

Balerno High School Head Teacher recruitment survey

Q3 What would your priorities be for improving the school?

Answered: 116 Skipped: 10

#	Responses	Date
1	Maintain and improve the range and combinations of subjects offered. Both S3 and S5 subject choices were very restricted this year. I also feel that there is a lot of time given over to the so-called core curriculum (one third of the timetable in S3) and I am not confident that this is the right balance.	5/2/2016 10:35 PM
2	Inspiring, developing and empowering teaching staff is critically important at this time. This is the number one priority for the new headteacher. We have many wonderful teachers in the school, but I think morale is low.	5/2/2016 9:40 PM
3	Increasing retention of pupils within catchment and making BHS the school of choice	5/2/2016 9:08 PM
4	Create an ethos of learning, teamwork, valuing the teachers, allowing diversity in teaching methods (not dictating how teachers MUST teach). Expanding the options and choices available for pupils to choose from, especially in the areas of science and modern languages, Head teacher should get to know his teachers, listen to their experiences and let them have a say in how teaching is done.	5/2/2016 9:02 PM
5	Not a priority, rather a basic piece of infrastructure: pupils should have lockers.	5/2/2016 7:26 PM
6	Improves communication and curricular / extra curricular strategy	5/2/2016 6:47 PM
7	Continue to improve the standard of education, having good and enthusiastic teachers who teach and motivate students and possibly an overhaul of school new desks, painting etc. But generally very happy with the school.	5/2/2016 6:46 PM
8	No more merits/de-merits...	5/2/2016 6:04 PM
9	2-2-2 structure to put less pressure on young, already pressured, students and the teachers	5/2/2016 5:56 PM
10	trying to maintain quality and numbers of staff in all departments. Increase options for subjects at all levels. Provide suitable storage options to enable pupils to adhere to uniform policy but be weather appropriate for outdoors and accommodate material requirements for all subjects.	5/2/2016 2:03 PM
11	Maintain high-quality education. Have a great communicator and leader as a head teacher. The head teacher should motivate, engage and stimulate children.	5/2/2016 12:46 PM
12	Improve school roll to allow more subject choice Forward thinking about subject choice in S3 to ensure that subjects can be followed through to exams in S4. If have a uniform policy ensure it is adhered to	5/2/2016 12:26 PM
13	To give equal focus to pupils from the feeder primaries. It is Balerno in name only, the community from other villages should always be included.	5/2/2016 10:41 AM
14	Ensuring that parents and the local community are always engaged in decisions about the future of the school and at an early stage	5/2/2016 9:47 AM
15	I am new to the school and can only go on my personal experience but I feel there needs to be more on offer for the pupils, especially with excursion, both in Edinburgh and abroad, also more extra curricular activities.	5/2/2016 9:34 AM
16	restructure the way subjects are offered, been a shambles last couple of years. pupils having to take courses they havent studied because of topic sections not offering them.	5/2/2016 9:28 AM
17	Supporting those children who have other strengths outwith purely academic achievement, those who thrive in outdoor active learning environments and to give this learning path value.	5/2/2016 8:43 AM
18	Greater flexibility in subject choices perhaps by working with other schools in the area such as Currie.	5/1/2016 10:32 PM
19	- Continue progress with academic achievement - Communicate effectively with parents/carers - Develop school brand and market to potential attendees	5/1/2016 5:30 PM
20	My daughter is about to start S1 in August so not entirely clear on priorities but the school is looking a bit tired in places and could do with a refurb. Would like to see the 2G pitch completed for next academic year to give more sporting opportunities esp for girls.	5/1/2016 1:25 PM
21	Adequate storage facilities, ie lockers, so pupils don't have to cart everything around from class to class.	5/1/2016 1:03 PM
22	Cohesive strategy for retaining staff. Provide a safe and happy learning and teaching environment. Upgrade sports equipment including pitches and encourage pupils to take part in sport. Address drug /alcohol issues (we are very alarmed and concerned by reports of cannabis drug use and supply of drugs at Balerno HS)	5/1/2016 11:55 AM
23	Educational attainment; motivated and skilled teachers; school infrastructure	5/1/2016 10:33 AM
24	To retain good teachers by inspiring them. Continuity of staff so that pupils don't have different teachers each week. To ensure curriculum is followed for all pupils, not just those sitting exams-S1 & S2 are important too.	5/1/2016 9:26 AM

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25	Good Sfl. Recruiting and retaining high quality teaching staff. Supporting teacher led initiatives in school (music and drama for example).	4/30/2016 6:35 PM
26	Improving discipline Banning mobile phones in class Rewarding pupils who work consistently not just occasionally Curriculum Timing of school day	4/30/2016 2:40 PM
