

Understanding the Many Roles and Responsibilities of a Teacher in Education



As a teacher, it can be frustrating and demoralising when people misrepresent or misunderstand your role. Many people think they know what the responsibilities of a teacher are— in the same way as they feel they understand the role of other public figures such as police officers and firefighters. But in reality, teaching as a profession has evolved well beyond the traditional stereotype. Teachers now have many responsibilities beyond lesson planning, teaching and attending parent’s evenings. The discrepancy in public awareness and the realities of daily life for teachers contributes to the low morale and feelings of being undervalued, which have resulted in a worrying shortage of teaching staff across schools in England. Teaching is easy, right? You deliver a few lessons, watch pupils play then enjoy the long school holidays. Not your experience of teaching? Let’s try to set the record straight. At Teacher Tapp, we believe that developing a wider understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a teacher is at the heart of the drive to help schools retain staff and reduce the number of people leaving the profession.

Why Is It Important to Develop a Wider Understanding of What

Teachers Do?

The secondary school population is growing fast and the government is facing [a serious shortage of qualified teachers](#) to fill school vacancies. Attracting and retaining talented and capable people in the profession is a crucial factor in addressing this issue. Developing a wider understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a teacher may attract people who otherwise would not have considered teaching as a career. In a recent Teacher Tapp poll, 74% of respondents said they knew “one or two” or “several” people who aren’t currently teachers who they thought would make a good teacher. Increasing the number of people entering the profession is necessary to cater for the growing student population, especially at the

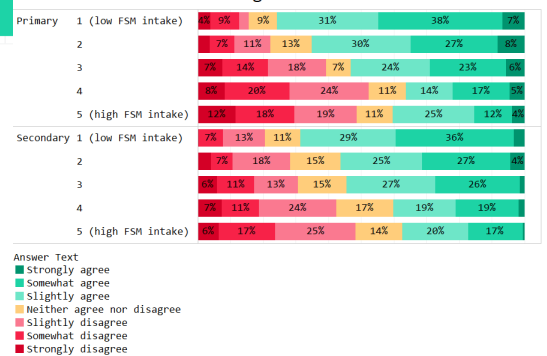
Equally, developing a shared understanding of what teachers really do may deter those for whom the profession is unsuitable. If an individual enters Initial Teacher Training (ITT) with misguided expectations of the role, they are more likely to leave before qualifying, resulting in a waste of valuable resources. Retaining experienced staff is as important as encouraging strong candidates to enter the profession. Many teachers are “burning out” and opting out of their careers. A common reason given is stress due to unrealistic expectations. This may be related to workload or a general feeling of being undervalued and unappreciated by parents, managers and society. When asked if the parents of their pupils have unrealistic expectations

Do you know someone who isn't in teaching but who you think would be a good teacher?

Yes - 1 or 2

No

The parents at our school have a good idea of our school's strengths and weaknesses



secondary level.

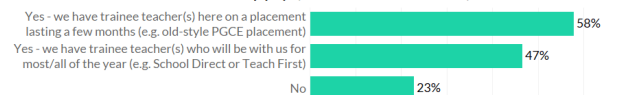
When parents or other groups operate under a misconception of the teacher’s role, both parties are likely to experience frustration, stress and dissatisfaction. Raising awareness and understanding of what school life is really like may help reduce such misunderstandings and help our teachers to feel valued and appreciated. Understanding the daily life of a teacher is important. What then, are the roles and responsibilities of a teacher besides teaching their classes?

Training and Supporting Early Career Teachers

Many teachers are involved in supporting trainee teachers. Almost all those we polled are involved in supporting early career teachers in some way. Three-quarters of schools currently

of them, 41% of teachers “agreed” or “strongly agreed”.

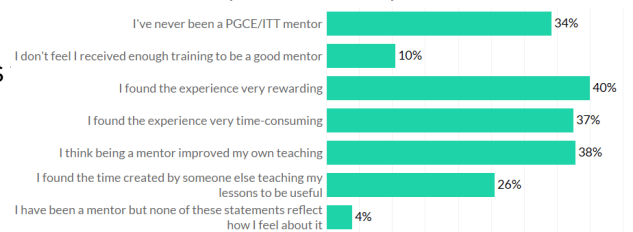
Does your school have any ITE trainee teachers right now? Please tick all that apply (consider all routes)



Question answered by 2,366 panellists on 22/01/2019

Supporting early career teachers is a crucial aspect of the teacher's role as this is the time that people are most likely to drop out. If the profession is to thrive and grow, new teachers must receive the training and guidance they need to succeed. Our Teacher Tapp poll shows that involving qualified teachers in training new members of the profession is beneficial for both individuals. When asked about their experience as a mentor, 40% of respondents said have some sort of trainee teacher in their school.

