S2 (due in 3 days)

Fill out this survey (due in 2 days)

Start S1 reports (due May)

Mark all Graphic Comm. folios prior to verification (due in 3 days)

Cross mark woodwork models (due in 3 days)

Plan an S3 course for May and read updated literature for tomorrow.

Attend a full staff meeting about the S3 course tomorrow.

Create an S3 exam due May 3rd.

Plan all my usual classes.

Help my senior pupils with individual study questions as their exam is 10th May.

My point is that we are all under pressure throughout the year and there is little sympathy or support as we are all in the same boat.
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
English teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Perth & Kinross Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The relationship with pupils, seeing pupils succeed.

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 cannot see myself remaining as a teacher until retirement, but I would like to stay in education. Possibly teacher training or in LAs. I simply cannot see myself feeling the stress of being an English teacher for the next 35 years of my life, and having a full and healthy life outside of the profession.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Changing and implementing new strategies would encourage me, but the political input from Local Authorities (particularly regarding behaviour management) would stop me. PKC have a ‘non-exclusion’ policy, which doesn’t work but the school is hog-tied into following this procedure.

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 stress level and input from parents. However, at my school in particular, the behaviour of pupils and lack of consequences are the most vital part of teacher retention. Restorative practice at my school is not implemented properly and the pupils run the school – this has lead to demotivation and a desire to leave the school and – for a lot of people – the authority.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
English. We have had 4 teachers off and not been able to fill the roles with specialist supply teachers.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Better wages, honestly. A better work-life balance, which means a reduced work load for all 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)
Any and all English/language based groups have been cancelled due to staffing shortages at PHS. This includes homework groups, literacy groups, creative writing groups. We don’t even run a department detention anymore due to staff shortages.

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, due a mixture of stress due to work load increase by staff shortages. Also, INCREDIBLY low morale due to pupil behaviour and lack of consequences. The school has also been in the papers (The Courier) a number of times recently and this is embarrassing for the staff and has a number of staff looking to leave the school as it is our reputations on the line at the end of the day.

ANONYMOUS 30

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Teacher of English (secondary)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
West Lothian Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with young people and helping them to succeed provides great job satisfaction. Teaching a subject that I love is very enjoyable. Term time working fits in well with my family circumstances.

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 applying for alternative employment which will make use of the leadership skills I have gained. I have taught for 13 years and there is little opportunity for promotion in secondary schools due to the PTC system of management. If I was teaching 20 years ago I’d be an APT or PT by now.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
The return of the APT/PT system would encourage me to apply for promotion. I am discouraged by the PTC system. Becoming a PTC would involve a lot of time out of the classroom. I also think that a PTC position is very unappealing due to the seemingly impossible 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)
Workload is an issue. Some staff have decided to give up teaching due to lack of time available for family- a poor ‘work/life’ balance. The salary is not competitive – many graduates earn a lot more money in other industries. The PTC system in West Lothian puts a lot of pressure on ordinary teaching staff –
foe example, if a member of staff is absent, other teachers must set cover work and so on. This was previously a PT job.

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

Raise the salary to make it more competitive. Extend the probationary period – perhaps a 0.7 year followed by a 0.9 year may be appropriate? Additional in-service days to implement new curriculum/benchmarks would be useful. An additional period of non-contact time per week would make workload more manageable.

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?)

For a period of 4 months, an English vacancy was unfilled. The classes were divided up between other members of staff. One S3 class had 2 periods of English teaching a week (with different teachers) as well as teaching from 2 cover teacher (other subject specialists) per week. Other classes had to be covered by non specialist staff to allow English teachers to cover the ‘teacher-less’ classes. This put pressure on staff and was detrimental to the education of the learners. This was ‘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?

Quite low. Wages have dropped below the rate of inflation. The 1% rise indicates that we are not valued. The removal of the chartered teacher programme suggested that good teachers need to get out of the classroom in order to make progress within their careers.

ANONYMOUS 31

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have? .

Secondary

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?

North Ayrshire

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

The relationships with children
The feeling that we can make a difference.

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 can't teach full time until I am 68. I struggle with the workload and stress now. I need to look at alternatives

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

Opportunities to improve my experience.
Encouragement and mentoring.
Support of SMT
Work load of completing applications and preparing for interviews to be knocked back.
Previous experience of the process which is negative.

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.
Constant change.
Criticism and feeling that no matter what we do it is never good enough.
Lack of funding: Budget restrictions
Failure to employ staff
Lack of support for my subject.

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

Religious Education

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

Increase pay.
Increase financing
Pick your priorities and stick to them. Significant change should not be taking place each 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?
  Change timetable to remove subject from department.
• How well are they working?
  Subject not being delivered effectively.
• 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?)
  Long term temporary. No time given for when this situation will change.

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)
  Religious Education

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

Additional comments
  The Scottish government has stated that RE is compulsory and has to be taught meaningfully to pupils 3-18. This is not happening in my school. However nothing has taken place to deal with this. My headteacher has selected not to prioritise the staffing of RE. The authority supports her decision. I don’t believe that

ANONYMOUS 32
  I am an English teacher. I am 43 years old, but have only been teaching for 5 years. I am also a mum to 2 boys ....whom I hardly ever see due to the hours I work. I usually work around 70 hour weeks....and I STILL feel I'm not doing my job as well as I would like and still have to reluctantly cut corners. This is not the job I signed up for and I am considering leaving, the thought of which devastates me.

  I am passionate about my job. I love my students, I love making connections with them, I love watching them enjoy my lessons and make good progression. I love opening their eyes to a love of literature. I love helping them, pastorally, with problems they have....my door is always open to students. I go to work with a smile on my face. I humbly say that I am also considered an excellent teacher and I have PTs from other departments, as well as my own, sending probationers and student teachers to observe lessons. But...it's simply not sustainable. I'm exhausted. Mentally, physically, emotionally.

  I've been a diabetic for many years...it's always been stable and not an issue. The last couple of years however, my levels have gone through the roof, along with massive increases in high blood pressure and other issues such as stress and depression. I am now on 19 tablets a day and I put the blame solely on my job. My consultant actually advised me to leave teaching. This devastates me....why does this job I adore, also cause me to be so ill? Why
does this job I adore cause me to have to ignore my family? I'm no longer a mother, a wife, a daughter....I'm only a teacher. The work load is so immense, it is not sustainable. Yes, my subject is marking-heavy, but the workload is unmanageable.

I would love to spend more time planning lessons, but that is a luxury that is rare. Indeed.....my holidays are my planning time. Holidays? Aren't they for having time off? No....they're for planning and desperately trying to get caught up with marking. The demands we get for monitoring and tracking do not help....if we had more time to work on these, then great. But of course I can't see teachers being given more non-contact time, which they desperately need.

Money is also an issue. No pay rise in years...that really makes teachers feel appreciated for all the extra hours they put in. I do all my printing at home, because the school has no budget. I provide, from my own money, glue sticks, scissors, pencils, pens, rubbers, sharpeners, colouring pencils, folders etc etc etc....I've even bought 5 class sets (5 x 28 books) of novels. No money in the school budget means our PSAs have dropped significantly every single year, making our job even harder. Our school building, which is full of asbestos, is a nightmare. Every time it rains, I have a river running through my classroom. The whole building is falling to pieces. Staffing in the school is also a major issue and there is no budget for cover, so 7 or 8 classes will be sent to the dining hall for 1 Depute to look after. My eldest child is at this school and he is always complaining about this...this is not right for our children. In this era of austerity, children are suffering. Teachers are suffering. Education as a whole is massively suffering.

In a nutshell, I love and adore my job. The students make this the best job in the world....they make me come alive. But at what cost? My health? My family? My mental well-being? I have already put in a request to go down to four days (which I can't financially afford to do), but I doubt it will be accepted as we are so short staffed in our department. So, inevitably? I think I'm going to have to leave this job, for my health, for my sanity, for my family.

And to leave this wonderful profession will utterly break my heart.

ANONYMOUS 33

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
I work full time in a Secondary School. I am a support for learning teacher

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

- I love my job
- I get great satisfaction working with pupils with additional support needs.
- I like being part of a team who make a great deal of difference to learner’s lives.
- The job is never boring or predictable
- I have an excellent line manager who encourages and supports me in all that I want to 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 would like to remain in 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?

After many years teaching, I feel nothing would now encourage me to apply for promotion. I have in the past undertaken acting promoted roles and found that I spent too much time attending meeting and dealing with discipline issues. I felt I did not have the management skills necessary to run a large department. I feel that I want to work directly with learners and, if promoted, would only be further away from them.

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)

For some odd reason, our school has in the past had a poor reputation and teachers have been reluctant to work here-including supply staff.

In addition we are soon to merge with another school and many staff have left because of this, I suspect.

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

English, Art, Modern Languages and especially Home Economics

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

- Additional support Needs should be a far bigger part of teacher training as, with the presumption of mainstreaming and closure of special schools, all teachers are having to address all ranges of abilities and needs- often with no or very little support.
- A weighting allowance for living in Aberdeen for ALL staff.
- Salaries that are in line with inflation.

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)?

Senior phase pupils are having to travel between schools within the city campus thus wasting precious learning time as we cannot offer a full curriculum.

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)

Home Economics
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?

A year ago, it was very very low. However, we now have an acting head teacher who is excellent and clearly cares about the learners and our school.

ANONYMOUS 34

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have?

Full time Geography teacher in a private secondary school.

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

Interaction with pupils; love of my subject; 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)

I hope to teach for the foreseeable future, but struggle to see how I could continue teaching at my best until I can retire at 68. The pace and workload are intense. I love it, but I don’t think it is realistic that I could continue teaching a full timetable when I’m nearing 60, let alone 70!

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

I would rather explore other roles relating to education for sustainability or Guidance, rather than applying for depute positions. I have no interest in becoming a headteacher – too much bureaucracy! I would miss interaction with pupils, and I have seen how quickly members of the senior management team lose touch with what it’s like to teach a full timetable.

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 – admin; uncertainties over new qualifications and unclear guidance from SQA is decreasing teachers’ confidence in their abilities. We don’t want to let the pupils down. My twin sister just left teaching after 10 years in the profession and says her weekly working hours have almost halved, and she is being paid only £8k less than me! She was a primary school teacher in a private school in Edinburgh, and cited internal politics in the school, parental expectations and workload (particularly admin that didn’t directly benefit the pupils in her care or improve lessons) as her reasons for leaving the profession. These factors, in combination with a change to her circumstances (her boyfriend was paralysed after an accident last summer), made it impossible for her to remain in full-time teaching.

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

I would love more subject-specific CPD to keep my subject knowledge up-to-date and relevant to the pupils. I think more options for job sharing and winding down would be welcomed, so that people can fit teaching in around
their lives more, especially if they have families, or are reaching the end of their careers.

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?)

This happens significantly less in my new school compared to the state school I was in before. Having worked in both sectors, I am shocked by the inequalities that are built in to the education system, which affects pupils’ learning from a very young age and their attainment and opportunities later on.

Composite classes (Nat 3, 4 and 5) in the same classes, along with behaviour management made for some very stressful times in my previous classes, as did having to teach other subjects in the faculty for which I did not feel qualified (History and Modern Studies). I am delighted to now be in a school where I can focus on my subject area and feel that my teaching has significantly improved as a result.

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 good, but I wonder about the long-term health implications for teachers who are working at an unsustainable pace.

**Additional comments**

More clarification is needed from the SQA regarding courses and assessment. Assignments/Added Value should be like the old NABs and not worth so much of the course mark. The marking of assignments is scarly arbitrary and pupils are not necessarily rewarded for their course-specific knowledge and understanding.

**ANONYMOUS 35**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary School - Mathematics

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Fife Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Making a difference for the pupils
Bringing Mathematics to life
Encouraging pupils to believe in themselves to achieve their potential
Helping pupils to make progress and achieve especially those who do not find Mathematics naturally easy

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 think it will be impossible to keep up my current working week (60-70 hours) till I am 67. This is completely unrealistic. I have completed a 35 hour week by Wednesday! I would hope to leave around 60 if not earlier. Dedicated and committed teachers work incredibly hard without extra additional payment or recognition. The current workload is unmanageable and staffing stretched to capacity.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Encouragement – to be honest I really love my subject and even though I know I could go higher than my current post it would take me away from the classroom and personally that is the most important thing about my job.
For others I guess - further professional and personal development, more status, better pay, more recognition
Discourage – parent power, workload, lack of opportunity to progress, lack of acting up/temporary responsibilities, bureaucracy, lack of teaching staff in school so deputes use a lot of time watching classes in the dining halls, lack of SfL for increased inclusion pupils, behaviour management, pressure from authority

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 real question is why do people not want to come into education? I believe many current teachers would say their job is no longer rewarding. Workload consists of so much paperwork, parent power, below inflation rate increase in salary, lack of support with Inclusion pupils, department budgets cut in half.
To put it bluntly teachers no longer have the respected position they once had.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
In Mathematics – salary is the main one. You can use your knowledge and skills elsewhere with a much greater financial reward.
Mathematics is a shortage subject. My department run 2 staff down most of last term. This has a major impact on the remaining staff as little or no supply staff available. Having to cover over 40 periods each week of classes. Organising relevant work, rotating classes, marking assessments, liaising with parents all takes time and energy. Last term we were stretched to capacity. This leads to health and wellbeing issues. I was mentally and physically
exhausted. Other departments throughout Scotland the same. We are suppose to be improving literacy and numeracy so recruitment of strong and able teachers should be key in these areas!

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

- Better pay
- Protected hours
- Tackle paperwork/bureaucracy
- Protect from parental challenges – we are becoming like customer services.
- Prevent the SQA from making more changes – this creates a massive workload issue. We have had 5 years of changing assessments. The impact this has on staff is under estimated – training up colleagues, explaining to parents/pupils, writing practice assessments, marking, recording (on grids which were not user friendly) and writing reassessments.
- Reconsider budget cuts – how can we be ‘closing the gap’ and increasing attainment with my department been given half the budget we had last year. Photocopying the continually changing assessments for SQA alone takes up a large part of our budget – have the Scottish parliament discussed this? It is 3.5p a black and white copy and around 13p for a colour copy in Fife schools. I could get it copied cheaper in a local shop!

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 are not enough teaching staff available. I would say it was close to crisis point.

My department has decreased in staffing size and one period a week is outsourced to be taught by a science teacher. The department are pretty much all on minimum time. There is no opportunity to cover absence – long or short term - with a qualified teacher. This impacts on attainment and qualifications.

There is no little or no cover staff in my school and pupils are being put to the hall on a regular basis. Senior management are looking after 3-6 classes at a time in the dining hall. Pupils have to be sent to the hall with relevant work by
Principal Teachers. S5 and S6 pupils are not being covered at all and are sitting on their own in classrooms throughout the session. They are suppose to self discipline – they are young people without adult supervision – so are unlikely to cover the relevant work left.

Lack of funding for SfL teachers and auxiliaries – our school has just had more hours cut. However, the amount of pupils, due to inclusion, who are arriving have more and more complex needs but the support is not available for them. Why should the other pupils learning in the classes be so badly affected by one person with complex needs. I totally agree with inclusion but you must fund the support.

Teaching is supposed to be about raising attainment and giving opportunities for all.

English and Mathematics class sizes in Fife are increasing back to 30. Remember ‘20’s plenty?’ The new class sizes will mean less 1-1 support for individual pupils. Smaller class sizes in Maths helps close the gap and bring pupils on who require extra support. Please note some pupils are arriving at Secondary School working on first level and early second. This should have been achieved at primary. They require a great deal of support to even start to close their learning gaps. Secondary staff sometimes struggle to accommodate and support these incredibly weak pupils, with very little external support, within a much larger class of 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)

Study support has not been offered as fully as before. There is no longer funding for this so teachers do it voluntarily. Teaching relies on goodwill.

When my department was running two staff down it would have been inappropriate to ask staff to do even more than they were already doing eg. Rotating classes, marking assessments, writing reports for classes without a teacher.

Production of homework booklets and additional revision worksheets

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 are exhausted by the continual changes being made to courses and assessment programmes. During the last assessment changes we were issued with folders with clear examples and assessments. The current programme assumes we have infinite time to look up the new changes on the internet and disseminate them to staff, change all the assessments, marking schemes, feedback sheets and revision programmes. We are still trying to teach our own classes too plus complete reports, returns for the whole school, homework, planning, monitoring etc…

Parental contact has steadily increased over the last 5 years. One major concern is that many parents perceive National 4 ‘not to be worth the paper it is written on’. This has been caused by the SQA taking away the external
exam. It also means we have to choose whether a pupil is N5 or N4 instead of credit/general or general/foundation. Pupils have less opportunities than before.

National 4 is not a stepping stone to National 5 for most S5 candidates in Maths. They do not cope with the jump in levels. The majority of the candidates will not achieve National 5 in one year due to the demands of the course compared to the lower level National 4.

We still do not know what courses and assessments will look like for the current S3 pupils. It is all too much change (again and again!) The thought of returning to work next week and trying to guide others through more changes is not a good one!

**Additional comments**

Teachers have a limited time. Even working 60-70 hours a week I still cannot cover everything on the ‘to do’ list.

I think it is important to note that schools are still trying to get it right for the senior school based on the continuing SQA changes. I had finally written two prelim exams for use on rotation for National 5 to reflect the final exam but with all the recent changes they will have to be redone. The knock on effect is massive at department level.

The benchmarks which have been released for BGE are at the bottom of the agenda. Schools are measured on SQA assessment results (Insight) so all concentration must be on there. Continuous changes means we are unable to give the junior school our full attention at present.

If people now asked me would I recommend teaching as a career path, I would have to think very carefully about how to word my response. It is indeed tough times. I hope the Parliament starts to recognise this and really consults with the people who make education possible – the staff in a school.

I am happy to complete this but I suggest if you really wanted to get a full response you could have emailed all the teaching staff in Scotland and asked them to complete a Survey Monkey where you could analyse the data more effectively. Also to release this in the holidays was not useful.

Also recent retirees have said to me they had no contact about considering coming back on supply. Surely if the Government or Councils were being proactive they would consider doing this. Trying to entice the skills back on a short term basis till you train up new colleagues. You would have to offer the full pay rate and not the weaker rate. Might be worth a thought?

**ANONYMOUS 36**

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

Secondary Teacher - Mathematics

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work? 

South Lanarkshire Council

**Q4** What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Helping young people understand maths.

Good job to have when you have young children of your own

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 unsure – with the increased retirement age I am not sure I will be able to sustain the enthusiasm up until I am 68 – 70. I am currently considering my options in terms of another profession.

Additionally, CfE and the new National Qualifications have been underfunded and under-resourced. Teachers have worked hard to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by this, but many feel that CfE and NQs are poor replacements for what went before.

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

I would have been interested in the old Assistant Principal Teacher posts. I am not interested in promotion to Senior Management Level and there are very few PT jobs available and few opportunities to gain experience in order to obtain these posts. I have been teaching for 15 years and enjoy being 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)

Too many young teachers are only interested in promotion – we need teachers who want to be in the classroom.

Currently, the workload and demands associated with teaching are likely to put many off.

The idea of teaching until the age of 68, or even 70, must be putting people off – teaching is a job that requires a lot of energy.

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

In my experience, all subject areas are struggling with cover and retaining staff.

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

Fix the mess of CfE and National Qualifications.

Improve pay and decrease workload generated by SQA/CfE.

Stop introducing new initiatives that only serve to make government look good (pupil equity fund) but actually increase stress and workload for teachers.

Improve mid-level promotion prospects.
Reduce class sizes.

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?)

Maths is no longer compulsory in S5, in order to help reduce staffing issues in maths dept. Bi-level teaching is taking place in many classes – class sizes are as large as possible which puts stress on teacher and means that struggling pupils are getting less attention. Departments have been merged to make Faculties.

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. It is my experience that teaching is no longer a job which makes people happy. Teachers do not feel that they are able to make a difference, despite all the work that they are doing. The workload has increased significantly over the last 8 years and even after our holidays, people do not come back to work feeling refreshed as they have worked during the holidays and know they are coming back to face continuing demands on their time.

ANONYMOUS 37

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary Maths teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Fife

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Seeing pupils achieve things. The rapport with most pupils and most 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)

Considering leaving profession. It is a much more demanding job than it used to be and pay is being eroded. As an unpromoted teacher the amount of additional things I am expected to do over and above my role is becoming a genuine burden and stressor. I never used to feel like this but the last 3-4 years have been particularly bad. I wish I had never chosen to become a
teacher. It is not worth it for the pay you get. In addition to this behaviour of pupils is becoming increasingly challenging to the point of outright defiance. The efforts of pupils appear to be diminishing also.

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

There are increasingly limited opportunities for this. As a hard working member of staff I have been consistently overlooked for promoted posts whilst seeing people who are not as good as me progress. Hugely frustrating and there is NO INCENTIVE for teachers in my position to work hard and progress. Why not bring back the chartered teacher scheme?

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)

Quantity and quality of maths teachers coming into profession is dreadful. Core subject specialists such as maths teachers should be given enhanced pay to keep them in the profession. All my department are sick of the amount of work we have to do for our job and the small pay packet at the end of it all. Stop offering incentives for new teachers and start respecting those of us who remain in the profession. We are at breaking point and need to feel valued. More and more will leave if this is not sorted.

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

Maths. I cannot stress enough how important this is. Maths is the gateway subject that allows pupils to succeed in a number of other subjects such part of STEM. Without getting maths right, these subjects have no chance.

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

Financial incentives to keep good teachers in the profession. Performance related pay. Stop giving teachers in promoted posts permanent contracts. Make them temporary so if they’re not very good we can demote them again. There are too many ineffective staff on enhanced pay. We need to get rid of these people and inject new life into the profession.

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?)
Class sizes increasing, workload increasing and lack of pathways to progression.

**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 Very low. Low pay affecting this. High workload for the pay we get. I don’t mind working extra hard, but it’s not fair pay at the moment.

**Additional comments**

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE pay us more or give us money for doing jobs over and above our remit. Unpromoted teachers are absolutely demoralised. I don’t think you all realise how much.

**ANONYMOUS 38**

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

Secondary – Physics with Science

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?

Dumfries and Galloway

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

Working with pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities; facing new challenges and chances to develop daily. Every day is a different beast entirely.

Working with some of the most dedicated people I’ve ever met who will go the extra mile for students when needed.

That my job doesn’t feel like a job – it’s something I enjoy and get to do everyday.

**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 fully expect to stay in the profession until 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)

- Need to return to university to complete PGDE – associated loss of income & costs.
- Expectations from current teachers when on PGDE placement
- Profile of the role – underappreciated in society
- Politicisation of the role – Education is a golden political football that everyone wants to kick around.
- Workload & work/life balance
- Class sizes
• Development time

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

Home Economics

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

Home Economics – more availability/publicity of courses that can be used to get into PGDE course for the subject. Currently only 3 undergraduate courses are accepted to join PGDE course.

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.

- Staff voice is an important; allowing staff to feel they have some say in the direction the school is taking.
- Support from management in handling issues in the classroom; if something is reported there is a definitive resolution.
- Good quality meetings and whole school CPD – not just tick-box exercises or doing something for the sake of doing it.

ANONYMOUS 39

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 

Principal Teacher of Vocational Education in a Secondary School

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

East Ayrshire

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

I am very fortunate in that my job is varied and I have lots of opportunities for working with pupils, staff and outside agencies in different spheres.

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 remain in 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 interested in further promotion. Too much stress and lack of contact with the main thing - pupils

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)
Young staff want a life. I am in the position of being able to commit to any extra time required to do my job to my satisfaction. I put in a lot of time. Older staff may have aged parents to look after too. It is not easy.

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

Teachers with a degree which allows them to apply for jobs outwith teaching will be most likely to depart. I have always said that teaching must be the worst job in the world if you don’t like it.

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

More time for things. Sometimes it feels like being on a treadmill. It is unsettling to have to accept that a task is done “ok” when it would be more satisfying to have had more time and finished it to a higher standard.

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?)

Not really. Lack of office support is the biggest thing for me. They are under pressure too.

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)

Don’t know. Lack of money for worthwhile visits is annoying. The cost of buses is prohibitive.

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. The tougher the school, the tighter the staff cleave together. We are a happy band.

Additional comments

The support of the Senior Management Team is crucial to staff morale in a school. I am fortunate in always having had that support.

ANONYMOUS 40

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.

Faculty Head of Geography and Modern Studies in a large secondary school in South Lanarkshire Council
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Duncanrig secondary School, East Kilbride, South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with the children in my faculty.
Working with my colleagues in my faculty.

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. Have no desire to do any other job.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Nothing! Have no desire to be promoted above my current grade. Don’t want to move further away from the classroom and the children in my care.

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! Fallen so far behind other sectors.
Lack of permanent posts/opportunities deter people from giving up other jobs to come in to teaching.
Increased stress caused by bureaucracy gone mad!

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
In my recent experience all subjects! My DHT finds great difficulty in getting specialist supply teachers in all subjects.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Address pay issue. Make teaching more attractive by increasing pay in line with other employment areas. Offer more permanent posts even if they are area cover to retain good 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? Reduction in support staff, reduction in faculty budgets.
☐ How well are they working? Poor, less help available to support the less able.
☐ 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?) Have no idea. All I know is kids are suffering.
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)
Fewer periods allocated to staff to deliver Advanced Higher courses as a result of cut backs and pressure on the timetable. This adversely affects the results and increases staff 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?
Low to very low.
Too many curriculum changes too often….no time to consolidate and take stock before next raft of changes sweep in…..always with a lack of support from SQA!
Cutbacks in budget, too few specialist supply teachers available when colleagues are off ill.
Reduction in wages compared to other sectors of employment.
More and more children with significant behaviour and learning difficulties/needs in mainstream with little or no support and little or no appropriate training for staff……this is a growing problem and so demoralising.

ANONYMOUS 41
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary - Geography
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Renfrewshire
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
- I enjoy working with young people, and sharing the passion I have for my subject. The positive is being in the classroom, building strong sense of community, teaching lessons – seeing young people develop and grow in 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 would love to consider teaching until I retire however, I know that for my own health and wellbeing I will not be able to. No I won’t teach until I retire, I don’t think it would be possible to do so given the way things are at the moment, I cannot see the job/workload etc getting any better.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Encourage – More opportunities for promotion, when I began teaching (~6yrs ago) the introduction of faculty heads across many authorities began. With the
removal of principal teachers for each subject (e.g. one for Geography, one for History etc) and the introduction of faculty heads (e.g. one person for multiple subjects Geography, History, Modern Studies and RMPS) this has significantly reduced the number of opportunities for promotion available to me.

Only in the past year have I felt at the stage to be ready to go for promotion. In that time there has been many faculty head adverts and very few principal teacher Geography posts (two across the country that I am aware of).

I have applied for faculty head positions, however these are much more competitive, due to the significant reduction in principal teacher (single subject), there is a much greater pool of people going for them (e.g. not just Geographers but also History, Modern Studies and RMPS teachers applying). Ultimately those who are more experienced are gaining the roles.

I have been told on occasions from senior management in my own school and across others that they will not consider anyone for a promoted post unless they have had ‘acting’ experience in a faculty head position, but there are so many people who want the experience and can’t get it. The occasions when people do get acting experience is if they are ‘fortunate’ that the faculty head in their school is off sick, on maternity, secondment etc.. if you are unfortunate to have a faculty head who isn’t ill, doesn’t want children etc. then you don’t get the opportunity, it is a lottery.

e.g in our school faculty head Music/French has just went off on maternity leave and the ‘acting’ faculty head position has went to a music teacher one year out of their NQT year – fantastic opportunity for them, but not one that is/has been/will be available to anyone in the Humanities/Social subjects faculty.

Discourage – the large volume of unnecessary tasks that is required (admin etc) but at times has little/no impact on learning for pupils. There is very little that would discourage me, I want to make a difference, I think I have the passion, skills to be able to do so – I just need an opportunity.

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. I was not aware of this when I joined the school, had I known about this then I would not have taken the job – reason: when teachers are forced to teach subjects for which they are not qualified for. E.g. I have no qualifications in history, or modern studies (last studied them when I was in S1) yet I am forced to teach both to S1-S2 students through ‘integrated social subjects’ – which doesn’t improve student learning, it only waters it down as my subject knowledge in history is virtually zero. I contacted GTCS regarding the matter that I am not qualified, and surely can’t be allowed to teach pupils yet they said that it was up to the school and there was nothing to stop them from telling me to teach it. More schools will move towards it as it is an easy way to cut costs, saving on the number of teachers required.

e.g. in our school

Previously (subject specialist teacher for each social subject)
S1 – Geo x 2 periods, History x 2 periods, Modern Studies x 2 periods.
= 6 periods a week of Social Subjects x 5 classes (~160 pupils in S1) required
30 periods of social subjects

Time table requirements for school 10 periods – Geography teacher, 10
periods – history teacher and 10 periods – Modern Studies teacher

Now (single teacher delivery, one teacher for the class)
S1 - 'integrated social subjects' x 3 periods
= 3 periods a week of social subjects x 5 classes (~160 pupils in S1) required
15 periods of social subjects

Therefore the school has automatically saved 15 periods which saves them
money (which they see as great), however they do not think about the
implications that this has on teaching and learning for the students, they also
don’t think about the impact that it has on staff morale.

I have no interest in the teaching of history and hence I have little/no
enthusiasm when teaching history lessons, this will no doubt have a negative
effect on the learning of the students, yet when I have requested CPD on this
to develop my knowledge I have been told that there is no time, money for
cover etc. I will not go out of my way, and use my own time and money
outside of school to pursue further training in History as mentioned previously
I do not want to teach it.