27	Enforce school uniform policy if you are going to have one. Communication from the management team could improve. Improve the running of extra-curricular activities.	4/30/2016 1:15 PM
28	Keep creative arts sector well funded	4/30/2016 12:31 PM
29	Collaboration opposed to autocratic leadership	4/30/2016 8:22 AM
30	Ability to encourage the less academic pupils instead of leaving them behind and focusing on only those that are more academically gifted.	4/30/2016 6:32 AM
31	Quality of teaching staff Better streaming - challenge bright children Increase the number of pupils Subject choice Enforcing uniform	4/29/2016 10:08 PM
32	improving the classrooms and learning tools i.e science labs, IT , music	4/29/2016 9:21 PM
33	Focus on behaviour management and bullying More emotional support for pupils Confidence building for pupils More communication with parents	4/29/2016 8:55 PM
34	Strengthen the science department and manage under-performing teachers within this department and beyond. We have an S1 child who is already aware that some of her peers, and children in the year above, are involved with drinking and drug taking on school premises or at the neighbouring sports' pitches, during the school day. This needs tackling immediately and openly. Avoiding confronting this issue now will do all the children within the school a dis-service. Tackling under-performing teachers within the school and making tough decisions on their future if necessary.	4/29/2016 8:44 PM
35	An improvement in staff morale which would spill over to the students. A sense of community and a pride in achievement. A place where all can excel in academia or other skills. A better communication system between school and parents from student progress to the sharing of important dates well in advance. S6 pupils should be encouraged to stay in school by treating them as adults and allowing them some privileges.	4/29/2016 7:40 PM
36	Consistency with teachers a lot have left in the last 18 months at a time when the kids needed consistency	4/29/2016 7:23 PM
37	Head teacher supporting, enabling, encouraging and motivating staff so they are enthusiastic and committed to teaching and marking pupils work efficiently. Guidance teaching very poor for both my children... Not mentioning names, but a head of guidance who doesn't even know what pupils in their care are applying to university to study, or what their grades are, is very poor. More relevant PSE : gender equality, consent, self harm, depression, Issues more relevant to youngsters than some if the materials my son has been fed.	4/29/2016 6:58 PM
38	Strategies for class discipline, positivity, application, achievement; list of curriculum text books made available to pupils & parents	4/29/2016 6:42 PM
39	-2 year Nat 5 courses -Broader options (2nd year to 3rd year students couldn't choose music or 3rd science!) - Friendlier headteacher who is able to command / earn the respect of the pupils. - Last head came and removed many extra curricular activities (China trip, ski trip, whoop day and even the maths trip) and brought in no replacement. He has left a poorly motivated and undervalued team of teachers with many leaving post during his tenure. We have seen a unprecedented staff turn over in the last 5 yrs. The new head needs to be able to lead, inspire and value his team.	4/29/2016 6:17 PM
40	Access to up to date technology, ie. iPads for all pupils, smart boards. Supporting all extra curricular activities not just rugby and hockey.	4/29/2016 5:44 PM
41	Keep range of subjects available	4/29/2016 5:29 PM
42	Continue to promote academic excellence Inspire all children to aim high and to stretch themselves in their learning Deal with disruptive behaviour in a fair and effective way	4/29/2016 5:02 PM
43	More outdoor sport facilities.	4/29/2016 3:48 PM
44	Employing good teachers and make sure they stay at school	4/29/2016 3:47 PM
45	Better engagement with parents / pupils and staff. The school should try to foster and build a reputation as a centre for excellence in particular skills / academic / extra curricular areas. This would help the profile of the school in the wider catchment area with the public and potential pupils / families who may be considering sending their children to balerno	4/29/2016 3:25 PM
46	To tackle the issues around drugs.	4/29/2016 3:10 PM
47	More skilled,vocational teachers Strong,respected leadership for staff and students. Better trained supported learning assistants.	4/29/2016 3:03 PM
48	Continued progress in communication with parents	4/29/2016 2:20 PM
49	Alongside academic development pupils should learn some life skills as well - Focus on all round development.	4/29/2016 2:14 PM

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50	Forming a level playing field with the majority of other Edinburgh schools, dropping the 3+3 model.	4/29/2016 2:02 PM
51	More consistent discipline. Ban on use of mobile phones during class. Encouragement of effort and engagement in class e.g. return of BAFTA scheme	4/29/2016 1:39 PM
52	Improving engagement with staff and pupils including improving staff and pupil morale and motivation Building a strong management team and improving staff retention Improving communication with parents	4/29/2016 1:36 PM
