School Staff other than teachers / headteachers

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PRIMARY SCHOOLS NAMED SUBMISSIONS

LORNA KYDD

Q1 What type of role do you have?
   Senior Clerical

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
   Angus Council  Warddykes PS

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
   No, I have worked in this environment for 12 years and the past 2 years has been very hard going for everyone, with extra, extra work loads, more paper work, everything needed in triplicate, cut backs on finances, job losses and restructuring areas of the sector and then the work load given to other people with enough of their own work load and no more wages. SCO wages have frozen with added pressures, then they give a new job title to PSA’s etc, then they receive the same wages as SCO’s. So no I would not recommend the job as it is a worthless task, but not much job opportunities out with and bills need paid.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
   Teachers mostly but all staff.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
   I would give them permanent contracts life is bad enough without known if you have a job every year.

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)?
   Yes, at certain times of the year e.g. end of year finances, last year we moved into a new school so had to find our feet again e.g. I put 50 hrs extra in between Aug – Christmas I have over 300 pupils in our school including our nursery and there is myself and a 12 hr part-timer who is still not on a permanent contract and she has been employed for over 5 years. I didn’t put in a time-sheet for those extra hours as we keep getting told there is no money and I would rather make sure there was enough money for the children but I am no longer going to do this due to lack of respect for staff.

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?)

None, in fact we have to cover any staff absences ourselves as there are very few supply staff to cover our area, if office staff go off sick there is no supply cover at all which can put a strain on the person that is off if their illness is serious and when the office person comes back everything has to be sorted out as this is a skilled job only known to SCO’s as we do not have time to train the part-time staff because of work overload and new policies etc.

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?

Quite low, work overload, low esteem, no enjoyment in education any more due to attainment figures, children’s behaviour, even heard it said that it is now a worthless job, but most people have to stick to their employment as there is not much work out there and bills have to be paid, thankless job.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

If they keep on going in education as they are they will be struggling to have staff in years to come and raising the retirement age is not helping morale etc as staff just thinks it will never end and really can’t see themselves in this job over the age of 60, it is very trying and stressful at 54. There doesn’t seem to be enough encouragement and most staff wish their life away e.g. just back from holidays today and the first thing we all say it is only 11 until our next holiday no enjoyment there at all.

Cut backs and lack of pay rise for staff then you read in the newspaper 4 of our top management is going to be getting a share of £x amount of thousands in a pay rise due to more workload not good at all for anyone’s moral considering we are the back bone of the organisation and get no more money or thanks.

ANN WILSON

Q1 What type of role do you have?
I am office based

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
I most certainly would recommend this as a career as it is rewarding working with young people and watching them flourish. Children are open and honest and I feel really do appreciate everything we can offer them both emotionally and socially.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Probably classroom support with special needs children.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
It can be difficult working with children with special needs but can also be so rewarding but it does take a certain type of person to be able to commit to this type of job. Offering colleague and teacher verbal support when it all becomes too stressful should help and advertising including explaining how stressful yet rewarding this type of career can be. I feel we don’t advertise sufficiently to recruit but rely on word of mouth quite a lot.

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)?
Not that I can think of. I work in a very small school and we are all happy to jump in and help out where we can.

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:
Not in my school.
• 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?)

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?
I find staff morale is very high as we are so small and support each other in whichever way we can. We all are always there for each other in stressful days.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 1

Q1 What type of role do you have?
Clerical.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Ayrshire Council, New Farm Primary.
Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
Yes I enjoy my working role in school and would recommend to friends.

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)?
Yes there is time that I spend due to staff vacancies.

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? Temporary vacancy but only P/T hours instead of F/T.
• How well are they working? Need F/T.
• 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?) Temporary.

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?
General moral is very good really enjoy working here with all the staff and pupils.

ANONYMOUS 2
Q1 What type of role do you have?
School Clerical staff.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
West Dunbartonshire

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
Yes If you are prepared to work hard and have a “Chief cook and bottle washer role.”

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Pay scale. The Admin. role particularly in Primary schools is vastly under paid. The range of tasks undertaken are far above the pay grade.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
A proper School Admin. job description which takes fully in to account the range of tasks undertaken.

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?
Quite good – due to staff supporting each other.
ANONYMOUS 3

Q1 What type of role do you have?
CLERICAL ASSISTANT

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

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

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

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
TAKING ON MORE TRAINEE TEACHERS AND/OR TEACHING STAFF

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)?
NO

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?
IN MY ROLE AS A CLERICAL ADDISTANT MORALE IS VERY GOOD

ANONYMOUS 4

Q1 What type of role do you have? Child development officer

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? Nursery class in a school

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

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention? Not being able to select your own training for cpd and being told by council what to attend.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention? Better pay.

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)? Yes happens a lot doing the job of two people. Stressful.

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: yes

- What are they? Staff cover when possible
- How well are they working? At times
• 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?) temporary.

