

Primary Teacher

Introduction

As a Primary Teacher you will teach children who are usually aged between 5 and 11. You'll teach most subjects to one mixed ability class. The work includes preparing and planning lessons, marking work, writing reports, and going to meetings and parents' evenings.

Also known as

- Teacher, Primary School



Work Activities

As a Primary School Teacher, you will teach children aged between 5 and 11 (or a limited age group within this range).

You'll cover a wide range of subjects. They usually teach one class of children of roughly the same age, but with widely differing abilities. 'Mixed ability' groups need a variety of teaching methods, enabling the children to learn at different speeds.

Your teaching methods might include small group work, projects, learning through experience, and the use of audio-visual materials, interactive whiteboards, the internet and online learning games.

Using a mixture of activities you will stimulate interest, learning and imagination, helping your pupils to develop a variety of skills. You will carefully plan your teaching so that it meets the needs of pupils with differing learning styles and needs.

Other activities include:

- Preparing and planning lessons.
- Marking work and giving feedback.
- Monitor and report on the progress of students.
- Creating or adapting lesson resources.
- Going to staff meetings and parents' evenings.
- Identifying underachieving pupils and giving extra support.

Primary teachers might work in partnership with teaching assistants, supervising their work.

They also take the children on visits to places of educational interest.

Personal Qualities and Skills

As a Primary Teacher, you'll need:

- The ability to inspire, encourage and motivate the children.
- Communication skills.
- Planning and preparation skills.
- The ability to maintain discipline and deal with challenging behaviour.
- Practical skills.
- The ability to remain calm and patient.
- Plenty of energy, stamina and a sense of humour.
- Creative skills to find activities that interest and stimulate learning.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

Teachers in the state education sector are paid on a scale according to their qualifications, experience and responsibilities. The highest salaries are available in inner London schools.

The pay rates (per year) below are approximate:

- Unqualified teachers are typically paid in the range of £17,000 to £27,000 a year
- Qualified teachers are typically paid in the range of £23,000 to £29,500 a year
- With experience this can rise to £36,500 to £48,000 a year

Teachers with management responsibility can receive a higher salary than this.

Hours of work

Teachers normally work from 8:30 am or 9 am to 3:30 pm or 4 pm, Monday to Friday. However, most teachers work extra hours - marking work, preparing lessons and going to meetings. They often have to work in the evenings and at weekends to prepare lessons and mark work.

Where could I work?

Employers are state and private schools.

There are also opportunities to teach in other countries.

Some teachers supplement their income by teaching privately, marking national exams or writing textbooks.

In Wales there is high demand for Welsh-medium education, so if you plan are a first or second language Welsh speaker, you could improve your prospects of obtaining a teaching post by training to teach through the medium of Welsh.

You could also get financial support through a Welsh-medium incentive scheme. Check with your course provider.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised by local authorities and in the local and national press, including The Guardian and The Times Educational Supplement (TES). There are also job boards, such as eTeach.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

To become a Teacher, you need to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) through initial teacher education (ITE). There are several ITE routes.

In Wales there will be new professional standards for students starting their ITE programme from September 2019

Work Experience

Firstly, training providers and employers will want to see evidence you have the required skills and motivation to succeed as a Teacher. To achieve this you may need to have some sort of experience of working with children/students of a relevant age. A minimum of two weeks experience is sometimes required.

But how do you get work experience in a school or college? Here are some possible answers:

- Speak to any school based contacts you might have e.g. family or friends.
- Speak to schools directly and ask them if you can observe a class or shadow a teacher
- Join a School Experience Programme (SEP). This is aimed at final year students and graduates. School placements of one to ten days can be arranged
- You may be able to gain vital experience by working in a support role in a school, e.g. Laboratory Technician, Teaching Assistant, Learning Mentor.
- Work as a Voluntary Mentor. There are opportunities for people to work on a one-to-one basis with students,

helping them in their school life. This would be great experience for any would-be teacher.

Undergraduate

It's possible to achieve QTS through a BEd or BA/BSc degree with QTS. Primary education degrees with QTS sometimes allow you to specialise in a particular subject.

Postgraduate

Most postgraduates take a PGCE in primary education. Some primary education PGCEs allow you to specialise in a particular subject. Courses are usually one-year full-time. Some two-year, part-time courses are available (although not in every subject). You can apply through UCAS Teacher Training or directly to the training provider. There are incentives of up to £20,000 for graduates with certain degrees who want to train to be a teacher in Wales.

A great way to get into this career is through an internship. Take a look at our information article 'Internships', for more details.

There is also the employment-based School Direct scheme: you'll train while working in a school. The expectation is that you'd go on to work in the school or group of schools where you trained, although there's no guarantee of employment at the end of your training. This does not apply in Wales.

In England, you can also train in a school after your degree through school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT). These programmes are delivered by groups of neighbouring schools and colleges and often aim to meet local teaching needs.

In Wales, you can train whilst employed at a maintained school through the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) but places are limited and subject to local recruitment needs.

Also in Wales, all candidates for teacher training need to have Grade B in English Language and Maths. Students training to teach through the medium of Welsh will also need a GCSE grade C or above in Welsh (first language).