53	Energising staff to go the extra mile and communicating with parents a)noticeable lack of any addition teacher support being put on for pupils leading to exams . Feeling reported home of staff saying we are here to give you information and not teach.Ensuring that all pupils meet their academic potential and achieve exam success.Giving information so families can assist their children in their learning . b) staff commitment for extra curricular sports and groups such as sporting clubs and Duke of Edinburgh .	4/29/2016 1:19 PM
54	As indicated above.	4/29/2016 1:09 PM
55	Reinstate opportunity for school trips abroad. Leadership at all levels. Retention of good teachers.	4/29/2016 1:05 PM
56	Children don't attend yet so difficult to say at this point. Clear concise communication and consistency are important. Essential this person is a good communicator at all levels.	4/29/2016 1:00 PM
57	Improve staff moral, teachers to be supported. Rebuild respect and pride in the school. Improve subject choices for upper secondary (better timetable organization to allow pupils to choose the subjects they need rather than the very restricted column choice in recent years). Failing this timetable which allows schools in the area to work together.	4/29/2016 12:21 PM
58	Strengthen the academic priorities, grow the extra curricular activities, improve communication with parents, improved feedback and information to parents	4/29/2016 12:12 PM
59	Better management - pupil relations. Senior pupils given more responsibility and treated with respect to encourage them to develop into confident adults. Management visibility especially at parent evenings. More support for less academic pupils to complete school and teach positive destinations.	4/29/2016 10:58 AM
60	I think there should be a better teacher pupil relationship to improve success in students and so they are happier in school.	4/29/2016 10:51 AM
61	The importance of foreign languages. Language department Making the subject more interesting. Implement trips abroad again. We have a very weak foreign language department compared to other schools in Edinburgh	4/29/2016 10:46 AM
62	Improving science and English departments. General feeling is that staff morale is low and this comes out in the teaching of our children.	4/29/2016 10:42 AM
63	Make all pupils feel valued and encourage learning at all levels - praising all pupil achievements in s5 & s6, not singling out high achievers for awards and recognition when all pupils achieving any highers work extremely hard.	4/29/2016 10:33 AM
64	Someone with strong leadership qualities that motivates the currently very demotivated and unappreciated teaching staff team, which is why they are all leaving. Someone who reintroduces the importance of a languages department with investment in this area and reintroduction of school foreign exchange trips to inspire children to learn other languages and explore the world. Investment in teaching staff, someone who actually listens to parent concerns.	4/29/2016 9:46 AM
65	Crack down on bullying - just not taken seriously. And a focus on all round ability aside from academic achievement. Better learning support is an essential.	4/29/2016 9:29 AM
66	- abolish the divide of pupils who come from Balerno being better than Ratho & Kirknewton -action for retaining teachers -dedicated to the high school not splitting time with any other roles	4/29/2016 6:33 AM
67	Maximise the potential for producing well rounded individuals who are able to make best use of their academic achievements and become respectful and positive members of the community.	4/29/2016 2:35 AM
68	I don't feel that I know enough about the school to provide meaningful comments, but my observations so far would be - A) Improve external image of school 1) on Open Evenings etc there should be a much more meaningful presentation of the school and its attributes, teaching staff etc. As parents have more information and are given an insight into the school and its achievements/ good points, they can have more confidence in the school, take more pride in the school etc which will pass down on to the pupils. 2) Enforce uniform policy B) building up an effective management team to lead the school	4/28/2016 10:05 PM
69	More communication with parents regarding the school.	4/28/2016 10:04 PM
70	Better communication with parents, including completing the new website and keeping it current and relevant.	4/28/2016 9:00 PM
71	More emphasis on inspiring students to motivate themselves, particularly in science, technology, engineering and maths.	4/28/2016 8:49 PM
72	Pupil behaviour, discipline, classroom management.	4/28/2016 8:04 PM
73	Absolutely ZERO tolerance towards bullying and/or unacceptable behaviour both at school and village lunch trips	4/28/2016 7:55 PM
74	Increase school roll Invest in technology - BaHS is WAY behind Ensure the 'less academic' subjects are protected	4/28/2016 7:54 PM

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75	More curriculum variety	4/28/2016 7:42 PM
76	Better communication all round. Head to teachers. Teachers to pupils. Head and teachers to pta and parents etc	4/28/2016 7:32 PM