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? Quite good.

Additional comments
Let staff get on with their jobs and stop adding extra duties constantly.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS NAMED SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 5
What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?
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.

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

The reality of the job (see above) 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.

How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?

There is a difference in priority between schools and local authority administrators which make the system ineffective. 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 their are none at LA level to cover - to make this work their 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.

What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?

Pay - low relative to other careers available to level 11/12 SCQF qualified graduates. This is especially true in my subject area (STEM careers) which explains why there is such a shortage of science and maths teachers.

Job satisfaction/intrinsic reward - High if you are in a school with a motivated management and a supportive system for dealing with staff development and stressful behaviour issues.

Workload and work life balance - Poor relative to similarly paid jobs in industry, at least until middle management levels are reached.

Holidays - this is a big perk for teachers with young families, but becomes less of a 'perk' and more of a tying issue as children get older, as teachers are obviously limited as to when they can take leave. This is largely compensated for by the long summer break, which should, I think be protected at all costs if the government wants to retain teachers currently in the job.

What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

I have now been a faculty head for 5 years and have twice considered applying for SMT posts. On both occasions, my main reason for NOT applying has been the observable stress and workload issues faced by my colleagues already in DHT or HT posts. The professional qualifications required are not a deterrent and I think may have been made too accessible in some ways, with too much emphasis on distance learning, which is designed to make it easier on schools and LAs, but doesn't provide the same level of academic support or even rigour as the traditional SQH. The educational, legal, social and financial responsibilities carried by so few senior managers within a school demands a substantially higher remuneration than is currently offered. Those at the highest levels in health and policing are rewarded much better than those in social work and schools, or at least this is the perception!

I hope these responses help to inform policy decisions on the part of Scottish Government and their work with schools, HTs and ITE institutions in the very near future.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 6

Q1 What type of role do you have?
   Admin Assistant

Q2 Whereabouts do you work? East Ayrshire Council
Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?

No – the pay doesn’t reflect the responsible we have and the education system seems to have deteriorated in the past 5 years or so. I do enjoy the work I do but for the stress and responsibility I have I could be paid a lot better elsewhere even including other local authorities in Ayrshire for the same job.

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

At present retention is probably the greatest challenge.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?

For retention – less duplication of paperwork and less irrelevant work - more focus on teaching and learning would help staff not feel so frustrated after all this is really why teachers went into this profession.

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 am very lucky to have a staff that all operate on a goodwill basis to a great extent. Well above and beyond what is their daily job. Most work approximately 1 hour extra in a day to help make the smooth running of the school better.

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?

General morale is very low

- Merger is process over next year – uncertainty of jobs
- Lack of discipline and respect from pupils
- Workload (mainly paperwork) has increased dramatically on teaching staff which has a huge knock-on effect to the school office.

ANONYMOUS 7

Q1 What type of role do you have?

Classroom Assistant and First Aider

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

Yes I would recommend working in a school. However, the pay is rubbish. We get paid pro rata. My top line is only £11,000 after 18 years in the role.

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

First aiders. No one wants to do it.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
Having more support and being paid better.

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)?

Sometimes we stay late waiting for a child to be collected after 3.30 – and when we want to take the time off in lieu we struggle to get it! We sometimes start work earlier than we should due to being called to first aid room. We have to cover staff who are absent – meaning we do not always get our break and often do not get our lunch until after 2pm!

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?)

We have 3 temporary classroom assistants. These posts have been vacant for over 2 years!

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?

Not very good to be honest. Influenced by bad communication between staff and senior management/line manager. Feeling that none of them are interested in us and do not care how we are - as long as we do our job.

Additional comments

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment

ANONYMOUS 8

Q1 What type of role do you have?

Learning Support Worker for pupils with ASD and additional learning difficulties

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?

Shetland

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

11 years of working with children with ASD has given me a great deal of job satisfaction and I would recommend this type of work as being very rewarding. However we are soon to move to a new school building and are told there will be a new way in which Learning support workers will work. We will no longer support a pupil on a regular and consistent basis, in which a good rapport is established with the pupil. We will be a "pool" of Learning
support workers who will work with all ASN pupils. I think this will be chaotic and not help build a trusting relationship with pupils (many of whom cannot cope with change) I think it will be inefficient and not in the best interest of some pupils, who need to be supported by staff who know them well and whom the pupils knows well.

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

The required qualifications and experience prevent some people from applying.

Poor management within the ASN dept is the main reason for learning support workers having left during the last few years. Additionally anyone joining the department are “thrown in the deep end” whereas in the past new recruits were able to shadow and be supported by an experienced member of staff until they understood the pupils needs and the pupil became familiar with the new person.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?

Less stringent entry qualifications with the opportunity to gain experience and qualification whilst working and being supported by experienced staff.

