

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee

ST 25

Inquiry into Supply Teaching

Evidence from : Bridgend Federation of Head Teachers

Consultation questions

Question 1 – What are your views on whether there is a prevalence in the use of supply teachers on a planned and unplanned basis?

Throughout Bridgend there appears to be more supply teachers used in a well planned way to cover non contact time for teachers in the school to undertake management roles and training events. Some supply teachers are used for sickness. However, more and more Cover supervisors and HLTAs are being used to cover sickness. If supply teachers cover sickness, staff within the school have access to planning for the particular class and ensure that the supply teacher has an understanding of the curriculum that is planned for that day. Many teachers feel it would be very helpful to have additional costings in the budget to allow for a school to employ a teacher to fulfil the role of 'supply' to cover absences for whatever reason. This would mean the teachers knows the school and knows the children and can be utilised in a variety of ways.

If you believe that this results in problems (for example, for schools, pupils or teachers), how do you think they could be resolved?

With the prevalence of training courses teachers are now required to attend, it does cause a problem for parents who often complain that classes are being taught by teachers who do not know their children and do not know the school. However, it is important that our teachers receive the relevant training to deliver the many initiatives required of them. Schools are very conscious that the supply teachers have not had the same quality or quantity of training. That is an issue.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)	
<i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	x
<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	
<p>Question 2 – What are your views on the circumstances in which supply teachers are used for example, the types of classes they cover; the types of learning activities which take place under the supervision of supply teachers; whether they are qualified to teach relevant subjects?</p>	
<p>Generally school staff are very careful about the activities left for supply teachers. It is important to maximise learning opportunities. If supply cover is not deployed correctly then that is a management issue. Behaviour issues can be a problem and it is vital that all classes are covered by quality personnel. What can happen is a member of the school team will cover the class of a more challenging class and the supply cover will be given that person's class. That ensures that no teaching time is lost. In the primary sector it is important that we get experts. That is why schools tend to receive CVs from the agencies and build up a relationship with a particular supply teacher who we know has experience of primary education and can offer expertise in a particular area. If a supply teacher does not manage a class in the way the school expects, then the supply teacher can be removed and the agency does not charge for that person.</p>	
<p>If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?</p>	
<p>The best way to resolve this issue would be to expand a school's budget to enable a school to employ a floating teacher that will be part of the school team, will receive ongoing training and is a quality individual able to provide quality education for the children.</p>	

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<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	
Question 3 – What are your views on the impact of the use of supply teachers on the outcomes for pupils (including any impact on pupil behaviour)?	
<p>Unsatisfactory supply teachers can impact greatly on a class. Quality personnel are key. When a good teacher covers a class for a day, then planning is covered and behaviour allows for positive learning to take place. However, if there is unsatisfactory teacher sessions of leaning can be lost. Schools remove the unsatisfactory teacher, inform the agency and will not employ that person again. Very often work has to be redone in these circumstances, pages ripped out of books and assessment re-done. A wasted lesson. Children's behaviour can impact on the school if the classroom management skills of the teacher are poor.</p>	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
<p>Again the key is knowing the person employed by the school and developing positive working relationships. Schools spend a lot of money on supply cover and it is vital that we get value for money. It is important too that we work closely with agencies to enable them to build up an understanding of our requirements. Agencies will work with you. They have to understand what constitutes a good teacher and will try hard to meet the needs of a particular school.</p>	
How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)	
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<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	
Question 4 – What are your views on the Continuous Professional Development of supply teachers and the potential impact of the National Professional Learning Model?	
<p>Supply teachers do not receive the up to date and relevant training to any of our current initiatives if they do not have a length of time in a particular school. It is very difficult for them to access training. Schools are very busy places and unfortunately their needs are not paramount if they are only with a school for a few days. Professional development opportunities are more likely to happen with our established supply teachers as they can be with a school for a length of time. In that circumstance they attend in service training days and staff meetings.</p>	
<p>If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?</p>	
<p>Providing funding to allow schools to employ people who can be a floating teacher and engage in on going CPD. It is impossible for supply teachers to attend training days themselves as they are not then working and not earning money.</p>	
<p>How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)</p>	
<i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	x
<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	

Question 5 – What are your views on performance management arrangements for supply teachers?

Again a very difficult aspect of school life to achieve for supply teachers. The only way it could be done would be through an agency, who would employ a teaching expert and undertake the task with the teachers they have on role. That would be very difficult to achieve.

If you think there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

Very difficult to resolve. Only be possible if the teacher was in a school for a length of time.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

<i>1 – This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	x
<i>2 – This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 – This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 – Not a problem.</i>	

Question 6 – Do you consider that local authorities and regional consortia have sufficient oversight of the use of supply teachers?

No one from our Consortium has ever asked a Bridgend Head teacher about supply teachers. We tend to ask other head teachers who is good, who has performed well in their school. We discuss their strengths and if appropriate to us we employ.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

The consortium issue is not a problem.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

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<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	x
Question 7 – Are you aware of any local and regional variation in the use of supply teachers and if so, are there any reasons for this?	
<p>We are not aware of any variations in the use of supply teachers. The only difference appears to be that Cover Supervisors are being used more often from in house to cover sickness. It is now a more planned approach to supply teachers for training and management time.</p>	
<p>If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?</p>	
<p>We do not believe this is an issue for us in Bridgend.</p>	
<p>How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)</p>	
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<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	x
Question 8 – Do you have any views on supply agencies and their quality assurance arrangements?	
<p>We do value the role of the agencies as it frees up a great deal of Head Teacher time. We also value the work that they do with us to match our requirements and to provide a quality service. However, there should be some work done on determining a flat rate for teachers as it does vary from agency to agency. They ensure quality assurance in all safeguarding matters. They provide CVs. All have an interview with them. They do follow up for our views on staff. They</p>	

will not charge if we remove a teacher from a class. They also follow up for reasons as to why we will not employ a teacher again. However, we do not think this information is circulated. We as heads tell each other, but we do not believe this is something the agency does.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

This could be a problem if heads did not talk to each other. However this is not the case and poor quality teachers are not often employed as supply teachers here.

Very important that agencies provide the same rate of pay. Some teachers get far less than others for a full days work.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

1 - This is a key, urgent problem.

x

2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.

3 - This is a minor problem

4 - Not a problem.

Question 9 – Are you aware of any specific issues relating to Welsh medium education? If so, what are they?

There are problems with both supply teachers and cover supervisors and LSOs in the welsh medium sector. Colleagues tell me it is a very difficult process until they have established one person that they use most of the time. HR in Bridgend are currently building a pool of welsh medium supply teachers. At the moment of writing welsh medium colleagues only know the quality of 2 of the personnel on the list. They are unaware of the others. 2 is obviously not enough. Long term cover in welsh medium schools is always a problem. The good staff are employed very quickly. In general the quality of welsh speaking staff is not good, both in terms of use of the language and classroom management.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

We need more welsh speaking colleagues available.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

1 - This is a key, urgent problem.

x

2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.

3 - This is a minor problem

4 - Not a problem.

Question 10 – If you had to make one recommendation to the Welsh Government from all the points you have made, what would that recommendation be?

Provide additional funding in budgets that would allow an additional member of staff to be appointed on the school team that could act as cover. That would mean they know the school, the children and the staff and can provide a quality education for our children.

Question 11 – Do you have any other comments or issues you wish to raise that have not been covered by the specific questions?