2. Teachers get frustrated when they can’t just simply be trusted do the job
that they’ve trained for years for and been employed to do. The new
qualifications – are a shambles and put added pressure onto students and
teachers. Teachers through formative and summative assessment make
recommendations about levels for student but then we are ignored and
pressured to ‘force through’ students at a particular level when you know they
are not capable.. or achieving at that level. It does no good for the student
who then constantly comes up against failures, feeling like they’re not good
enough, when if we were able to set them at the correct level then they could
achieve success, and we’d scaffold the more difficult higher level material in
throughout those successes

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

As a classroom teacher I can only guess based on what I have heard, but I
don’t know the figures.. something that senior management/local authorities
would know.

From our school experience – Home Economics.

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

Higher salary
More opportunities for promotion.
Move back to the model that there was previously before I entered teaching.

Have Subject PTs instead of faculty heads – The job as faculty head (e.g. in our school managing 12 staff across 4 subjects in addition to teaching 21 periods is hellish, and not one that many people would wish to do).

Bring back APTs – assistant principal teachers (to allow those teachers wanting to seek promotion to gain the experience and skills necessary before moving onto the PT role)

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?)
- Reduction in the number of ASN assistants although the number of pupils has increased. Not working well as those pupils who need additional support don’t get it, teachers are stretched to support all 33 pupils but don’t have the resources to do so on their own. A difficult balancing act for the teacher who wants to help all, but ultimately has to get them through exams etc. This therefore results in teaching to the majority and trying to plug the gaps for the lower ability when possible.
- Removal of the admin support (lady who done all the photocopying) – this therefore means teachers spend more time on admin tasks. Photocopying has been outsourced to the council with a one week turn around. This is not suitable for teaching. As much as we can forward plan any good teacher will let the outcome of one lesson inform their next lesson. If e.g. I realised a class didn’t quite understand something and wanted to do a consolidation task in the next lesson (2 days later), I could make a sheet for them but then I need to print it myself at home as it would take a week for the copying to be returned to school. It is ridiculous.

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)

- In our school additional PE teachers being employed (as there is a ‘surplus’ of them) to teach Home Economics (as we have had experienced people leave moving sideways to other schools, not retire) – however as the PE teachers do not have the necessary training required to teach cooking (health and safety, food hygiene etc) pupils are not able to experience the cooking aspects that form a vital part of the subject. This therefore has a detrimental effect on the number of pupils who will choose the subject, also they are losing out on the key life skills that are necessary and which some don’t have
the fortune of being taught by their parents at home (e.g. how to work a cooker, boil pasta etc)

- Subjects not offered due to staff shortages – Advanced Highers (various subjects), also Drama is not offered at all as a subject in our 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?
Low – key factors: SQA, salary, CfE, lack of trust given to us to do our job.

ANONYMOUS 42

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary Physics teacher. Full time and permanent.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
North Lanarkshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I enjoy the challenge and the satisfaction of inspiring some pupils and helping them achieve their goals.

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 investigating pursuing an alternative career. The conditions have changed significantly since I began teaching 12 years ago. I have qualifications which are in demand and would be significantly better remunerated in an alternative career. In addition to the changes to salary and pension, the move to faculty leaders and abolition of the chartered teacher scheme have resulted in very limited career progression prospects.

The poor implementation of CfE has been incredibly frustrating and I now find myself spending more time dealing with benchmarks, outcomes, standards and assignments rather than improving teaching and learning in my classroom. It pains me to see the impact of CfE on the children that are in front of me each day and I feel genuinely sorry for them.

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 and probationer teachers has declined considerably recently. More able candidates are choosing alternative professions which offer better financial rewards and career progression.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
We have experienced significant difficulties recruiting Science teachers.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
To attract and retain the best quality of teacher, they have to be remunerated on a similar level to other professionals. I find it difficult to imagine many teachers still working at the current retirement age and forward thinking is required to address this before it becomes an issue.

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?)

Composite classes significantly detract from the learning experience of all pupils in a class. In my experience, the most able do not receive the challenge they need to reach their full potential and those in most need do not receive the support they require to achieve. I imagine this would be equivalent to chairing three committees in the same room at the same time. If this occurs lower in the school, it has an impact on the number of pupils progressing to Higher level.

This year has been the most challenging in terms of staffing so I can conclude the measures are not working and fear for the consequences which will be felt for the next five 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)

A number of pupils are not able to access the BGE due to staff shortages in Science. There has also been a reduction on the number of pupils studying at Higher level.

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. This is the lowest I have seen staff morale since I began teaching. This has been influenced by a real terms decrease in salary, a lack of promotion prospects and a disastrous implementation of CfE which has a plaster of ‘more change’ stuck over it to attempt to fix it.

**ANONYMOUS 43**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary Modern Studies

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Renfrewshire Council
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Seeing young people enjoy my classes

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 believe 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?

Nothing as there is too much bureaucracy in the system as it currently exists. When I started teaching, I considered the idea of becoming a Guidance/Pastoral teacher at some point in the future. This is something I have reconsidered as the number of pupils in your care has increased dramatically since I was a pupil. This brings problems as these teachers have less time to spend with the pupils they are responsible for as they are stretched too far. In addition, I love teaching my subject and, at this point, I do not want to give this up.

I would not consider a move to Support for Learning/Behavioural Departments as I believe that schools do not have enough funding to adequately support every pupil’s additional supports needs and I would feel that I had failed. There are pupils in my school who use laptops during classes due to additional support needs, but these have been provided by their parents. There are others in the class who may also benefit from this, but the school cannot provide this due to costs.

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 believe recruitment for Modern Studies is fine in terms of numbers. However, I do believe that those with a general degree struggle more than those with an Honours degree in terms of content knowledge.

There are concerns regarding recruiting Home Economics teachers – the universities require very specific degree modules which are not particularly common and I believe that this is part of the issue in recruiting teachers.

I also think that overall, the amount that teachers are paid does not reflect the work that they do, both in terms of time and quality. Many people will state that teachers pay is okay as they are compensated with holidays. I still work during the holidays. My senior pupils send me essays they have completed for revision and I prepare my lessons for the coming weeks/term.

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

Home Economics

Physics

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
For Home Economics, I think that the entry requirements need to be revised.

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 a previous school, there were issues with recruiting Home Economics teachers. The BGE timetable had to be changed to accommodate this – pupils missed out on Home Economics, but did receive extra periods of Music and Art. This may now have changed.

I know of a school where S1 History will be taught by Geography and Modern Studies teachers and there are issues with timetabling the senior phase classes due to the popularity of the subject. This could be relieved by adding another full time teacher (or at least one that is part time), but funding is tight and this might not be possible. This means that pupils are not getting to study their preferred subject.

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)

Due to staffing, some S5 and S6 pupils in my school have to travel to others to complete a Higher. This can be disruptive as they have to rely on their transport being on time. In many cases, my Higher class has been disrupted by pupils coming in late from other schools.

I believe that some pupils miss out on the opportunity to complete Advanced Higher classes due to the fact they are taught in a consortium arrangement as opposed to ‘in house’. I know that the prospect of travelling to another school for Advanced Higher Modern Studies has put off some pupils in my current Higher class from picking this for their final year.

Schools should also be able to offer a broad range of subjects within Humanities including Travel and Tourism, Politics and Sociology. More staffing would allow this to happen.

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?

My working environment tends to be good with a good staff morale. Staff are experiencing pressure with CfE and the constant changes to the curriculum, but they/we are trying to get through this. It would be nice to have a few years with a settled curriculum.

Principal and Depute Head Teachers can be stressed with regards to staff absences. This is largely due to a lack of (competent) supply staff. It is difficult to leave work that is stimulating/engaging for classes when the teacher is not
a subject specialist or needs the time to prepare and mark for their own classes.
Morale can be low in departments where there are members of staff who are supply and have been looking for permanent posts. Permanent contracts are relatively hard to come by. If one does come up, you will often find that there is a person in post who has been a temporary member of staff for a long period of time. I believe councils do this to save money, but this makes it extremely difficult to plan your life – wages are different each month and there is no pay throughout the school holidays. This cycle of temporary work also makes it more difficult to obtain a mortgage and buy a house with some peace of mind!

**Additional comments**
I am fairly new to the profession having completed by training in 2014-15. I feel that teachers need more training with regards to additional support needs. My tutor at university was very good at making us aware of support needs we may face and gave us advice on how to support these pupils, but I know from talking to other teachers that this was rare. Universities should include more training in this area.

I believe this survey is badly timed. This was announced over the school holidays when some teachers will be spending time with their families. It could also have been easier to fill out the questionnaire. Using software such as survey monkey would have been less time consuming for those responding.

The announcement and offer to participate should also be shared on more platforms to ensure that all teachers have a chance to respond, should they wish to do so. There are many teachers in my school who do not use social media. Using the GTCS mailing list would have been a better way of contacting teachers.

The offer to attend Committee Meetings is good, but the timing is bad for secondary school teachers due to upcoming SQA exams. As well as helping pupils prepare for these exams, many teachers also volunteer to mark the exam papers which require our attendance at meetings.

For teachers working outside of Edinburgh and the Lothian Councils, attendance at one of these meetings would require them to be away from school for the whole day. As you are aware, there is an issue with schools and councils recruiting supply teachers and this would increase the burden of having to find cover, but also the burden of financing this. It may be beneficial to hold each of the committee meetings in a different location.

**ANONYMOUS 44**
**Q1** What type of teaching role do you have?  
Secondary  
**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?  
Perth and Kinross
The students. Caring about them and their future – which is more than this government has ever done.

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 retiring early, in June. I have been asked to stay on; I am an ‘excellent teacher’ (so says everyone) but I can’t wait to leave. If it hadn’t been for the pupils, I would have walked out years ago.

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 thought about applying for senior management but then saw who actually got the jobs – usually people with a mixture of inability and ineptitude, promoted above their competence level, often to get them out of the classroom. I preferred to stay in the classroom so that I could make a difference, rather than be seen walking around with a protective clipboard, going to endless meetings and discussing issues which were meaningless to the general 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)

- Litter, vandalism – daily. Unaddressed by SLT
- Desperate state of our school. Even staff toilets are disgusting.
- Lack of respect for teachers, daily verbal abuse of teachers by pupils which go without sanctions.
- Lack of support for class teachers from SLT team.
- Lack of support from parents of pupils who have problems.
- Pupils being labelled ‘with issues’ but in fact, using those as an excuse to run amok in school instead of being properly trained in self-discipline, as any workplace would do.
- Headteacher trying hard, but no proper discipline sanctions are available.
- Teachers who have had real problems with verbal / physical abuse from pupils (throwing things at teachers, sexual innuendos, phones out in class, taking inappropriate pictures etc) seeing same pupils free to wander the corridors and laugh at the teachers they have abused.
- The joke of CfE / Education Scotland, which has dumbed down our subjects to make pupils ‘confident individuals’ with no thought of helping to make us ‘confident teachers’.
- Changing guidelines, changing course structures
- Staff shortages due to being off with ‘stress’. And can you blame them?
- No staff cover, no supply teachers, no SLT in their offices or patrolling corridors—because they are covering classes, instead of managing the school.
- IT system which is a complete joke—variable wifi, ancient laptops, equipment which is falling apart.
- No level playing field between schools—so new schools have had money thrown at them, state of the art, Macbooks etc, and we have damn all.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
ALL (in our school)—and I think retention will get worse

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Government needs to let us teach—and then come and watch and listen. NOT to the HT but to ground staff, actually pop into a school unannounced and talk to people. See the things that are happening. We have the knowledge, we know how to put things right. LISTEN TO US!!

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?)

Faculty Heads instead of Principal Teachers/Assistant Principal Teachers = Cost cutting exercise with long standing terrible consequences of time management, timetabling problems, lack of knowledge—e.g. Head of History, in charge of faculty which includes RMPS, Geography etc etc. This is probably the worst thing to happen in my lifetime as a teacher. Departments lost identity, lost control of what is happening curriculum-wise plus internal departmental discipline.

Lack of support staff—this is a DIRE problem. I teach classes with up to half pupils with 'issues' with no support staff ever. (In fairness some of whom should not have been labelled with issues at all, but with the occasional pupil who should not be in mainstream education.) The disruption that this causes has a huge impact on other students' learning.

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)
Focus is all on 'proper subjects'—maths and English and huge emphasis on sport too. Music and art are basically being ignored. It's funny how Government is happy to promote music schemes which get the limelight
(Stirling/Rapploch instrumental scheme) but is happy to support cuts to instrumental instructors in schools and music in primary schools (which is virtually non-existent) despite stats which prove that music is healing for young people with mental health issues, plus providing excellent multi-cultural links, plus supporting pupils from all backgrounds……

(My own children all had music lessons in school and did well, working in London now, high paid jobs – and still playing their instruments for fun, making new friends through music. Now, music tuition is being cut as ‘unnecessary’ when it should be necessary for those who want 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?
Extremely low. Staff, young and old desperate to move – any job at all. My colleague in English Department is working 60-70 hour week - and has no sympathy with doctors or nurses!!

Additional comments
If you have any other comments please include them below:
Stop blaming Westminster- This has happened on your watch deal with it.

ANONYMOUS 45
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary school teacher of maths.
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeen City
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Sadly my main motivator is to pay the mortgage. That said, I still enjoy interacting with the pupils and share their joy and enthusiasm when they get something or pass a test.
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 likely to keep teaching until I retire as I only have 7 years (at most) to go. If I was 20 years younger, I would certainly consider a change of career as I definitely feel my enjoyment in teaching has gone down over the years.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I have held senior roles in other industries and also ran my own company for 5 years prior to coming into teaching – I have considered promoted roles in teaching and have discounted applying for many reasons – the reporting and administration required makes all these jobs too much of a “pen pusher” role for me. There is no real authority to implement your own ideas – head teachers can’t even get rid of troublesome pupils without a mountain of
paperwork. Councils don’t want “fresh ideas”, they just seem to want managers who will carry out the job as the council sees it. The additional money is nowhere near worth the extra hassle and form filling expected. I would rather remain in front of the pupils doing a good job there.

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 cost of living and houses in Aberdeen is prohibitive still for anyone considering a move here from most other places in Scotland. If I was a teacher or probationer based more than 50 miles from Aberdeen and I was looking for a post or a promotion, there is no way I would consider moving to Aberdeen. A simple scan of the ASPC website shows what poor value there is for money up here property wise. It's not as if there is a huge abundance of other reasons to come here outside of these down sides either. [the school] has been even more badly hit during this period due to the impending merger with another school in 2018 and a perceived poor reputation of the school built up over several years.

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

STEM subjects due to relatively poor remuneration levels versus industry.

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

Pay teachers a generous “Aberdeen allowance” like they do in London. They have tried “golden handshakes” and “relocation payments” and neither have had any significant impact.

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)?

Yes.

If so:

- What are these measures?
  Using other schools as “hubs” for small classes like advanced higher.
  Teachers doing two subjects (one like supply) to maximise use of teachers.
  Bigger classes often with pupils at hugely differing levels of ability and even actual levels in some cases.
  Dropping subject choices altogether.

- How well are they working?
  Not well at all in my opinion.

- 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?)
I have no idea if these changes are permanent or not – we have been told one thing by management and then this has changed totally soon after – I am sure this is due to the council, not the management. I suspect that the council will do whatever they can to reduce costs as their number 1 priority ahead of all else.

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 believe that many higher and advanced higher courses are not offered at our school due to staff shortages. (Business admin? Accounts? AH Maths next year?)

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 – 6 years of ridiculously low wage increases, over worked due to CFE and staff shortages and cuts to support staff, stressed out due to the frustrations of poorly behaved pupils not being dealt with appropriately.

Additional comments

It is extremely frustrating to see our education system sliding downhill so badly due to money and other things that could be avoided. I also feel that all the “initiatives” that have been introduced over the years have in the main been a waste of time and money (AIFL, CfE, Visible learning, BGE etc etc).

Good teachers will teach well if you have the right personnel in place. All this other stuff, I feel, is just another new “fad” that is hopefully going to provide a process to compensate for poor quality teachers.

ANONYMOUS 46

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Non-promoted Drama teacher, secondary school

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Angus Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The holidays – although much of those are taken up with resting from working 50+ hours a week during term time, or catching up with the things I don’t have time for in term time (such as housework, gardening, DIY), planning and preparation for the next term, or catching up with marking from the previous one, and during this current Spring holiday, going into school to take extra classes – for which I am not getting paid – as there is not enough time to teach the pupils properly, and thoroughly enough during term time in order to prepare them for their exams.
The extensive extra-curricular work that I do with the pupils – which in many instances is far more valuable than the nonsense that I have to teach them.
Reminding myself – constantly – that the experiences I give my pupils are the memories, skills and development of their future.
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)
Every single term I wish I could leave. I really doubt I’ll still be in this job at retirement. After only 10 years, this isn’t the career that I came into.
I hate the politics, the red tape, the complete crap of a curriculum that is being taught, the paper work, the over assessment, the school management, the political correctness.
I hate being told what to do by people who have never spent any time in a classroom, I hate that we keep developing new ‘policies’ so that we are apparently ‘getting it right for every child’ when in reality, we are getting it completely wrong for the vast majority of children. For example, who one earth thought that inclusion was a good thing for anyone except the child being ‘included’?
I hate buzzwords and the latest ‘in-thing’ initiative that has no place in education as it just messes everything up. I hate bowing down to societal pressure because someone has a bee in their bonnet and we need to follow it.
I hate the behaviour of the pupils and the fact we can’t do anything about it.
It’s just getting worse and every single tool that we used to have as teachers has been taken from us. I hate the lack of support from the government / LA / media / parents / leadership of the school. It’s always the teachers fault.
I hate being called one of the ‘whiny teachers’, when in my short career, I’ve seen standards of pupils and their education decimated. I’ve seen my retirement age soar (hahah – can you imagine teachers still being able to teach their subject effectively at 67??!! I can barely do elements of mine now at 34!!) . And lets not talk about any career prospects I may have had disappearing from under my nose (unless I want to be PCS, which I don’t).

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 seek promotion. The government took away my career development ladder with the introduction of the faculty system. I did once think about being a head of department, but since I don’t want to be a faculty head, that’s just a pipe dream. I know nothing about the other subjects that I would be in charge of in a faculty, and I think it’s insulting to subject specialists to tell them what to do. My own FacHead doesn’t have a clue about my subject, so whilst I still have to do half the work that a head of department does as my FacHead can’t do it, I don’t get paid for it and he does. It’s a cop out method to pay less staff and have less promotion. Perhaps I should just let him fail at his job, and reveal the truth of what goes on.
I wouldn’t ever want the responsibility of being a head teacher (despite the fact I would have done a better job of it that my previous head teacher). There’s not enough money in the world for that job. I don’t like meetings, and have better things to do with my time – like teach - not to mention, my views aren’t exactly what people would want as a head teacher. I certainly don’t want to go into social work, sorry, I mean PCS.
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 is good, but it doesn’t reflect the work that we do, the hours we put in or the fact that we are meant to be a profession. It also doesn’t rise in line with inflation and the last pay rise I got actually say me earning LESS per month, due to tax rises etc.

Poor discipline within schools. If I want to be told to **** off, I can get that for more money per day on a building site.

There’s a distinct lack of promotion opportunities. Usually the people who get them are nothing more than those who can talk the talk – greasy pole climbers who can’t actually do the job.

Location – we can’t employ staff because we are too ‘rural’ and public transport is horrendous. There’s no incentives to move here (or stay)

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

ALL of them. We have more kids with ASN, yet LESS ASN staff, so less support in class. We have more kids in mainstream that shouldn’t be there – for example, why is a lovely young laddie with a mental age of 6 taking up the time of one support for learning teacher or assistance every single period of every single day, when there are pupils floundering in classes because there is nobody to support them.

Let’s not mention these pupils who require ‘personal’ support – I certainly wouldn’t be doing their job if I had to change nappies – and in my school support assistants and learning support assistants have just been amalgamated, so staff who signed up to do admin and photocopying are now wiping arses for a living.

We also have more emphasis being placed on skills for work, yet there is also more expectation to achieve highly in academic subjects. What do we want the kids to do? There’s not enough staff to teach classes, so courses don’t run, of different courses / levels are put together in one class. I’m lucky, I only have a bi-level class – but for example, in a unit with 40 hours of teaching, they only actually get 20 hours of my time, and have to do the other 20 hours themselves. The government doesn’t acknowledge drama as a practical subject, I’m pretty damned sure that in a couple of weeks I have 20 kids participating in a PRACTICAL exam, where they will either be performing, or carrying out a practical technical role. I guess that needs time and space and resources – something I’m short of.

And there’s no training – I’m trained as an actor, but I now have to be able to teach lighting, sound, set, props, costume and make up and do it up to advanced higher level. I have no idea about most of that. There’s no courses to attend, and if any do appear, the school wont pay for them (so unless it’s like a sewing course I did last week which I wanted to do for my own
enjoyment, I most certainly won’t pay for them myself) AND there are inaccuracies in some of what the SQA are telling us to teach!!

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

Pay us more, and make realistic pay rises that make it a living wage that actually reflects the hours we put in. Treat us as professionals. Stop pissing about and actually get people who do the job to design the curriculums and assessments, not people with no idea who sit in offices.

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?)

I have no specialists teaching some of my lower school because I am a single person department and can’t teach all the classes myself. This is the third year out of 4 of this situation, last year I lost S1 from my timetable. I was supposed to get a probationer this year, but she decided not to come as it wasn’t her first choice and was too far and too difficult for her to travel on public transport (whilst the girl who actually wanted to be in my local authority and picked it as a first choice was sent to another LA instead, forcing her to move completely away from the area, and leaving me with a two person timetable to be taught by one person – clearly GTCS messing up again).

Other courses in other subject areas haven’t run because we don’t have the staff available to teach them or we haven’t managed to recruit.

Teachers with no specialism in the subject have had ‘long term’ cover of subject areas – either because of absences and an inability to get supply, or because of staff leaving and being unable to replace them (for example I taught music for two terms due to absence) – we’re told we’re all teachers and that for S1-S3 CfE, our subject specialisms don’t matter. Trust me, they do.

As previously said, I have bi-level classes, but I know of quad-level (in fact quin-level, as there was also an SfL kid in that class who was given another level of unit to complete).

Learning support just isn’t available for poor wee Jimmy who needs an extra hand, it’s being wasted on behaviour support and kids who in my opinion, have no place in mainstream schools.

Staff support isn’t there, and it takes a period of stress related sickness absence (or in my case, having a total melt-down and threatening to take stress related sickness absence) before anything gets done.
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)

YES! My classes don’t get the opportunity to be taught for the full requirement of course length, because the lesson is shared with two levels. I can’t offer other areas like creative arts / creative industries as a full subject as I’m on my own and can’t accommodate it on the timetable. I can’t explore personal development in areas such as dance or technical theatre as I don’t have the time to train or develop courses in these areas.

Another example is losing a maritime skills course, and a refereeing skills course because two members of staff left.

Everyone is working on their full contact time as they’re constantly covering classes for absent staff or vacancies.

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 at rock bottom. I feel like we’ve lifted slightly in the last few months, but only because we have an acting head teacher, and it’s been the best bit of news and relief that we’ve had in over 5 years.

Courses demand too much of staff and pupils. They bear little resemblance to anything the kids will use/need in the real world, and course content/exam papers frequently contain inaccuracies. If we raise these issues / complain our professionalism is brought into questions. We are told just to ‘accept’ it.

Behaviour and new initiatives are killing us all. Nothing is allowed to develop and grow, it constantly has to be changed, tweaked and developed so we never know whether we’re coming and going.

We’re about to have to change courses again because of SQA changes, but we’re going to be teaching the courses before we get all of the information that we need.

We’re tired, and fed up.

Additional comments

I really hope that this survey is going to be taken seriously and that you’re actually going to listen to what people are saying, and it’s not just another pretend consultation for consultations sake. We get too many of them.

ANONYMOUS 47

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have? .
PT Faculty of Art, Design and Technology, specialism in Technical teaching

Q2  Whereabouts do you work? East Ayrshire

Q4  What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Some nice kids, though getting fewer every year. Feel like I can make a difference with some kids.

Salary is decent but has not had any real term increase in nearly 10 years.

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 making plans to leave as early as possible, maybe for alternative employment or leave early. Certainly within the next year or two. I am 17 years away from my normal pension age.

There is little or no enjoyment or fulfilment in the job I used to really love. Constant changes and cut backs to resourcing and support staff is making the job impossible. Coupled to the ever increasing low level disruption to classes, lack of respect from too many pupils, lack of effort from pupils and fewer sanctions for dealing with unruly pupils the enthusiasm has totally drained from me.

Weekends and evenings are times for recharge for the forthcoming week; not relaxation and enjoyment. Remuneration is not equivalent to job. The supported study rate (£22.76/hour) has not changed in at least 15 years; it will be soon equivalent to living wage. This is a disgrace and senior management continue to demand that teachers provide supported study even though they know it is a pitiful rate; but ‘it is for the kids’ is what we are told. I will not do supported study as I find this amount to be derisory. Pupils are becoming lazier and lazier with every passing year. They have no work ethic yet the results improve every year; how can that be? The pressure on staff to get pupils through at the highest level is greater with every year as well. No matter if the pupil evidence and teacher recommendation suggest that they should be presented at a lower level, SMT keep saying no or that the parents insist presentation at the higher level even when this is not right. We are told that the parent has the final word on the level their child is presented at! How ridiculous this is. The teacher’s role in setting presentation levels is ever diminishing. It is tantamount to cheating. I have told my head teacher that I and my staff will not be cheating and I don’t care if other schools are out performing ours. Education is not about teaching and learning, it is about cheating and recording.

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

Nothing would make me want to seek promotion to senior management level. HTs are now just under qualified, over ambitious, quite often deluded of their own competence and have no real life experience for this job. A HT should be over 50 before getting appointed. Their leadership skills are severely lacking. My HT does not know the kids; he doesn’t appear interested in them and will not consider dealing with discipline issues himself. Passes them on to PTs or DHTs.

Most senior managers appear to be desperate to get out of the classroom and do not have real passion for teaching. They have a passion for telling other people what they should be doing and earning the big salaries. Some have
admitted that they could not go back to the classroom. Many have not even run a faculty or department and they think they can run a school!

Senior management have no innovation or ideas for themselves; they just regurgitate others ideas and implement directives (normally badly) from Scottish Government or LA.

They seem to have lost their passion for the kids and lost their soul for 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)

Staff do not feel valued. They are now just a number in a soulless community. They do not feel as if they are listened to by management; the big game must keep rolling on relentless. They are not remunerated properly either. For a graduate job the pay is not keeping up with other workplaces. Our school is merging with a neighbouring school but the staff leaving this year, either to retire or move sideways to other schools, has been unprecedented. Instead of everyone looking forward to the move there is no appetite to stay because the job is draining the blood from everyone at the chalk face. I believe our HT is really only understanding the enormity of the recruitment crisis we have. I know of teachers less than 5 years into the job and thinking I have got 40 more years of this sort of pressure; no way, they are looking for jobs in private sector to get a better work life balance or packing teaching in altogether for a more enjoyable career.

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

My knowledge is only within my own sector of Art and Technical. Within East Ayrshire, there is no spare capacity. I need a small point-age for Technical but there is little chance of recruiting anyone never mind someone of any quality as there is no one out there. I am desperately trying to get newly retired people to fill in but the bureaucracy and pupil indiscipline surrounding teaching puts a lot of them of.

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

Scrap the McCrone arrangements. Get all staff to work in school for their allocated working hours, i.e. not taking work home.

Reduce tracking and monitoring of pupils; it is at ridiculous levels.

Have proper sanctions for disruptive behaviour. Staff cannot shout at kids, cannot give punishment exercises or ask pupils to be removed from the room without supervision. What sanctions do we have? Only ones that are extremely time consuming, e.g. restorative practice, or ‘detentions’ in staff own time. Other words staff are being asked to volunteer to supervise detention of pupils during their lunch or break time. This will drive more staff away from teaching.

Increase the pay and do not expect staff to work for nothing.
Better resourcing for departments; support staff have been reduced but the work remains to be done. For example, technician service is constantly being eroded so teaching staff cannot get through lessons effectively if technician support is required but they are working in another school that day! Requisition amounts continue to fall, year on year, yet prices keep rising! Staff are fed up making do with rubbish materials and rubbish equipment that is unreliable and breaks down all the time.

Improve examination and award procedures by simplifying course assessment to a final exam only in ALL subjects. It is a much more robust, honest and accurate measure of pupils’ ability than the current mixture of internally produced portfolio and exam. Portfolio work is so open to abuse and it is ultimately expensive to mark. It could make pupils work harder to ensure they perform on the day instead of having a lax attitude all 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?)

Main permanent staffing changes were to the faculty system where the number of specialised subject managers was reduced. Faculties, like in my case, were created with a Technical specialist teacher managing Art department with no or little subject knowledge. It is un-educational to do this as Art staff feel they are not being led properly and Technical staff feel a similar way as their PT provides less support for them than they had before.

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)

Yes, computer programming is a huge area of demand from industry that is not being catered for by our schools.

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

Over worked, undervalued, under paid, over stressed.

ANONYMOUS 48

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Full-time teacher of chemistry and science.
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Scottish Borders

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The opportunity to work with amazing young people every day, great job satisfaction whenever they achieve in any way, the challenge of meeting students’ needs, the fact that no two days are the same, the variety in the 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)
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 quite happy in my current role at present. I would be encouraged to seek promotion if I needed more challenge. I would be discouraged from seeking promotion if the role took me away from the classroom too much.

