

## The big debate

# Classrooms need more male teachers

There are many more female than male teachers in schools, but does that make a difference to your education?

### What you need to know

- The latest figures from the Department for Education show that only 15% of primary school teachers in England are male.
- Teach First, an education charity, is encouraging more men to go into teaching; it says that they could have a lot to offer in the classroom.
- Some studies show that pupils benefit from having some male teachers; others show that a teacher's gender has no effect.

Male teachers are rare in primary schools.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Figures for 2013 showed that Africa is the only continent in the world where many countries have more male than female primary school teachers.

A report from the Department for Education has revealed that, in 2015, 15% of teachers in primary schools in England were male. In fact, more than 3,000 primary schools across the country have no male teachers at all. So, what's going on? It is thought that lots of men are put off becoming teachers because of some people's beliefs that teaching is a woman's job and that men are not as good with children. Others do not want to work in a mainly female environment. Teach First, a charity that works to make education fair, is encouraging more men to take up the profession, saying that a lot of teaching talent could be going to waste. Research has shown that children, especially boys, benefit from having some male teachers, although other studies suggest that a teacher's gender doesn't matter.

### Male teachers make a difference

The world is made up of men and women, and schools should reflect that. Male teachers may offer skills and viewpoints that differ from those of female teachers, and this will give children a broader understanding of the world. This is especially important for pupils who don't have a positive male role model in their life. Some research suggests that boys feel they can relate more to male teachers, and may even behave better and work harder for them. Some people believe that some boys are not doing as well academically as girls because there are not enough male teachers to inspire them. If boys do not see men in school, they may think that education is not relevant to them and could also be put off considering a career in teaching.

### Gender is irrelevant

Why should it matter if a teacher is male or female as long as they are good at their job? If a school decides to hire a man just to increase the number of male teachers on staff, it may not pick the best person for the job. This isn't fair on the pupils because their education may suffer as a result. Besides, having a male teacher does not necessarily benefit children. A 2014 study in the Netherlands found that the gender of a teacher has little effect on primary school children's academic achievement or their behaviour. Some people believe that teaching is a female profession: they say that men do not have the temperament to do the job and that women are naturally more caring, responsible and better at looking after children.



### 3 reasons FOR having more male teachers

- 1 Having a mixture of men and women in schools reflects the real world and better prepares children for adult life.
- 2 Children, especially boys, may benefit academically and socially from having a male influence at school.
- 3 Seeing more male teachers may inspire boys to become teachers, too.



### 3 reasons AGAINST having more male teachers

- 1 A teacher's gender should be irrelevant – the important thing is that they are passionate about the job and knowledgeable.
- 2 Whether a teacher is male or female does not necessarily have any effect on how well children do at school.
- 3 Some people think that men are not naturally suited to teaching children.



### What do you think?

Now you've read a bit more about it, tell us what you think by voting in our online poll at [theweekjunior.co.uk/polls](http://theweekjunior.co.uk/polls). Vote **FOR** if you think classrooms need more male teachers, or vote **AGAINST** if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

### Last week's poll



Last week our debate motion was: Newcomers should be expected to "fit in" to live in the UK. Most of you felt that people shouldn't have to.



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