

From Primary Head teachers

23rd October 2019

Dear Deputy Ward,

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Review

Thank you for your recent letter to Primary Head Teachers inviting us to submit our views to the panel in regards a forthcoming review on Teacher Recruitment and Retention.

We understand that under the Terms of Reference you wish to gather the views of stakeholders regarding the key challenges faced in recruitment and retention. We would like to submit the following statement in regard to the above.

Head teachers believe that there are multiple reasons why teachers are currently motivated to remain within the profession. The vocational job is a rewarding, interesting, challenging job and every day is different. Teachers have a desire to develop themselves and continue to learn and teaching allows them the space and creativity to do this. As teachers we are privileged to work alongside families and children and make a difference and for many that is the reason they enter and remain in the teaching profession.

We have a strong and committed workforce across the island in the primary sector and posts are generally being filled. Newly Qualified Teacher support is good but better funding for the schools to enable NQT's to be released to attend vital training sessions would ensure that NQT's are given the very best start in their career and the school is able to cover their absence with high quality cover. The Jersey Graduate Teacher Training Programme has been introduced into Primary Schools and we look forward to working with these colleagues enabling them to have the support they need as they enter the profession. Teachers need quality time to engage in Professional Development opportunities and schools need to be funded adequately for this.

There are many challenges that affect recruitment and retention in Jersey, the cost of housing and cost of living are obvious ones. Our HR systems for recruitment are restrictive; the inefficiencies in the system have prevented some applications and the process wastes a significant amount of professional time. Head teachers lack autonomy and the VAR/ Talentlink process take too long and jobs remain unfilled whilst paperwork is being completed. There are frustrations over declaring headcount and how many FTE staff work in the schools rather than looking at the needs of the school and the children in the community. The Teaching Supply list is not accurate and reflects a different picture to the one we, as school leaders, see in schools.

The workload of teachers and the pressure of expectations from schools, CYPES and parents do have detrimental effect on the wellbeing of our teachers. There is not enough access to outside agencies or services offered by CYPES for us to be able to meet the ambitious goal of full inclusion as set out in the Department Inclusion Policy (May 2016) With better support around us, teachers could refer families to the "Right help, Right time" approach and be able to focus on children's learning within school. We need further funding and support for children with additional needs.

Budget constraints within the schools are leading to a resource shortage and teachers have to be even more creative with the resources that they have available to them to support their teaching. We have limited administration support in school; Jersey schools do not have the Business Manager model that UK schools currently operate whereby administrative tasks

such as HR, Health and Safety, GDPR information and other tasks are completed by administrators leaving school leaders and teachers to focus on their core purpose of Teaching and Learning. We need funding for Business Managers to ensure that the administrative tasks are not completed by teachers and school leaders. Thus allowing more professional time spent with children and improving outcomes.

There are limited opportunities to progress within a primary school; supplementary points for areas of responsibility are restricted within a primary school. There is a significant difference between Secondary School supplementary allowances and Primary School allowances which need addressing to ensure Primary teachers have the same opportunities available to them. Opportunities for career progression in schools is limited to a narrow flight path in terms of class teaching/school leadership/Deputy Head/Head teacher with additional specialist responsibilities being included in these roles rather than the opportunities for teachers to explore specific specialist leadership roles. For example in the UK schools are funded to develop the role of "Special Educational Needs Coordinator" which has career progression and is a leadership role in its own right - given specific training and qualifications and is often a non-class based position working alongside the Head teacher. In the majority of schools in Jersey this role is one of many responsibilities held by the Deputy Head.

There is substantial commitment from Senior Leaders in schools to support staff in whatever way we can. Schools have staff well-being plans and policies in place; we are flexible and consider the needs of the staff when making decisions. However, some issues outlined above are out of the remit of school leaders.

If we are unable to recruit and retain our dedicated staff we are in danger of losing quality teachers. This will, of course, have a detrimental effect on the quality of provision for pupils. It will also add pressure on already stretched colleagues and school leaders as we try to fill gaps. Research has shown that investment in Human Capital improves organisational performance leading to a greater efficiency and better outcomes for all. We need funding to ensure that schools have the appropriate resources to deal effectively with the challenges in our communities today. The HR system needs to support us to be as effective as we can be in recruiting top class educators to and within Jersey.