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 experience, recruitment and retention is affected by being a rural school. Young teachers do not want to live in a rural location away from the excitement of city life so recruitment is difficult. If they travel to the school from Edinburgh they find the travelling difficult to combine with family life and move back to Edinburgh.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
We had difficulty recruiting for a biology post recently after our Edinburgh-based teacher moved to a job in Edinburgh to have less travelling time due to family circumstances.

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?)
ANA hours have been reduced. I think this is a permanent cost-cutting measure. The pupils were given laptops instead. I am more involved in developing teaching materials for them than I would have been with ANA support. This is time-consuming but is developing my skills and my relationship with the pupils. One pupil with a severe behavioural condition was left unsupported in the classroom for several months until the school could prove (by health and safety log) that support was required. He now has support.

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 all get fed up with all the changes to assessment by SQA. I rely on the forum for chemistry teachers to keep me abreast of changes and how I should be assessing. This is my first year teaching higher and I am the only chemistry teacher in my school. I was going to attend the SQA standards workshop for higher but it was cancelled.

Last year, before I arrived, my department (consisting of 4 teachers when complete) were without a chemistry teacher for the year. This year we have been without a biology teacher for most of the year. Supply teachers have filled in but this puts extra work on the permanent teachers to keep the supply teachers supplied with work.

We are a good team and I very much enjoy working as part of this team. However, we are all feeling the strain.

ANONYMOUS 49

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary School – Class Teacher of Music.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Inverclyde.

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I work in an excellent school with an extremely supportive head teacher. I have the opportunity to work with some fantastic pupils.

I enjoy the education of the whole child, not just subject specific.

I enjoy working with the SQA to deliver integral qualifications to our young people.

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 probably continue teaching until I retire. I hope to take early retirement when I'm 60 as I don’t want to be teaching until 67! If I did leave the profession, I would consider alternative employment with SQA.

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

In the later stages of my career, I would consider progression to Depute Head Teacher. Things that would attract me to this would be the whole school remit, working closely with parents/carers and making more of an impact in the school. The competitive salary would also attract me to this. I can’t see myself going for Head Teacher at any stage. Things that would discourage me from going for senior management promotion would be the gruelling interview process.

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. Inverclyde Council can often be very late with advertising these, by which stage, teachers have been snapped up!

There’s a very high turnover of NQTs, again, due to lack of permanent contracts. Also, it is rather insulting as highly qualified members of staff, to go for jobs and be the successful candidate, then to be told “sorry, we’re actually withdrawing this job and giving it to an NQT”. Cost cutting exercises at the expense of good teachers! When I started out in 2004, NQTs were more of a “surplus to requirement”, not a full-time permanent position. It’s up to the government to try and sort out this mess.

In our school, we have gone from a 3 person Health and Food Technology Department, to a one person (Principal Teacher) over the past three years. This is unacceptable. For some reason, there is not enough happening recruitment wise for university courses. It’s got to the stage where pupils in my school have been told they can’t take the HFT courses at National Qualification level due to lack of staff. It’s not the pupils’ fault, so why should they be disadvantaged?

Lots of staff are leaving the profession due to Curriculum for Excellence. Some think it is a major downfall and see the whole thing changing again in the not too distant future. Older staff are seeking early retirement to get out while the going is good.

I am currently seeking promotion outwith my school. I have been teaching in a Roman Catholic school for 10 years now (not through personal choice, but through being surplus to requirement in a previous school, therefore moved on compulsory transfer). As I am not a baptised Roman Catholic, I am unable to go for promotion to Principal Teacher of Guidance or into Senior Management. I did an Acting PT Guidance role for 6 months, which was apparently fine as it was only temporary, but when the job came up, my Head Teacher told me I could not apply as I wasn’t Roman Catholic. I sought
advice from the EIS who told me I could apply but that I would never be successful in interview as only Roman Catholics can get the job in a denominational school. I fail to understand why this is. Some of the Guidance staff in school are RC but don’t attend church. They have absolutely no dealings with religion in their daily tasks. As an individual who has been approved to work in a Catholic school, surely I should be able to go for promotion??? Sadly, my options are limited and I can go no further so I need to get out.

Unfortunately, when we go for jobs in other schools, it’s 99% certain that the person in the Acting position will get the permanent position. This is regardless of how good (or terrible) they are. Head Teachers are pushed into a corner and feel they need to do the right thing. The government need to make sure they’re getting the best person for the job, not just the person who says all the right things.

I would love to see the government do something about the Roman Catholic issue raised. Being religious doesn’t make you a better teacher. I’m baptised Church of Scotland and I support the Roman Catholic ethos. My Head Teacher told me I was one of the best teachers he had ever worked with in the Guidance dept, but he couldn’t employ me. Unacceptable. Schools need to be able to hold onto good staff.

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

Health and Food Technology

Religious Education

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

Working with universities to address the gaps.

Teacher recruitment programmes for experienced professionals.

Opportunities for promotion for all teachers – help keep them there!

Jobs being advertised early in the 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?)
PE and Technical departments have taken on some of the pupils studying Health and Food Technology, so that they can help fulfil the Health and Technology requirements of the course. This is a permanent feature of the timetable. Music department temporarily took on extra classes.

This seems to work well but parents are concerned about their children’s progression.

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)

Just Health and Food Technology.

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 at the moment. We have just got a new Head Teacher who is extremely supportive. A great SMT really helps staff morale.

Teacher workload and stress really affects morale. Our school has really worked to balance the load a bit and everyone feels appreciated.

ANONYMOUS 50

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Secondary School Business Education Teacher.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Fife Council

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

Positives are that I have only been teaching for 2 years full time and I tell myself that the workload and stress is going to reduce soon. Although I'm beginning to notice that all teachers no matter how long they have been teaching seem to have similar levels of stress.

I love my job and I am passionate about my subject, I enjoy the interaction I have with my pupils and I like the variety of my job.

I also love the holidays as they fit around my family life. When my children were small I only worked as an Admin for a school part time so I could raise them. I wanted to be home for my children when they were very young. I feel I work to live not live to 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)

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I consider leaving every day. I feel that we do not get enough time in the day 8am until 5.30pm and working at home 2 or 3 nights a week to prepare and plan for lessons that are of high quality. I strive to provide an excellent learning experience for my pupils and feel that I will never get to the desired result. We are reinventing the wheel continuously.

I am constantly stressed about behaviour within the classes and I worry that today will be the day that one of my pupils will blow and of course it will be my fault as I did not hold a restorative conversation correctly.

I worry about the level of responsibility put on a teacher in relation to a young person - For example one CPD session was talking about how we are responsible for keeping children out of Jail and responsible for their life long outcomes changing the world one child at a time. I agree we do to an extent but the pressure given to us everyday is immense. Surely parents should still be held to account. I should be there to teach them Business and Admin skills, numeracy and literacy. I don't want to go home and think that "Joe" will go to prison one day because I haven't done my job right or "Sam" will be abused by her parents tonight because I never saw/reported the signs.

There are over 19 secondary schools in Fife – Would make sense for teachers to come together and share all resources and workload.

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

Pay incentives would encourage me to move to a promoted level and I have to say less time in the classroom might encourage me also.

Challenge and enjoyment would encourage me to move to a promoted level.

The workload and commitment required would discourage me. Leadership are often in school over their holiday period.

The culture within schools of 'jobs for the boys' discourages me from going for a promoted role.

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 stress teachers are under in relation to behaviour management is an issue. Pupils manners and attitudes can be intimidating and I feel that this leads me to become stressed and depressed about attending some classes.

I also find that the work level required from a teacher is not sustainable long term. Report writing, parents nights, marking, teaching, planning, feedback, CPD, Extra Curricular activities, Treat week planning, Easter Study Club, Enterprise Weeks… the list seems to be never ending.
Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Business Education has a lack of teachers in Fife.

I cannot comment on other subjects.

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

In an ideal world ---

I would reduce the amount of reporting required to parents,

I would reduce the amount of unit assessments required (Tick) for senior level subjects.

I would reduce class numbers especially for practical subjects like Admin and IT.

I would also reduce the amount of teaching hours to allow teachers to plan lessons and mark/feedback work with quality rather than rushed on an evening when we really need to get some rest for the following day.

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?)

Admin and IT classes have been increased to classes of 30 for junior classes, trying to get 30 S1 to sign in to a computer and tech them new practical skills in one class session is just impractical, I feel that I am letting my pupils down and not giving them the experience they deserve.

There are many pupils in my classes that would benefit form a Pupil Support Assistant however cuts have limited the number of PSA in the school.

I am fortunate that I didn’t go into teaching from a younger age. My youngest child was 5 before I started. I do not know how young mothers cope with the profession and I know that if my children were any younger I doubt I would have continued teaching.
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?

 Mostly quite low – workload leaves very little time for social interactions at school, very little time to hold professional dialogue and learning conversations with peers or superiors.

 Teachers are often unwell and still attend work as workload of colleagues would be impacted on if they didn’t go to work.

 Teachers struggle to get time off for Doctors appointment/dentist appointments.

 I often miss lunch hour and break throughout the week, due to workload and commitments within the school.

 Teachers are often unwell during the first week of their holidays as they are exhausted.

 We have only just got used to Nationals and now changes have been made to reduce workload, which I believe will increase workload in our subjects.

 We have also just got round to understanding experience and outcomes of the BGE and benchmarks have been introduced, increasing our workload yet again, this will result in us having to make new assessments/feedback forms evaluations classroom resources and activities.

 Additional comments

 Teaching could be a lovely profession, I am passionate about my subject and I strive to ensure that my pupils receive a quality learning experience; I want to give my pupils excellence. Unfortunately I struggle due to the level of workload and the extra commitment expected of me as a teacher. I often think about leaving the profession as I don’t know how I will deal with the level of stress as I become older.

 I am fortunate that I didn’t go into teaching from a younger age. My youngest child was 5 before I started. I do not know how young mothers cope with the profession and I know that if my children were any younger I doubt I would have continued teaching.

 ANONYMOUS 51

 Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
 Secondary teacher in Art and Design

 Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
 Glasgow City Council

 Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The majority of other staff, those wanting to try and maintain a feeling of community in schools that are 1000 students plus. This is a continuing challenge but the staff do their best and it can feel positive, even in difficult circumstances. We are all in it together.

* The small amount of students that want to learn and that thank you at the end of their time with you. Teachers don't do it for the thanks at all, but these days the % of students who care and listen in class are fewer, therefore when you have that small amount that show their appreciation, it makes it all worthwhile.

* Wanting to give every child the best possible chance in life.

* The general security of a salary (but not to work ratio) and the decent 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 don’t think I will stay within the classroom until retirement, I may seek another career path or it will be outside of the classroom in some educational capacity.

My reason for leaving would primarily be the management of schools. I’m finding that most teachers are stressed, not just over workload, but over being a constant firefighter within the classroom and school. Education now seems secondary to simply having students follow code of conduct and having such an extreme variety of needs within one classroom (especially for secondary). This has been observed across a number of schools I have been in over the last 2 years and teaching colleagues all sing a similar tune. I personally love teaching but the stress is overwhelming and considering you can make a similar if not improved salary elsewhere for less stress, why wouldn't teachers leave?

I also think the lack of security is an issue. For some, myself included, I do not have my own classroom and don’t have the opportunity to really implement what I can for my students. Sharing rooms and with the threat of being moved school in 6 months, a year or so is stressful. Sometimes the thought of an office job with fewer holidays is more appealing. Also leaving at 5 or 6pm and getting paid overtime would be nice.

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 encouraged to follow the leadership path, 100%, if I felt I could make a real difference and that there wasn't so much red tape, or the perception of it. It very much feels that head teachers (not all) and management are working to statistics. More often I am asked for stats on classes rather than how they are doing with their learning, what they have made, how they are enjoying themselves. Seems like it goes against CfE. I feel that being in senior management is very much now being a YES person and conforming to expectations set, never rocking the boat too much for what is right and needed in their school for their students.
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)

When a school gets a poor reputation for behaviour. I personally know two supply teachers who turned down coming to my current school due to knowing about the classroom/school issues. A supply teacher who had a terrible time told me upon leaving the school one day that she would never be back and looked visibly upset, this was due to lack of support also from management. Reputation of what was once a "good" school turning in to a "don't go there" school has a massive impact. This is also a problem with bringing in full time teachers not just supply. Senior management do the best they can with what they have but they feel very separated from the general teaching staff. This creates low morale.

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

I would say STEMS. Having best friends being both Math and Biology teachers, they tell me teachers don't want to stay due to the pupils and management. The students come to the school and their learning is well below the level it should be, therefore more work is needed and the students push against it and senior management seem to constantly need stats on it. All of this is pressure and stress and the teacher can do nothing about it except for their best, which never seems to be good enough. On top of the classroom work, teachers are also expected to do extra curricular and this is just more and more work and stress.

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

I have thought long and hard about this over the last 2 years, as this is something I would like to direct my career towards, the training of future teachers.

In regards to retention, the biggest issue is behaviour and workload and student teachers not being properly prepared

I know 3 teachers that quit during their PGDE program due to poor experiences within the schools (ie. bullying, lack of help/support etc), a further 2 that have quit during the probationary year (ie. lack of support and stressful council programs) and finally I personally know 3 teachers that have already secured jobs outside of the classroom for Aug 2017.

PGDE route. Many friends have said the same thing, that the PGDE course itself does not fully prepare you for teaching. It feels very much more academic and they expect the schools to teach you the subject knowledge. This is okay if you are placed within good schools with friendly staff, not as easy when you get a school that uses you as a time-saver and barely teaches you a thing, even when you ask. This is common and happened to me. I was a spare set of hands rather than a student and was often ignored. In school we had lectures upon lectures on procedure, nurture, Cfe etc and have assignments to write about assessment and so on, but not once did we have proper classroom based learning about what it's really like to teach from a Mon to a Fri in your subject. Courses should be Mon-Fri all day in university
when not on placement, with a variety of classes and events to get in to, not just mass lectures.

* CPD events during probationary scheme. I feel that having a scheme at all is amazing however most of the events are geared towards primary and secondary teachers feel like they are wasting their time. Many events also cover the same topics over and over again. It would be good to have subject specific events for teachers, giving them a real chance to discuss and share practice about their subject, which they are passionate about.

Outside of teacher training, I do think that CFE has a big part to play in recruitment. Teachers across subjects still seem to be confused by the curriculum and with so many changes and general confusion, it's not a great environment to work in.

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 are a number of new ASN staff members to deal with the rising number of students with needs. One thing I have noticed is the recruitment of current teachers to do these jobs. Example is in my subject, one part time teacher now comes in during her 2 days off to work with students failing their units and who don't attend school regularly. Another staff member is on reduced timetable and works within the support for learning department.

This has really effected the department, causing confusion for students on who their teacher is and what their role is.

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)

In the expressive arts there are no real additional programs for the students due to not having enough staff and with the reliance on bringing in probationers, they can't commit to any National courses.

Other things, like school trips and outdoor learning is off the cards for most subjects. Nearly all extra time is eaten up by covering classes around the 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?

Before the Easter holidays, the morale was very low. This is due to the management of the school and feeling completely exhausted by workload and behaviour of students. There was no staff outing this year as teachers just wanted to go home before the holiday instead of be social.

Additional comments

My comments may come across as quite extreme but I think they have to be, especially if they are true. Teachers simply want a well laid out curriculum that is clear!! They want less pressure on paperwork and in place of this have
more prep time, so that we aren't working 20+ hours extra a week for no extra money to just cover the basic coursework. Finally I think having properly managed schools is crucial because by building large 1000+ modern, small roomed and poorly equipped schools councils are taking away that community spirit, where you know all the students names and know their stories. All of this will help keep teachers and recruit more because the reputation of the teaching profession will improve. Overall teachers want to feel like they matter and right now, most don't.

ANONYMOUS 52

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?  
Principal Teacher of Pupil Support – Secondary

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?  
South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The camaraderie I share with colleagues - all of whom work tirelessly and selflessly with little thanks.
The pleasure of working to support young people.

Holiday provision.

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)

For the first few years of my career I could not have conceived of doing anything other than teaching – increasingly, however, I am reconsidering my options. The stagnation of public sector wages means that professional friends of mine (lawyers and dentists) earn considerably more than I do. I have a friend, with no university education, earning £9k more per year than me for a managerial role in a call centre. It is getting to the stage where I feel almost humiliated by the wage I receive.

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

I often fear I have little chance of further promotion. It seems, increasingly, that only those who accept the erosion of our terms and conditions, uncomplainingly, have any chance of promotion. If you are unwilling to work hours beyond those to which you’re contracted, if you stand up and say too much is being asked of us, if you complain that we are now expected to do things for free which we were once paid (e.g. supported study) then somehow we are selfish, unprofessional complainers unworthy of 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 are simply not enough teachers available. Fewer graduates want to enter a poorly paid profession where support staff cuts and SQA failures mean we cannot deliver a quality service. Increasingly we are not treated as professionals but as numbers on a spreadsheet.

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

English, Home Economics.

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

The job must be more attractive – better pay, better conditions. The answer is a simple one but, if there is no money to do this, then the system will crumble. If we receive another 1% pay rise offer (as we undoubtedly will) then the profession will continue to erode and children's education will suffer. The full extent of this will be felt sooner or later.

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?)

When inclusion was pioneered and many specialist provisions closed (often to save money) we were promised an abundance of support within schools to support young people with particular needs. Now, as budgets are squeezed, this support is ever diminishing and, as ever, classroom teachers are expected to pick up the pieces.

Increasingly classes are made up of multiple levels (N3-N5, N4-H) adding even stress to teachers and making the learning experience worse for 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 have never seen it worse. Staff feel like they are ignored, undervalued, dumped upon. Quite simply, staff are miserable. They are exhausted and feel that the system does not allow us to deliver a quality service to learners.

ANONYMOUS 53

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .

Secondary Art

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

Children, holidays

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)

Early, very hard work deteriorating conditions, too much expected from teachers, lack of support in schools, highly physical job and it has impact on health both physical health and mental health. It is a job where in secondary the students can find it hard to relate to older teachers, changes happening all the time and resent the fact that I feel cynical regarding those changes being for the better, although the evidence is that the curriculum is failing students in many ways and that even more changes will be needed in the future.

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

I don’t want promotion as the teaching and children are the part I enjoy, I also see my senior management team at breaking point.

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, conditions and behaviour of pupils Lack of respect from pupils and parents. And no ability to enforce respect. The SNP government has taken their eye of the ball with their fixation with independence and this has resulted as evidenced by crashing standards as seen by the failing Pisa reports Too much pupil voice and no support for staff.

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

Not sure, but see problems throughout the school.

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

Better pay, smaller classes as was promised 10 years ago, more support and training and time for reflective practice within the job, more financial support as regards conditions and resources, and time for teachers to properly implement and train for the curriculum.

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 now do teach composite classes of mixed ability which further strains teaching resources time and quality of class experience We also have a reduced school day which means less teaching time as well as reducing the pastoral role of teachers during registration and guidance this has in turn affected behaviour and I see increasing bullying and stress in youngsters.
far as I am aware those changes are permanent. In the primary I see a lack of specialist skills in art, music drama and pe this has resulted and is evidenced by a lack of skill in the secondary and generally has not benefitted the students balance of education, and ability to think creatively and in a time when mental ad physical health and rising obesity is seen as so important can not be a positive move in the right direction.

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)
Art, music, pe and drama in the secondary
A reduction of teaching time in the secondary
A reduction in subject in the secondary and lack of continuity in the secondary the curriculum for excellence resulting in changes of timetable and teacher over 3rd and 4th year as many pupils dropping subjects at end of third year, and so lack of continuity happening resulting in poorer standards and more stress for teachers having to more in less time with the remaining students.

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 poor, and we are working so hard to try to make it work for our youngsters, too much is being done by teachers to compensate for the lack of time for students leading to an increased expectation and I believe a false positive for schools which would show poorer results if left to the students own discovery, ability and organisational skills / I see many teachers at breaking point and looking for ways out.

Additional comments
Acknowledge the failures of this SNP government please, the disastrous curriculum for excellence and the failing results of schools and pupils who have been messed around with and had a lack of quality resources spent on them. Allow teachers to talk freely and listen to their voice, as it has been forgotten, we want what is best for the students and country as we are well aware that they are the future on which we depend.

ANONYMOUS 54
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Teacher of Mathematics (Secondary School)
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire Council
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
- Helping young people succeed
- Having a positive impact on the future
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 love teaching and do not want to leave the profession. However, I would be concerned if my rights as a working professional were not respected i.e. any (negative) changes to pay, pension, holidays, maternity pay or workload.

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

I want to have as big an impact on children’s lives as I can and I am currently seeking promotion. I have hit a bit of a glass ceiling, as I am a non-Catholic teacher at a denominational state school. Unfortunately, this has meant that I have been unable to be considered for several promoted positions for which I have the relevant 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)

Teachers’ pay is very low in comparison with other professionals.
Teachers have a very demanding workload. We work far beyond our contracted hours.
Teachers are not always respected as professionals; politicians, parents and pupils sometimes use teachers as “scapegoats” for larger problems.

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

- Increase in salary
- Protection of teachers’ rights
- Positive portrayal of the work that teachers do in the media (and from the Scottish Parliament)

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 mathematics, teachers are being asked to teach split-level classes; this has had a negative impact on pupil performance and teacher morale. National 4 Maths and National 5 Maths may sound similar but they are two completely different courses that cannot be taught simultaneously. The coursework,
notes, homeworks and assessments are all distinct. Consequently, pupils in split-level maths classes effectively have “half a teacher”, as the teacher must split their time as evenly as possible between the two different Nationals.

More support assistants are needed. In my maths class there is a pupil with ASN who requires full time support. Unfortunately, he only receives support 1 period per week, due to staffing.

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 more practical mathematical alternative (such as a Personal Finance) targeted at S5/6 pupils who have previously struggled with N3 or N4. However, due to limited staffing, this cannot be offered.

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 want the best for the young people of Scotland but departmental budgets are very low. We cannot afford to buy basics like jotters, pencils, rulers and calculators.

Additional comments
I commend the government’s commitment to Closing the Gap and its desire to ensure that a young person’s future is not determined by their financial background.

Above all, it is absolutely crucial that Higher Education remains free in Scotland. Courses and polices will come and go as governments are voted in and out but hope and aspiration is something that we simply cannot afford to lose. Keep tuition free.

ANONYMOUS 55

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Teacher of Business Studies – Secondary school

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Falkirk Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I enjoy the subject I teach and I still have a lot of enthusiasm about my chosen career. I love seeing pupils do well and in many cases better than I thought they would 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 do imagine that I will be teaching until I retire. I enjoy teaching and unfortunately now I wouldn’t be able to use my B Acc to go into Accountancy without taking a massive pay drop.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I am always looking for new challenges and want to look for promotion opportunities to develop my own career. The main factor stopping me from seeking promotion is the lack of opportunities, joint faculties etc. The McCrone agreement removed many opportunities 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)

Lack of support from some faculty heads and an inconsistency in the way pupils are dealt with between different Depute HTs. Some teachers feel that they receive little to no support from their Faculty PT in terms of disciplining pupils.

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

I am aware that there is great difficulty in many authorities recruiting Business Education teachers.

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

Make it more appealing and worthwhile for people with life skills to want to enter the profession – better pay, workload issues, etc

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?)

More bi-level classes, reduction in choices for pupils. Business education is a subject area where there are many choices available. However, if there are only 4 or 5 pupils wishing to take a subject at a particular level, this choice is not encouraged because it is not using resources to the optimum.

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)

Accounting at both N5 and Higher.

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 pretty low. The pressure we are put under to show that our pupils are achieving sees us giving up lunches and offering supported study revision after school. If pupils do not achieve in your subject but have achieved elsewhere previously staff are often made to feel they have underperformed rather than the pupil not performing. I have several pupils this year who were very high achievers in S5. However, knowing that they have enough As to get into University has resulted in them not even trying in my Higher, this year. This is commonplace throughout the school. Very little is done by some line managers to deal with these pupils. Parents are also quick to blame teachers. It has taken almost all year but finally, one parent who felt that I was to blame for her child underperforming, eventually admitted that she could not trust them, they weren’t mature enough for university and apologised for the way her child had been behaving towards me.

In other public services a stance is made that aggression and verbal abuse will not be tolerated, customers will be banned from using the service. However, in teaching it seems that we are expected to take this verbal abuse.

There is an increasing workload. Every year there seems to be some change that needs to be made to courses. Es and Os are amended without consultation of many staff who are using them. For example, recently the Technologies Es and Os have been redrafted. However, all they are succeeding in doing is reducing the need for a Business Education department as they seem to have forgotten about us once again and as a result the role of Administration could be diminished once more.

Teachers are fed up having to deal with the changes and not actually receive solid guidance on the course structures. They are left to make resources up themselves because Education Scotland have stopped doing this.

ANONYMOUS 56

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Secondary teacher of Modern Studies
Q2 Whereabouts do you work? East Lothian Council
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
   - I enjoy working with young people, they are interested, insightful and often come up with ideas I would not have thought of.
   - My colleagues and the relationships you build with staff and pupils.
   - Each day is different and that challenges you.
   - Keeping up to date with current world issues and events for my subject.
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 consider 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?
There are few opportunities to seek promotion at the moment. With a move to faculties and reduced budgets there is not much scope to gain experience in senior roles. I would like there to be more opportunities to step up to mid management roles. I would not consider a head teacher post as I enjoy teaching my subject to much to give that up.

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 terms of recruiting, the profession of teaching does not seem to be valued as highly in this country as it is in other countries. There has been no real reward for hard work in terms of pay increases. In fact, the last “pay increase” resulted in my pay actually going down! With such an increased work load and stress that adds many do not see the profession as being rewarded at all. It is disheartening when you hear the increase politicians get when we work equally as hard with little monetary reward.

- Little movement/ jobs. It took me 4 years from my NQT year to gain a permanent post and in this time there were very few posts being advertised. This will put people off from doing a uni course and putting in the hard work when there is the potential they will not gain employment at the end of it.

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

- Start to show the value of the profession again. Support teachers instead of blaming them! Often, the media and others focus on all these ‘holidays’ we receive when the hard work we carry out day in and out is not mentioned.

- Put more money back into schools/ teaching. Budget cuts are all we hear about and how there is no money for resources, staff or implementing new courses. All of which are at odds with the ideas behind a Curriculum for Excellence.

- Stop changing the curriculum/ qualifications. This has added a lot of pressure and stress to ensure we are changing courses etc year in year out. This is not sustainable.

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)

- Yes, we would like to offer a wider range of highers within our faculty such as Politics but have been told we cannot due to staff shortage/ needing to keep staff available for 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 low. Most of my colleagues love teaching their subject and working with the young people we see each day. However, the mounting pressure, lack of resources and constantly changing qualifications has visibly caused staff to feel undervalued and de-motivated. All this combined with no real pay increase in the last few years.
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

Secondary school level – teacher of home economics / Principal Teacher
Pupil Support

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

South Lanarkshire Council

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

Our young people are what drive me as a professional. Making a positive difference to all of our young people is what is most important. Staff work together to get the best out of our young people. Knowing that I have an input in to the future of our economy and country and the lives of all children is important to me.

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 although the increasing pension ages are worrying particularly for teachers as doing this role at nearly 70 seems an impossible task when I know just now how much work, extra hours and dedication are involved to do the best job possible. Teaching also involves having knowledge of our youth and sometimes teachers who are near / at retirement age are very far removed from our young people that pupils find it difficult to engage with them. I am also a practical subject teacher and the thought of having to do this element at nearly 70 will not come without its struggles and issues. However, I have no plans to leave teaching early or change career as I am very passionate about my job and love the career that I have chosen. I could never envisage myself doing any other job despite the continuous increase in workload / hours involved.

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

Encouragement has to be driven from above at government level. Headteachers as well as all other teachers are put under increasing scrutiny and enhanced workloads which at times seems unreasonable. It is widely spoken about within the teaching profession that people feel senior management level is “not worth” it due to the workload, expectations and continuous pressure for the salary that is offered.

Training and Support is key in this area. Staff would benefit from enhanced training for senior management level. Staff find it very difficult to gain experience of these senior roles before deciding if it is for them and this also makes it very difficult for promotion for these members of staff who can not move into these roles with a lack of experience.
When I first came into teaching (12 years ago) my ultimate goal was to aim towards a headteacher role. Education is changing and roles are changing. Do I still have the same goal? I do but I feel that paths towards this are becoming longer and increasingly difficult.

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 subject area we struggle greatly to get teachers as we are very few and far between. Not enough are being trained and no university in the west of Scotland offer university courses that lead into the teacher training course at Strathclyde. Offering a new course in the highlands will make very little difference I feel due to location. More courses are required in Glasgow / central Scotland. We have a crisis at the moment in Home Economics and can see this happening in other subject areas – maths and physics for example.

New staff can struggle with workload and I think this can be quite a shock to them when they enter the profession as it can be off putting. New teachers think they are coming into classes to teach and inspire our young people and it is not that at all. We spend lots of time with paperwork, filing and other bureaucracy that can be very off putting.

Lots of new teachers can not secure full time permanent posts and this also drives them away from teaching. Cover / supply posts make it hard for them to then enter into permanent jobs. Without a permanent job they struggle without the security and feel that industry is better as it offers that security. Lots of new teachers I have met / worked with have left due to salary too as they can get much higher salaries in the private sector with the same degree for working less hours.

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

Home Economics as previously mentioned. This is a major issue for me as a subject specialist.

I also see shortages in Sciences, Maths, RE. I feel that teaching as a whole is suffering from shortages just now.

Currently in my own school we struggle to get any type of cover required as teacher numbers are simply not there.