Have you been a PGCE/ITT mentor for a student before? If so, recall ONE of your most recent students and any all the boxes to describe how you felt about the process



Question answered by 2,272 panellists on 23/01/2019

And for one-in-five of you, a trainee teacher has

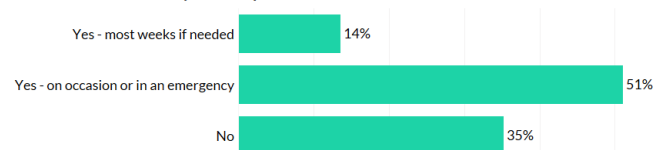
Mentoring could be helpful in both attracting and retaining teachers as it boosts the morale of existing staff and allows them to improve their own teaching while providing the essential support new teachers require at the start of their career. However, 37% commented that the experience was "very time consuming" and schools need to be careful to allow sufficient time and resources to enable teachers to fulfil this responsibility effectively.

Covering for Staff Absences

In the early 2000s, many teachers complained that covering classes was eradicating their time for planning. The unions saw to it that teachers' conditions were changed, so cover was "rarely" needed. It seems for many teachers, this is indeed the case, with 51% of teachers

Are you required to take cover lessons?

that they "found the experience very rewardin



However, the results showed substantial differences between primary and secondary teaching staff. In primary schools, Teaching Assistants (TAs) often provide the majority of cover. When asked "Are you required to take cover lessons?", 83% of primary teachers replied "No" compared to only 28% of secondary school teachers. And 22% of secondary teachers said they do cover "most weeks" compared to only 4 % of primary teachers. The increase in cover in secondary schools is a worrying trend when considered in the light of the vast number of teachers burning out and leaving the profession due to excessive workload and stress. If covering classes becomes a core teaching responsibility in secondary schools, this could harm staff retention levels.

Administrative Tasks

Teachers seem to have an ever increasing number of administrative tasks to manage on top of lesson planning, teaching and their many other responsibilities. We polled teachers on the

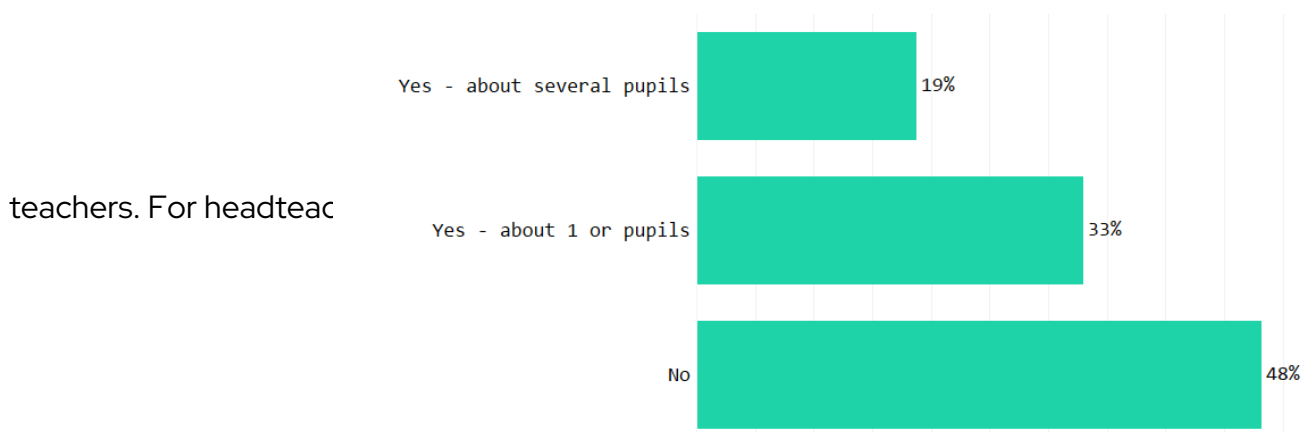
time they spend just reading and answering emails. 36% said they send an average of between five and ten emails per day. However, there was a significant difference in email use depending on whether respondents worked in a primary or secondary setting and what their role is. Our results show that 51% of secondary teachers send between five and ten emails per day and 9% send between 11 and 20 – compared to 23% and 0% respectively for primary

Assuming an average of three minutes to send an email and two minutes to read one, a teacher sending ten emails a day and reading 20 would be losing a day a week just to emails!

Monitoring Pupils' Mental Health and Wellbeing

Teachers are increasingly being called upon to monitor the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. We found half of teachers have raised at least one mental health issue about a

Have you raised a mental health concern about a pupil with a staff member who is senior to you in the last month?



Only 11% of teachers felt they should be responsible for improving children's mental health and yet this is an added responsibility currently placed on teachers. There is also a growing expectation for teachers to play an active role in raising awareness of issues central to a child's wellbeing. When polled about their confidence levels in supporting students with LGBT+ matters in school, the majority of staff answered positively, with 69% saying they feel at least slightly confident and 20% "strongly agreeing". However, 24% "neither agree nor disagree" or lacked confidence in supporting pupils in this way.

Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities – Time for a Change?

The above is certainly not an exhaustive list of all the roles and responsibilities of a teacher. Behaviour management, out-of-school events, Career Professional Development and many more responsibilities could be added to the list. If the national shortage of teachers is to be addressed, the government needs to attract and retain more teachers, which means ensuring the responsibilities and expectations placed on teachers are reasonable. Giving teachers a voice and developing a wider understanding of daily life for a teacher is an essential first step towards positive change.

What are your thoughts on the roles and responsibilities of a teacher? Make your voice heard by [downloading the Teacher Tapp app](#) and start contributing to daily surveys. Help us to make a positive change in schools.