A manager that understands what the pupils needs are and that additional support needs cover a vast range of needs – some staff are better suited to supporting certain pupils: for example, support adolescents with profound ASD and learning difficulties often with challenging behaviour is very different from supporting those with ASN who are able to attend mainstream classes and need support from someone who not only understands them, but also the subjects they need support with.

Present policy means that an employee has left the post before the post is advertised and new staff recruited. It would make more sense to advertise the post when someone gives notice of their intention to leave – better still if new people could be recruited before the old person leaves, so they can pass on information and help the new person settle in.

Any time worked or courses taken out with normal working hours are supposed to be taken back as TOIL – however staff would prefer to be paid for this time, as it used to be, as very often the opportunity to take TOIL back is not possible.

Having to take time off for sickness is almost treated as an offence, with disciplinary back to work interviews and warnings of what will happen if further time is taken off. This has resulted in some staff coming into work when they really should be taking the rest they need to recover fully. Staff should not be made to feel quilty about being ill when it something they have no control over.

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)?
Many of the staff do preparation work or continue to work with pupils in lunch times, break times and sometimes prepare resources in their own time. It used to be that staff were allocated daily prep times – now preps are very limited, staff cutbacks have meant that it is no longer possible to get daily prep times.

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?)

There are no longer close working, teacher led teams in the ASN dept. This has resulted in a lack of cooperative working among staff, which often results in the care of pupils being less than adequate. Staff often, do not work with the same pupils anymore, often changing from period to period. This has a detrimental effect on some pupils who need consistency and can result in information and knowledge of the pupils not being passed on, which again can cause stress and both for the pupil and the staff working with them.

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?

Low morale within the department caused by being undervalued and unappreciated, especially when most staff go above and beyond the call of duty to try and ensure that pupils have a good and positive experience at school, that pupils feel safe, secure and happy and allows them to reach their own potential.

Throughout the school, there is a degree of low morale caused by additional workloads with ever changing strategies, curriculum and exam structures which are stressful for teachers.

ANONYMOUS 9

Q1 What type of role do you have?
Office Manager

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Renfrewshire Council

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
Yes Busy fast pace working environment – changes every day – Interesting working with children

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
None at the moment

**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)?

There are various times during the school year that are extremely busy. This may require me to work extra hours to ensure delivery of the task in time.

I.E. Scotxed census, Transfers of P7 to S1 pupils to the school and placing requests for years groups starting each August.

**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?)

At the moment ERC are conducting a review on clerical staff, bringing in New business management posts but we will lose clerical staff within the offices.

**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?

Usually very good but at the moment low with the uncertainty of the review

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**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS SCHOOL ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS**

**ANONYMOUS 10**

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

I am a Support for Learning Assistant working with small groups of children to support literacy and numeracy. I also work with a small group of children with Dyslexia and occasionally support a child who has Asperger’s.

**Q2**
Whereabouts do you work?

Stirling Council

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

I would recommend working in a school to a friend because I find it a highly rewarding role in the main. It is a privilege to work with children and help them reach their potential but mostly they are great fun to be with in the here and now! I have the benefit of working with teachers who are respectful of my experience, input and the benefits I can bring to all the children and the teaching staff.
However, there are many negative aspects of the job which have led skilled colleagues to leave as soon as the opportunity arises. These negative aspects include low, term time only, pay, no career structure, no training requirements or acknowledgement of learning/training undertaken elsewhere (I am in my 3rd year of an OU Primary Education Honours Degree and yet I am paid less than the cleaners in my school!) or opportunities for specialist training at in service days (beyond basic first aid for example when ASN needs appear to be becoming increasingly complex!) oppressive and disrespectful attitudes of SMTs, no job security (as contracts seem to be temporary or under consideration for change each summer) and the regular inappropriate use of support staff for cleaning, tidying and some administrative duties rather than supporting children.

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

I think the cuts in support staff and the challenges, mentioned above, to the staff in these roles account for recruitment difficulties in attracting and holding onto the right kind of staff with appropriate attitude and ambition to support teaching and learning in schools for all children. Without adequate numbers of trained, or willing to be trained, support staff teachers are also struggling to meet the needs of the diverse range of pupils in class.

In addition the lack of training, both at initial teacher training and in-service levels, puts teachers under huge stress to get up to speed, in their own time, on the many different needs of children likely to be in their classes. Some teachers in training may realise this during placements and abandon their training. Many teachers in schools cannot cope anymore with the huge demands on their time and skills as a result of the diverse needs of children in ever increasing class sizes. I see this particularly in small schools with multi-composite classes adding to the demands on teachers.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?

More ASN training for teachers in training and in jobs, more support staff with adequate ASN, curriculum and pedagogical training and remuneration, professional bodies overseeing training and standards of support staff, EIS membership for support staff so they receive appropriate union support and conditions of employment appropriate to staff who do educate children.

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)?

No there are no vacancies for support staff where I work due to cuts.

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?)