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

Permanent posts that offer new teachers security are required.

University courses that specifically link to all subject areas would make it easier for people to access teacher training.
Areas like bureaucracy and salary may also have to be considered as these are items that I hear new teachers and long serving teachers discuss frequently.

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)
This is widespread across schools. I do not know of one school with a full complement or who are not struggling to find cover / teachers for subject areas.

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 teaching is probably at the lowest in the past 12 years.
Key factors include:

- Workload
- Paperwork
- Bureaucracy
- Working hours
- Salary
- Illness – stress related

ANONYMOUS 58
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
PTC Business and Computing in a Secondary School
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Fife Council
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working in class with pupils to see them progress and attain and also I enjoy building good relationships with pupils. I also enjoy working alongside other professionals – teaching and other agencies which can challenge me both personally and professionally to learn new things. Teaching is essentially a rewarding career where you are always striving to be better.

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 early around 55 years old. Teaching is a physically and mentally demanding job that has been made more difficult in the past 10 years to sustain long-term without lasting negative impacts on health.

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 is the support to do qualifications/gain experience towards preparing for these roles. What is discouraging is the perception that many senior level jobs are so demanding that to work towards them and do the job well involves a lack of work-life balance. Due to the fact that there are few PTC roles, this also reduces the opportunities for more staff available to work towards senior leadership.

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)

Teaching is seen as a job that is very demanding with day-to-day pressures of dealing with pupils who have many complex issues while getting them to attain at a high level. These pressures, as well as continual curricular change have led to staff at my school feeling a tremendous amount of pressure. Senior Leadership pushing responsibility down the school while trying to meet the demands of their own role has led to a feeling that staff are not supported and there has been a large staff turnover in the school I teach. This has led to a negative perception of the school which has made recruitment difficult. Basically teachers cannot do the job that is required in the time that they are paid for, ie 35 hour week. The majority of staff have to work many hours at night during the week and at weekends just to keep up with their workload. Due to teacher shortages at the school I teach in, there have been occasions when staff have not been able to be released to attend courses and staff regularly having to cover so many classes that they work below their contractual minimum class contact hours.

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

Business, Home Economics and Pupil Support

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

Teachers' workload needs to be addressed to ensure that change for improvement can be done within working contractual hours, student teachers have left as they have been overwhelmed by the demands of the job. To retain staff, there needs to be more opportunities to allow people to progress as a class teacher or other opportunities to manage/take whole school responsibilities. Presently if you wished to stay as a class teacher and you reach the top of the scale but do not wish to go into management, there is no incentive to progress, especially in some local authorities. Good teachers are the essence of any school yet this gives the view that the only progression is through management in terms of responsibility and financial reward.

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 faced staff shortages in IT seeing S1 IT covered by non-subject specialists. The staff who are delivering this do what they can but it puts more pressure on the subject specialists who have to support them. This was a temporary measure this year but the school has had to change the curriculum due to recruitment issues so no subject IT will be delivered until S3. Also PT staff have to regularly teach to their maximum contact hours which means that their management duties have to be done in their own time. A greater number of multi-level classes have been created which has put a lot of pressure on teaching 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)

My school has not been able to offer IT to S1 or S2 due to staff shortages.

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 not just in the school I teach but when I speak to colleagues at other schools. When I started teaching I often did work outside the school day because I felt I wanted to deliver the best lessons I could to my pupils, now this is essential and even then I struggle to keep on top of my workload. There is a lot more administration in terms of data collection, reporting, evidencing that has been added to teachers workloads. This combined with ongoing curricular change from both Education Scotland and the SQA sees teachers looking to never be on top of their workload and feeling overwhelmed. Many teachers are struggling to cope with continual demands.

ANONYMOUS 59

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?  
Secondary English Teacher (recently been acting Principal Teacher of Department).

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?  
An enjoyable job where I get to make a difference to the lives of young people.

I get to teach English every day.

It’s inspiring to work with young people who are enthusiastic and have wonderful ideas.

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 – still working in education but perhaps in a different role as the demands of teaching at certain points of the year are great. Specifically Nov – March.

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

Being able to make a greater difference.
The pressure and demands of the 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)

Student teachers are not made aware of how difficult and demanding the job is.

Too much change with significantly low levels of training or guidance. The Es and Os do not come with a way to measure progress yet the Scottish government are insisting that we provide levels. Education Scotland’s training leaves a lot to be desired. They are vague at best. Much on the information which has come online was good but staff in school were not made aware of it and now the website has changed.

HMIE are judging school staff but the parameters are not clear.

Furthermore, the Scottish Government’s response to this has compounded the problem – emails directly to teacher’s inboxes is not an appropriate way to deal with the implementation of a new curriculum. Does the Scottish government and Education Scotland even have similar views about how the curriculum should be implemented? Or what the curriculum is?

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

Learning support – an increasing number of children with additional support needs and more pupils getting into Nat 5 / Higher who need scribes and yet there is a very drastic reduction in the number of support staff.

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

More realistic expectations of a profession.

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?)

It would be beneficial if we could have reduced class sizes as per 2010. This made a great difference to pupils’ attainment.

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 made more difficult by the fact that there are no clear guidelines. There’s a lack of exemplar material and resources. Teachers are having to literally create new course materials daily. Stressed teachers has an impact on children’s lives.

ANONYMOUS 60

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .

Secondary teacher

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

I thoroughly enjoy my job working in an excellent establishment. The ethos and attitude surrounding the school community provides me with a focus to provide the best teaching and learning platform possible for 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 intend to be working in the education sector 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 currently in a principal teacher role and I am very keen to pursue a senior management role in the future.

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)

No difficulties in recruiting staff. Only difficulty retaining staff is due to promotion aspirations that certain staff have.

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

A greater number of classroom support staff would be welcomed.

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

For head teacher roles, the head teacher qualification should not be made compulsory to help encourage more deputes to apply.
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 – leadership and management of the school, well balanced teaching staff and interactive parents.

ANONYMOUS 61

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Principal Teacher Curriculum Physics, Design, Engineering and Technology

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Fife

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Job security. Given how few professionals are becoming teachers it is unlikely that I’m going to become unemployed

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 be retiring at 60, the age I should have retired at with 40 years service before the government changed and degraded the pension scheme I had signed up to which in my opinion is a breach of contract. If I could move out of teaching with no monetary penalty I would do so immediately.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Nothing at all. Financially it’s not worth it.

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)
Salary degradation
Pension degradation
Workload
Every changing goalposts with respect to external exams, course content.
The expectation that all society’s ills can be changed by teachers
Lack of funding
An expectation from senior managers that despite the points mentioned above they still expect more

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
All of them. The number and quality of potential candidates has dropped dramatically over my career to date.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Vast increase in salary and a willingness on the part of employers to respect the Mcrone Agreement

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?
Poor
Work load
Lack of confidence of SMT in the professionalism of their staff
An unending stream of self evaluation and paper work that fundamentally gets in the way of developing truly enjoyable and engaging episodes of learning
Long term staff absence and no suitable plans to deal with this

Additional comments
I would under no circumstances currently recommend teaching as a career to any student that I teach.
It was once a respected profession. This is no longer the case.

ANONYMOUS 62

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Curriculum leader (secondary) with responsibility for Computing, Business and ICT.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Edinburgh

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Commitment to providing a service that benefits young people.

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 50, so likely until I retire, although circumstances (conditions, support and badly organised curriculum) make it increasingly difficult to remain positive and to provide a quality service.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
The job has become increasingly difficult to do well and this increases with promotion. Senior management jobs are incredibly difficult to do well,
massively time consuming (significantly eating into your life outwith work), and poorly remunerated. A few thousand pounds a year extra is not enough).

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)

Teachers are generally embattled and quite bitter because of the ongoing lack of clarity in the curriculum, the lack of promotion prospects, the lack of time to do the job properly, the mainstreaming of pupils that need specialist help, the lack of power to derail with indiscipline etc.

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

Attracting good graduates into several subjects is a real challenge I believe. Computing is one of the most challenging, but hardly surprising. Moray House didn’t even ENROL prospective Computing teachers for many years. (I believe they have recently started again, but I think they will struggle to get the right people). But if you want good graduates then you need to pay the right salaries, with the right increments and decent promotion prospects, which isn’t currently the case.

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

Obvious. Decent salary relative to other post graduate qualified professions, better career progression – this has been decimated over the last 10 years. No more APTs, PTs or AHTs. These posts all still exist in English schools by the way. Also the concept of Curriculum Leader with responsibility for several subjects is a fundamentally flawed model.

Even more importantly - get the curriculum right, with clear exemplification of assessment standards and clear progression. CFE is the biggest example of the emperor’s new clothes I have ever seen, justified with extraordinary educationspeak.

I’m not sure anyone saying it really believes it. But teachers are forced to learn and repeat this pseudo-intellectual waffle to extend the smokescreen to parents through reports that in the main provide no real value.

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?)
Composite classes are the norm now in the senior school and the disaster that is the interface between Nat 4 and 5 makes this particular one VERY difficult. Also we see increasing numbers of pupils in our classes who previously would have been extracted to specialist classes (or even schools) or at the very least would have had dedicated support. This is no longer the case.

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. Described above. I think poorly managed curriculum change is the root of most people’s disquiet. Most depressingly, I see no end to this. Indeed, the charges that are currently being suggested for unit assessment will not help at all, so further change is likely. The Broad General Education phase of CFE is still a total mess in terms of assessment and tracking. Stop, think, get it right, then leave us alone for a while!

Additional comments

Teachers want to do a good job but current circumstances make that very difficult. Speaking personally, there are many things that we currently have to do that I find professionally compromising, which is disappointing and unsettling. This is not a plea for the good old days, but there’s no getting past the fact that a reduction in spending is seriously affecting our schools, whether that is in core salaries, the removal of much of our management structures, the reduction in special school provision etc.

Additionally, we have a curriculum model that may be sound in principle but is being very poorly delivered and managed at a national level. It is astonishing that after 8 years we still don’t have the answers to some very basic questions. Coupling this in terms of school or individual autonomy or flexibility is an insult. We need clear exemplification and proper leadership.

Lastly, local authorities. Support structures there have been stripped back to the point of ineffectiveness. Our network of development officers, quality improvement officers is so thin and overstretched it almost may as well not be there. Are they still adding value, or are they an administrative layer that would be better localised in schools? Increasingly I think the latter.

ANONYMOUS 63

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .

Secondary teacher of Food and Textile Technology

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? East Renfrewshire Council

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

- Working with young people.
- Helping pupils develop vital life skills.
- Enjoyment
• Variety
• Sense of achievement.

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?
The school is very encouraging and actively help and guide teachers to leadership posts. I have been working towards a promoted post.

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 subject there is a shortage of teachers, however, we have been fortunate in retaining a good core of Home Economics staff, I know other schools are not so fortunate.

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

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Provide a relevant degree course at a university, not a college.

Q10 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 the moral is very good, teachers are motivated by the high achievement of the school.

ANONYMOUS 64
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Full time secondary school teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Midlothian Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Seeing pupils make progress; the basics of the job becoming easier (planning etc. due to a catalogue of resources developed over time); the new challenges I get offered keep it interesting and fresh; the opportunities within my school / department to develop in areas I really enjoy
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)

Alternative employment – teaching is far too demanding a job to do for the next 40 years. I feel the stress would age me and I wouldn’t be able to enjoy my retirement. Depending on money, I’d like to start my own business in something media related, or go into the media in some aspect. Alternatively I’d like to be a writer (I’m an English and Media teacher at present, so both related in a way to my job).

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 desire for this. I enjoy interaction with the pupils too much to become a manager. I have no desire to manage adults.

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 expectation in my school for teachers to give up their free time is quite high. I think this means that some people feel taken advantage of and worked beyond their capabilities. However, that said, the ethos in our school to provide the best opportunities and experiences for the pupils is high so I imagine that also encourages a lot of people with the same mind-set to stay on.

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

Maths seem to be struggling at the moment – there have been a few staff members left recently and replacing them has proved difficult.

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

Not really

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?)

Departments have been condensed into faculties, reducing the number of PTs across the school. Also, in an attempt to keep classroom teachers, our school eradicate Learning Support teachers and combined the LS department with
that of Pupil Support (guidance) meaning that there is a shortage of LS available. Duties normally carried out by the PT of LS are now being divvied up amongst other staff. Also, the LS staff are being used increasingly as admin support. In terms of keeping teachers, it is working, but the ethos amongst the LSAs is low and the running of the LS timetable by a PTC is a bit of a mess – constant changes mean pupils’ support is disrupted or changed frequently. As to whether it is temporary or permanent remains to be seen as we have a new HT starting after summer.

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’m able to teach media this year but the class is a split level S4-6 class because there are not enough teachers to warrant separate classes. Other subjects like photography are ones that pupils would like to see in the school, but there aren’t any teachers qualified or with the time to teach 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?

Amongst the teachers I would say it’s quite good overall – there are subjects / departments where this is not the case and this is mostly down to PTs and how they manage their staff. As I said, morale amongst LAs is very low at the moment because of the extra duties they are being made to do which do not benefit teaching and learning.

ANONYMOUS 65

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

I am a permanent 0.4 part time Primary teacher working full time at the moment providing mat leave cover. I also am on the supply list too.

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 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 neadrathals.

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.

ANONYMOUS 66

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Teacher of Business Education.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? Fife

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? Interactions 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 would like to think that I could do my current job when I retire but I do not think I would be physically able to do my job until the age of 67 due to the current workload that I am expected to undertake which means I am working 60+ hour weeks.

I would like to think that I could leave the profession early before I am 60 but this depends on my financial situation and obviously my physical and mental health.

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

The current system is short sighted in taking out a tier of management. Principal Teacher of Curriculum posts might have saved money in the short term but in the long term it is having a big impact on the aspirations of staff who could have gained promotion through the senior teacher/APT and PT route but these levels have been taken away so the gulf between being a classroom teacher and then being in charge of more than one curriculum subject (especially when it’s not your own subject specialism) is too much. Also when Principal Teachers are absent there is no one in a promoted post to take over the running of the department. This is left to teaching staff who have enough on their plates with reference to their own workload.

Furthermore, I would also like to think I could be a Depute Teacher in the future. But, the decisions senior management are making with regards to recruiting to the Senior Leadership Team make this a fantasy. Guidance teachers are being promoted to Depute Headteacher and there is not one Depute who has ran a department on the Senior Leadership Team since before I arrived at the school which is many years. Therefore, decisions that are being made at this level do not take into account the day to day demands of running a department. It also makes it difficult when you go for promotion as they favour Guidance teachers. This has a big impact on Principal Teacher’s morale who feel they cannot get promoted and often look for a sideways move to get out of the school. So I am thinking what is the point as the gulf between a Teacher and Principal Teacher is too big.

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 issues and make us work until we are 67.

This all started with the introduction of A Curriculum for Excellence. We were given green folders containing Experiences and Outcomes for all levels and were expected to come up with our own S1-S3 courses from very brief statements. The new benchmarks are not much better. There was no strategic implementation from the Government and subsequently Fife also did not take a strategic route which was a very poor decision that they made.
Since then, every year we have had to develop new resources, new course materials, new lesson plans and become fully conversant assessment arrangements, and all the course documentation and guidance the SQA have published giving information regarding the new courses at National 3, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses while at the same time reviewing the courses that we had recently introduced the year before. Whereas, when Standard Grade was introduced we were provided with folders containing course outlines and the SQA produced very detailed arrangements documents outlining the subject content that we had to teach at certificated level. This gave us a good starting point for the introduction to new courses that would could adapt over time. Moreover, the new course assessment specifications are quite vague for the subjects I teach and it’s difficult to know how much depth to go into and are open to interpretation.

Our region, Fife, did not take a strategic approach and all schools had to interpret the documents using their own professional judgement and all 19 secondary schools did their own thing and wasting time, money and resources. In May 2015 Fife Council distributed money to subject working groups to write courses that were going to be delivered for the new higher in June 2015 but it was too little too late as we had already written our new courses.

Now that we have finally aired our views with reference to workload, especially the regards to unit assessments. The subjects I teach: Business Education Subjects: Accounting, Administration & IT and Business Management. For these subjects they are 100% pass or fail. The SQA did not listen and introduce a 60% pass rate. So unit assessments had to be re-issued – up to 3 times until a pupil had passed. Imagine what that does to a child’s health and wellbeing as well as teacher workload? So last year the SQA reviewed the unit assessments and stated in some cases a pupils could pass 5 out of 7 outcomes or 7 out of 9 outcomes for example. However, this was superseded by a statement by John Swinney, who has no idea what it is like to be in a classroom, that we don’t have to do unit assessments now. Thinking that this could alleviate our workload but he has also stated that if we are not presenting pupils for an exam they could gain unit assessments as recognition of studying the course. So we will still have to do the unit assessments after all. Furthermore, due to taking out the ‘entry requirement’ to sit the exam ie. Pupils must show a minimum competence by passing the unit assessments, we will not be faced with deluded parents who will want their child to be presented for exams who have no hope of passing as they they do not possess the ability to pass and this increases our workload even more as it is our responsibility to get that child ready for the exam and the ‘culture’ in schools today is that the teachers are entirely accountable and the child’s effort and ability does not even come into it.

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

Business Education

Computing Science
Mathematics

English

Chemistry

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

Give us a pay increase. Our pay is now falling behind as we have had a very very small pay increase since 2007.

Tackle workload at a strategic level. All secondary schools in Scotland should be doing the same thing and we should have a more strategic focus. Our school still doesn’t have a tackling beauracracy working group. Since John Swinney’s announcement regarding writing reports, we are still expected to write very lengthy reports which take hours and hours to prepare – this has also not been addressed in our 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)?

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?)

Teacher shortages make getting supply staff difficult and also due to budgetary constraints we are not able to have the appropriate number of staff with non-contacts to cover for staff who are absent. Hence, that is why there is no staff to cover for. The situation with reference to staffing is critical. Since February we have had 4 or 5 classes at a time in a dining hall being supervised by Depute Head Teachers as there are no supply teachers to cover for staff who are absent due to illness.

There is talk of increasing class sizes to the maximum when our timetable changes in June. This will have a big impact on teacher workload and also raising attainment but we won’t know until we see out timetables. These have not been produced 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)

Computing is being offered in one column now due to staffing.

Pupils are being recourse as there is not ‘enough uptake’ in subjects to merit a teacher. But courses that are being recourse what not communicated to us.
I know in other schools in Fife that departments are being rationalised to reduce staffing numbers. Pupil uptake and timetables are being engineering to make staff ‘surplus’ like increasing Computing Science class numbers to 30 (as its not in the LCNT document when it very clearly is a practical subject like Administration) . Or when staff are leaving they are not being replaced so Business Education departments are having their contact with pupils reduced and will only see them in S3-S6 and they wont see them in S1 and S2 – how are the experiences and outcomes expected to be delivered? During the last 4 years we have had 4 FTE Computing Teachers and now we have the equivalent of 1.5 FTE.

Also classrooms which are kitted out to have 20 PC are being given 10 more laptops for subjects that are not ‘practical’ and are not listed in the LCNT document like Business Management and Computing Science. Room sizes are not being taking into consideration and pupils are being taught in cramped conditions.

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. We are all fed up and feel there is no end in sight to these changes that the Scottish Government keep introducing.

ANONYMOUS 67

I have been a qualified, fully registered secondary teacher for 10 years now but I only found full time, permanent employment as such 4 years after qualifying. When I trained and when I sought employment, the profession seemed to be on an upwards trend, but around 60% of those people I qualified with left the teaching profession within 1 or 2 years.

I have considered leaving on many occasions - even my mother who taught for 40+ years and is in many ways my inspiration, has advised me "get out while you still can". The reality is that teaching takes too much from us, without giving us the means to survive in today's economy. I barely manage to contribute to household expenses in my home despite working on average around 35-40 hours per week (on a 0.6FTE contract). I know other teachers who live very much on credit. It is not sustainable and many of us have developed stress, anxiety and physical manifestations of these such as cluster headaches, migraines, fatigue, low immunity to viruses as a result of the high demand. My mother suffers still from the guilt of devoting more of her energy at school and having little left for us when she got home, but now I too see that there isn't any other way to be a mother and a teacher, both.

As a mother with two young children, I constantly have to make choices whether or not to attend school and send my children to be sick at nursery or have to provide thorough, comprehensive self teaching cover lessons which I then have to mark and follow up, as well as having "gentle encouragement" from my manager to “optimise my attendance” at work because in this climate of austerity they can't afford supply/can't find anyone to take it.

There is no mystery why teachers don't stay in the profession - we aren't paid what we are worth or deserve, the holidays are spent recovering or working -
not relaxing as people suppose, we are expected to teach more students with less time to prepare and we are expected to work extra when necessary (all the time). There is no end to the changes in the curriculum and this involves extra planning and resource creating (at home). All in all, it's a tiring, ungrateful workplace and as many contemporary children become more assertive and disrespectful towards an older generation, the shining reward (of seeing that you are having a positive effect on the future of the next young adults to enter the world of work and responsibilities) is not shining anymore but is tarnished with too much blood, sweat and tears.

I sincerely hope that this consultation results in the changes which need to happen to make us lead the way in education again.

**ANONYMOUS 68**

**Q1.** Secondary Supply Teacher of English

**Q2.** Do not wish to say

**Q4.** I could attend possibly however not on a school day as I am a supply teacher and would lose pay.

**Q5.** I stay in the teaching profession because I am good at it. I enjoy teaching and being in my classroom and developing young people who always have a fresh perspective. It can be very creative and interesting and I enjoy developing lessons, debating and creating. I have a good relationship with students and it can be a fun job.

**Q6.** I might not be a teacher in the future because there are no opportunities to develop your career for example by obtaining a curriculum development role and leading others. There should be particular effort to address the gender imbalances in schools and the failure to mentor young women effectively and challenge the authoritative male culture which often goes unchallenged.

**Q6.** Lack of CPD with some senior roles very wide in their scope.

**Q7.** The recruitment practices of Local Authorities are very off-putting for staff. For example I used to teach in London and there was a very quick process and turnaround with a clear relationship to a school. I applied for a post in December and it took six weeks before I was out in a school. There needs to be a greater say on the part of the school on which staff for their school as different teachers fit well in different environments.

**Q8** I’m not sure as I have only recently returned to Scotland.

**Q9.** Teachers should have their own classrooms.

**Q12.** I’m not sure I could describe general morale as it can vary rom school to school and authority to authority. Currently I enjoy the schools I am in.

**ANONYMOUS 68**

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

    Secondary teacher - Cover - permanently based in one school

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work?
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The 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 it relates to your enjoyment of your role)
Considering leaving early or for alternative employment. Cannot envisage doing this job until age 65-68 with the ongoing workload and stress associated with red tape/ticky box exercises/changes etc etc!

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

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)
Method SLC recruitment/lack of action/support/resources (all)

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

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Fairer system of recruitment by SLC
Cover teachers if teaching in one school for 1-2 years in their subject, should be offered the position as a permanent one... without having to apply!
Increased salary

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?
Changes to the use/numbers of support assistants, and, more composite/larger classes

• How well are they working?
They're not! Places workload/stresses onto existing classroom teachers
to juggle balls and spin plates because of pressures that pupils ‘Pass’ (the onus is even more focussed on the classroom teacher!)

- 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?)
  Ongoing as partly reflects the number of teacher/other posts 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)
  As a whole many more vocational subjects could be offered in secondary schools as more and more pupils become disengaged with core subjects they have no real interest in/or relevance for them

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 – Lack of ‘appropriate’ funding in education – provision of appropriate resources in general… including classroom support; all staffing areas; larger class sizes; implementation and/or changes to courses without proper support/CPD time/appropriate and timeously resources in place to deliver them; lack of appropriate pay-rise to reflect profession and value of teaching staff; WORKLOAD

Additional comments

I am an active union member and aware of the general overall feelings of teaching staff across the country, not just in SLC.

ANONYMOUS 69

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)
  Secondary school teacher of Physical Education

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
  City of Edinburgh Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
  The opportunity to shape, guide and inform young people. To support their learning and nurture a love of the subject. To encourage young people to recognise the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and strive to excel where possible. To offer opportunity to work individually, in a team or group, to solve problems and over come challenges. The opportunity to support, guide and mentor ITE students and probationers.

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 in the process of applying to retire (early) after 32 years of teaching. This is a decision that has been made with a heavy heart due to the recent eroding role of the teacher. Some of these changes are; the imposition of SQA duties to teaching staff with no time to enact or develop the appropriate collegiate skills, the year upon year budget cuts, along with the increased demands made by society for teachers to increase output in the manner of a business model that does not reflect the complexity of a people centred community that is a school.

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

challenges and responsibilities. However this was prior to the ‘stripping out’ of the middle management tier of principal teacher. I am relieved I do not hold a middle management role now. With the imposition of a budgetary cut of middle management (Principal Teacher) the support infrastructure is weak and cannot sustain the quality of staff support that once existed. Current Curriculum Leaders operate a damage limitation approach to staff and pupil support. Therefore the opportunity to implement and sustain new initiatives is less likely at a time when the demand for such is even greater.

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 change of the teacher supply contract has had a detrimental effect on attracting and retaining a strong, competent workforce who are placed immediately in front of pupils.

An accurate reflection of the job and the many roles and responsibilities the teacher undertakes is still to be portrayed. An improved and real advertising campaign may assist those entering the profession and therefore support an improved quality selection process, which may assist in the retention of staff.

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

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

A suggestion was offered at Q7. Might an opportunity for those entering the profession be a requirement that they have had some ‘work experience’ related to the profession prior to applying?

The PRD process is a place for reflection on retention. However as the process is often led by CL middle management staff the role of mentor is not engaged with to the depth that would support this.

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)?

YES.

If so:
• What are these measures?
   CL's taking on additional responsibilities of SLT staff to compensate for the extensive remits.

• How well are they working?
   Not at all. Staff are taking on more work, not completing that which is their employed remit thus daily operational work is being overlooked.

• 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?)
   Reduction of SLT staff posts, but the remit still exists.

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.
   Factors; volume of work load, time frames within which to execute the work load. Limited opportunities to interact and support one another.

Additional comments
Despite the early conclusion of my career as a teacher I have for the majority of the 32 years had great pleasure and felt very privileged to be part of the Scottish education system. I will always remain loyal to that which I am still so passionate about, hence my concerns now shared. The strength of the Scottish education system is due to the quality, passion and commitment of teachers. Therefore these key features must remain at the heart of the system for it to flourish and be a front-runner in world education again.

ANONYMOUS 70
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
   Secondary Teacher of Physics with a promoted post in Guidance

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
   Aberdeen City

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
   Love working with young people in supporting them to become the best person that they can be. Mentally challenging career with variety where no two days are the same. Allows me to problem solve on a daily basis. Keeps me up to date with society, young peoples’ issues and technology. I like working in an environment that has young people at its core and the collegiate nature of working in a school environment.

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)
It depends on when the retirement age is when I am eligible. I will have to
gauge this on my health and wellbeing and my personal circumstances nearer
the time. I would potentially consider retiring early should my career be
seriously detrimental to my wellbeing. I don’t think that the change to the
pension arrangements that I signed up for when I joined the teaching
profession was a positive one. Instead of retiring at 60 (which is still late in a
lot of ways for many teachers) I now have many more years to teach for. I
don’t think it is positive for the health and wellbeing of teachers to be ‘forced’
across teaching until pensionable age. The increasing numbers of teachers
below this age who are struggling to deal with the increased pressures and
stresses being faced will mean that as teachers get older they are more likely
to find their role more and more challenging and less likely to be able to deal
with this as easily. I think that although it is important for there to be a good
mix between experienced and younger teachers that pupils will also find it
more difficult to relate to some teachers as they come towards retirement and
vice versa and some teachers could lose their enthusiasm and everyone will
suffer.

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

I am already middle management and I don’t think that the pay, stress, extra
hours and the exposure to parental pressures is sufficient to encourage me to
move further up the promotion structure. Everyone in a school needs
sufficient time and resources to do their job properly and I don’t feel that this is
the case at any level currently.

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)

High cost of living in the Aberdeen area, workload, parental pressures, high
school expectations within curricular and extra-curricular time, SQA exam
requirement pressures of assessment and curriculum review as well as
disproportionate wage rises completely out of line and below inflation.

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

STEM subjects – especially Physics, Design & Technology & Latin

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

Pay teachers appropriate salaries, give them sufficient time to do their jobs within a
reasonable work/life balance.

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?
  o Trained teachers using similar routes to those used in England – training on the job whilst completing university study towards PGCE qualifications over a 2-year period
  o Re-deployed a Primary School Teacher to teach in the Secondary School for 1 year to address subject teacher shortage

• How well are they working?
  o Depends on the trainee teacher and the support given to them by the university, GTCS and the school. At our school so far this has been very successful and has resulted in the trainee teacher being offered a permanent contract.
  o Re-deployment wasn’t successful and the teacher went back to Primary Teaching

• 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?)
  o Temporary measure for specific people, posts and subjects. The offer of this training route is only a two year contract with the potential of a permanent post offer depending on the situation and progress.

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?

Varies depending on time of year between quite good and quite low. Key factors: workload, pupil, parent and school pressures/expectations, exam and assessment pressures.

ANONYMOUS 71

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Secondary school

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Glasgow City Council

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

I find it difficult to identify positives about this profession. I try to teach to the best of my ability and try to keep my pupils at the forefront of everything I do. I believe that I could make a difference to the prospects of our young people and the job can be rewarding. Many teachers enjoy the school holidays however these really on give me the chance to catch up on work. For the past 4 years I have been teaching I have had to work every holiday to meet the demands expected.

