

TEACHERS TURN TO YOUTUBE TO RECRUIT 6,600 MORE SCIENCE TEACHERS

The British public has an outdated view of what goes on in the nation's science classes that could threaten future science teacher recruitment, according to a poll released by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). In response, teachers themselves are hosting science classes on Youtube to show the reality of teaching today.

When asked what they thought about science classes, only 17 per cent of 1000 adults polled described them as 'enjoyable' and only 28 per cent think science teaching is interesting. Fifty seven per cent of respondents believed lessons could be improved by showing how science is applied outside the classroom. The public also condemned science equipment as outdated with only 16 per cent describing the equipment as 'modern'.

But in a campaign called 'Your Science', launched today, the TDA is promoting a different view as part of its drive to recruit more science teachers. And teachers across the country are challenging the public's view of science in schools. A video showcase hosted on www.youtube.com/tdacampaign shows five real and creative school science classes from 'screaming jelly babies' to fluids dancing to a bass amplifier. The most popular experiment will be carried out on a massive scale at the TDA's Train to Teach recruitment events in 2009.

Science teacher recruitment is also improving sharply. The latest figures from the TDA show that the number of trainee science teachers will reach 3,670, exceeding the Government's target by two per cent for 2008/2009. The number of mainstream trainee physics teachers has increased by seven per cent on last year, chemistry by 10 per cent and biology by a further 14 per cent.

Overall there were 31,272 new and expected entrants to mainstream initial teacher training (ITT). With an additional 6,950 expected entrants through employment-based teacher training programmes, the total number of new entrants for 2008/2009 is expected to reach over 38,200, exceeding the Government target of 36,845.

Graham Holley, Chief Executive of the TDA, said: "The recruitment figures overall are very encouraging. And for the first time ever, the TDA has beaten its annual recruitment target for science. This is fantastic news and a testimony to the success of our recruitment campaign. It is great to see that we are attracting a record number of science trainees, and that our hard work is paying off.

“However, we must not be complacent. Over the next two years we need to recruit an additional 6,600 science teachers to meet the expected demand from schools. To do this, it is vital that the TDA continues to invest resources in attracting new and exciting talent to the profession. We need to encourage the best science graduates to become teachers, and this is what we will continue to do with the launch of today’s campaign.”

Maggie Philbin, science broadcaster and former *Tomorrow’s World* presenter, said: “Tomorrow’s scientists, engineers and innovators will come from today’s science classes. This is why the teaching of the subject is so crucial to us as a nation. There is a huge amount of inventiveness and curiosity in every young child and you could be the one to harness this potential and give young people the confidence to develop their passion into a career. The poll showed that 54 per cent of people see the study of science as crucial to overcoming the environmental challenges of the future, and 52 per cent see it as central to keeping the UK economically competitive. I’d urge anyone with a passion for science to consider the impact they could make in today’s classrooms.”

Diana Garnham, Chief Executive of the Science Council, added: “The Science Council knows that young people worry about issues such as climate change and human health and that they enjoy learning more about science and innovation related to such topics. So now is a great time for people who have a science, technology or engineering qualification to consider teaching and play a crucial role in bringing the science of these issues to life in the classroom. Science teachers are also influential role models in showing students what a great career they can have if they study science and maths.”

In other priority subjects such as English, the number of trainee teachers from mainstream and employment based routes is expected to reach 3,000, up 12 per cent on the Government’s 2,670 target. Maths continues to improve on last year, with mainstream recruitment up four per cent from 1,990 to 2,044.

The figures show 20,479 people entering mainstream and employment-based secondary courses and 17,739 on primary courses.

Further information on becoming a teacher is available at www.teach.gov.uk/talent <<http://www.teach.gov.uk/talent>>

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