We have a shared HT. I feel that relationships and communication have suffered the most. This impacts on children, teachers, support staff and parents.

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?

Morale can be low when we have an incident and the HT is not there to support the staff during and after. The time taken to meet with staff to discuss the matter, reflect on practice (if either of these happen at all) and even to meet with the families involved seems unacceptable to me and is a result, in part, of the shared HT post. Low morale is often as a result of no participation or inclusion in decisions which impact on teachers and support staff. The resulting apathy for the change/project/policy imposed on us is understandable! Perhaps again this is as a result of the shared HT post reducing time available for consultation before action is required.

ANONYMOUS 11

Q1 What type of role do you have?
Mainly ASN/ Cover short term and long term sickness as an Early years Practitioner.

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Argyll and Bute

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
Working with children in a school is the most rewarding job a person could do however financially it is not a working wage and little credit is given to support workers locally or nationally for the hard work we put in.

Authority wise we are always the first on the list to be considered when cuts have to be made we are never valued for our contribution to education and we are never ring fenced.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Teachers are the hardest to recruit they would stay if there were permanent contracts offered to them. Support staff have been easy in the past to recruit but are the hardest to retain due to the poor wages and temporary contracts.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
Teachers: Look at a varied salary banding depending on the commitment they can give. Many teachers wish to just teach they don’t want to be part of working parties etc because of work and life style demands with families. We loose many excellent teachers because of the long hours and demand on their time outwith their working hours.
Within my authority nepotism is obvious and common. Although the authority has tried to eliminate it by having another leader from another school interview as well, what now happens is the head teacher invites the leader she wants to interview the candidates and vice versa briefing the leader from outside their school of their preference of candidate. It would be fairer for personnel to appoint the other panel members to prevent unfair bias/influence in these proceedings. Also the PTA chairperson without any educational qualifications has been involved on every occasion to select candidates.

In our school if you are a single parent who works in education it is seen as a barrier to promotion by management.

Support staff and Early year’s staff: Permanent contracts are needed for all support staff. Currently in my school two thirds of our support staff are either on temporary or hourly paid contracts. This is not an incentive for them to stay or commit to developing themselves for the benefit of the education system they support. There should be bandings dependent on qualifications and commitment to training and development. My colleagues and I in support or early years are not paid for holidays; we only receive payment for 39 weeks of the year the rest is unpaid. Although the salary is displayed for support at £16,369 for a 52 week we are actually only paid £12,276 for a 39 weeks and paid pro rata of 35 hours, most people work less than 35 hours as the children are only in school for 30 hours. We are not paid for any breaks and we have to have staff meetings during our unpaid breaks. We are expected to commit to extra curricular activities after work, we are not paid for this including all fundraising events nor are we reimbursed for materials we purchase for the fundraising. We are expected to provide first aid cover at these events and once again we are not paid for doing this either.

You may ask why I say the word expected, if we don’t do the above this is reflected in future contract offered to us if in temporary employment. My colleagues and myself have numerous qualifications. I committed to these and had to pay for them by myself including the SSSC Children and Young Persons level 3 SVQ level 7 on the framework. I had to do all the studying in my own time. I have never been rewarded for achieving any of the qualifications I have achieved which I use to support the educational experience of the children. A newly appointed employee working in support without any training or qualifications will start on the same salary as myself even although I have had 8 years work experience and 4 years volunteering in education. Perhaps you could look at qualifications in this sector of education as you did in the review for early years qualifications, perhaps a minimum qualification for support workers to work towards funded by the government to then be recognised and reimbursed at a fair wage.

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)?

Regularly, I cover Early years practitioners positions. I am not asked if I want to do it I am told to do it. I don’t mind at all however I feel undervalued being told not asked. I am paid if it is long term if it is short term a day or a half-day I am not paid although it is a band 5 and I am on the lower pay band 3.
I have covered janitor duties moving furniture, equipment and very heavy boxes when the school has been refurbished and at times of sickness once again being told not asked to do it.

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?)

Temporary measures have been put in place to cover McCrone time and lack of supply.

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?

SCHOOL UNKNOWN- NAMED

ANONYMOUS 12
I'm emailing as I saw the Scottish government was taking submissions about teacher recruitment and I'd like to share my experience.

I've been working in Scottish schools now for over 10 years, both primary and secondary. I'm not a teacher, I'm employed by a charity formed by a group of Churches who wanted to support their local schools but didn't always have the ability to resource it. So I go in, as a person from the community to support in whatever capacity is needed. I run lunch clubs, after school drop ins, Seasons for Growth groups, I support transitions from primary to secondary, I run a one day RME conference and can sometimes be found in RME lessons helping children learn about what Christians believe and do. I'm also active supporting churches to deliver good quality children's and youth activities in their communities.