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 the process of looking for another job out with teaching just now. I am only 28. I have become very disillusioned about the profession and I do not enjoy the job anymore. I do not believe I am respected or valued in this profession. I could receive the same money in the private sector with less stress.

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 within education. The duties and expectations of someone at a more senior level are unattainable. I am not valued for the work I do as a class teacher, I am not convinced this would change further up the chain of command. Education is expected to achieve so much, it is completely unrealistic and unattainable. If I were to think about promotion there is no way to achieve this due to the delayering within the school community. Limited promoted posts available.

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)

For example, why would someone from IT industry want to become a teacher when they can receive much better pay and conditions in private sector? Our pay and conditions do not reflect what we must put up with in the classroom. Behaviour has become totally out of control and with the withdrawal of valuable support staff this is becoming much more impossible to deal with. I also feel that the implementation of CfE has modelled our pupils to know more about their rights than respecting others around them. I also do not believe that the primary curriculum is adequately setting up our children to sit formal examinations in S4. Basic writing and arithmetic is still important but not valued by pupils or parents. Teaching staff are constantly put down, I do not feel I ever get anything right in teaching, there always seems to be someone wanting to criticise rather than guide. This profession has become a “blame” culture and this is the reason why Scottish Education cannot retain excellent teachers, therefore we want to leave to go back into private sector. As a young teacher at the beginning of my career I do not want to be subjected to this anymore, the holidays, the pay, the working hours are not worth this.

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

There seem to be an increased drive in STEM related subjects but what about other subjects? Resources are constantly being pulled from us, how can we close the gap and achieve the same results when SQA and Scottish Government constantly change the goal posts and take away support staff? The whole way which education is managed baffles me, the system is not working for practitioners or pupils. This is maybe also another reasons why many of us and more than willing to go on strike. The government will never be able to retain staff if the current system continues.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Change CfE – it is not working. Less emphasis on “play” – some of my S3 pupils cannot constructively form sentences and paragraphs or punctuate these. Things such as handwriting and timetables and non-existent why is this? Bring back testing at primary level.

I believe I would have benefitted much more from receiving adequate training during my teacher training year.

Consistent approach to exam and exam preparation across the country – SQA are aware that coursework submitted from schools differ in standard as many practitioners are not adhering to the guidelines – everything should be marked externally to ensure a fair approach for pupils.

Complete reform of the school system – more emphasis on vocational studies rather than outdated courses that are being forced upon pupils. Our economy is changing, we need to train our young people in innovation and IT. Our pupils are not getting this, we are lacking behind other advanced economies due to this persistent rigid structure of our education system. It is time to reinvent and move on.

Scottish Government are desperate for teachers so anyone seems to be getting through the net with adverse consequences to school departments. These members of staff lack the enthusiasm and dedication and even the innovation to change. Also causes massive amount of work load issues on other members of staff as these people need to be “carried”. Why do councils persistently support these inefficient teachers? Needs to have a more rigid and efficient selection process.

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?)

Yes, senior management think it is a good idea for teachers to teach tri-level classes (e.g. N4/N5 and Higher) due to the lack of teachers. It does not matter how many times they have been told and continue to be told this does not work. The bottom 20% suffer the most which then goes against everything that we are trying to achieve in education to reduce to attainment gap. Senior managements are not interested in the wellbeing of their staff, all they are interested in is the statistics and how they measure up with other schools in the surrounding area. Many senior “leaders” are so far removed from the classroom that they have no idea what really works and what is failing the pupils. I always fill in feedback forms expressing the same points I am putting in this questionnaire but no-one listens, no-one has ever came back to me and asked why I feel like this, what solutions do I offer. It is exhausting.
Pupils are forced to take courses that they do not want to take due to some courses being oversubscribed and others limited to one class due to the lack of teachers. This again goes against the GIRFEC initiative. I also feel that senior management always have a hidden agenda as to where they wish pupils to be placed and can be bias when putting together options forms and timetabling. This has a huge impact on teacher numbers as this could leave certain departments with teachers surplus. I also believe that the lack of detailed knowledge about each course from pastoral teachers affects course choices. For example, pastoral staff cannot distinguish between Administration & IT and Computing (I have experienced this in every school I have worked in). Again, no sure if this is related to their on CPD or timetabling issues.

Extremely low. Most experienced members of staff I have spoken to says they have never experienced anything like this in teaching before. So many factors are affecting this – working hours, demands, expectations, pupil behaviour, lack of respect, lack of support from senior managements, pay issues, exam pressure and constant changes of the goal posts and overall our opinions being ignored.

Additional comments
Looking over this form my views seem extremely negative however I am finding it very difficult to find anything positive about this profession. I unfortunately dread going into work everyday as I have no idea what to expect, what I will now be expected to achieve in a short period of time and what behaviour I will be expected to put up with from pupils. The only reason I still go in everyday is there are pupils who deserve the best, who deserve to be taught and want to achieve well. It is not their fault that the system is failing them. Pupils are still achieving good results due to teacher’s kindness, not due to senior management and their policies. The Government will never be able to retain teachers if they continue to treat professionals like this and I will unfortunately continue to seek alternatively employment out with teaching.

I started on the teaching training course as 1 of 10 individuals eager to teach and help young people, I am now only 1 of 2 left from that course which I only completed 4 years ago, this profession is not attractive to young people anymore.
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?

I enjoy working with young people to develop their skills and their enjoyment of my subject area. I really enjoy seeing pupils progress in maturity, academically and socially through their time at 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 had always thought I would stay in teaching until retirement but the past few years of change and incidents this year have changed my views. I am aiming to try and stay for another 5-7 years if I can and then look for another career but may leave sooner.

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

Being able to maintain class commitment in my subject is important to me and this has put me off applying for pupil support roles. (I did this job acting for 2 years some time ago when there was still a high subject teaching role.)

I would like to run an Art and Design Department and feel suitably qualified for this however the council have a Faculty structure and I do not want to oversee two other subjects that I have no knowledge of. Faculty jobs have also cut down the amount of promotion available.

Management seems to be more paper based and less pupil based than ever before and that is not what I came into teaching for. I worked in industry before teaching and am able for the paperwork part of a promoted post, I carry out a lot of the admin tasks for my dept as our Faculty head is from another subject, but I would not want it to be the dominant part of my job. Teachers, promoted or not, should primarily be there to enhance the learning experience for pupils.

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 a factor. With a pay freeze for several years teaching is not a good wage for degree qualified individuals. More money can be made elsewhere in professional and semi-professional jobs with overtime options.

The hours are now unrealistic. Little effort is made to stick to working time agreements. Teachers are expected to keep going to get endless admin tasks done on top of teaching, prep, marking, reporting…

On many occasions extra responsibilities are given as opportunities for those wanting experience for future promotion and this extra work becomes expected of an increasing number of staff.

The way indiscipline is handled is causing increasing stress to teachers and causing them to leave earlier than they had planned. Teachers are not believed if there are no adult witnesses, incidents of aggression and /or bad language are no longer dealt with seriously so there is no deterrent. This is off putting to experienced staff, probationers and student teachers. How can front
line staff work if there are no consequences for this type of behaviour. I was assaulted at work and received very little support from management. I was made to feel it was my fault I was injured because I chose to keep a pupil who was being violent away from others. Clear sanctions have to be available to head teachers to ensure staff and pupils are safe.

The application process is a paper exercise that is missing some really good teachers. Those that can use jargon are successful rather than those that can teach really well. A practical weighting should be given either with more weighting to a reference or a teaching part of the interview. Those that can talk the talk are not always the best candidate.

The focus on attainment is draining staff. When a pupil achieves one level the teacher is expected to get them a pass at the next level regardless of pupil ability – a lot of pressure is put on staff and their opinion, expertise is often overlooked. Tri level senior classes are common which causes issues for teaching, assessment…

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

Clearly defined roles for staff, faculty heads and managers. A realistic expectation of work to be completed within the time frame teachers are paid for. More sanctions clearly used for indiscipline. Parents involved more to support the teacher and school rather than against it. Subject specific department heads to support development work, the many changes to the curriculum and take some of the admin burden off teaching 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? Less support assistant time, multi level classes
- How well are they working? Less support assistant time is stopping some children achieve their potential as they need so much support. Multi level classes do not allow for teacher time to be used well, no one benefits. Groups have to work on their own for extended periods of time as the teacher fire fights rather than checks for genuine understanding.
- 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?)

Permanent due to school role. It is false to base our support needs on pupil numbers as we have a significant number of pupils who need the extra time and help to fulfil part/all of their potential. We are always told it is just the nature of a small school, but it is not fair to 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?

Very low at present. Staff do not feel at all supported by current management strategies. They do not feel like their views are being taken into consideration
for school policy, and back up for practical issues is not there. Sometimes things need to be escalated so they can be dealt with instead of problems always being given to middle management to deal with. There is a feeling that as long as it looks OK on the surface that is fine. This is not best for pupils or staff. This is happening only in my school.

ANONYMOUS 73

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Secondary – Craft, Design, Engineering, Graphics and Technology

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Lothian

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The learners and seeing the difference I make to their lives and futures. Spending the holidays with my kids.

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)
Consider leaving due to the politics of teaching. Even the GTCS is a tool for management to stop free thinking teachers not to support the development of teachers. Too many things are expected of teachers without looking at the workload issues, if you say anything you are a trouble maker and will not get promoted. It is worse than my experience with the British Army.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
How you are expected to sacrifice your family for the job. Also, not being allowed to question or give your own thoughts. There are limited promoted posts due to CfE faculties rather than subjects.

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.
SQA.
Senior management.
Education being a political tool.
Lack of job security.
Poor working conditions and equipment.
Wages falling behind inflation.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Practical subjects due to squeezing of budgets.
Q9  Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
   Scrapping of faculties.
   All subjects treated as equals, not classed as minority subjects.
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?)
   All posts have reduced meaning other teachers are expected to take up the slack through ‘voluntary’ giving up of time.
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)
   Skills for work i.e. Metalwork, Engineering Science and Construction Crafts
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?
   Extremely poor
   **Additional comments**
   Start listening to the troops on the ground not the yes men who get the senior management and above positions in education.

ANONYMOUS 74
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
   Secondary school
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
   I am at a school where pupils are in general very pleasant and biddable, and a delight to teach. Also I am in employment.
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 or take early retirement. I will leave as soon as I can financially afford to, as the stresses and strains of teaching, and the lack of sleep and mental stress it causes are not really worth it. For instance, I am frequently discussing SQA, teaching issues etc with my wife, who is also a teacher, in the early hours of the morning as neither of us can sleep.
Last night (17/4/17) we were discussing Nat 4/Nat 5 progression at 3.30am. Neither of us got back to sleep after that.

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, not even to Principal Teacher – and I like some kind of a life outside teaching, to pursue my interests and hobbies. I do not think I would have that with promotion, unless it was to a subject specialist PT post in the old departmental system.

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)

- Faculty system – lack of promotion, particularly in attracting staff down from the central belt.
- In a faculty system, the largest department (ie in our case Maths) in the faculty takes up 99% of a PT’s time and if the PT is a Maths teacher then almost no time is spent on the lesser departments within a faculty, and therefore there is a complete lack of support, advice and even contact with line managers. This has been my experience working in two faculties with a number of PT’s over the last 10 years (I am dual qualified).
- Specialist PT means there is no expert in the subject to provide support, materials and advice to both new and existing staff, and can not push the department forward. I am lucky that there is a very experienced Depute at the school who is also a computing teacher and heavily involved with the SQA, so I still ask this person for advice.
- Since the advent of the faculty system, we really are just individuals working on our own in the class, not even a department.
- Constant changes to the system – we must have a period of stability over the next few years.
- SQA coursework tasks were very poorly designed and had many mistakes which has taken a number of years to iron out.
- Very poor implantation of the new Curriculum for Excellence (and I speak as a strong supporter of the Scottish government). No national materials were produced which meant that every Computing teacher in every school had a huge development workload.
- Poor implantation of Nationals and lack now of a two year course. It is far too much, coming from a BGE to teach National 5 Computing in one year. It puts too much pressure on staff and pupils.
- Promotion now seems to depend on the extra curricular activities a teacher organises outside the classroom ie Charities Committee, not what goes on inside the classroom. Other young teachers in my school are pursuing MSC’s at the moment in a bid to help with promotion. This is an enormous extra pressure of workload.
Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Computing faces a massive challenge. Approximately ½ the schools in my region do not teach Computing (but may teach Business Studies) meaning essentials skills for the Scottish economy are not being taught. The average age of existing Computer teachers in the region must be over 50. The region also lost a young teacher who went to work in England last year because of concerns about the Scottish Computing curriculum.

Also much more money can be earned in private industry with a chance of a career progression.

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

Bring back subject specialist PT’s – this would help with recruitment of staff in rural areas as staff would be attracted to promoted posts.

The local university should have teacher training courses in shortage subjects

Increase pay.

Spread holidays more evenly over the year as in England.

Appoint much better people to be in charge of SQA and LTS, people who understand education and will listen to teachers.

Stop constantly changing and tinkering with the system. Give us stability for at least the next 10 years.

Also allow teachers to still retire at 60. There are very few teachers who can work to 65 or beyond in front of a class. It is physically and mentally demanding even at a good 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 always have composite classes (for the last 5 years) ie Nat 4 with Nat 5 and usually Higher with Advanced Higher.

The H/AH works better but only if the AH also have some completely separate classes during the week as well.

The Nat 4 with Nat 5 does not work very well as there are two different types of pupils in the class, one half which is motivated and the other half not. Schoolchildren at that age are usually not mature enough to sit and work, whilst the other half of the class is taught and follow a different course. Many adults would struggle with this as well.

In addition – half the class will be issued homework and half won’t.

Up until now we have managed to avoid the situation at S4 of some pupils not taking the subject in S3 but then deciding to take it in S4, having missed a year of the course. This is a disaster if they do this, as in addition to having Nat 4’s and Nat 5’s in the same class you also have another set of pupils at a completely different stage, so in effect it is a tri-level 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?

Fairly low, many would like another job or career and it is workload, lack of promotion opportunities, pay cuts and constant changes that affect this. Even the young teachers feel like this.

If also you happen to work in a school with challenging behaviour, and having to fight hard to maintain discipline every single period, then that is a massive extra pressure.

ANONYMOUS 75

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?

I have worked in the same secondary state school in Edinburgh now for 17 years, I teach a variety of different subjects such as Philosophy, RMPS, Classical Studies, History and Modern Studies. I have been a Principal Teacher until the job sizing and the facultisation disasters, I have also been a Curricular Leader on a temporary basis twice.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

City of Edinburgh

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

Always has been the students, teaching is the most wonderful profession in the world, it has allowed the chance to spend my career researching, and teaching subjects I am deeply passionate about, and better yet seeing that enthusiasm and passion passed on to future generations.

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 most probably teach till I retire, I am for the most part extremely happy in my job, and always find new ways of making it challenging and rewarding, however that is not to say that I wouldn’t necessarily change my career, perhaps further education might be an avenue for me to consider, but right now I am solely focused upon my career.

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

I am extremely fortunate to be working in a school where the SMT actively encourage staff to take on leadership roles, and that gives you an opportunity to be able to experience the difference challenges and rewards of different positions. Unfortunately facultisation has not been a success, and the hardest job in the whole school is being a Curricular Leader. I teach what a considered minority subjects by some although we have strong uptake from students, but RMPS and Classical Studies have often been tagged on to a whole variety of unsuitable other departments to make faculties. I am again very fortunate to be in the faculty I am with Geography, but we have little in common with each other and my CL for all her good intentions cannot help with the day to day running of other subject areas. More on this elow.
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 number one challenge right now to retaining teachers is the flawed management structure that we have, with most councils running faculties, subjects have become ignored, or forced to work with other areas with which they have little shared goals. Most teachers are extremely proud of their specialisation and see it as a defining characteristic of who they are. Yet they are often continually seeing that speciality eroded by non-specialists before forced to take individual classes, or worse manage entire curriculums. With the greatest of respect you wouldn’t expect a GP to perform Brian Surgery, the same axiom should apply here, there should be an immediate return to Principal Teachers. Principal Teachers system is universally recognised as a system that worked. It allowed staff reasonable expectations of advancement, in gave specialists the control over areas it was needed, and it stopped people like me having to do management tasks because my CL (for no fault of their own) is simply not capable of making strategic decisions about the way forward for our department. Most teachers of smaller subjects are doing Principal Teachers jobs (ie SQA paper work, overseeing curricular development, quality and standards, etc etc) but receive no recognition either from their school, or financially.

The second great challenge is in pay, we have not had a pay rise since 2009, except the pitiful percentage points on offer, we are an extremely hard working, caring, and dedicated profession which needs a large amount of initial training, as well substantial further academic development and we are worth less now than 2003 by 14% in real terms. The SNCT is being ably reminded of this by our professional associations so I don’t intend to go into it too much further except to state:

Teachers work long hours, through the night, through weekends, through their holidays, they don’t complain, they just get on with it. Part of the problem you are facing is because the younger generation fails to see why this would be attractive ot them in a society where instant gratification is king, why would you do a 65 hour week for 34 grand? Teachers deserve at least 40% pay rise, and that is me being conservative, if you are to have any hope of retention and rise in recruitment. Also the reinstatement of the Chartered Teacher program would be highly motivational to the thousands of staff who are 10 years service in and who don’t want middle management but want to improve their own learning and teaching, by completing further education, surely the message that Chartered Teaching sends out is highly positive and motivational, please please look at ways to reinstate this.

Thirdly
This evidence is anecdotal at best, however as part of my job I meet a large amount of student teachers and probationers, many of whom are wonderful people but many are not either mentally or physically equipped to understand let alone deal with the demands of teaching. Stirling university in particular in my eyes especially in RMPS because it offers an undergraduate degree program, sends out students to schools who are light years away from being ready, and who have little motivation or desire to succeed. The closing down
of many smaller subject teacher training facilities such as RMPS and Classics at Moray House in Edinburgh has sent shockwaves out. 20 years ago Edinburgh schools had strong direct links with the university, and could help, and influence generations of RMPS teachers, of whom many are still in the job on a direct level. The masters in education at undergraduate level is a MISTAKE, the best way to prepare people for teaching is for them to complete an undergraduate degree in their subject of choice, and then complete Postgraduate Diploma. A better vetting system is needed by universities as well on choosing candidates to enter initial training, maybe not in subject like PE and CDT, but for social subjects the quality of candidates in recent years has shown a worrying decline, far too many students drop out or simply cannot cope, and much of this blame is due to the Universities ineptitude of being able to select resilient candidates, and the withdrawal of funding from certain subject areas. Undergraduate student teachers are far more likely to be at best average in the class room, this impacts heavily especially on smaller subjects where your popularity is driven the rapport you foster with your students.

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

The role of the class room assistant is in dire straits, we rely heavily on ours but we can only see her once a week, she is a life saver, as she helps us deal with the excessive bureaucracy which we are involved in such as record keeping, stationary orders etc. The class room and support assistants are vital in any school and I know this from seeing their influence day in day out in the class room, their pay is risible, there should be a sliding scale based upon experience or assessment, to encourage support and learning assistants to progress down career path ways. This would give them better financial motivation, and improve the overall ethos within the school, the direct cut in budgets imposed by the SNP on schools has hit hard, and whilst as a small subject in my school we have been relatively insulated from this, many departments are not so lucky with RMPS in particularly been seen as a soft target, we are potentially loosing 0.6 FTE staffing this session in RMPS.

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

i) Across the board 40% pay rise, which is fair and equitable in line with inflation and seen as a fair reflection of how Scotland views its teaching profession

ii) Reinstatement of chartered teacher or some other mechanism where long serving teachers have the opportunity to develop

iii) The reinstatement of Principle and Assistant Principle Teachers

iv) A pay scale introduced for support and learning assistants to motivate and encourage life long learning

v) A detailed review of University admission standards for initial teacher training, and a recognition that the standards as they are do not work,

vi) A recognition that the best way to prepare for secondary teaching is through the tried and tested method of Degree then PGCE
vii) A look at re-establishing teacher training in specific subject areas which can only be done in England now such as Classical Studies.

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?

Classical Studies suffers every year in my school, this year I had 41 chose it at higher it and could only accommodate 28 at S5, in S3 I didn’t get a class at all due to staffing changes.

Advanced Higher in any of my subjects is never allowed to run even though I have 12 students in S5 who want to take it this year coming. But no time can be found within the timetable.

Every subject, every department, every primary is hit by these cuts, it is not just ours. If you truly want depth, progression and choice then you need to release funds to allow this to happen.

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 lower than it used to be especially in this last year, I have noticed a discernible downturn in people’s attitudes. There are many people who always look to the negate and are never happy, but there is a ground swell of real concern over the lack of leadership nationally the government is showing. It comes out with statements we all agree with like being progressive, world class, skills driven, closing the gap. We all want this we spend our lives fighting for this, but at the same time, we see a government which is not interested in education, which has consistently denied spending increases, and positive wage reviews. That fails to appreciate that in order to close the gap changes need to be made much higher up the chain, the money needs to be in our hands so we can help these kids. I fear with the eye always on the constitutional farrago they are not looking where they should do, which is real basic bread and butter issues. I love my job as I opened this whole feedback with and I will not leave it lightly, and to be honest if people like me are getting to the point where we are considering leaving, then the Scottish Government has really messed it up, as Scottish teaching survives solely on the HUGE amount of work that is done through good will, every day teachers do over and above what they are asked for, our system would not and will not function if we stop, but we cannot do that as that would be unfair to the kids. I would really love to think that the Scottish government cares and will listen to one voice with 20 years on the job, we are not the problem we want to be part of the solution, but make the situation fair and equitable, give us a pay rise, look at the management structure, and you will be rewarded beyond reasonable expectation.

ANONYMOUS 76

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .

I am a full time, permanent secondary school teacher and have been for the last 27 years.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
I work for Glasgow City Council.

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

I enjoy the job of actually teaching my classes, but that’s where it ends. I stay in teaching now because I am too old to retrain in anything else and have financial commitments, which mean I cannot risk leaving for something else. I enjoy my relationships with different pupils and I enjoy seeing them achieve in my subjects.

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)

Having worked out my finances, I plan on taking early retirement.

I feel that teaching has become something which is detrimental to my health. The frustrations, the lack of support from my school and the other education bodies like the SQA and Education Scotland, the workload which means I have literally no time to plan interesting lessons for my classes (I have two higher classes of 30 pupils each, the marking for that alone takes up all of my non-contact time never mind endless assessment and reporting). I am exhausted when I get home. I spend at least one weekend day marking and all this for a significant drop in the value of my salary. I feel undervalued and underpaid. So, despite getting good results I will be retiring as soon as is financially viable for me otherwise this job will kill me.

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

The only thing which would encourage me to seek promotion would be the increase in salary.

I have not sought promotion because there have been very few openings. I would have liked to have been a principal teacher, but these no longer exist. My faculty head cannot do his job properly because he is being asked to do an impossible amount of work and cover for lack of staff. He is also unable to oversee all the subjects in his department properly as he has not taught them. Deputes in my school have large teaching commitments which means they are unable to do their jobs properly, and appear to be papering over the significant cracks (poor discipline goes unchecked and everything slips down a notch or two). Again, changes to the management structures have been nothing but detrimental to the smooth running of a school. You ask us to raise attainment against a backdrop of chaos, poor management and lack of resources. It’s just not possible.

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)

First of all, society does not value teachers any more. That is evident when you look at our salaries compared to other jobs of equivalent professionalism. We are expected to provide more than just education to children (the only thing I signed up for). I am not a Social Worker, a psychologist or a parent to
my pupils; I am their teacher. The increased expectations and poor
remuneration would put me off becoming a teacher.

Many students come into schools with an idealistic view of what it is to be a
teacher and many leave before completing their practice or probation because
the reality is significantly different…workload, poor behaviour, lack of support
(mainly because of lack of time), large classes and a curriculum at odds with
rational thought (CfE is ill conceived at best and harmful at worst. It does not
work, especially in secondary schools).

I had so much more autonomy when I started teaching in 1989. Now it is
prescriptive, dull and unengaging, all the things we were told curriculum for
excellence would not be.

I would not encourage either of my children into teaching. It would be a job of
last resort now, not a vocation.

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

I know science and maths are a problem. There are so many more, better
paid opportunities with these specialisms outside of education, so why come
into teaching given its status?

Getting a supply teacher in any specialism is almost impossible as the work
these teachers do was devalued when it was decided to cut their pay. Supply
teachers are crucial to schools as they allow time for everyone else to do their
own jobs. In my school, we have a depute teaching a subject at Higher level
(which she is not qualified to do) because we have not been able to get a
specialist supply teacher for the last six months…raising attainment? You
have got to be joking.

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

Make the job an attractive one: -

Scrap CfE. Standard Grade had its faults, but nothing compared to our current
system. It serves no one. BGE is a waste of time, Nat 4 has no value and I
have seen some dubious practice when it comes to getting kids through a Nat
4 qualification, AVUs are stressful for pupils and teachers (and in my subjects
are nothing more than a test of memory).

Scrap the SQA and Education Scotland. I have been at SQA meetings where
it was quite clear that they hadn’t a clue what they were doing. They wouldn’t
answer questions from teachers unless they were written down and chosen
by the so called SQA experts…nothing short of shocking.

Improve the status of teaching in Scotland…all that bad press is truly
deserved.

Pay teachers more. I expect NQTs are earning less than the minimum wage
in their first few years. At certain times of the year, I am too, and I am at the
top of my pay scale.
Listen to teachers (not those who got out of teaching or so called “experts”). We have told you since the beginning of CfE that it was ill-conceived and unworkable; we were ignored.

Give us structures in schools that make teaching possible...poor behaviour, lack of time, large classes, lack of support...none of these make the job attractive.

Give student teachers more time in schools, not in the universities, where reality has been bypassed, and let the teachers in schools make the main assessments on the teaching abilities of their students.

You can have as many slick advertisements aimed at teacher recruitment as you like, but once a student gets into a school, all of that becomes meaningless. The job has to be attractive on the inside, and it just isn’t.

Yes, ironically, I would say Economics. This is one of my subjects, and was squeezed out of the state sector, in Glasgow anyway. It seems that it is only taught in private schools now. So many subjects have been lost in the state sector...Classics, Economics, many languages. Some of these subjects give privately educated pupils an edge on state school pupils.

A state education can be detrimental to your future, especially if you are a less able pupil. We do less academic pupils a HUGE disservice. Vocational courses are badly organised and poorly thought of. Give vocational subjects more value in society. There are skills our country needs, why don’t you promote and encourage these within schools? It makes more sense than having less academic pupils sitting doing meaningless and unexamined National 4 courses.

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 shockingly low, even amongst relatively young teachers, and this has become more apparent since the introduction of CfE.

I have described some of the factors above, but the overall feeling is one of a system that is trundling along into the darkness, pieces falling off and being held together with increasingly unsticky tape.

CfE is unworkable.

The BGE is pointless.

The workload is impossible.

The pay is unreasonable.

Behaviour is poor.

Management is ineffective.

The system is broken.
**ANONYMOUS 77**

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have? 

I am a Scottish qualified secondary teacher of English.

Q2  Whereabouts do you work? 

Up until recently, I was PT of English in a school in Aberdeenshire, but I have recently moved to international teaching and work in a private school in Beijing.

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

I love working with young people and I love my subject.

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 left teaching in Scotland and cannot see myself returning to it.

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

I was very keen to seek promotion, but find that Scottish schools have a parochial attitude and don’t necessarily promote the best person for the job. I have been in China since August and start my new promoted post this coming August, so I am pretty sure that it was not an issue with me or my abilities, more to do with attitudes back home.

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) 

Senior Management is often made up of people who no longer work in classrooms- which quite frankly is shocking- every HT and DHT should have timetabled classes. There also seems to be an attitude to promote bad teachers out of the classroom rather than get rid of them- ineffectual leadership is causing massive discontent in schools. Newly Qualified Teachers are not up to scratch and universities let them pass- Aberdeen University let through a probationer that we had to fail. He was then passed on his extension, although I cannot see how he made the required progress. This causes huge frustrations and takes up a massive amount of time in already hectic environments. The marking load is insane- 33 children in a class- UASPs, folio pieces and redrafts, prelims- it works out at about 500 individual pieces of marking, per class, per year before you have actually taught them anything. I think I worked out that if you could mark every piece in five minutes and only did marking in non-contact time (as opposed to taking it home with you) it would take 14 weeks to mark everything for one class.

Inclusion is being badly managed- we are not helping the most vulnerable young people in our care due to class sizes, lack of funding, lack of support and lack of resources. We then hold back other children who could achieve more did we not have to work at the pace of the least able. This was the straw
that broke the camel’s back for me- 15 year olds in National 4 classes (and being told by SMT that they had to achieve N4) who could not read or write, and being told there was not a problem. Illiteracy should not be a thing in Scotland today. I felt my best was not good enough for these children.

Long term illness (stress, depression and alcohol related illness- all caused by the stress of teaching) puts a massive burden on departments.

We are treated as a babysitting service by parents.

Parents have too much power and do not value education.

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

English teachers- as mentioned before the marking is insane, as is the planning. We are expected to be able to teach illiterate teenagers how to read and write without any training.