77	To rebalance the curriculum - too much time wasted each day where the pupils don't learn anything (Creative learning and PSP). The poor curriculum is also responsible for too many academic pupils leaving Balerno each year because their needs are not catered for. To improve the discipline of a small minority of pupils. To improve communication within the school and also with parents. To make the 50mins lessons longer - practical subjects do NOT have enough time to do anything! In the last 3 years class sizes have increased. A priority should be to reduce class sizes in the core subjects especially for pupils taking SQA exams.	4/28/2016 6:37 PM
78	Opportunities for all and ensuring every pupil reaches their full potential	4/28/2016 6:03 PM
79	I feel that the kids in Ratho and Kirknewton (maybe elsewhere) find it difficult to be involved in after school activities (e.g. sports, drama, study) as they have no way to get home on public transport (this is even worse now that the Blue Bus has stopped running between Balerno and Livingston), and they rely on parents to come and collect them. This can be difficult for working parents - my personal feeling is that this student demographic is never really catered for with regard to after school events. It would be great to see a great participation of the school in competitive sport - developing a basketball team, a swim team etc.?	4/28/2016 5:18 PM
80	Better communication with the parents, just now none. More co curricular activity and trips for children to develop beyond the classroom as per curriculum of excellence More reward of pupil achievement and looking to develop pupils skills beyond the classroom	4/28/2016 4:54 PM
81	Ensuring the school suits all kids both academically and vocationally.	4/28/2016 4:53 PM
82	Creating a greater sense of community and increasing the course choices available	4/28/2016 4:48 PM
83	Consistent undesirable/disruptive behaviour needs to addressed (better acknowledgement of students who do behave not those who don't). Better communication with parents/notice of events.	4/28/2016 4:17 PM
84	To have a few school trips linked appropriately to subjects. To manage behaviour within school in general and within class.	4/28/2016 4:16 PM
85	Resources and extra curricular activities (trips)	4/28/2016 3:00 PM
86	A leader who engages with technology ie - uses online learning/ PC learning programmes etc	4/28/2016 2:30 PM
87	Engaging more effectively with the pupils, teachers and parents especially at the points where there are timetable changes and subject choices to be made. The engagement could be in the form of drop in sessions or discussion evenings where points can be raised and discussed. The head teacher should also be willing to work with the parent council and PTA for the future good of the school. Whilst I appreciate that a head teacher can not always attend all after school activities eg music concerts, sports matches it would be desirable for the head and the senior management to make efforts to support as many of these events as possible both to show support to the pupils but also to engage with the parents.	4/28/2016 2:03 PM
88	N/A	4/28/2016 1:09 PM
89	I am currently receiving letters every other week saying my kids are not making the grades, and I'm being asked to make steps to to make sure they improve?Perhaps more support for pupils in the basics of studying instead of just directing them to various websites. I do all I can to make sure they study, and what more I can do is beyond me!!!	4/28/2016 1:06 PM
90	extra tuition, extra curricular activities after school clubs which support students in outlying areas by providing transport to get them home. Many do not take up these opportunities because of this. Lunch time tutorial mean students are not having enough time to eat lunch or have a proper break.	4/28/2016 12:12 PM
91	Inspire staff AND pupils to be the best that they can be.	4/28/2016 11:58 AM
92	MUCH better communication i.e. increased advanced notice of events. Several weeks notice should be possible for most school events that are on an annual cycle and would enable parents to plan work away from home around important school events. Better planning in some subjects to make sure that the whole curriculum is covered in good time before exams. Some subjects are excellent, others seem very 'hurried' towards the end (the end being two weeks before exams start). Find a better way of handling sixth year (some of my perception may be out-of-date, based on 2014/15). It's a year with a mix of those who need to study and those who are free-wheeling - accept that. Bring back the flexibility that allows sixth years to sign in and out of school at their own discretion. Give them a space of their own. Treat them like young adults - most will rise to it. Introduction of a more formal uniform has been good - make sure it continues to be/is enforced. A perception that the behaviour policy could be tightened up.	4/28/2016 11:03 AM
93	Stricter enforcement of poor behaviours. Zero tolerance approach urgently needed. Support for learning needs	4/28/2016 10:50 AM
94	not fair that schools like ratho not included like dean park is	4/28/2016 10:29 AM