I love working in a school. My whole family are teachers and I rebelled by going into informal education! In all honesty what I'd love more than anything else is to re train as a primary teacher. In fact, I recently started volunteering in my own children's primary school a half day a week with a view to seeing if I could be cut out for it, and to potentially support any application.

I ought to be a good candidate. I've a 2:1 degree from St Andrews, I am already familiar with schools and the CfE through my work and have a proven commitment to the wellbeing and education of children.

However, it is not possible for me to access teacher training. I have two young children (aged 6 and 8) so my family commitments mean I would need to either access part time training, or intensive weekend training. However the only courses available in a commutable distance from my home are at Stirling or Glasgow, both of which are full time, 9am - 5pm. Allowing time for commuting I'd be away from 8am - 6pm for the training year and then have no option but to work full time for the
qualifying year which follows. I cannot in good conscience make the sacrifice of time from my children at this point in their lives.

I feel saddened that there are no flexible options for teacher training. It's a job I'd love, and bring so much to, but which currently is completely off the table to me.

Thanks in advance for your consideration of this matter

ANONYMOUS 12

In relation to teacher retention there is a significant impact from poor leadership and management of staff and by poor implementation of CfE by those within leadership positions. I was luckily enough to have an excellent faculty manager 9 years ago who understood how to consult with staff to develop a coherent and progressive curriculum appropriate to the pupils within our catchment and at the time had thought all schools would be going through the same process. Unfortunately some schools failed to understand how to implement a curriculum and therefore chose to just be negative and criticise it. You also have significantly limited human capital in outlying areas that probationers go into and get poor experiences, schools should be identified as very good or above before they can get probationers or students working there. Some schools have poor quality learning and teaching and get probationers to reduce costs rather than make a positive difference to teaching practice. Moral leadership is lacking in a number of school as 80's effectiveness management still reigns.

Poor leadership and management needs to be addressed. Cooperative headships? Federation schools that attract better leaders?

Also appointed mentors in schools can be teachers one year out of probation themselves. Stricter guidance on who can take these roles on should be considered as well as significant training given.

A PT support for learning who loves schools, teaching, young people and making a difference 9 years on in his career.

SCHOOL UNKNOWN ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 13

My Background
I taught in England for about 25 years as a secondary Biology/Science teacher, culminating in Senior Management positions in three different schools. My family and I then moved to Scotland and I went back to classroom teaching for a further 7 years. We then moved as my wife was appointed to a Depute Head position in a local High School and for the past 3 years I have worked as an ASN Assistant providing 1-to-1 support for an autistic child in a primary school. I am due to retire at the age of 60 later this year.

I have therefore experience in both Scotland and England and also in both secondary and primary schools in Scotland, as well as a perspective from both teaching and support roles.
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?

Children are receiving signals about teachers from a very early age and certainly by the time they first go to school. Initially these signals come from their parents and possibly their siblings, but then they will be from first-hand experience. Their experience of teachers changes dramatically as they move from primary to secondary school. At primary school they will be used to a single teacher or at least very few teachers who will know them and their families very well, while at secondary school they will come into classroom contact with anything up to 20 teachers each week. Some young people will go through their whole secondary school career feeling that no member of staff really knows them well at all. Not a good signal about teaching.

It is clear that schools (particularly secondary schools) themselves are a recruiting ground for teachers, not all teachers, but certainly for the majority. It is therefore a good idea to consider how teachers present themselves to their students (and I do not necessarily mean their appearance) and also how they are presented, and sometimes represented, to their students.

Teachers who appear to be under stress, tired, bad tempered and showing little interest in their students beyond the ‘end of lesson bell’ are hardly a good advertisement for the teaching profession. Sadly, as time goes on this image of teachers is also likely to be portrayed by parents to their children as well, if this is the image with which students leave school.

It is true to say that many students leave school with an abiding memory of that ‘one teacher’ who got through to them, who went the extra mile, who inspired them to follow a particular route in life. These teachers are the ones who hold the key for recruiting future teachers. However, unfortunately there will be just as many students who leave school with abiding memories of teachers who frightened them, were sarcastic, were thoughtless, were bullying and were therefore the worst possible advertisement for the teaching profession.

I would therefore argue that, for the sake of the future of the profession (and therefore for the good of our children), teachers must be required to consider much more carefully about how they go about their daily interactions with their students.

I have worked in a school where mutual respect is one of the fundamental principles of interaction between staff and pupils and where, for example, shouting at pupils simply does not happen. I have also worked at a number of schools, in both England and Scotland, where there are still teachers who will seek to demean pupils as a method of control. A pupil does not need to be the one on the receiving end of this sort of treatment for it to have a lifelong effect upon their view of teachers and schools. This is something that needs to be talked about and stopped.

A rather different, but still very influential issue affecting the way that pupils/students view their teachers, is the inclusion agenda. Obviously, this is an issue that is constantly being raised in a variety on contexts. It is relevant here because I believe
that it is another cause of pupils receiving negative signals about their teachers. I am not going to discuss the rights and wrongs of our current inclusion policy in Scotland but I am going to comment on the impact that it can have on classrooms and therefore on pupils.