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

Better teacher training; massive pay rise (if the Scottish Government believes education is as important as they claim it is, put your money where your mouth is); better professional development opportunities- funded Masters and PhDs; let teachers design the curriculum and examinations instead of politicians; HTs to be held accountable for what is happening in their schools; more regular inspections and proper whistleblowing procedures for concerns; early retirement packages for those who desperately want out but can’t afford it and are festering in staffrooms; better maternity packages- I could not afford to start a family as the main breadwinner in my household; a genuine focus on staff wellbeing- if your teachers are healthy and happy your students will ultimately perform better; a complete overhaul of the examinations- they are a joke and the SQA is useless- go to International Baccalaureate and get rid of SQA altogether; local authority mortgages for teachers in areas where it is expensive to buy/rent- in both Aberdeenshire and Highland, the cost of accommodation was a major factor in driving me out; properly trained classroom assistants who have time to meet with subject teachers for planning- rather than them having rushed from First Aid duty, arrive late and then don’t have a clue what is going on and you cannot stop the lesson to explain, so they are of little use; get Education Scotland to see one initiative through at a time instead of constantly updating things- I did not have time to read my emails from them with updates they were happening that constantly- and that was with me putting in 15 hours, 6 days a week.

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 had massive staff shortages which were compounded by giving an already weak senior management team more schools to manage- despite none of them having any primary experience. Composite classes at Higher/N5 were forced upon us meaning that the most able Higher candidates were being held back and the weakest N5s were unable to keep up resulting in mediocre grades across the board. Classroom assistants were appropriated to undertake First Aid and library supervision, amongst other things, meaning they had little time to actually assist and were always late and unprepared as they had no time to prepare. I would strongly suggest that none of these measures were effective.

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)

Yes- students were forced to take subjects they did not want, and composite classes in most subjects meant that we couldn’t push the top and were not supporting the bottom.

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 left at the end of last year and was amongst 16 leaving (most leaving the profession, or at least, the country). We were absolutely on our knees and I was regularly on the receiving end of phone calls from colleagues at ridiculous hours of the evening who could not cope with the marking load. This particular school was by far the worst ethos I have ever seen, and I would say an awful lot of that was down to poor leadership.

ANONYMOUS 78

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary School teacher of English

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
My love of my subject and I enjoy working with young people and feeling that I make a difference, no matter how small.

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 about to retire but if I wasn’t I don’t think I could face the thought of years of teaching stretching ahead as I am sick of the constant changes and I hate teaching the new Nat4 which has no credibility and the pupils know it. The constant dumbing down of the qualifications is very demotivating.

I would no longer recommend teaching as a profession.
Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?

I was Faculty Head until I started winding down. Teachers are no longer trusted to be professional, there is too much form filling to prove that we are doing what we say we are. It is increasingly stressful.

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 Inclusion policy is not working. There is no real support especially for pupils with SEBD. The silent majority of pupils suffer because pupils with serious mental health issues are in class when really a different type of education would suit them better – small groups etc. Teachers are increasingly expected to be social workers and mental health specialists. The fundamental question is would you want your child in the same class as someone with “anger management issues” or “oppositional behaviour disorder” if the answer is no, why should anyone else’s child be?

Also in Aberdeen, the cost of renting accommodation is too expensive for teachers. Buying a house is out of the question so it is very difficult for a teacher to get a foot on the property ladder.

Class sizes

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

Maths, Physics, Technical Subjects, Home Economics

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

Teachers must be paid more. It is as simple as that. A salary to reflect their 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)?

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?)

No, the only changes are that subjects are no longer taught. If there are no subject specialists out there, the authority stops advertising and therefore it looks like there are no vacancies, therefore no shortage.
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)

Physics, technical subjects and Home Economics. The last two are very important for pupils from disadvantaged areas, even as life skills.

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 would say this is primarily due to constant changing of the curriculum and deteriorating pupil behaviour. We are also expected to take on social worker too.

Additional comments

Too many rash decisions are taken. I have been teaching for nearly forty years and the same old ideas come round dressed up in glossy brochures and presented to the teachers as though it is something wonderful and new and it isn’t. For example the latest in service we were subjected to had the marvellous idea of “Pause, pounce, bounce, bounce” Extremely patronising as though we hadn’t thought of giving pupils Thinking time (pause) then selecting someone (pounce) and then if they did not know the answer pick someone else (bounce) and then someone else (bounce) Really!? Never thought of that. I believe the Scottish Government paid a huge some for this kind of simplistic nonsense to be part of the Attainment Challenge.

ANONYMOUS 79

Q1 I am a full time permanent secondary school teacher- technical subjects I am currently taking on a temporary principal teacher of guidance role.

Q2 I work in East Ayrshire

Q4 Positives- relationships with other staff/pupils. Variety of work- interesting and varied groups of pupils. Holidays of course!

Q5 I will have to teach until I am 68 and I cannot imagine having the energy which I require to do my job every day at that age. On my feet all day every day, dealing with confrontation-with less and less support from above, ever changing courses/assessment. Workload pressures over and above teaching classes. I am exhausted at 35 and cannot imagine doing this at 68 years old.

Q6 I would never seek promotion to that level.

My experience of senior management is to do anything to ‘get results’. The child and what is best for them has been forgotten about in favour of 3/5 Highers, positive destination percentages. They do not support staff and seem to be becoming more of a separate group from teachers. Workload seems
crazy for them with increasing pressure from councils on results improving/ exclusion driving down/ no support in difficult situations with pupils and parents. No work life balance.

Q7

Problems recruiting- wages are no longer competitive. Lack of permanent positions. Negative publicity in media regarding new courses.

Retention- too little time to be a 'good teacher' - time wasted on tasks which do not benefit the pupil- only 'prepare for possible inspection'. Feeling under prepared as there is lack of time to plan and review lessons. Too much is asked of staff relying on good will. Work life balance is an issue- many things expected of staff outside of school hours- and above 35 hr working week.

Q8

I know we are having problems recruiting English, home economics and technical teachers as well as deputes.

Q9

Streamline the amount of formal assessment/ tracking/monitoring required.
Review CfE - particularly BGE- it is so wooly and ever changing, people have lost patience.
Reduce paperwork burdens in schools/authorities.
Funding!! Staff/resources/textbooks/photocopying- we don't have basics.
Trust our professional opinion- there seems to be a lack of trust from above.

Q10

Faculties- puts pressure on staff in dept who have no subject specialist PT- e.g. Our art dept has a tech PT- they have to carry him with SQA duties, ordering materials, any sort of info required which is art specific- they get no extra money or time to deal with this burden and are very stressed out.
Pressure to remove pupils from ASN log- less classroom assistants- they are vital particularly when dealing with poor and potentially dangerous behaviour.
Multi level classes- e.g n4 n5 higher and advanced higher in one class. Puts too much pressure on the member of staff.

Q11

Staff shortages in science areas so pupils cannot study biology who wished to do so. School role falling so class numbers capped and pupils encouraged to pick other subjects where staff are available. Bge cannot cover all areas due to lack of staff.

Q12

Morale is very low- at the lowest I have seen it. Staff are exhausted and do not feel appreciated or trusted. The pupil and what is best for them seems to be forgotten about in favour of banding them by SIMD, 3/5 higher pupils, making sure they are tracked, making sure there are 3 types of assessments used and it is all recorded. What about knowing the individual child and what is best for them? Having time to get to know/teach them effectively? Do
learning intentions/ success criteria being clearly displayed make a difference to them if the lesson is suited to their need based on the understanding of the teacher? Paperwork overkill leads to less time spent on the pupils.

ANONYMOUS 80

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? (Teacher Art and Design)

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The hope that I can make a difference to a student’s life.
Opening doors to subjects and areas previously unaware
Helping to widen the life experiences of students

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 till 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 was never interested in promotion: I had worked in Industry for 10 years before applying for art school so I wasn’t interested in that side of the job. I like the interaction between staff and pupils. That is where the best use of my skills lie. As you move up the scale in teaching the paperwork gets worse and the contact with pupils is less.

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)
Paperwork: too many reports, interim reports, rotation reports, tracking for all years plus added stress, and threats, with pointless GTCS 5 year reporting listing work we do every day.
All takes time outside normal working hours.
Student teachers can be badly treated in schools where they have little or no solid backup and feel they have to tackle what they’re given because of pressure for jobs after their stint in school.
This should be an empowering stage and was when I was a student. Most departments want a student as he/she supplies the pupils with new ideas and approaches to the subject. They should be encouraged, informed politely and respectfully because they are the future of the profession

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
I don’t really know.
Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Realistic expectations for teaching. Don’t recruit more than is required for the jobs available.

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?)

Not in my experience

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)

Architecture: a N3/N4/N5/N6 course in Architecture. Possibly a collaboration between and art and tech department: creative ideas tempered by the practicalities of construction. New ideas spawn new materials and approaches. Designing living spaces for people and how ergonomics, market forces and special needs shapes the demand and availability of good design in architecture for domestic and civic amenities.

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 profession is attacked by the media and successive governments both at the UK level and the devolved governments level.

Education is an easy target for party manifestos. The don’t seem to realise that their policies on education need time to mature as they may look good on paper and sound impressive in the chamber but can be quite different when dealing with real people.

Teachers very rarely regard their students as numbers as we get to know each person quite well over the years and because of this we do an enormous amount of work outside working hours and even use our own money to buy expensive materials or books for our students. I have never worked at a job where this level of commitment is normal practice. Still we are treated like ordinary employees in a chilly corporate atmosphere.

The local councils can inform that we shouldn’t take work home but this is ludicrous with the timescale to deliver the courses and reduced time and funding.
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? Secondary Education, Teacher of Technology for 29 years.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Angus Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The love of the subjects I teach.
The joy of teaching pupils especially when they are fully engaged in the learning process.
Working with colleagues who are dedicated to teaching.
The motivation new technology, challenges and pupils bring.

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 used to think I would teach for as long as I possibly could. I was even determined to follow a path of promotion. Now, as soon as I can afford it I plan to reduce my working week gradually until I can take early retirement. I'm aware that I cannot leave at this stage in my career but I don't want the constant stresses of the job to kill me off either.

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 encourage me to seek promotion again. I have been in a promoted post previously and hated it tremendously. When I was given the opportunity to relinquish my promoted post I did it without hesitation.
I would much rather be given the time, support and resources to enjoy teaching my pupils. Still waiting on that too.
Meetings - pointless, time consuming, repetitive.
I have endured endless hours in meetings over the years that involve too many self promoting people reviewing, repeating and regurgitating materials. Onerous and needless. I would just love for time limits to be set during these and then tasks issued and guidance for participants to just get on with the 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)
- Too many people know Teachers that are stressed and unhappy. Pupils are stressed too. Not a happy mix. Definitely not a format to encourage people to consider coming into teaching.
- Constant changes to the curriculum puts everyone involved under stress.
As I stated previously, I have been teaching for 29 years. In my first year I developed my first Standard Grade course - as a probationer! Every year since then I have had to develop new courses or make changes to existing ones in order to keep up with new initiatives mainly from the SQA. Not my favourite group.

This has become extremely wearing and tiresome. I love development work but even I am finding this stressful.

- Everyone is aware of changes to the curriculum but few people really understand them. I am frequently bombarded with questions about why are the changes being made. What the differences are? Why is the grading system different? What do the grades mean? And so on.

- People are confused by the system and will steer away from it.

- People are aware that what was once seen as a highly respected Education System is apparently now failing our pupils. They hear of other systems around the world out performing Scottish Schools and it will put them off getting involved.

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

Most subjects appear to suffer shortages but I feel there is a particular problem in STEM Subjects. We should be trying to encourage experienced people from suitable fields such as engineering to apply for teaching. This has to be carried out properly, I heard of an event to try to encourage people into teaching technology being held in the department for nursing and midwifery!

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

Not short term. Incentives may make a small difference.

Long term we have to improve the system. Make school a more positive and happier environment.

We have to look at the whole system. Why are teachers loosing interest? Why are pupils loosing interest? Why are we examining every last detail in every subject. It is not necessary and we cannot justify it sincerely.

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?)

Composite classes are a normal feature of courses and have been so since "Revised Higher" was introduced. We were even told that this would bring up
the standard of Intermediate 2 pupils. Teaching staff knew this to be untrue but with the only alternative not to have a Higher class what choice was there.

We are now being informed that the new arrangements for National 4, 5 and Higher will not include composite classes as National 4 includes Unit assessment, National 5 and Higher doesn't. Although Units for National 5 do still exist and I'm absolutely positive that if any pupil is not performing at their appropriate level they will be dropped down to National 4 and will have to complete the Unit materials and the teacher will then have to assess 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)

No, the current curriculum is wide enough. The problem is it's not fully available to all pupils due to timetabling constraints. Pupils frequently approach teaching staff asking for advice due to them not being able to choose subjects they would like to follow.

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?

Extremely low. Constant changes and additional demands by management, who do not treat you in a professional manner. They have no really interest in your work and workload except for meeting national statistics and checking that you are carrying out the latest implementation, even if it is not suitable in your subject area or you have no time to do this.

ANONYMOUS 82

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.
Secondary School Curriculum Leader / Head of Department for English and Literacy

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
City of Edinburgh Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The young people themselves: I believe it is a privilege to work with pupils and really enjoy assisting them to become their best possible selves. I love teaching my subject of English, and have become more and more interested in teaching skills, metacognition and wellbeing, as I see a large increase in student anxiety.

My departmental colleagues make up a brilliant team, and sharing a shared sense of purpose and value with them is a foundation to my enjoyment of the 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 find it difficult to think about teaching until I am 68, partly because of the huge, never ending workload and increasing bureaucracy around education;
partly because of the frustrations around any sort of career path, and because of the short-termism of so much education policy.

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

Current leadership structures are varied in focus and impact; some schools focus on a Senior Leadership Team, whereas others focus on a Senior Management Team. The credibility and effectiveness of such teams relies on the same structures class teachers and middle management staff are expected to comply with – regular professional development, interaction with research and policy, participating in action enquiry, leading by example. S. M. teams where HTs and DHTs do not teach, or haven’t been in a classroom for years, seriously impacts on their day to day knowledge of what it is like ‘at the chalk-face’. This can lead to disillusionment with Senior management. Promotion structures are shambolic: there are ridiculously few options available to a teacher who may eventually consider a head-teacher post. Firstly, they must qualify through the Probationary route, then find suitable full-time, permanent work if they are to be able to access quality CPD. Next, they must go for one of the far-reduced Principal teacher / Curriculum leader posts which so rarely come up. In my own school, management restructuring went from 20 Principal Teachers of subject (not including Guidance) to 12 Curriculum leaders of Faculties. To be in with any chance of securing a C.L role, the class teacher will have to have done all sorts of initiatives, extra curricular activities and additional management duties for free – previously, of course, they could have secured an Assistant Principal Teacher post, been suitably renumerated for their work and have guidance from their P.T as to how to run a department, which requires not only subject knowledge but leadership and vision too. So, the initial step onto the ladder of promotion is now so much harder than before. Once in a C.L’s role, the next step would be to a D.H.T post. Certainly in my L.A. there is a lack of provision of support or CPD for anyone wanting to make that move. Everything is focussed on becoming a Head teacher (S.Q.H, for instance). I might consider an H.T post in the future but only if I can experience being part of a Senior Leadership Team first, and learning with support and guidance. Again, DHT roles have become more scarce and in an ever-shrinking pond, and with a stranglehold by local authorities on recruitment processes – hugely varied, and unfortunately, far from transparent. Access routes to Senior management routes are too often unclear, limited and do not support professional growth or career progression. We currently negotiate GTCS Professional Standards, S.C.E.L. frameworks, local authority update and PRD, and HGIOS 4 Quality assurance – that is a LOT of bureaucracy for not a lot of impact. Blue-sky thinking – let HTs support staff who want to move into Senior Management by offering rolling job-share posts. One DHT post per school, even, could be offered as a one-year ‘on-the-job’ experience, shared between interested teachers. Many schools now operate an unofficial ‘we will only interview or accept applications from existing DHTs’ policy, so getting that next step into Senior Leadership is even harder: the few jobs there are are then offered out to people who are already in one of those posts! There needs to be more recognition not only of staff ambition for promotion but the way in which
individual HTs', and local authorities', personal choices affect the profession. Some CLs would not want to move into DHT posts when the salary can actually be less than that of a C.L.

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)

Recruitment: poor pay, poor career progression, limited options for teacher training to fit around family or existing work; poor provision of subject specialism training (eg to train as a teacher of Health and Food Technology, you must train in Glasgow or Aberdeen – not an easy options if you are coming into teaching as a second career and have family commitments)

Retention: workload impacting on quality of life. Lack of suitable pay. Limited career options. Frustration at bureaucracy and a feeling that class teachers are not listened to.

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

Certain subjects such as Health and Food technology, R.M.P.S., STEM subjects. Guidance also suffers from a lack of professional development and suitable qualifications. Often, it will be up to individual teachers to pay themselves through Masters’-level Guidance-specific qualifications.

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

Decent pay. Teachers’ salaries have reduced by 12% in real terms since 2007. If we truly want to close the attainment gap, we must invest in the most effective ‘tool’ for doing so – our staff. Suitable remuneration concurrent with a professional post is essential.

Clear, consistent policies and application processes across all local authorities. Reintroducing some aspect of professional recognition status such as chartered teacher. Ensuring clear and well-supported career progression routes.

Reducing the number of bodies involved in education: local authorities, SCEL, GTCS, Education Scotland, HMIE, SQA.

Retention of staff may also be helped by ensuring teachers and academics actually communicate with each other about research and policy, helping teachers to explore their pedagogy and practice and have their experience used in a mutually inclusive, supportive and exciting way. Why not have a central database of every academic working in Education, their areas or interest and expertise, and contact details so teachers can easily find them? Every school should have an academic contact.

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?)

Pupil Support Staff, and classroom assistant numbers and hours cut, impacting directly on pupils’ learning experiences. In Special Education, which really needs excellent teams of teachers, nursery nurses and PSAs, one Council has recently got rid of all Nursery Nurses and is employing PSAs instead, while another council is actively recruiting Nursery Nurses!

Staffing around auxiliary support, office staff, Business Managers also cut, placing more work and pressure on everyone else. Ultimately, all of these cuts, whether to subject teachers, promoted posts, support staff, end up impacting on whoever is left, and that ultimately leads to a poorer experience for our young people.

Cuts to the number of Guidance posts in many schools places unworkable burdens on these teachers. Expecting one Guidance teacher to support P.S.E, U.C.A.S., Apprenticeships / work, pastoral issues, work experience, health and wellbeing etc for 300 pupils is ridiculous.

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. Constant cuts and constant changes to policy and assessment, for instance, are demoralising and we feel these things are done outwith our control. The SQA does not work in effective collaboration with staff and as a secondary teacher, I have never felt more ‘split’ between teaching BGE and Senior Phase. When using HGIOS 4, for example, we can comment positively on many aspects of it for BGE classes but find it harder to do so for Senior phase classes as they are much more exam-driven then previously (in my subject, anyway)

**Additional comments**

I have taught for nearly 20 years, in a variety of schools. I still enjoy my job but am increasingly frustrated at the short-termism of local authority policy. I would welcome a discussion about whether education should remain in the hands of local authorities or be run by one national body to steer it.

**ANONYMOUS 83**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary Teacher of Physics

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Aberdeen City Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with young people.
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 am taking early retirement aged 55. This is mainly due to the fiasco of the SQA and the inordinate workload they have created. I no longer have any faith in the Scottish exam system as it has had a detrimental effect on both pupils and teachers. CfE is a complete disaster which has led to an erosion of standards in schools.

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

Since the introduction of faculties (a purely cost saving measure with no educational rationale to support it) the opportunity for promotion has severely diminished. This has led to staff leaving the profession as there is very little career progression available now.

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)

- erosion of pay
- workload generated by SQA, Scottish Government initiatives
- pupil behaviour
- increasing retirement age – would you want to teach 30+ teenagers at the age of 68?

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

Sciences
Maths
Modern languages
Home Economics

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

- Bring pay back in line with other professionals
- Reduce workload
- Increase non-class contact time
- Make more offsite and onsite provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs
- Reduce retirement age

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?
  Courses and subjects have been removed from the curriculum.
  Increase in class size.
  Subjects being “taught” by non-specialists.

- How well are they working?
  They are not working and are leading to disaffection in pupils and staff, and poorer outcomes in the senior phase.

- 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- but how long is a piece of string? Temporary has been going on some at least 4 years mainly due to lack of suitable staff being available.

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 fluctuates- we have become good at coping with the challenges and have learned to make do and mend, but this is severely impacting on the health and well-being of staff. This takes its toll, hence staff recruitment and retention difficulties.

**ANONYMOUS 84**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Renfrewshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Helping pupils achieve their potential
Sharing my passion for learning about my subject and its important today
Residential trips and outdoor learning experiences
Extra-curricular activities
Holiday

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)
In the last four years I have seriously considered alternative employment. Namely self-employment to give me a better work-life balance during term time when I struggle to make time for my family or my self.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
I have applied for a number of promoted positions as PT Curriculum. Unfortunately there are not a large number of vacancies that are not Faculty jobs - only one authority to my knowledge in the central belt continues to operate this system.

I regularly take on additional responsibilities that mean I am in a good position to meet the desirable and essential qualities for promoted posts. I am not paid for these and along with many of my colleagues these are assumed of anyone considering promotion in the future. i.e. you will not get looked at for promotion unless you are carrying out unpaid additional responsibilities over a consistent time period.

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 – particularly in some subject areas where the combination of small departments (nobody to share development work with), literacy based marking, assignments which require a high degree of teacher guidance for each pupil, and vague documentation from awarding bodies which result in confusion and at times overteaching.

Through my career I have not accessed much support from Education Scotland which I find surprising as they could be sharing best resources across the country. Like most teachers I know I am always happy to share materials and I am surprised more excellent resources are not shared. The current website has limited, outdated and hard to access materials under their resource sections.

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

In my experience it appears that maths, science and business are facing the greatest recruitment challenges.

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

A pay rise. I have not had one in my careers (pensions increase wiped out the last 1% increase). As a result relative pay has deteriorated relative to rising living costs.

A review of workload. A generation of teachers have now been overworked in my opinion (voluntarily) with the lure of promotion. Whilst I have not yet got there many of my colleagues have. These promoted positions show no let up though and during term time morale in secondary schools can be incredibly low. Senior Management rightly prioritise pupil experience but in my opinion leaders in both the local authority and in schools should be more aware and vocal on the issue of teacher workload – e.g. marking of unit assessments and non-examination of National 4 courses are now widely regarded as failures in the senior phase of CfE. Rather than redress immediately we are faced with a phased change that simply muddies the waters and asks even
more questions. This uncertainty results in over-assessment, teaching and dilution of positive experiences within the curriculum such as trips and outdoor learning – key tenets of the revised curriculum.

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 comments above.

Additional comments
The only real solution is to free up time and share resources – some workable ideas include:

a. Create more non-contact time within the teaching timetable for teachers to create resources to support the new curriculum and complete the massive increase in marking associated with it
b. Facilitate greater working between departments across schools – there is so much duplication which is crazy. Each school is trying to resource and interpret guidance in isolation resulting in a huge range of pupil experience. While local autonomy to choose topics is welcome the indecipherability and over-proliferation of guidance from Education Scotland and the SQA has made the job harder and less enjoyable. Current systems are not fit for purpose and many teachers have resorted to facebook groups to share materials and ask professional questions
c. Please think about the pupils – they are doing numerous assessments, assignments, folio pieces and exams throughout the year. As a result many have stopped attending sports club, music groups, going on trips, taking on part time work etc. As a profession our anxieties are projected on to pupils and we are encouraging them to spend more of their free time in school at after school study groups. As well as giving freely of our own time we are taking from pupil’s free time diluting their own abilities to develop independently

ANONYMOUS 85
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary teacher currently based in a Language and Communication Resource.
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Glasgow City Council
Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Working with all sorts of children and young people, having a positive impact on their lives.
Working with a fantastic team of people (teaching and non teaching staff) who share common goals when working with young people.
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?

I have no desire to become a head teacher, but pastoral care interests me. I have done CPD (In school, provided by current pastoral care teachers) where I have had an enhanced tutor role with a small number of pupils. Pastoral care appeals to me as I feel supporting pupils health and wellbeing is the number one priority of any teacher. I think mental health is becoming a real issue in our schools. Budget cuts have led to diminished resources and main stream secondary teachers are not equipped to handle pupils with more complex social, emotional and behavioural needs. A good pastoral care team is essential to support these teachers.

What puts me off going for promotion currently is the workload and ‘red tape’ you have to wade through to be able to get anything done. The budget cuts and limited resources have all but made CAMHS useless and many kids don’t get the help they desperately need.

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 jobs!! Universities taking in students for certain subjects even though there’s no posts for them to go to (meaning their guaranteed years probation takes a potential post away from someone already qualified. The guaranteed year is not a problem, but we need to make sure that there are not too many students for a particular subject in that year!)

The LNCT agreement states that after 2 years of continual service you earn permanent employment rights with in GCC and can attend the staffing meeting which usually takes place at the beginning of March. However your probationary year does not count and you have to have had 2 years continual service by the time the staffing meeting takes place in March. This means of you started in August (which seems logical since that’s the start if the school year) you essentially have to work for the council for 3 years before you earn your employment rights. Also you find supply teachers often have their service broken around May when the exams are due to start (schools justify this by saying pupils will be on exams leave so the supply teacher is no longer needed). This means they take longer to accrue service and do not get paid over the summer, which is an appalling way to treat an employee.

Budget cuts and limited resources are putting a strain on all staff, as is workload.

I think more part time options (0.8 fte for example) would appeal to staff and help retain many. It helps solve child care issues etc.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Additional support needs, SEBN - kids are being placed in schools not suitable to their needs and it is doing them a disservice. It’s almost as if there’s the thought that so long as they have a place somewhere they are sorted but that is not the case. I’m supposed to work with high functioning ASD pupils, helping them across mainstream but what we are finding is that the kids coming to us now would be better placed in a MLD school and cannot access secondary mainstream at all – they may be in the mainstream class but they are just filling a seat and are unlikely to achieve anything past a national 1 or 2 (which a LOT of support)

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

Address how supply teachers are treated

Make an investment in mental health in schools (CPD for teachers, resources etc)

More part time 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)?

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?)

I’m not sure, but I know they are looking to restructure the LCR provision in Glasgow.

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 we are all frustrated with our workload and lack of resources. More SEBN kids in mainstream means behaviour is becoming a big issue which will only get worse as time goes on.

ANONYMOUS 86

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .

Head of department (design and technology) , secondary. I moved to the independent sector after head of department posts disappeared (in the state sector) and faculties were created.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Independent sector

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

- Generally enjoy the profession
- 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)

- Considering leaving early (constant change without improvement and lack of consultation saps your morale).
- Funding for design and technology subjects is very poor and getting worse.

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

Too much paperwork, I do not feel comfortable implementing systems that have little evidence base and may detract from the fundamentals of teaching. Since the faculty system was introduced the promotion possibilities have been reduced significantly.

**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 standing / recognition of the teaching profession in UK, low emphasis on education full stop.
- Lack of investment in implementing curriculum for excellence. Many subjects still do not have textbooks / subject notes that cover the new courses.
- Very poor conditions of employment for supply teachers. These changes were implemented relatively recently and have created a shortage of staff in key areas. Semi retired (often very experienced teachers) do not want to work in supply positions when they get paid at the lowest point on the pay scale.

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

Design and technology – lots of specialist knowledge and skills lost with introduction of the faculty system.

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

- Greater investment in the teaching profession.
- Chose a qualification system, invest in setting it up properly and with suitable 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?

Quite poor! Constant change, no stability, massive workload, unfilled posts, discipline issues are the biggest issues. More recently, teachers have asked for many of the very onerous unit assessments to be removed from courses and the result is measures which may actually make matters worse – because teachers were not consulted.

**Additional comments**
Curriculum for excellence has been very poorly implemented. It requires individual teachers to write complete sets of notes for courses, which is a huge task and we simply do not have time to do this. Compare this to "Higher Still" which had course notes and sample work produced. The SQA ended up running lots of implementation days when it should have paid suitably experienced teachers to write courses and produce exemplar work.

Whatever you do in future, please consult teachers first, create the courses in advance, let teachers see them well in advance and modify after a period of feedback (before pupils have to sit them). Qualification systems cannot be forced to work (within a limited timeframe) especially when teachers had no stewardship of the qualification structure.

ANONYMOUS 87

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? 
Secondary – Computing Science

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
West Dunbartonshire Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
Passing on my knowledge and skills to the young people that 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)
I had originally planned to work until I reach 66 (or older) when I would be eligible for the old age pension. However, in recent years my workload has become unmanageable and this has affected the enjoyment of my job. The amount of work we are expected to do cannot happen in 35 hours a week, or even in 60 hours a week. I am now considering taking early retirement in the not so distant future and using my skills as a programmer to work part-time to top up my income.

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion?
Been there, done that in a previous career. Don’t wish to go there again.

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 workload and the fact that the pay has not increased much over the last few years.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Computing Science. There aren’t enough skills available for the Tech industries so why would graduates want to teach when they are guaranteed a healthier salary and better working conditions in the Tech industry.
Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

*Increase the salary and look at a more realistic workload for 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)?

If so:

- What are these measures? *Reduction in the number of depute head teachers*
- How well are they working? *They aren’t. Bigger workload for the rest of us and an increase in discipline issues.*
- 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?) *Permanent, as far as I know.*

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 am not aware of any in our school but I know they are struggling to recruit temporary staff to cover long term absences.*

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?

*At the moment I believe that staff morale is at an all-time low*

ANONYMOUS 88

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .

Secondary school teacher of Geography and social subjects. I also run the S6 PSE programme, the Head Boy/head Girl team and the prefects. I have been running World Challenge Expeditions in the school since 2000.

I am de facto lead geography teacher as the Faculty Head is a Modern Studies teacher.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Aberdeenshire

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

Working with young people. It’s lots of fun, and it’s amazing to watch them move through the school and emerge as young adults. The day to day interaction is priceless. I love the variety. School can be many negative things, but it is NEVER boring!!

