

The Role of Staffrooms in Early Career Teacher Interactions, Relationships and Wellbeing

Government data show that more than 10 per cent of teachers leave within one year of qualifying and 30 per cent of teachers leave within five years (DfE, 2016). Although heavy

identified as a key place in the working lives of many teachers, is the school staffroom. This space has been described as somewhere used by teachers to talk, relax and spend time together (Wood, 2014), socialise with colleagues, (Frankel, 2011), work away from pupils (Holland et al, 2007), escape or seek refuge (Clandfield & Foord 2008), share resources (Hansom 2012), develop professional learning (Lisahunter et al, 2011) and build a sense of collegiality (Ben-Peretz & Schonmann, 2000). Previous research has also recognised that this space and the interactions that take place within it are likely to factor in the emotional wellbeing of all teaching staff, especially those at the beginning of their careers (Chartered College of Teaching, 2017; Kington et al, forthcoming).

As teachers in England work on average 19 per cent longer than teachers in other OECD countries, with an average working week of nearly 50 hours (Sellen 2016), coupled with the fact that many new school settings are being built with no designated staffroom (Howard, 2012), identifying the role and importance of staffrooms for early career teachers (ECTs) would appear to be a high priority. Thus, in order to identify, describe and explain key features of the social interactions and behaviours evident within primary school staffrooms, the study has four overarching research questions:

- (i) What are the social and behavioural practices of ECTs regarding collegial relationships in staffroom settings?
- (ii) What are the characteristics of interactions of ECTs within this social condition?
- (iii) What do practitioners perceive as key features of, and influences on, these interpersonal relationships?
- (iv) How do the complex relationships developed and nurtured between colleagues relate to early career teachers' emotional health and wellbeing?

staffroom interactions, the development of teacher peer relationships, and the impact on early career teachers' emotional wellbeing. For this reason, findings will be of interest to policymakers, advisors, researchers engaged in primary education, school teachers, headteachers and ITE providers.

References

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