Many teachers feel that they are not equipped (often through lack of training, but sometimes because they are presented with ‘impossible’ situations) to deal with the range of children that are present in their classrooms. We also have many support staff, myself included, who are untrained or at least undertrained, certainly underpaid and often under supported who shoulder much of the responsibility for getting our most vulnerable children through their classroom experience. This situation frequently leads to unsatisfactory experiences for many of the other children in the classroom and certainly does not present a positive image for teaching.

My teaching experience in Scotland may not be representative of schools in the country as a whole, but I have three further observations to make which influence the image of teachers, teaching and schools:

Firstly, in the secondary schools where I have worked there is a significant lack of quality pastoral care. This is a result of such care being delivered through Guidance Teachers who have a remit for a significant number of pupils in the school and who have a significant teaching load on top of their pastoral responsibilities. In these schools there are no ‘Form Tutors’ who see every child in their form at least once or possibly twice every single day. In each of the schools in which I taught in England, the Tutor was a vitally important person throughout the school lives of each pupil. They were tasked with getting to know their tutees very well, often delivered a pastoral/PSE programme and were the first point of contact for that child within the school if there was a problem. I have a daughter currently in S2, she has no Tutor, her Guidance Teacher is a distant figure and she has felt ‘invisible’ at school for much of her first two years in secondary school. I have heard other parents claim that their child’s Guidance Teacher did not know who they were until S3.

Now I accept that this may be an issue in one particular school, but I think that the fact that this situation can happen at all speaks of a failing within the system and it also results in very negative signals about schools and therefore teaching in general.

I know that mention of what happens south of the Border often results in the shutters being brought down and I am in no way trying to suggest that schools in England are better than schools in Scotland. Indeed, there are many things happening in the English system about which I am profoundly uncomfortable.

Secondly, my (admittedly narrow) experience of schools in Scotland suggests that the significant role of the Local Authority can result in a lack of accountability, a lack of clear vision and a lack of the school adopting a leadership role within its community. In short, it can result in Head Teachers who are more concerned with the nuts and bolts of the day to day running of a school rather than providing strong, visionary leadership which inspires both staff, pupils and parents. This equally results in a lack of inspiration for young people to take up teaching as a career.
Thirdly, the 35-hour week in many cases has provided an opportunity for teachers to down tools and leave their work unfinished at the end of each day. It is, quite frankly, impossible for a teacher to do his/her job in 35 hours a week. It is therefore not possible for a teacher to get on top of his/her work and this will and does lead to a high level of dissatisfaction in the job. There are probably more complaints about workload than anything else within the teaching profession, which is not at all surprising if they try to cram everything into 35 hours. This is then transmitted to the pupils who see and feel the dissatisfaction of their teachers and it is not surprising if they then do not see teaching as a desirable career.

Long holidays should, and do, compensate for long hours worked during term for those teachers who take no notice of the 35-hour week. (I realise that this is not necessarily a popular point of view within the teaching profession. I find it interesting that my primary school colleagues pay much less attention to the hours they work than secondary school colleagues.)

What is the impact of teacher shortages in certain parts of Scotland or in specific disciplines?

Having lived and worked in two rural areas in Scotland, I can testify that teacher shortages are having a profound impact on young people, particularly in secondary schools. As a parent this is something that particularly concerns me as my daughter has already suffered from a lack of specialist teaching in two subjects during her first two years in secondary school. It looks like this is set to continue next year.

I must also make the point that the 1 month notice period written into teachers’ contracts is a massive problem, particularly for rural schools seeking to maintain continuity of education for pupils. In my experience this nearly always leads to a gap in specialist teaching, sometimes stretching over several months.

What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?

As with any career, do the positives outweigh the negatives?

I will leave it for others to provide the list on both sides of this as I have gone on enough! However, I will just make one point about salary. In rural areas, teachers are amongst the best paid people, but the salaries are apparently still not good enough to attract people enough in. It is therefore necessary to consider incentives, such as special payments for remote areas.

There is also the issue of insufficient promotion opportunities and senior management posts are definitely not sufficiently rewarded and the salaries are therefore not sufficiently attractive to act as an aspiration for most teachers.

**ANONYMOUS 14**

Q1 What type of role do you have? Admin
Q2 Whereabouts do you work? Fife
Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?

I would not at present. It is becoming unmanageable. The responsibility of SMT increases and increases, and there are more and more child safety issues put their way, yet they spend so much time in class covering vacancies/sickness that it becomes impossible and stressful for everyone in school. Moral sinks and every term is a struggle to reach the end without being physically and mentally ill. There is very little satisfaction and a rise in parental complaints. Increasingly I find that I spend very little time doing the administration tasks and more and more trying to juggle staff so that we can cover classes, give pupils a good experience. My heart literally sinks when I discover a teacher is to be absent because I know I will not be able to get any supply to replace her/him no matter how hard I try.