My colleagues. I work in a great school with some fantastic people. I feel valued by the SLT and I couldn’t hand pick nicer colleagues in the faculty. We work well together. We are close and supportive of each other. We have fun.
He opportunities I have had. Through World Challenge expeditions, I have visited some incredible places. Have also given children life affirming and life changing experiences e.g have taken pupils to climb Mt Kilimanjaro.

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)

When I started teaching, I thought I would be in it till the end. Since the introduction of ACFE, I have seriously started to think of alternatives as I don’t think I can maintain the pace and work with this much stress for another 10–20 years. I work 50 hrs a week, am on my feet all day, I never finish a task, the assessment is pointless and unrelenting. The cfe levels, TMR etc are contrived and meaningless.

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

Nothing. Not interested. The pleasure in the job is in the classroom. Next step up for me would be Fac head, and I don’t see the point of that role. Subject heads are far more effective.

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)

Aberdeenshire is an expensive place to live, and I don’t think there is much to attract young people as the Central Belt is much more exciting!

The job is very stressful, and I see a huge change in young people. I find, year upon year, pupils who are less literate and numerate, with shorter attention spans and poorer behaviour (on the whole – not every child obviously!) I feel like I have to entertain my pupils, and work ethic and children taking responsibility for their own learning is poorer.

Parents are also more demanding, and less inclined to support the school.

The ACFE assessment is time consuming and stressful. In Standard Grade, there was a suitable pathway for everyone, but with N5 etc it isn’t so clear. I have pupils sitting the N5 exam this year who would have been sitting F/G in the old system. They are going to fail the exam, but they, and their parents, are insisting that they sit because no one values the N4. I will then have to justify my poor results in the INSIGHT meeting in the autumn.

The outcomes are stressful and a waste of time. The pupils learn nothing from them as they are open ended and open book. The assessment and reassessment goes on and on……

There isn’t enough time in a year to deliver the content, yet content has been cut, and in my opinion, the course content is poor. Higher, in particular, has been trimmed to the bone, and leaves pupils badly prepared for Advanced Higher.

The pressure to get kids through the outcomes is immense, but they don’t feel the same urgency as the staff. Last year, my exam leave catch up time was
filled with pupils finishing outcomes. A HUGE waste of everyone’s time. It is very stressful, and to what end/

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

Don’t know. I do know that I have been regularly teaching two periods of art and a period of English this year because we are short of teachers in some departments. I believe that at one point this year, we were 8 FTE down, and I work in a good school!

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

I believe the problems are stress related, and the stress ties in to ACFE. Get rid of ACFE! Trim the primary curriculum so that when pupils come to secondary school they can read, write, count and behave.

Get rid of the open-ended outcomes completely, and reintroduce pass/fail assessment. This will ensure that pupils are presented for exams at the right level and reduce stress levels all round. Reintroduce an exam for lower ability pupils. Get rid of the assignment as it is open to abuse, from input of tutors to schools bending the rules. We play by the book, but I know of colleagues who do not. That’s very unfair. I will not cheat in order to improve my results, but I know that some teachers do.

Pay us all more money, not just sweeteners for people to relocate. I resent that very much. We all have to pay the same bills.

Support teachers over pupils and 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?)

We have composite classes, N4/5/H. The course content is different even if you choose to teach the same topics, and it’s stressful. Through circumstances beyond our control, we are often left feeling like we are failing the kids, which is absolutely not our fault.

We are only timetabled to teach 3/5 Advanced Higher periods

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)
Don’t know, but clearly my art classes are suffering by not having a subject specialist in front of them! You should see my drawing skills!! At least I am providing consistency.

Some pupils must be lacking a subject specialist in several subjects. If they are seeing different faces/supply teachers/random pleasetakes every week, this must have a HUGE impact on attitude, behaviour and so on, and I believe the whole school suffers as a result.

There have been periods of time when we have had to cancel PSG meetings / attendance at pupil voice forums because there isn’t enough cover.

I wasn’t allowed to go to a funeral due to a lack of 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?

I would say low. People are tired and stressed, but we just get on with it. See above comments re acfe

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I think standards and quality assurance are important, but as a professional, I build it into what I do. I resent the amount of time spent on pointless and repetitive discussion of the above. I feel the amount of QA/assessment/TMR that I am expected to do stops me being able to improve lessons and resources.

ANONYMOUS 89

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have? .
Secondary History Teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Dumfries and Galloway

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The experience of seeing how you impact on a young persons confidence/seeing their skills progress over a period of time/encouraging a love of a subject/welcoming their exam achievements

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 no longer see myself teaching until I retire – this has only been an opinion change in the last year where it has been made clear by the local authority and the budget cuts they are making that it is unlikely that I will ever be able to work full time again in the present secondary school where I work. I have been part time for the last 4 years following maternity leave. As a result of needing a full time wage and the difficulty of getting a full time perm post in the authority I am instead looking to leave the profession all together just to
get a job to support my own family. I have worked for the authority for 13 years now.

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

Nothing at the moment. Morale in school in so low regarding the constant changes to the curriculum and the situation of cluster schools regarding the little benefits they bring aside from cost saving for the local authority.

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 local authority simply being unwilling to take on staff. Staff want to be employed on a perm basis not a temp basis. The local authority is making so many cuts to staffing under the guise of ‘effective use’ which does not work in schools – Schools are not a business and should not be managed like they are.

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

Treating teachers decently by hiring more staff and allowing teachers time in school to work. Creating a positive work place atmosphere where senior management see teachers are people who know the pupils best and treat staff with respect. This will encourage staff to want to stay especially in a rural school like the one I work in. Rather than senior managers who focus only on money. Younger staff do not want to stay when they are treated as a number rather than a professional.

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?)

Numerous changes - cluster head – not a visible head in the school - sense of no strong leader/doesn’t know pupils

Less learning assistant support time – more having to go to the primary (secondary pupils losing out significantly)

Too many point one posts being given out in a small school – teachers views not represented at management level – point one teachers acting only out of self interest by creating increased workload for unpromoted staff to secure a
contract rather than doing what is best for pupils learning but looks good on their CV.

Faculty heads not being replaced when they retired and more staff divided up among remaining faculty heads – Individual subject teachers are then ignored by their faculty head as they don’t have the time – for example I have had no meetings with my faculty head all year and in spite of his promoted wage/post does nothing for my subject/me.

Bi level teaching – does not work for pupils at any level if mixing Nat 4-Higher in one class – the courses are too different and the skills too distinct in light of pupils ability – added stress on teachers who already have little time.

3 deputes in the last three years – one staff member was given the depute post decided she did not like it after a few months so was given a faulty head post instead.

These changes have been in place for the last 4 years and appear to be ongoing. So many staffing changes/promotion changes have had a negative effect on pupils consistently and achievement.

**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)
- Maths and English need another teacher to allow ability levels to be properly catered for at all levels from S1-S6

**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 morale – key factors are the sheer increase in the number of point one posts/ the confusion over clear lines of management and roles – for example we have 2 deputes and 2 teachers doing point one depute duties for a school with less than 200 pupils. What are the deputes actually doing?With the lack of communication of responsibility I have seen specific instances where pupils are being lost through the cracks and mistakes are being made.

In addition the 6 point one posts don’t appear to do much to impact directly on pupils but they are given protected time to do so when what the school actually needs are paid teachers actually teaching rather than point one roles doing very little and perhaps the deputes doing more of what they traditionally did.

What tends to happen is promotion is only available to those who have space on their timetable and not those who have the skills best for that job – in one week we had 3 promoted posts for internal applicants and one member of staff who went for all 3 until they found a way to give them a 5 day contract rather than who might have been best for the job.

Faculty Heads – the lack of interest in individuual subjects and individual subject teachers actually acting as a PT of their own subject but without the wage. This is especially a problem in smaller secondary schools for example where a faculty head does not teach that subject e.g. HE teacher head of Maths.
Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?.
Secondary school Curriculum Leader of Mathematics

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Edinburgh City Council

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
The pupils, I enjoy seeing them succeed and achieve their dreams and sometimes even beyond what they expect.

I love teaching in the classroom.

I enjoy the positive relationships I have taken time to build up with pupils and having them put their trust in me that I will do whatever I can to help them succeed. Also we have a lot of pupils from difficult home circumstances and to be able to help them and be there for them when they need to discuss things that are going on, to help them seek appropriate advice and help when they don't have another trusted adult to lean on.

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 want to teach until I retire, however there are times when it takes up so much time out of school hours and eats into my home life that I do consider whether I can continue to work like this if things do not improve. I am pleased to see that people are listening now, however the actions that are taken will have a big influence on whether this is a sustainable career or whether I 'burn out' like some of my colleagues have.

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 DHT for a year last session and don't think it is right for me. I love teaching and in these senior positions far too much of your time is taken up with other issues (dealing with parents, community issues, police, social work, external agencies, ICT etc) and many paperwork tasks rather than having a direct effect on the people that matter the most – the pupils. I may change my mind in the future, however it is certainly not something that I would consider going for permanently at the moment.

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 student teachers recruited, eg 20 Secondary Maths expected next session at Moray House, that is not even close to enough to cover the roles required in the local authority areas (positions that have not been filled this session!)

Difficult to attract people to become Maths teachers due to the continued negative press associated with the job and the subject area. Also they can earn a lot more money with a lot less pressure in other careers (many of my
friends took a different path due to this and some have left the school I work at to go to other careers which they say are a lot less stressful as they do not have the workload or pressure of ‘acting on your feet’ in front of classes for the majority of the day).

Teachers are not rewarded in any way, other than what they take out of the job, for doing well. SMT could do more to support and encourage staff, politicians talking about ‘the state of the education system’ etc does not help. The constant changes mean we have not had a year since the introduction of CfE when there have not been massive changes to deal with. Instead of just encouraging and helping teachers to teach in different ways we constantly make changes to the assessment of senior courses which leads to a lot of rewriting in every school. Changes are released at ridiculous times (eg September, we start the courses in June! You released this survey at the start of the Easter holidays wanting responses by the 20th, I am writing this while abroad on holiday as it is so important to me, however others will not see this until they return on 18th. If you truly wanted to hear the views then choose a time when we are working and don’t post it up on your website/facebook, this could have gone out via schools and our unions). The way unit assessments are marked means that when you have a class of 30 and several have resits to do, everyone is doing something different in the class and if you did no ‘traditional teaching’ during the lesson that only gives you less than 2 mins per pupil per lesson to give them the help and support they require, it is ridiculous.

Teaching is no longer a respected profession. The behaviour of pupils is getting more difficult to manage due to ‘inclusion’ which is not supported correctly. We had an excellent SRP in our school, however we are getting more and more pupils, who previously would have been in a more specialised, smaller class environment, who are now with us and really struggling. It is very difficult to see and deal with them while at the same time maintaining standards for the rest of the class and to ensure they get all the teaching time they require when there are so many behavioural issues not properly dealt with (some from pupils that would have been elsewhere and some from pupils whose poor behaviour is not dealt with). Schools are being railroaded into having fewer exclusions, but there is nothing in place to replace this. How can we go to fewer exclusions without the back up (funding!) to ensure there is a different resource available for these pupils who need the extra support.

Pupil Support Assistants – we are so lucky with our PSAs who do a fantastic, difficult job every day for a very poor wage. We find it difficult to retain them due to the more and more difficult pupils they need to work with. The numbers are stretched, more workload on each PSA, they leave the job and pupils suffer as they are not able to build up effective relationships with them, it reinforces to many of our pupils that you can’t trust adults and many will leave you eventually, this is not acceptable.

We have several staff off with stress at present along with some vacancies in both teaching and support roles, this means more and more staff are feeling the strain of planning and covering other lessons, SMT are covering more classes too resulting the support not being there around the school.
Q8  Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

You should know the answer to this, not us. But from experience in my school and in my role as CL Maths, I know there are struggles with Maths and PSAs.

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

More positivity around the profession, promoted more effectively. Reduce workload as this is what people hear about all the time. Deal with pupil needs more effectively, instead of shutting ‘alternative provisions’ we should be increasing these as they do a fantastic job of allowing pupils to flourish with more individualised attention and help instead of in a class of 30 odd in every lesson. Cut class numbers so that teachers can effectively help each child (that is what parents want and you might get more people training if they could have this).

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)?

Bi-level classes – detrimental effect on attainment. Maths is a content based subject and in order to teach Nat 4 and Nat 5 in the same class you need to teach two separate lessons, meaning pupils do not get the support you would usually be able to offer. It is double the planning for teachers. Parents hate it and it is the thing I field most calls about, parents complaining about it. Permanent measure due to reduction in staffing.

Less PSAs available to help support pupils – massive negative impact on pupils and makes life much more difficult for teaching staff. There were changes in what our support assistants were expected to do, including what I would see as more medical/nurse type duties. Permanent measure, although at present we are even shorter than usual due to 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)

Don’t know.

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.

Unacceptable workload, meaning no real work/life balance during term time.

Not enough praise, recognition from SMT.

Inclusion – not enough support to ensure this is working well, again putting more onto teachers.

Negative behaviour from pupils/lack of respect not adequately dealt with.
Constant changes to CfE assessments and content mean staff are constantly rewriting assessments, marking schemes, prelims, courses.

Lack of staff – more and more cover required due to staff off with stress or vacancies, teaching staff can only do their 22.5 hours, however this does leave less time for preparation and those further up the chain are being taken more and more which leaves them less time to support staff.

**Additional comments**

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I am glad we finally have people that seem willing to listen to the profession, however recent suggested changes have not been thought through properly and I would prefer that instead of making snap changes that you wait and make proper, well thought out, lasting changes that will have a positive impact. For example, stating unit assessments will be scrapped, however there will be no positive recognition (or fallback) meaning nothing has really changed and we are actually punishing those who are weaker is not acceptable.

I sincerely hope this is a move in the right direction where positive changes will be introduced as when I started this job, I could not imagine anything being more satisfying and I absolutely loved it. While I do still love the teaching and pupil side of my job, that is becoming more and more difficult with all the other ‘stuff’ needing done.

**ANONYMOUS 91**

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?
Secondary chemistry teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? West Lothian

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?
I still enjoy seeing your people develop and feel I am making a little difference to future society.

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 seriously considered leaving several times in the last five years or so but due to my age it would not be wise to do so so I will be 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?
SMT seem to spend a lot of their time on initiatives which I see having little impact on the learning of the students in my classroom. I would like to see more time spent on things that really make a difference and give SMT time to implement these changes so that a difference can be seen as changes in education take a long time to embed.

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
There is not step by step promotion structure. Too many staff are having to volunteer for responsibilities to add to their CV's instead of being formally recognised by giving them time or financial reward. There is no incentive to stay in the classroom and continue to learn to be an excellent class teacher due to the lack of increase in financial recognition after the first few years.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
We have seriously been struggling to recruit physics teachers and homes economics staff

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
Reward good classroom teachers. Extend the scale so that more folk with expertise are recognised if they do not want to seek promotion. Put more pot other posts back in place eg dept heads as well as faculty heads.

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?
Staff now have to volunteer for example to take on student support responsibilities. They are given no financial reward and no extra time for these duties, yet they have responsibility for significant numbers of students and are also hear y'll involved in parental engagement tasks. We also have fewe pupil support staff but increased role and higher focus on needs and interventions than before.
• How well are they working? I see those staff who are volunteering losing morale and their sense of value.
• 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 changes are permanent.

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). Yes, our students are more limited in their choices due to staffing in particular in home economics.

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, due to massive workload to address constant changes/edits in sqa documentation and ES benchmarks etc. Frustration that behaviour us not being managed effectively above calls teacher level so class teachers are dealing with the same behaviours for the same kids with no improvement. Folk are fed up that they are being asked to be involved in consultation exercises with little time allowed for them to effectively respond, then results of consultation being taken forward when it is clear that that the responses to these exercises are extremely low in number yet have been treated as valid to represent the views of staff in Scottish education.
ANONYMOUS 92

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

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? East Renfrewshire

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession? Working with the pupils. Holidays. Convenience as a parent. Love of the 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) Yes

Q6 What would encourage you to seek promotion to senior management, including to headteacher level? What would discourage you from seeking promotion? Having been in middle/senior management for many of my teaching years and showing a desire to get back into it, I would say that the under-lying criteria during the interview process, financial limitations and in-house favouritism is the only hinderance.

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) So many choose to leave for promotion or go part time for child care reasons. There are few recruitment issues.

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? Change in recruitment procedures.

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) Mental health support e.g. counselling being brought back in would be beneficial.
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. Work load, ineffective leadership, cliques/favouritism and lack of pay rise seem to be the main issues discussed.

ANONYMOUS 93

Q1 What type of teaching role do you have?  
Secondary Maths teacher

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?  
Aberdeen City

Q4 What are the positives that keep you in the teaching profession?  
Actually enjoy teaching, when not exhausted or too stressed. Sometimes have a nice moment or even day and can find the job rewarding occasionally.

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 I can teach into my sixties. I have been teaching full time without a break of service since I was 23, now 52. Increasingly finding work mentally and physically tiring. I will work full time as long as I can then go part time.

I have told many colleagues I will find alternative employment, somewhere like Tesco, at some point. Main reason I am still full time now is financial. I would like to go part time very soon.

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 felt encouraged. I am a successful classroom teacher and feel frequently taken for granted. I am always at work, I have few discipline issues for others to deal with, I get on well with parents and pupils and I get good results. I rarely get positive feedback or support in school. Have never felt encouraged to do anything else.

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)
Class sizes. Teaching 30’s across the board much harder than 20. Parental expectations VERY unrealistic. Nat 5 course unsuitable for many pupils in the classes. Never on top of the work. Discipline, lack of, and lack of respect for teachers in school and out of school. Salary poor given our qualifications, workload, stress level and actually our importance to society.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Subjects where people can get easier, better paid jobs elsewhere e.g. maths, computing, ICT

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

Reduce class sizes. Increase pay. Allow teachers to tell parents their children are unsuitable for their courses i.e. not able. Then support those teachers when parents disagree. Give schools more powers to remove unruly pupils. Find alternatives for S5 pupils. Make children who do not speak English go to intensive English classes for a year before coming to mainstream school. Provide alternatives for the very poor academic 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)?

Shortage of support staff. Classes increased at bottom end academically. Senior management team all well qualified!

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)

Non academic courses unavailable like hairdressing, car mechanics, photography. No vocational courses.

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. As already mentioned class sizes, lack of support, parental expectations, workload etc

Additional comments

I think the Scottish Govt. know all this but are reluctant to accept, face and deal with issues.

Very little time at an extremely very busy time for staff to fill this in and return.

ANONYMOUS 94

Q1  What type of teaching role do you have? .

Secondary School Teaching (Biology & Science)

Q2  Whereabouts do you work?

South Lanarkshire Council

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

Now, I would say the only positive thing in teaching is seeing some of the children succeed, however at present there are very few positives in 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 cannot see me teaching until I retire. I am currently trying to pay off my mortgage early, at which time I will seek to leave the teaching profession. Teaching has now become almost impossible due to low level disruption in schools. The number of pupils attending secondary school unable to read or with poor numeracy skill is a disgrace. Also, many children who are at school to be socially included, are educationally isolated due to shortages of qualified support staff. I as a teacher have never been trained to work with children who have special educational needs such as autism, yet I am expected to differentiate work for them. A two hour CPD course does not prepare anyone for this role.

Continuous changes to the curriculum and the introduction of CfE has been shambolic. It is difficult to prepare course work when the SQA and Education Scotland are continually moving the goalposts. The extra workload and bureaucracy has made the job impossible. Increased levels of violence against staff from children who have behaviour problems including confrontation due to the pupils’ inability to engage at an appropriate level, this includes pupils with anger management who will swear and lash out at staff with no repercussion.

The list goes on…….

I would say modern teaching would drive most people to an early grave.

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

Nothing on Earth would encourage me to move into 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)

Dealing with issues listed above. When I went to school everyone could read and write. School now require teaching classes at three levels. Some pupils working at National 5, some at National 4 and some at National 3. There is even the possibility of having pupils at level two in your class. Regarding assessment this increases teacher workload and stress level trying to keep everyone on track and keep a record of assessments for every child. Added to this, children cannot leave school unless they have a place for employment or further education. This leads to many pupils from sixteen – eighteen years of age remaining in school with no interest in their education. These pupils are young adults who must be chased all over the school to complete assessments, which quite frankly they don’t want to do.

Q8  Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
I would say the sciences and maths are finding retention difficult again due to issues raised. It is very difficult to teach a science to someone who cannot read or count. Yet according to the Scottish government we are having the highest pass rates for exams in History. This of course could be to do with the fact that much of the content has been removed from the courses and the exams are easier. As a teacher, I get to see what the parents don’t.

There is a massive lack of funding for basics like photocopying or printing not to mention many experiments cannot be carried out as materials cannot be afforded. In my school, we have one set of Higher Biology text books between three higher classes. We have no past papers or exemplars for pupils to get exam practise from.

We now must record our CPD on the new GTC website showing we are regularly working to improve ourselves as teachers, with the threat of being struck off if we fall behind with this. As if we don’t have enough pressures to deal with. Where does the time for this come? I’m already working from 7.30 am – 5.30 most days and up to 10.30pm on some occasions with marking and homework, not to mention extracurricular voluntary work. There never seems to be any time now when I am not working. Pay has not increased significantly in the last five – seven years. A train driver earns more than a teacher.

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

Reduced class contact time, allowing teachers time to carry out preparation and marking. Employ specialised teachers to work with children who have assisted support needs. A focus in primary schools on the basics of reading writing and arithmetic; leave the sciences, languages and other subjects to the specialist in the high schools. Our job will be so much easier if the children can do the basics which will allow them to access the high school curriculum.

Improved pay for teachers, god knows we deserve it. Teaching is not a normal job, it’s a vocation. It is about our young people’s future. If the Scottish government continue to run our education system into the ground then I see a dire future for Scotland as we will have the least educated population in the western world.

Put alternatives to education in place for some of our less academic pupils. As much as I would love to see every child well educated, for some children the bar is set to high. We are not giving these children any benefit by putting them into a mainstream education system in which they cannot access the curriculum. I have heard all the arguments from educationalist about social inclusion. In the real world, it isn’t working.

Reduced assessment for pupils. CfE is a monster that has grown arms and legs. It was rushed through with no proper preparation. Made up by people flying by the seat of their pants. When we are still introducing changes to course three and four years into the system, something has gone badly wrong.
Don’t get me wrong the idea behind CfE was good, implementation was a disaster and papering over the cracks won’t solve the problems. I for one am sick of it.

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?

Three local high schools teach an Advanced higher science each, with pupils from three schools attending one school for AH physics, a different school does AH biology and the third school does AH chemistry. All science staff in my school are on minimum time. We have 7 science labs for 12 teachers. This means when you are not teaching you cannot access your lab as someone else is using it. On some occasions science must be taught in a classroom.

Most children with support needs have a classroom assistant one lesson in three.

• How well are they working?
They don’t.

• 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?)
Any teachers who are not on minimum time are used to cover staff absence. This would mean a science class would be left with book work to get on with while an R.E. or other subject teacher takes the register and monitors the class.

Q11 Are there any subject choices or other opportunities that are not available to pupils because of staff shortages that you consider would be valuable? (please specify)
Although we struggle I believe our staff go above and beyond to ensure our pupils have the best possible choice, however many children do not get to do a chosen subject due to not enough teachers in that subject. This puts children into subject they did not want increasing low level disruption.

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 this is not easy to answer. As you will no doubt have ascertained from my responses my morale couldn’t get any lower. As we no longer have a staff room we only see colleagues in passing so I could not speak for other departments. However I could say with all honesty that most colleagues I speak to feel undervalued and overworked. If Donald Trump
starts a war just blame the teachers, we get the blame for everything else in society. It will be interesting when the named person act comes into being.

**Additional comments**

The tone of this response is low, because there are very few if any positives in teaching. If it wasn’t for the holidays I believe I would be certified. I get up in the morning and do not look forward to my day. Over the term of the SNP government my job has gone from being the most enjoyable job in the world to a chore to be gotten through. If I publically criticise my job or my council I will be sacked. So much for a democracy and freedom of speech. If I was to advise any young person today I would say avoid teaching at all cost. It is the hardest job in the world, with little or no appreciation from society, in fact we are the whipping boys for failures at government level, the SQA and education Scotland. We have poor rates of pay and ridiculous work loads.

**GENERAL COMMENTS NAMED SUBMISSIONS**

**BEN NELSON**

- What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

  Poor remuneration.

  The imposition of regimes and initiatives, the obvious example being CfE, which fly in the face of what those delivering curriculum on a daily basis know to be practical or realistic.

  This was also the case in the recent changes to NQs.

  The outrageous disconnect between expectations and resources or support e.g. One plus two, where language teachers are supposed to deliver two languages instead of one to the same level but with no extra time or staff.

  - Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

    Better pay abroad.

    The stress of the job.

    The lack of follow through on behaviour issues or support from parents and senior management.

    - How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?

    The use of non-subject specialists in secondary for long term cover can really hinder pupil progress and put undue pressure on department colleagues.

    - What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?
The stress of the job, the lack of support or resources, the imposition of working practices or curriculum from those who don't teach on a daily basis.

What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

The workload, the impact on family life (lack of time or energy for family).

**JOANNA PHELAN**

I'm a secondary teacher with Aberdeenshire council. I became a teacher just 2 years ago, and did this in my 40s after having previously worked in administrative roles and in the hotel industry. Deciding to enter the teaching profession was a difficult decision because I had to give up working for a year. I am married with 3 children so we had a difficult year financially while I did my PGDE - having to rely on savings and any overtime that my husband could get. The whole PGDE process seems to assume you are a young student with parents who can support you, and no ties. Teaching placements are allocated at very short notice and you are expected to pay for travel (only a small part can be reclaimed). At the end of the year, the allocation of probationary year posts is similarly last minute, and shrouded in secrecy - making it a worrying time if you have family ties. All of this makes it difficult for people who want to retrain as a teacher.

I now really enjoy my role as a teacher. And once you are "in" the job is financially very secure. I have no plans to leave the profession and hope to stay until I retire.

With regards people leaving the profession I can see a few issues that lead to frustration amongst teachers. Hard work is not always recognised because:
- incompetent teachers are kept on regardless - unlike most jobs there is no trial period, and teachers can only be fired for the most serious offences,
- promotion within the profession is based entirely on the basis of an interview - previous hard work and achievements are not taken into account.
- the council seem to have the power to shoehorn people into senior management positions - seemingly over the heads of people who may have been doing a good job in an "acting" role.

I have already seen how these factors make good teachers so frustrated that they leave the profession.

Overall, the recruitment, retention and promotion of teachers seems to be really old-fashioned and could do with a shake up.

I'm happy for my name to be used, but don't want to speak before parliament as this would mean me having to take time away from the classroom.
SUSAN RHIND

I genuinely believe that teachers have an incredibly tough workload. Many people who are entering teaching have no concept of the difficulty of the job and some feel overwhelmed during training or probation. Some teachers get to a stage in their lives when they know that the need to get a good work / life balance is a necessity and realise that it is incredibly hard to achieve.

I left teaching to spend a year in industry, 5 years ago. In this year, I did more training and received more promotions than I had done in my previous 20+ years of teaching. All training was done during my working hours, was paid for by my company and had an immediate impact on my day to day work. Promotions were accompanied by increase in salary and I felt valued. Much training that I have done as a teacher has been something which I would like to take further but due to our constant workload, never get to use it as I would like.

My year out also made me realise that many other people can leave their work each day and not think about it until the get back to it the next day. Teachers are often planning including thinking of techniques to address pupil needs etc. Many of us have very minimal training about how best to deal with different pupil needs…but to be honest it is surely impossible, as one person, to meet the many diverse needs of all our pupils in a 50 minute lesson. I feel that I am running to keep my head above water each and every day. Teachers rarely feel valued. There is an expectation that we will cope with all that is thrown at us whether we agree with what it is or not.

I have been teaching in secondary schools for 26 years and can honestly say that these past few years have been the hardest for me. Obviously I am a very experienced teacher but feel ‘snowed under’ by ongoing changes to the curriculum, new initiatives, difficulty finding the most recent documentation from SQA, inclusion etc. A few years ago, I believed myself to be one of a team of inspiring teachers who used AifL strategies and games to engage and excite young people. I am now conscious that I am less confident about what SQA requires of my pupils and constantly feel that what I do is never good enough. Many colleagues have discussed that we could work 24 hours, 7 days a week and still we would not be doing enough!!

When Standard Grade, Revised Higher and Higher Still courses were introduced we all felt that we were trained well. In these days of ‘cascading’ of information, everyone seems to have their own perceptions of what is required from each piece of course evidence. The descriptors are so vague that each person has a different interpretation. It should not be that we are not sure whether we are right or wrong.

The young people are our main concern and we are mainly empathetic and understanding people. This quality is something that I feel is taken advantage of.

Many parents would be surprised at how some pupils behave in class. Many young people and their teachers have to endure this rudeness and lack of respect.

I would be very happy to be one of a team tasked with formulating a plan to improve Scottish Education. I personally believe it is at rock bottom at the moment and, although I once was very proud of our education system, I often wonder whether I should look at teaching other curricula in other countries.
GENERAL COMMENTS ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 95

I am a teacher working in Aberdeenshire and my partner teaches in Aberdeen city.

What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

I did my probation year in a school in Aberdeen city and it was a great location with some great schools. At the end of the year we were told that probationers all get the first pick of the jobs (interviewed before the job is officially advertised) which is great and makes you feel valued. Unfortunately in this case there were no jobs available for my subject so I felt that the whole "we need more teachers" recruitment panic was very misleading.

