

Where are all the male teachers?

Dr Joshua Fullard

Summary

- Since 2010 teachers' pay has fallen by about 13 percent in real terms. During the same period average earnings in England have increased by around two percent
- Today less people are interested in perusing a career in teaching and more teachers are leaving
- Men's occupational choice is generally more sensitive to financial considerations than women
- The decline in the relatively attractiveness of teaching has caused i) a decline in the pool of male graduates interested in pursuing a career in teaching and ii) an increase in the likelihood for male teachers to leave the profession, relative to their female counterparts

Methodology

Using 12 years of School Workforce Census data (2010-2022) we investigate the change in the number of male classroom teachers and the proportion of classroom teachers who are male as well as the differences by region, Ofsted rating and pupil disadvantage.

Key findings

- Today the proportion of secondary school teachers who are male remains at a record low (35 percent)
- The proportion of schools without a male classroom teacher has increased over the last 12 months – almost one in three state funded primary schools do not have a single male classroom teacher today
- In five regions the proportion of schools without a male teacher has increased. Most notably the West Midlands – up from 22.9 percent last year to 25.6 percent today
- Schools in Special Measures are less likely to have a male classroom teacher

- There are two local authorities where half of the primary schools do not have a male classroom teacher (Rutland and Northumberland)
- Areas with more disadvantaged pupils are less likely to have a school without a male classroom teacher

Author's main message

We have observed a general decline in the number of men in the school workforce – particularly among white male teachers. Worryingly, these trends are getting worse. The proportion of secondary school teachers who are male remains at a record low and the proportion of schools in England without a male classroom teacher has increased in both primary schools and secondary schools over the last 12 months.

While attracting men into teaching is important for purposes of diversity and representation it is also important for meeting recruitment targets for STEM subjects. In the short run, if policymakers want to meet recruitment targets for subjects such as physics and maths, they are going to need to recruit more men because the pool of potential subject specific teacher is predominately male.

To attract a wider pool of potential teachers' and retain existing teachers the profession needs to become more attractive. A pay rise of over 10 percent and policies related to reducing teaching working hours and improving school leadership would be a good place to start.

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References

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