95	Taking a broad view of education in the whole area and combining Currie and Balerno HS in to a shared campus. This would give students the widest possible choice of subjects and access to the best facilities for sport, drama, arts and music , as well as extra curricular activities.	4/28/2016 10:28 AM
96	Staff training on managing conflict and challenging behavior.	4/28/2016 10:23 AM

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97	Improve communication with parents. Improve website so children can have access to ALL subject materials. Links for all subjects to help pupils & parents. All school letters on website. Stamp out bullying and create a tolerant ethos with pupils. Improve support for Additional Support Children and have a permanent ASL Teacher who is experienced.	4/28/2016 10:17 AM
98	Good teaching staff to support academic achievement. Manage out teachers who are not performing. Ability to challenge LA where current plan is not helping the children.	4/28/2016 10:11 AM
99	Improvement in communication for the parents.	4/28/2016 10:02 AM
100	Maintaining/recruiting good teachers - if possible removing poor teachers Positive and enthusiastic attitude from head and staff to pupils to encourage learning High focus on pupil performance (academic and non academic) rather than appearance (uniform) Acknowledgement of good performance of pupils (academic and otherwise) Active procedures in place for behaviour management. Improve communication routes between school and parents in addition to between school and children, notably about curriculum changes Fairness across all years and classes with respect to extracurriculum opportunities (ie trips)	4/28/2016 9:59 AM
101	-focus on academic excellence -increase choices for sciences -have something similar to the Beijing and France trips again so the pupils have something extraordinary to look and work towards to -focus on rewards for pupils to encourage excellent behaviour -improve hygiene of toilets - maybe make pupils in charge of it -ask the pupils what needs to be done to improve the school	4/28/2016 9:54 AM
102	Renewing confidence and gaining support of parents with good communication and active engagement; making each child feel valued and supported at all ends of the educational spectrum.	4/28/2016 9:48 AM
103	Better communication of what the school is trying to achieve, why and how parents can assist with that. More meaningful reporting systems for each pupil. Having teachers and guidance teachers understand the need to know and understand their pupils. Having a leader who can inspire and motivate the teaching staff to go above and beyond. Clear communication of what the school's priorities are to parents and pupils in an easy to understand way. Delivering a curriculum that meets state requirements but that puts the needs of each individual pupil at its heart. Making sure each teacher at the school was up to the job - getting rid of those teachers who can't or refuse to control classes, are not teaching classes to a basic required standard and who continually deliver poor results.	4/28/2016 9:33 AM
104	Improving communication at all levels, from the basic day to day to the bigger issues eg. changing the S3-4 curriculum/subject choices. the Head to develop a real partnership with both the staff and parents.	4/28/2016 9:32 AM
105	Allowing 6th year pupils opportunities to return home instead of having to stay in LRC when there are no lessons timetabled for them. Comfortable chairs in 6th year area would be a good idea too! Not overburdening students with volunteering opportunities and Open University and school points when they have studies and occasionally are crashing subjects.	4/28/2016 9:28 AM
106	School is primarily about getting the best education possible. The Curriculum for Excellence has caused a great deal of unrest with parents and pupils and many have taken the decision to complete their children's education in other establishments. BCHS has taken the decision to complete National 5's in just one year - is this model going to allow our children to get the best possible results or should the school re-evaluate. If we compromise the children at this stage the knock on effect is life long. We only have one chance to get this right.	4/28/2016 9:24 AM
107	Organisation of certain departments could be improved.	4/28/2016 9:02 AM
108	Strong and consistent discipline. Develop some variety in the curriculum to cater for wide educational needs.	4/28/2016 8:59 AM
109	Test	4/28/2016 8:57 AM
110	Making sure the pupils have a positive goal to work towards , & Having a positive attitude in school	4/28/2016 8:57 AM
111	Ensuring a wide range of curricular choices of a high standard for the pupils	4/28/2016 8:54 AM
112	Better academic challenges for the children.	4/28/2016 8:53 AM
113	Communication Reinstate school trips Increase extra curricular activities Debate with parents and kids the purpose of S6 and how it is managed.	4/28/2016 8:25 AM
114	Better communication with parents re curriculum changes . Promote high standards	4/28/2016 7:59 AM
115	Communication. Engagement with the whole community	4/28/2016 7:50 AM
116	Communication	4/28/2016 6:30 AM