Teach First is a charity that recruits and supports graduates to teach in schools in low-income communities in a number of UK regions. The programme takes two years to complete.

Training

Once employed, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) must complete a three-term induction period, usually within a single school year.

Progression

There are opportunities for Teachers to move into teacher training, leadership roles, advisory work, educational research or schools inspection.

Teachers can become heads of department, heads of year, or co-ordinators of special educational needs or careers guidance.

Rehabilitation of Offenders

This career is an exception to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that you must supply information to an employer about any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, if they ask you to.

Qualifications

All candidates for primary teacher training need GCSEs (or recognised equivalent qualifications) at grade C or above in English Language, Mathematics and a science subject.

In Wales, all candidates for teacher training need to have Grade B/6 in English Language and/or Welsh, and Maths. Primary teachers also need GCSE in science at grade C/4 or above

Students training to teach through the medium of Welsh will also need a GCSE grade C or above in Welsh (first language).

If you don't have the GCSEs that are usually needed, you might be able to sit a pre-entry equivalency test; you should contact individual course providers to discuss your situation before making your application.

To enter a degree in a subject that's relevant to the primary National Curriculum, you'll usually need 2/3 A levels and 5 GCSEs at grade C/4 and above. The subjects you'll need will depend on what the degree subject is.

Alternatives to A levels include:

- BTEC Level 3 qualifications
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma
- Welsh Baccalaureate.

However, course requirements vary, so please check prospectuses carefully.

For entry to a primary education degree with Qualified Teacher Status (BEd or BA/BSc) in a specialist area, you might need an A level or equivalent in a related subject.

To enter a PGCE, you'll need a degree in a subject that's relevant to the primary National Curriculum. Some PGCE courses allow you to specialise in a particular subject. For entry, you might need a degree, or at least an A level, in the specialist subject or a related area. For courses specialising in languages, universities will usually accept native speakers or candidates with lots of experience of using the language.

In Wales, you need a degree that is relevant to primary education.

Some universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to 1 A-level.

Adult Opportunities

Skills/experience

To enter teacher training courses, you'll usually need to have at least observed some classes in a primary school. For some courses, you'll need paid or voluntary work experience in a primary classroom, or other relevant experience with children.

Courses

If you don't have the qualifications you need to enter a degree course, you might be able to start one after completing a college or university Access course. You don't usually need any qualifications to start an Access course, although you should check this with the course provider.

There are several two-year, part-time PGCE courses.

Distance learning

Some PGCE courses are available on a flexible learning basis. For example, you might be able to train by distance learning in combination with classroom-based teaching practice and campus study.

Employment-based training

Instead of going to university to do a PGCE, graduates can follow an employment-based route. This is where you train in a school. Employment-based routes include School Direct, school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) and the scheme offered by Teach First. For more information, please see 'Entry Routes and Training'.

Funding

For funding information, take a look at the GOV.UK website, or Student Finance Wales if living in Wales.

Further Information

Contacts

- **UCAS Teacher Training**
Website: www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/teacher-training
- **Teach First**
Website: www.teachfirst.org.uk
- **Department of Education Northern Ireland**
Northern Ireland Enquiries
Email: DE.DEWebMail@education-ni.gov.uk
Website: www.deni.gov.uk
- **General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland)**
Scottish enquiries
Email: gtcs@gtcs.org.uk
Website: www.gtcs.org.uk
- **GOV.UK**
UK government services and information
Website: www.gov.uk
- **Teach in Scotland**
Scottish enquiries
Email: teaching@infoscotland.com
Website: www.teachinginscotland.com
- **Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol**
Information on Higher Education courses and scholarships through the medium of Welsh
Email: gwybodaeth@colegcymraeg.ac.uk
Website: www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk
- **Welsh Government Education and Skills Department**
Email: customerhelp@gov.wales
Website: www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en
- **Mudiad Meithrin**
Email: post@meithrin.co.uk
Website: www.meithrin.co.uk
- **Student Finance Wales**
Welsh enquiries
Tel: 0845 6028845
Website: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk
- **People Exchange Cymru (PEC)**
Public sector recruitment portal for Wales
Email: peopleexchange@cymru@gov.wales
Website: www.peopleexchange@cymru.org.uk/home
- **Discover Teaching - Wales**
Website: www.discoverteaching.wales/
- **Education Workforce Council Wales**
Website: www.ewc.wales

Related Careers

- Nursery Nurse
- NVQ Assessor
- School Lunchtime Supervisor
- History Teacher

- Geography Teacher
- Modern Foreign Languages Teacher
- Teaching Assistant
- Music Teacher
- English Teacher
- Maths Teacher
- Science Teacher
- Education Welfare Officer
- Playworker
- Special Educational Needs Teacher
- Art and Design Teacher
- Design and Technology Teacher
- Early Years Teacher
- Physical Education Teacher
- Secondary Teacher
- Training Manager
- Higher Education (HE) Lecturer
- School Business Manager
- Teacher of English as a Foreign Language
- Lecturer
- Teacher
- Welsh Teacher
- Nursery Assistant
- Headteacher