My partner does work in a school in Aberdeen city and I still live here with him while commuting out to the shire. What we have noticed about retention with younger teachers is that the city is such an expensive place to live that if you are on your own you just can't afford it on the money earned.

The most important part though, I think, is the advertising. I love my job. I work in a great school with fantastic staff and students but few jobs are ideal. The adverts for teaching show you as this loving hero to wonderful perfect students. It makes the job look like all pupils will love you and hang on your every word as long as you work hard but in reality my partner's classroom has been set on fire. Students in schools we have worked in previously threaten staff, take A class drugs in other classes (literally), bully one another, question basic instructions. Regularly you can be made to feel like you might as well not be in the room and I have recently been told by a parent that her son will not be following deadlines as he has his own priorities different from mine as his Advanced Higher teacher.

Teaching is a very rewarding job but also lot of hard work and can be very stressful. So when people are drawn into it because of the wonderful idealistic scenarios in the adverts they are often the wrong people for that job, unable to cope with the reality of it.

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

This is a difficult question to answer as there are a few ways a teacher can train. I trained at Stirling University where the teacher training is a four year course you do at the same time as your main subject. Many from my course, start it at 17 or 18 years old and four years later what you want in life may have changed and you have other interests. I cannot speak for those who did the one year teacher training after their undergraduate degree.

As I have said before, when you get into teaching in a permanent job it can be very different to what you expected. I have been very lucky to go through some decent schools but have ended up in tears because of the actions and words of staff members during some of my school placements. My partner very nearly gave up because of the attitude of staff members, one of whom had multiple official complaints against her with no consequence. Like any job it is difficult to work under stress when you are not supported by your peers. Student teachers are often not taken seriously and when questioned by one, some staff will brush them away. An
example of this would be when some staff were not following SQA guidelines and essentially cheating to get pupils through unit passes...student is told to "wheesht".

I realise that much of this has been venting and that the government cannot change the nature of people but I feel that it is important to say.

ANONYMOUS 96

My Background
I welcome the opportunity to share my career experience with the Committee and hope it is useful in their gathering of evidence around teacher recruitment and retention. I feel my experience gives me a perspective that may be of interest, especially around teacher retention.

Until September 2016 I was a secondary school teacher in Scotland for 18 years. I trained at Moray House in the mid 1990s and then worked in two secondary schools in one local authority. I was a full time English teacher, moved into Guidance and for the last 10 years was a full time Pupil Support teacher with a caseload of 400 pupils (from S1-S6). I left this career in September 2016 and I am now working in the third sector for a children’s charity, which includes direct work with children and young people.

Attractive Profession
I went into teaching because:

- I enjoyed my own schooling experience and was inspired by my own English and Guidance teachers
- I wanted to work with young people – this felt exciting and potentially rewarding
- I wanted to make a difference in young people’s lives
- I wanted to be a part of a ‘community’

I think these are common reasons for people to go into teaching – including loving their own subject for secondary school teachers.

Other areas that may be appealing to those considering teaching may include:

- The pay - which certainly improved over my teaching career due to the McCrone report. However, I have taken a pay cut to move to my new role and I know of some people who took a pay cut to go into teaching, so it may not be a deciding factor for many.
- The working hours – if so, this is a mistake as teaching does not start at 9am and stop at 3.30pm, it is much more a way of life, based on the actual hours teachers work and the emotional demands of the job. Teaching is like having two jobs – you do your school based job during the day (in the classroom and all the admin and extra-curricular activities etc that happen daily) then go home at night (and weekends) and do another job of marking or planning or preparation or report writing etc.
- The holidays - it is hard to explain to those who are not in teaching how essential the school holidays are for many reasons. When the holidays do come it takes a good few days to wind down into them and I am aware of a number of my colleagues who really struggle with their
emotions and feelings at the start of a holiday. It takes a long time to 'step off the treadmill' and really relax. Many teachers also do work during holidays – marking and planning work or going in to school to organise their classroom for example. Sometimes they undertake paid work for the school or local authority or the SQA.

**Impact of teacher shortages/approaches taken**

Teacher shortages and the austerity cuts in recent years impact on how schools manage classroom cover (schools can no longer afford to buy in supply staff) and ultimately impact on pupils’ experience of learning and teaching.

In my experience I was often taken for cover as my PSE classroom contact time was 60% of my time. Most of the rest of my time was for meeting the demands of my 400 caseload, such as one-one meetings with pupils, parents, outside professionals etc. To combat staff shortages my school chose not to have an official 'on-call rota' (to allow a degree of flexibility) and so I could be called any day I had a non-contact period and was, more often than not. I found this unpredictability a challenge as it impacted on my ability to manage the significant demands of my 400 caseload, whether it be academic (supporting their attainment) or pastoral (sensitive meetings). This was an added pressure and brought with it its own stress and worry about not being able to do my job well and thus not supporting my 400 pupils.

When there are teacher shortages it impacts on the staff who are in the school/department. At the very least they will be organising work for the classes without a teacher, over and above their own remit. They may be taking these classes – this should not take them under their contracted non-contact time but often teachers do this to ensure young people are taught. Again, this brings with it huge demands on time and energy levels.

It has also had a clear impact on teachers being able to get out of school to attend meetings and training events. There is so little cover that teachers are missing out on useful and interesting events and training opportunities that would be good for their teaching and ultimately their pupils.

Although schools work hard to make up for a teacher shortage, pupils may find the shortage unsettling and may feel that they are not receiving the teaching input they need or deserve. For example, when non-specialists take the class they may deliver the lesson well but may not have the subject knowledge to support the pupils’ learning in any detail.

Parents also find the situation concerning, understandably. Supporting their understanding and answering their concerns impacts on staffing time in school also.

**Stay in or leave the profession?**

I chose to leave teaching after 18 years. There were various reasons behind this decision:

- I felt it was time for a change. I had been in my current role for 10 years and could not imagine doing so for another 10 years. I needed a new challenge.
From a career progression point of view my next step would have been to apply to be a Deputy Head Teacher. I did not find this an attractive prospect. DHTs have less contact with pupils and spend more time in meetings – often to do with learning and teaching, but not always. When they do meet with pupils and families it is often a crisis point, which is stressful.

I enjoyed my job, it was rewarding, but it was also stressful. At the end of every summer holiday I would come up with a plan for a better work/life balance but over 18 years I never cracked it. Being in a classroom involves being ‘on top of your game’, it is a performance and so is physically and emotionally demanding. In between my teaching contact time I was working with young people, their families and professionals around very sensitive pastoral areas (such as mental health issues) which is also quite emotionally draining. Other professionals who work in similar areas often have mentoring support (for example, at Childline) but there is no official structure of support for teachers. This often impacted on my home life – taking my concerns/the impact of meetings home with me. I also had a whole school remit which made some practical demands on me at break and lunch time and after school. This meant I very rarely had any down time to take stock of the classroom and pastoral demands. This was not a healthy lifestyle.

I went in to teaching to be part of a community, to work with young people. Part of the joy of my job was running extra-curricular clubs, directing shows, going on trips etc. In recent years there has been a real focus on attainment, but in my opinion this has been to the detriment of the really enjoyable (de-stressing) aspects of teaching. I was reminded on more than one occasion by those in senior management that my job was to support attainment and not to run clubs. I felt this was so short-sighted. Young people will learn and progress if they are happy to come to school, enjoy it whilst they are there and develop positive relationships with peers and staff. It clearly supports their health and wellbeing. I know some of my former pupils have gone on to work in the areas they developed skills in through extra-curricular activities. It is also important for staff to find their own outlets to support their own health and wellbeing. Parents also really appreciate the opportunities offered to their children.

Self-evaluation is an essential tool for teachers and the GTCS has worked hard to make Professional Update accessible and manageable, similarly with Education Scotland with inspections and HGIOS4. Schools and local authorities have found clear ways of supporting teachers in this self-evaluation. But all of this has a knock on effect on teacher time. It permeates through-out the school year. I felt it was very useful to me professionally but cannot deny it had a large demand on my time.

Applying for promotion
There are various aspects to promotion teachers consider when applying.
For:

- If an opportunity arises - this happens less than it used to with the PTC structure but schools are trying hard to find funds to create short term development opportunities
- Clear career progression – which many find rewarding
- More/wider responsibility
- Pay increase

Against:

- Responsibility - some people do not want this or feel the pay does not reflect the amount of responsibility they have taken on
- It may include managing more difficult/challenging meetings and relationships
- Freedom of information requests and complaints procedures (both are time consuming and can be stressful)
- Different skills demands to classroom teaching (e.g. financial, building works)

ANONYMOUS 97

What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to stay in the profession or to leave?

An often ignored issue facing teachers within the secondary school sector is that of inequality. I am currently a Teacher of English and find myself, along with my colleagues in the department, with a heavier workload than many other teachers in the school. We teach many more pupils per class, mark many more pieces of work, and write many more reports. Yet, no account of this difference in role is taken account of in job specifications. We are paid and expected to complete our work to the same deadlines as others. I find this particularly frustrating as there is currently a History PT in my school, paid a full time salary, with 14 free periods. I have a maximum timetable. Also, I am currently pregnant and will soon have to decide if I will return full time for part time. Even part time, I will still work more for a smaller salary than some other teachers in the school who make up there time with 'please takes', involving no preparation or marking.

Although teaching is not a career you choose for the salary, it is also frustrating that we are paid a mere 35 hours a week when we find ourselves working over this in order to do a good job. There is no ability to earn more or work flexible hours as there are in other jobs.

What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion?

Again, due to my workload and the desire to do the best by my pupil, I find myself unable to be part of whole school leadership opportunities which would allow me to gain promotion. I have self-funded a diploma through the University of Aberdeen to allow me to move into Guidance teaching, using my own time to complete the course as we are no longer given time for CPD of this kind, however I am unable to gain teaching experience in this area, even as a register teacher, as the English department do not have any addition free periods to allow me to gain wider teaching experience. This prevents me from gaining the confidence and experience required.
As previously mentioned, other departments are less heavily burdened and therefore have more time.

**ANONYMOUS 98**

I have been a teacher for 7 years. I chose not a career in industry, I have a STEM degree and instead chose teaching.

I absolutely love working with the young people and find that the rewards of simply working with a fantastic bunch of kids, whilst challenging, far outweighs any negatives and it is this that has kept me in a job thus far.

However, after doing an Acting PT role for 2 years my department has been subsumed in to a faculty and so there are now NO opportunities of promotion for me given that they appointed someone of a similar age and who had been at the school for a lesser time. I do not feel valued.

Also, I moved away from my hometown to find a job as a teacher of a chemistry. Consequently, as a Mother of 2 children I have struggled to find childcare as the number of breakfast clubs and after school clubs have decreased. I now pay £191pcm for someone to pick my son up from school each day and £879pcm (average) for childcare for my 2 year old. Given that their Dad and I are both teachers- we receive no help with this. A teachers wage is not competitive and we are both considering leaving the profession to pursued a job with less evening and weekend work, a more competitive salary and thus more, quality time with our own children.

Teaching is not the job it was when I started 7 years ago. It is riddled with bureaucracy and doubt. The blame of insufficiency is laid at our feet yet it is budget cuts, ever changing courses, lack of leadership opportunities and lack of ownership by the SQA.

As a teacher, would I recommend teaching to any other? No. We do not feel valued. As a profession we do our best for the kids but this is never portrayed in the media and we would never let the kids see how tired, stressed and depressed we are at being let down. But we are never thanked nor made to feel valued and this of course causes problems with retention.

**ANONYMOUS 99**

- What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

  Money is the first. If you pay teachers enough money, you get better candidates who then drive up results. There is evidence here: [http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp352.pdf](http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp352.pdf)

  Every statement from the government doing the hand-wringing of 'How can we keep teachers?'

  - it's easy; pay them more.

- Do you have views or insight into the process for recruiting the right number of teachers to satisfy the demand for teachers in Scotland’s schools (including the availability of up to date information such as on supply and demand)?

  In terms of languages I can tell you that if you let the secondary schools drive the Languages to be taught in primary, and to be timetabled to do the delivery, this
will sort out several problems, not least the disappearance of German. Also put Languages back in the core.

- 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?
  Discipline and poor pay & conditions compared with comparable professions requiring two degrees.

Teaching is currently not attractive as a job. Constant interference from the SQA and the utter nonsense that is CfE - at least at Secondary level - is exacerbating things.

- Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?
  We've had several who either intended to go abroad because of the money, or who were training as a backup plan in case their other plans didn't work out.

- What is the impact of teacher shortages in certain parts of Scotland or in specific disciplines?
  In terms of stress on teachers in the school the impact is terrible. They have to juggle classes if no supply can be found at the same time as teaching their own classes. I can tell you from experience it is dreadful and nearly broke me when my two colleagues were long-term absent. To try and cover all the classes I was working a 70-hour week, every week for a whole term. We got supply in geography, maths, English but not Modern Languages.

- How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?
  Using former teachers who have retired seems to be the only thing that works. Paying supply teachers fully from the first day of employment would surely help.

- What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?
  Money, stress and lack of support.

- What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?
  Lack of money for the job. Too much to do, too much responsibility. Mending all the ills of society should come with a hefty payment. A perception that management are complete idiots and that a heidie's qualification nothing to do with the requirements of the job - who would want to join that?

  Having to implement CfE. Being answerable to HMI who, themselves, are perceived as a bunch who couldn't handle a class and are now telling others how to do it.

  Please canvass the views of teachers as vigorously as possible. CfE is the shambles it is, partly because Mr Russell refused all advice that didn't tie in with his own views and wanted it shoved through on his own timetable instead of taking time and getting it right.
ANONYMOUS 100

The following information that I am providing is as a secondary business education teacher within West Lothian Council.

The views that I share whilst can be published, should be done so anonymously.

The reason for this is, upon sharing views with a recent HMIe inspector I was spoken to afterwards about me feedback by senior management in a negative way.

**What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?**

In relation to recruitment, there are now a number of students who undergo their PGDE as a back up and do not fully intend of seeking a career in teaching. This may be due to the job market upon completion of their initial degree. Following that time period they realise that the job is not financially suitable for the amount of work having to be done.

I also believe that the pay is a huge issue at present. Workload continues to increase but there are no extra financial support. My current working week can be in the range of 60-70 hours per week, something that is seriously hindering my work/life balance.

**Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?**

There is far too much paper work having to be completed by teachers, some adding no benefit to the learning and teaching or the young people's progress. Teachers are being continuously asked to undertake more and more administrative duties meaning that planning and correction is having to be done more and more at home. There are also many jobs available that offer the better financial support than teaching.

**How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?**

There is a severe lack of support available in order to cover teacher shortages. Staff who are off on long-term sick or maternity are often not covered and non subject specialist are being asked to teach certificate classes whilst other teachers within the department are having to do all the planning and marking.

**What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?**

Pay is one factor that would impact the decision. Another is that staff are now under huge pressures to raise attainment however councils and senior management are handling the situation wrongly. Students are made to sit Higher and National 5 even though they are not capable and teachers are also expected to get them a pass at the lower level as a back-up. The workload is quite frankly unbearable.
What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

I would definitely consider moving up the ladder so to speak, however, I have now seen a number of people who are in these positions far too soon and their inexperience can be clearly seen. I think there should be an in-house training programme offered which delegates specific responsibilities. This could last for a period of three/six months and only after that a particular person could apply for these positions. Their training programme could be graded which would offer insight to the interviewer/school on how competent the candidate is. This is the way that it is handled in the private sector and this approach would help considerably.

ANONYMOUS 101

I am a geography teacher, having taught for over 23 years in a number of schools in Scotland.

When I entered the profession I struggled to gain a permanent position and it took three years to achieve my probation in my first subject. I had to tally this myself through supply teaching. I never managed to achieve probation in my second as I never got hours, as a result it lapsed - in French- so my additional qualification was to no avail.

Hence it rather sticks in my throat that new teachers get an automatic year and get qualified as an NQT.

- What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

In my experience, many probationers leave the profession in my council as they are interviewed in January and do not hear of appointment until June. Many very good probationers are therefore snapped up by other councils where schools advertise individual posts.

My council uses the generic system and probationers are allocated to schools if they are successful and I have been "landed" with NQTs who really have not fitted in. Under normal interview techniques I may not have appointed.

- Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

Many do not have life experiences. Teaching requires excellent communication skills not just with pupils but with colleagues. Some probationers I have worked with who have come straight through school then university lack a level of maturity and have an expectation that they know best. They are not willing to learn from experienced colleagues.

Sometimes it is too difficult to try to get a permanent position. The skills learned in teaching are transferable.

For those who do not complete training they do not realise the emotional commitment required for this vocation.
-How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?

Ineffective at best. My new school has been running understaffed since it opened. Fortunately a few recently retired teachers have helped out with supply. Most are very effective.

I totally disagree that teachers who have been doing supply in a council should be offered a permanent contract with that council. This has meant teachers - who have not been permanently appointed to a school as they cannot interview well, nor who are capable of teaching - doing supply and being ineffective. This has happened at my son's school.

-What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?

Stress levels are extremely high at the moment. Many colleagues in my school are unhappy - so many changes in a short time with curriculum - also with pupil behaviour.

As with the police service I wonder if 32 years would be better in the profession? Personally I do not feel I will be able to stay in teaching for another 20 years. As I get older the generation gap widens and I am no certain that I will have the same ability to relate to teens in another few years!!! Early retirement may be the way forward particularly in light of the survival rates of older teachers following retirement in their 60s.

-What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

Stress. I would not entertain promotion to SLT. I did an acting PT faculty for 3 years and was a guidance teacher for 5 years. The PT job I hated as I was managing a young staff who felt that they knew better and they ganged up on me and I was not supported by SLT. I loved the guidance position but the school was small and required a smaller team so I stepped down as I'd just had a family.

It is a thankless task and I much prefer having a full teaching commitment.

**ANONYMOUS 102**

What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

Teaching is a great profession and the reward are amazing. However the problem, in my opinion, does not lie with teacher recruitment numbers, but with the quality of people recruited, the reasons for them coming into teaching and the retention.

Recently my school has had student teachers in my department. Their reasons for joining teaching vary from a real desire to teach (this is good) to wanting a steady job that means they can buy a house, down to the "because it's easy money". These attitudes are resulting in people that are there to collect a pay packet and when they realise how tough the job now is they look for something else, assuming they even make it through the student/probation year.
Teacher training is also lacking, through no fault of the universities. They do not have the contact time with the students that allow them to learn how to handle either difficult pupils or difficult curricular areas. As a result the universities either have to look at teaching the content or dealing with behaviour.

Personally I find cfe manageable, however there are a lot of artificial hoops to jump through. This was also the case with standard grade, there are just a few more now. The issue in schools with cfe, in my opinion, is the pressure management put on teachers for every pupil to achieve N5. As N4 isn't examinable there is a perception of lack of worth. This makes management want the best for their pupils, which to them is N5 in S4. This is unachievable for some pupils but adds pressure to teacher to either get them through it or explain why the teacher has failed and what interventions they have put in place to ensure that the teacher has done everything they can. It is taken for granted now that teachers will give up their lunchtimes and days during their Easter holidays to conduct study support classes in order to improve grades. This is a reality check for most newly qualified teacher and as they try to make a good impression, they quickly burn out and leave.

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

In addition to above, newly qualified teachers are ill equipped to deal with the rising indiscipline in most schools. There is an epidemic of pupils that are hovering on the behaviour line. Coming from primary schools where they have the same teacher all day, they struggle to move around. Many more pupils are now also coming to secondary school with an additional support need. These are often used by senior leaders as excuses for bad behaviour and these learners, as well as those who act out due to problems at home, get rewarded, e.g. Trips away, when they behave for a week. The pupils that are hovering the line then see the reward and want to get involved and so the spiral continues. This is difficult to manage in a classroom when pupils walk out when you challenge them and go straight to their year head who makes excuses for them.

NQTs quickly feel undermined and lose confidence.

Another issue in retention is the method of recruitment. After completing their probation year successfully many NQTs have to attend pool interviews and are up against experience teachers looking for school moves. If they are lucky they get a job but it could be in any school in the region. This is a problem for large council areas if the public transport links are not wonderful and sometimes the jobs are impossible to fill (particularly or remote schools). The flip side of this is that in a large number of subjects the teacher numbers are oversubscribed and so the NQTs are told that they were not successful at the pool interview and therefore lose confidence in getting a teaching job as this is the only avenue in the council and look for work elsewhere. Once they find a different job they often never come back as they have student debt to pay and need money.

How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?
Personally I think they are ineffective for rural schools. In the last 2 years my colleague has been absent twice. Once for a period of 6 months and one for a period of 4 months. Instead of a qualified subject teacher her position was covered by a non subject specialist and being the only subject specialist left I was expected to have equal contact with all certificate classes from S4-S6 as well as S3 discrete subject classes. The reason given to me was there was no money and no specialised supply. My school focuses on getting retired teachers in rather than subject supply.

What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?

Work load

Behaviour management within the school

Expectations of parents - which is shifting more to the idea that it is the schools job to make their child succeed rather than the child taking any practical action in this.

Pay freezes or well under inflation pay rises in relation to the level of work that is expected Early retirement due to ill health - the stress levels at the moment in teaching are higher than I have ever know them

-What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

I have been applying for promotion for the last 10 years and getting nowhere. I have been told this is due to lack of experience. Coming from an authority that now has principle teachers of curriculum rather than subject it is nearly impossible to achieve promotions as there are always a large number of people going for the promoted posts. There are few training posts (Pt1 positions) and even if you have had one there is no guarantee of getting an interview. I have held a pt1 position for 10 years and still I am being told I do not have experience at the level required.

The other issue is that in a high majority of cases the person for the job has been decided prior to any application or interview taking place. Internal candidates from a school are almost always guaranteed to get the promotion. This doesn't always happen but it is becoming more frequent. This demoralises people and they eventually get to the point where they do not see the point in applying as they know who will get the job before the application process closes. As these positions are few and far between the teacher remains an ordinary teacher for large stretches of time and sees no opportunity for promotion, unlike most other jobs. Teaching is one of the few jobs where you can start at 21, work for 20 years, be great at your job and fail every time you seek promotion. Depending on the subject you teach it can be impossible to obtain a promotion due to lack of suitable replacements should you achieve the promotion also.

ANONYMOUS 103

I am a secondary school English teacher who has only been in the profession for just under 4 years, yet I am the longest serving member of staff within my department and, after my PT, the most experienced. In the three years that I
have worked in this school I have witnessed, within my department, excellent teachers retire far too early, student teachers quit within weeks of beginning their placements and members of staff who have been in the profession for less than two years leave it. Currently within our department there is a probation teacher, who I am mentoring, and he is hanging in by the skin of his teeth…I have talked him into staying and completing his probation year twice now. It confuses me why you have to ask what it is that leads to people leaving the profession or walking in the door, taking a look around and saying ‘no thanks’, as I am sure you have had scores of emails saying the exact same thing: we have too much work to do and are severely underpaid and under-appreciated for the excessive workload that we do take on. My probationer is overwhelmed, stressed and exhausted, and I feel the same.

I think the best way to illustrate what I mean by this is giving you an idea of my own workload. First and foremost I am an English teacher. I have 7 classes, 2 of which are going into exams soon and 6 of which I share with another teacher. Therefore my workload includes planning, teaching, marking and recording work and progress. In itself that is a lot of work; to mark a set of National 5 critical essays generally takes me 3 ½ to 4 hours just to give you a rough idea of how much of my spare time marking consumes. But there are further challenges: Take my S1 class, for example. There are 25 pupils, 5 of whom are only Level 1 on the Curriculum for Excellence. In that same class, 3 pupils are National 5 level and 2 of those pupils are Polish and barely speak English. This means that every piece of work that we do must be differentiated three times to ensure that all pupils find the work both accessible and challenging. That’s 1 class.

Mounting up, isn’t it? But I haven’t even scratched the surface of homework which, once issued must be detailed in each classes’ Google Classroom so pupils and parents can access its details, must be collected, must be marked and, once not submitted must be chased up and recorded.

Behaviour Management must be factored into all of this. Every time I discipline a pupil in line with our school’s Behaviour Management policy; that must be recorded. Let’s say that in a class 3 pupils are having a bad day and therefore get themselves onto various stages of the policy, I must record how the behaviour of each of those pupils escalated and my response at every step. Again, time consuming! If I teach periods 1 to 3 and have 5 incidents, I guarantee I lose my non-contact period 4 as I am catching up with that paperwork. Undoubtedly pupils who come from a class which has had a ‘cover teacher’ are far more hyped up and excitable which often leaves us subject teachers dealing with the consequences.

So that’s my classroom, what about what I- and hundreds of other teachers- contribute to the wider school? Within my department I am in charge of the link with our feeder Primaries. Every year I make and review the transition project undertaken by the new intake of S1s, not a small task. Also, within my own department, I manage a cross-curricular project for S2s which sees them undertake a Marketing Project across 4 departments. As teachers we are under increasing pressure to ensure that cross-curricular links are clear and the workload to do so is immense. I am also a mentor to our current Probationer, great experience for me but again, a huge undertaking and
responsibility. How about the Supported Study Sessions that I run weekly: National 5 on a Tuesday lunchtime and Higher on a Wednesday? At least it keeps my waistline at bay as I certainly don’t have lunch on those days - I don’t have time!

Then there’s what I contribute to the whole school: I co-ordinate the S1 and S2 Activities Days, I coach and manage the school netball team, I chair the Social Committee, and I am in the Literacy working group and the Positive Achievement working group… I think you get the idea.

Let me revisit what I said before: we have too much work to do and are severely underpaid and underappreciated for the excessive workload that we do take on. I haven’t even mentioned Parents’ Evenings, report writing, wall displays, cover classes, theatre trips, covering detentions, keeping on top of the progress of every single one of the 170+ pupils that I teach with a variety of social backgrounds, abilities, needs and challenges.

I suppose at least we get holidays. Well, during these April holidays I have spent 4 of my 10 ‘holiday’ days in school catching up with everything that piled up before them. I have also spent hours of my holidays at home marking.

The main reason people leave this profession is simple: They are concerned about their health. The amount of stress, worry and confrontation that we face is disgraceful and the money we earn to compensate is offensive. On top of all of my work I have to maintain 3 tutoring commitments on the off chance I could do with affording a holiday! I’m sure that you can tell from the amount of work that I take on that I am a pro-active and keen teacher who wants to contribute to my school… I’m the kind of teacher you need to keep, but you’re going to lose me too. I am currently job hunting; I want out for the sake of my health. I want out because I give my job my everything and it still isn’t enough.

ANONYMOUS 104

As a teacher of 20 years in secondary education, I'd like to give you some of my thoughts on the current recruitment issues...

Becoming a teacher was a dream of mine since the age of 5. I did an honours degree and took an obligatory year abroad to allow me to become a fully registered modern languages teacher. In 1999 I secured my first permanent post teaching French and German. Since that time, I have seen an enormous change in this profession. I had always been told that each year gets easier with experience and assumed that by now I would still be loving my job and breezing through it! However, that is not the reality.

In my opinion, this profession had become unbearably stressful over the last 10 years. The implementation of CfE the main root of this issue. Teachers are being squeezed from every angle. Everyone wants more! Better results, better lessons, better marking, better tracking, better reports….. I am not saying that this is a bad thing and being professionals we have always done our best to rise to the challenge! This is often at a price to our health. I have often felt exhausted and too tired to plan the lessons I actually want to be able to. There is simply not enough time in our week to allow us to properly plan. We
are always being told we need to 'refresh' our BGE courses, this is fast becoming an annual thing! However, we get no proper development time and we often feel we are having to cobble ideas together at the last minute! I personally feel this is a hugely demoralising part of our job!

Then there's the major issue of behaviour and lack of support from SMT. Behaviour has changed, sorry, deteriorated badly in the 20 years I have been in the classroom. Even in 'good' schools teachers are being sworn at and worse and pupils aren't always being punished accordingly. SMT seem unwilling to act unless there has been another adult witness. Somedays it can feel like all you have done is fire fight! If there are issues we then have to take time to fill out referrals....again another squeeze on our time. SMT seem to all be on a softly softly approach. It appears that most don't like to rock the boat for fear of parents/ education leaders.

Support for learning is dire. Resources have been cut, support staff have disappeared and the class teacher is often left alone to deal with up to 30 pupils with huge variation in needs. This is unacceptable. GIRFEC is impossible in this situation!

Cover for absent colleagues has been one a bone of contention. Staff are left covering for unfilled/ unadvertised posts. Often a money saving tactic?! This is an immense strain on staff. We had a staff member go on maternity leave and her job wasn't advertised in a timely fashion leading to greater stress for the rest of our dept. Our school has now assigned designated cover periods for some staff to cover a Home Ec maternity leave. I know that the staff involved are not happy about having to do this. This is leading to a huge lack of morale.

I have never been interested in promotion but those who are....I am not sure teaching is the best profession to be in. There is little room for promotion. The old APT/ PT system was much better.

I have often dreamed of being able to leave the profession. I am a very professional person and always do my very best in my job but I often feel that this job is slowly killing me. I don't think I have the energy to last until retirement. Most of my friends are the same! We are not respected by the public and with no real wage rise over recent years, we are rapidly falling behind many other professions. Never mind, there's always those holidays that the public like to remind us of! Oh, yeah most teachers end up working during them whether it's catching up with marking, reports, planning. If we're lucky we may unwind enough to allow us to keep going for another term!

Thanks for taking the time to read. I sincerely hope that the Scottish government actually listens to what its teachers are saying. Otherwise, education in Scotland will continue to nose dive!