

A CAREER IN TEACHING

The UK government has just published a report on the future of secondary-school teaching (pupils aged 11-16), and the conclusion of the report is that many secondary schools now face great difficulties in finding people who want to be teachers. Since the 1980s, the number of graduates who say they would 'seriously consider' teaching as a career has fallen sharply, from 64% in 1982 to just 17% today. The report suggests that the government needs to do something to encourage more intelligent young graduates to become teachers. The main downside of secondary teaching, according to the report, is the low salary. Earnings in teaching are much lower than in many other jobs, and this means that fewer and fewer young people decide to be teachers. Joanne Manners, 24, is a good example: 'I graduated in maths last year, and I was thinking of doing a teacher-training course to become a maths teacher. But when I looked into the details, it became clear that teaching isn't a very lucrative job these days. I saw I could earn twice as much if I worked in marketing or advertising, and so I decided not to become a teacher'.

However, it's not just about the money. The survey concluded that another reason why people don't want to be teachers is that some teenagers behave very badly in school. A lot of schools have problems with discipline, and it seems clear that children do not have the same respect for teachers as in the past. Dave Hallan, an accountant from London, says: 'When I was at school, we were taught to look up to our teachers, and to do what they told us. No one would ever disobey the teacher or be rude to him or her. But now, this has completely changed, and it is difficult to control the pupils in class. I think parents should have stricter rules with their children at home and also teach their children to have more respect for teachers.'

Brian Jones, who works in a secondary school in London, says: 'I love teaching, it's my passion. I've been a secondary school teacher of Spanish for ten years now, and although it's a very demanding job, it's very satisfying. When I see my students passing their Spanish exams or singing Spanish pop songs, it makes me feel so proud.' So what does Brian think the government should do to encourage more people to become teachers? He answers: 'My view is that the government should reduce the burden of work on teachers by hiring more teaching assistants. I always find that I have too much work to do, and I always have to do a lot of paperwork. I have to stay at work late, and this is really bad for my family. I've got two young kids and I often don't get home until after they have gone to bed. My work-life balance is terrible. If the government employed more teaching assistants, it would make teaching a much easier and less stressful job, and more people would be interested in it'.

The report is clear that the problem is serious. It says the government should raise teachers' pay significantly to reduce the difference with workers in other professions. The report also suggests that the government could launch a publicity campaign to show the positive sides of teaching to young people. Another solution is to set a maximum number of hours per week that teachers can work, in order to reduce stress. These solutions can improve the poor image of secondary teaching and increase the number of young people who want to become teachers in the future.

PART ONE: DECIDE WHETHER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE, FALSE OR NOT GIVEN ACCORDING TO THE TEXT.

1. There aren't nearly as many people who want to be teachers as there used to be.
a. True b. False c. Not given
2. Joanne decided not to become a teacher because she would earn half what she would if she worked in marketing.
a. True b. False c. Not given
3. According to Dave Hallan, parents aren't responsible for their kids' behaviour.
a. True b. False c. Not given
4. Brian's work-life balance would be better if he could reduce the amount of work he has.
a. True b. False c. Not given
5. Money shouldn't be the most important thing when people choose a professional career.
a. True b. False c. Not given
6. The government's efforts will improve the quality of teaching in general.
a. True b. False c. Not given

PART TWO: CHOOSE THE BEST OPTION ACCORDING TO THE TEXT.

7. The main cause for the lack of secondary teachers is that
a. schools aren't attractive enough for young graduates
b. the most intelligent graduates don't want to be teachers
c. young graduates look for jobs that are better paid than teaching
d. pupils between 11 and 16 are the most difficult to teach
8. Lack of discipline in schools
a. isn't such a serious problem
b. has always been a problem
c. is the teachers' fault
d. is more common now
9. What does Brian feel proud of?
a. making his students feel proud of themselves
b. seeing his students make progress
c. teaching Spanish songs to his students
d. helping his students with Spanish exams
10. According to Brian,
a. teachers should be paid more and work less
b. assistants would make a teacher's work easier
c. there should be a more flexible schedule
d. the government should let teachers work from home
11. What's the goal of the advertising campaign?
a. to let people see the nice aspects of a career in teaching
b. to inform the people of the raise in salary for teachers
c. to encourage parents to be stricter with their kids
d. to show teachers how to reduce stress in the workplace
12. If the government adopts these measures,
a. teaching will continue to have a poor image
b. teachers will retire at an earlier age
c. pupils will study fewer hours per week
d. more people will want to be secondary teachers