

Improving Teacher Morale – A Short Survey Guide

Teacher morale is vital for improving retention in schools. Satisfied teachers who like their teams stay in their jobs. But how can a leader improve morale through survey questions?

Each day more than 10,000 teachers answer questions on our app [Teacher Tapp](#). This helps us find out what's going on in schools.

So one day we asked a simple question: tell us why morale is high or low in your school.

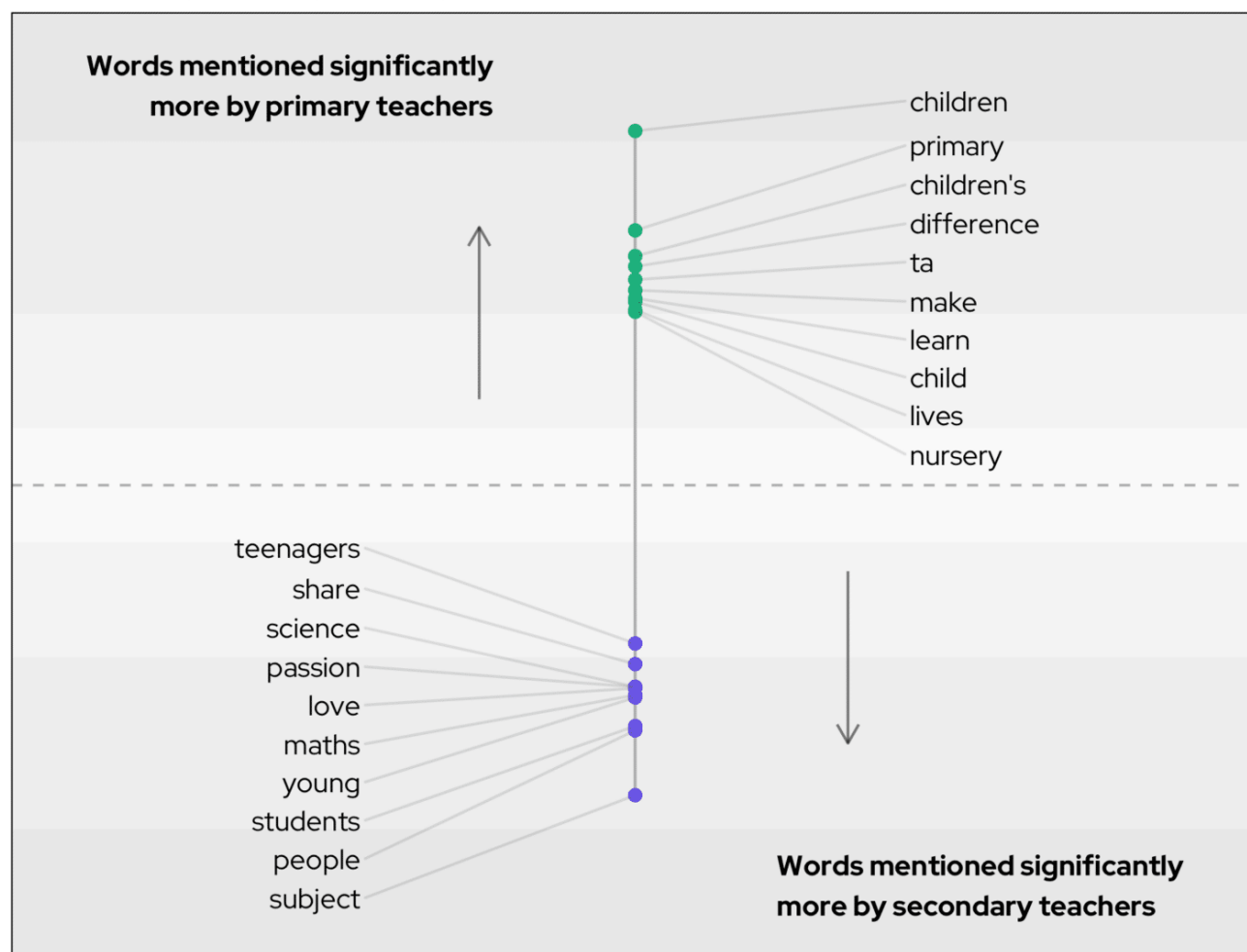
Behaviour, workload, supportive, teams = Teacher Morale

The charts below show the top ten words most commonly used by teachers to explain why morale in their school was high – and why it's low.

The higher UP the line for green dots, the more often it was mentioned by teachers in a high-morale school

Keyness Analysis

Keyness Analysis of the question: 'Why did you decide to become a teacher?'
with answers split by the phase taught



Analysis of what affects teacher morale

As you can see: the two most important words in high-morale schools are 'team' and 'supportive'.

Words further DOWN the line appeared among the teachers with the lowest morale scores. The two most common answers in low morale schools are: 'behaviour' and 'workload'.

High teacher morale schools are good, great, excellent and strong

In high morale schools, whatever teachers are talking about, they describe them in positive terms. There are many synonyms of good in the chart: words like "positive," "outstanding" and "strong." Staff clearly feel that things done within the organisation are done well.

They attach these positive terms to facets of a happy and well-run school:

- Excellent CPD
- Great colleagues
- School is well led, pupils are well behaved

So one useful indicator for school leaders is: do staff describe the the school in glowing terms?

But if morale turns out tbe low, this isn't an actionable finding.

Fortunately, there's more!

High Morale schools offer trusting, supportive and collaborative environments

The two words mentioned most in high morale schools are "team" and "supportive."

Teachers in these schools say things like:

- "It's like a family. Everyone supports each other and SLT care about their staff."
- "A great, supportive team & kind leaders. Skilled staff passionate about what they do."
- "We work in an inclusive, supportive school. We feel free to talk to anyone about anything that might be going wrong and we all try and support each other."

The words of one supply teacher were particularly useful:

Morale is "noticeably high in the school I'm in - and I've seen quite a few - because teachers and students are treated with respect and kindness. I am thanked EVERY DAY for coming."

How can leaders work towards a high morale school?

These findings suggest that making the school work better boosts teacher morale. That's encouraging, if unsurprising.

But it also suggests leaders can boost morale if they focus on building feelings of trust, support and collaboration.

Consider asking the following questions at your next senior leader meeting:

How and when do we hear from staff about their concerns?
Do staff feel their concerns are heard? (How would we know?)
Do staff feel supported – by senior leaders and colleagues?
Do staff feel trusted?

Our School Surveys include a number of questions designed to get to heart of these elements of staff experience.

A useful question is "Do your school leaders listen and respond to staff concerns?" Nationally,

we know that 54% of teachers respond either 'all' or 'most of the time.' For a school seeking to build high teacher morale, this represents a good benchmark.

Other Useful Questions To Ask Staff

Some other questions we ask that are useful for determining morale:

1. 1. If I approached my manager with concerns about my mental health, I am confident that I would be supported
2. 2. 'Members of staff at my school are able to raise issues and problems with management'
3. 3. 'My school's management have realistic expectations of me

If you are interested in using our School Surveys service to find your staff's morale level and actions for improving it, [book a call with us](#) or [ask for more details here](#)