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

NCCT roles and or maternity leave. NQT teachers who are put in schools who have absolutely no desire to be in them, or they are too far away from their homes, or they requested a preferred area at generics, which was disregarded. We have had three vacancies in the last 2 years due to this. Teachers interviewing through the generics, being sent to us, when there were posts available in the clusters areas nearer to home, and in some cases where they had done their probation. They then went on to successfully apply for new posts or being asked to apply for posts in schools they have done their probation in (that wanted to keep them). These teachers left before the October break and in both cases we could not fill their posts. There definitely needs to be more done to help teachers find posts in schools they wish to work in to stop them moving on very soon into an academic year. This needs to be done so teachers are settled and feel valued and so school staffing can be given a chance to be consistent throughout the term. In our case because of the area we are in it can be a challenge to find teachers who want to work in this area.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?

I believe that listening more to teachers preferences, or giving teachers preferences of areas and clusters prior to the generic interviews and trying as hard as possible to accommodate them would help a lot. They would be more inclined to do more after school if they were not travelling so far and would have a lot more energy for school and a better home life balance which would help make them less exhausted and more able and want to stay in the profession, as well as perhaps lowering staff sickness levels. As above, teachers would be less inclined to move on again quickly.

Looking carefully at workload and absense cover and the hours that some teachers have to work.

Leaving teachers/schools less open to aggressive behaviour on part of parents and pupils.

Making teachers feel valued.

Making more of distinction or addressing the parent power/child rights.
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 often have to deal with parents/pupils that the HT/DHT would deal with if they were not in class. Sometimes I have to deal with break and lunchtime issues are there are no staff other than us available to cover it. I find that the time I used to get after the pupils have gone home is not there any more as there are afterschool clubs to comply with active schools and health & wellbeing and also because of the increased nursery hours, there are many more parents and also problems relating to all sorts including pick ups and drop offs that cover nearly all my working day. I have many hours of unpaid work over and above my fulltime role.

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:

- DHT/HT cover for illness and NCCT cover and any CPD

No they are not working

- 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?)

  temporary again for the 3rd year running.

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?

I would say moral is very low although we are a resilient bunch. We come in every term thinking this will be different we will make it work we will be able to cover everything that is asked of us, but no matter how hard we try it never ever happens. A teacher will go off or we will have vacancies and everyone then has to step up a gear to cover them.

Key factors from my point of view is knowing that there will be no cover for accident illness. Knowing that no CPD can be undertaken as we cant get supply and it can only be done if the HT DHT is able to take a class, which very often they cant comit too as they have SW , bahviour management, parent problems to deal with as well as all the other council meetings they are expected to attend.

Also knowing that if HT/DHT is covering classes then all their normal workload will come to me to be redistributed/rearranged at a later date.

Knowing that I can advertise a post and no one will apply. Knowing for sure when we go to try and fill anything less than 4days we will have no applicants.
ANONYMOUS 15
Q1 What type of role do you have?
School Support Assistant
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
South Lanarkshire Council
Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
Yes, positive working environment, rewarding working with children.
Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Greatest challenges is recruitment of temporary supply/cover staff.
Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
Improved availability of supply/cover staff.
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)?
Yes, arriving early as good will to provide nursery cover due to short staff.
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?)
Reduction in work hours for support roles has a knock on effect, resulting in reallocation and distribution of work loads, which increases pressure on others.
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?
The majority are very good.

ANONYMOUS 16
Q1 What type of role do you have?
Resource Manager
Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
Falkirk Council
Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
Not at the moment – unrealistic expectations of the amount of work that one person can do. Support staff not valued by government as a vital requirement for efficient running of schools – numbers constantly being cut. Tight budgets so staffing numbers cut.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Not currently able to recruit admin staff – can only use redeployed staff from other services if vacancies arise. When admin staff leave they are not replaced due to the constant cutting of support staff numbers.

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
Increased support staff budget to allow proper recruitment of people with the high level of skills now required for the job.

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)?
If I do not have admin staff to do the required jobs then I need to do them myself, regardless of the number of hours that I have to work. Services need to be provided and standards maintained and that is ultimately my responsibility in school.

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?)

Constant reduction in Admin staffing levels mean that it is not possible to provide the same level of service.

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?
Morale is currently very low for both teaching and admin staff. Staff feel undervalued and overworked. The many changes to the curriculum impact just as heavily on the Admin staff as they do on the teachers.

