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Solving the Teacher Recruitment Crisis

Have you had a chance to read the articles on the recruitment crisis in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) this weekend ((6th April)? You may have been having a well-earned break from education. Here are two of the headlines: 'Where will we find a further 47,000 secondary teachers?' and 'Are we ready for teaching minus the teachers?'

The first article by Will Hazell calculates a shortfall of nearly 50K secondary teachers by 2024 as the number of primary children come through the system and swell the numbers of pupils in secondary population. Hazell points out that this means an increase of 22.5% in the number of teachers currently teaching in this sector. This does not take into account teachers leaving the profession and who will also have to be replaced.

Will Hazell's second article, which immediately follows the first, offers the suggestion that technology might be an answer in providing learners with independent learning software while the teacher focuses on children who need more support.

Scattered throughout Hazell's articles and elsewhere in this weekend's TES are a number of other suggestions on how to solve the 'Recruitment and Retention' crisis. Note the pairing of 'Recruitment' with 'Retention'. I will come back to this phrase shortly. Here are some of the suggestions:

- Reduce entry requirements for teacher training applicants
- Increase salaries
- Reduce workload
- Invite Primary teachers to teach Year 7 in Secondary schools

There is also now a regular advert in the TES, funded by the TES Institute, which claims that '...research suggests that there may be at least 120,000 teaching assistants who have a degree and who would have the motivation to train to become qualified teachers'. 'Expand your recruitment and retention strategy to include TAs and support staff', states the ad. There's that phrase again: 'recruitment and retention'.

So, why do I focus on this phrase? Because, simply, **there is no plan in place or funding or strategies or DfE units or government drives or anything else to RETAIN EXISTING STAFF IN SCHOOLS BY INVESTING IN THEIR WELLBEING, IMPROVING THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AND CREATING A SUPPORTIVE, OPEN SCHOOL COMMUNITY WHERE TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF WITH ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND STRESS ARE NOT SEEN AS WEAK AND UNABLE TO COPE.**

There is a Workload Unit at the DfE. While workload is a component of low teacher morale and burnout, reducing it, while important, is not the whole answer. Especially as there is no sign of the government reducing the relentless focus on results and 'standards' which, in conjunction with Ofsted inspections, is producing much of the excessive workload in the first place.

What we are doing when



we try to solve the recruitment crisis while ignoring strategies which improve the wellbeing of our teachers.

The most expensive version of the **Teach Well Toolkit** costs less than 16 days of supply cover. By focusing on retention so that teachers are happier and stay longer is a short-term investment which produces a long-term solution. **Bring it to the attention of your Headteacher, Governing Body or anyone who can make the financial decisions to make your job more manageable and your school a place you don't want to leave.** Go to www.teachwellalliance#teach-well-toolkit to find out more.

Meet me at the free seminar 'School Wellbeing' on 19th April organised by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) at **RSA House: 8 John Adam St, London WC2N 6EZ 16.30**. I will be joining **Jenny Hannay, Headteacher of Three Bridges School** and **Dani Lang, Headteacher of Brimsdown School**, in a panel discussion: **'Success Stories and Challenges'**. Jenny and Dani put wellbeing of staff at the centre of their schools. **Hear about the remarkable impact improving staff wellbeing has had on their schools' communities.** Book your place here: [Eventbrite](#)

Did you know?

We have an invitation-only Teach Well Alliance Community hosted on **Basecamp**. If you don't know Basecamp, you will soon get used to it. Join us there, share ideas and strategies, and get access to a growing library of articles and documents on wellbeing, both in education and in the workplace.

If you would like to be sent an invitation via email, contact me, Steve Waters, at steve@teachwellalliance.com

Next Newsletter: May 2018

The signs of burnout and what you can do about it



Basecamp

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