

problems solved

Children running wild? Inspectors waiting around every corner? Ready to quit? Teaching expert Hazel Bennett can help...



Hazel Bennett has been a teacher for over 30 years in inner-city, fresh start and leafy suburban schools. She has been a class teacher in every age-group in the primary school and taught in secondary and special schools as well. Hazel has also been a supply and peripatetic teacher.

Dear Hazel

After several happy years in a school, I am leaving at the end of this term to become a supply teacher. I am leaving wholly because the new head has made life difficult for me and others. I am very tempted to tell him, just before I leave, all my reasons for going. I have even been advised to write to the governors outlining my reasons. Is this likely to cause me problems in the future?

David

Dear David

When your happy working life is disrupted, it is natural to react like this, but I urge caution.

At some time in the future, you will need a reference for a full-time post and will probably be required to get one from this head. If you have left ill-feeling behind you, this head could, and probably would, prevent you from being shortlisted. It is better to hold your head up, look confident and keep your path smooth for the future.

Hazel

Dear Hazel

My LSA has been off school for a long time, but I am still under pressure to complete targets and am feeling the strain. What can I do?

Helen

Dear Helen

Do not struggle on. You must speak frankly to the head or deputy. Tell them exactly how much LSA time you have missed. Emphasise that the children need that support and that it is impossible for you to fulfil your targets without it. Point out all the difficulties - wide ranging abilities, special needs, children in early stages of learning English, pupils needing one-to-one support. Point out that it is impossible for you to be doing two things at once. Ask them to get you temporary support until the LSA returns, and point out that the targets were set when you expected to have her time. If they cannot provide support then ask them to at least give you more time to fulfil the targets.

Let them know that this is causing you stress, because they are obliged to try to protect you from that.

Hazel



Dear Hazel

My headteacher is always pushing me to progress with my career, but all I want to do is be a good classroom teacher. Is this a bad thing? If not, how can I focus on being a good classroom teacher without disappointing the head?

Anthony

Dear Anthony

It is a good thing to be an enthusiastic classroom teacher rather than seek promotion. Good class teachers give stability to a school, and security to pupils who like familiar faces.

Explain to your head that teaching gives you more pleasure and job satisfaction than administration and paperwork.

To impress your head with top quality teaching, go on a course run by Osiris Education (www.osiriseducational.co.uk). You will come back fizzing with lots of great ideas to make your lessons exciting.

Try to put an element of fun into each lesson – a starter or plenary which is a game, a weekly maths teaser. For a creative writing lesson, take digital photos of groups of children, strip away the background and stick the picture of the children onto a background of a desert, spaceships, volcano or land of dinosaurs. It gets their creative juices flowing.

Show them some estate agents' blurbs. Then ask them to write one for a house of the period you are studying in history. When your head sees that the pupils love your lessons, he will be impressed.

Hazel

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

If you're looking for advice and would like to pick Hazel's brain, please email your question to inbox@teachprimary.com