Additional comments
The skills required for Admin within schools has changed dramatically over the last few years with the increase in the use of ICT. Pay hasn't kept pace with the skill levels required. Admin jobs in schools attract workers who want to have a term time job to fit in with their family life, but this attraction is being negated by the pay that is offered for the skill level and pressure of work so staff are not retained.
ANONYMOUS 17

Q1 What type of role do you have?
Senior Technician

Q2 Whereabouts do you work?
East Ayrshire Council

Q4 Would you recommend working at a school to friends? If so, why (and if not, why not)?
I would have 10 years ago, but not now. Financial constraints are making the job near impossible and declining standards in pupil behaviour and attitude is concerning. Also, the continual changes in courses and qualifications makes it hard to plan ahead with little continuity.

Q5 Which particular roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
Poor pay increase, little money to buy new equipment or specialised equipment

Q6 What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?
More money being made available to the school to use as it wishes rather being “red taped” for certain areas

Q7 Are there any roles or time you spend as part of your job that operate on a ‘goodwill’ basis, where this is directly as a result of lower than required number of staff due to vacancies (please give details)?
I help out with school football team in my own time for no pay and also help out on school trips

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?)

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?
Low due to financial constraints, we can’t even afford photocopying!

Additional comments
I have worked in schools now for near on 20 years and I cannot remember a time when morale throughout the whole school, teaching and non-teaching, has been so low. I work as a technician within a science department and we are having to use equipment that is near obsolete and falling to pieces because there is no money to buy replacements. I would not be exaggerating by saying that some of the
equipment being used comes for the 1970’s. Every year we are having to balance what chemicals we need to carry out now just the most essential of experiments instead of doing all like we used to. I really cannot over state how tight things have become. I would urge you to drop in to a school and see how bad things are, you would be shocked

**ANONYMOUS 18**

**Q1** What type of role do you have?
School Librarian

**Q2** Whereabouts do you work? Aberdeen

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

Once upon a time I would have. Now I am not so sure. There is considerably less money for day-to-day essentials / we have more high-tariff pupils and insufficient PSAs to support them, so all pupils lose out and all staff are more stressed / the SQA repeatedly fails to address teachers’ legitimate concerns / many parents do not support the school when their child is at fault and blame the teachers / IT infrastructure is insufficient / there has been a repeated failure on the part of successive Scottish governments to properly acknowledge and support the vital role played by school librarians.

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

Teachers

**Q6** What steps would improve recruitment and/or retention?

The SQA should be made to support teachers and remove all unnecessary bureaucratic burdens. Pay should increase, the teacher’s starting salary is inadequate. Teachers should be provided with at the very least adequate levels of support from technicians / PSAs and school librarians. There should be more opportunities for progression – the system now has far too few tiers compared with 10 years ago. The Scottish government should listen what school staff say and trust them to do their jobs properly – in almost all cases their concerns will be legitimate. Bureaucracy should be slashed and the money pumped into increasing per capita budgets for day-to-day essentials. Spending money on creating another level of governance in the form of regional boards is no solution. Spend the money at the chalk-face.

**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)?

**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?

**Additional comments**

It is essential to properly support literacy across the board– a myriad of international reports have proven that literacy is improved by secondary schools having professionally staffed school libraries.
“43% of Scottish children between 12 and 17 do not read for pleasure. 60% of Scottish prisoners lack basic literacy skills.”

Student teachers should be taught about the role of the school librarian.

It is high time to reinforce the COSLA standards of 1998 - *Standards for School Library Services in Scotland*. These have been eroded over time and that is a national disgrace. The current situation in Argyll and Bute is deplorable. Scotland’s children should not be subjected to a literacy postcode lottery. Secondary school library provision in Scotland used to be the envy of the rest of the UK due to our almost blanket provision of full-time professional staff, sadly that is no longer the case.


The latest initiative to try to lessen the attainment gap is laudable and necessary but schools lack basic funds for day-to-day essentials like textbooks, library books, photocopying etc. as well as “luxuries” such as author visits and fieldtrips.

Devolving more power to head teachers is all very well and good, but is it vital that this does not cause an even greater degree of postcode lottery provision than we have already – this should only be done hand-in-hand with strong national standards for staffing and funding.

**ANONYMOUS 19**

I saw your media publication about teacher training etc in Scotland and wanted to give my opinion.

I completed my degree as a mature student having left school in 4th year. I have been working as an Active Schools Coordinator for the past 3 years and was told by Head Teachers to look into teaching as a profession. However, when I did this I discovered that I would have to return to school to sit Nat 5 Maths and Higher English. With my job and young family I would realistically have to do this over two years before I even looked into applying for the PGDE course. Yet there seems to be such a shortage of teachers. I have had a chat with quite a number of people who are in the same sort of position - people who would make fantastic teachers but don't have the correct course work from school. I just feel that for primary teaching there should be a way where mature students could take a maths/English test or a short course through the summer or something that would allow them entry into the PGDE.

Personally, I would never have thought of being a teacher prior to having my own child and gaining my degree. Now I love seeing my child's development and the volunteers who deliver the Active Schools programme are taught about the curriculum for excellence and what we strive to achieve through the school and Active Schools partnership.