Department for Education

Reducing teacher workload action plan: update and next steps

February 2017

Introduction

On 26 March 2016, we published the reports from three independent review groups set up to address the biggest issues emerging from the Workload Challenge – ineffective marking, use of planning and resources, and data management. The groups set out clear principles and made recommendations to be taken at every level in the school system. We accepted all the recommendations for government and this action plan sets out what we are doing to meet these.

Schools have been using the three reports, and Ofsted and teaching unions have been spreading their messages, but we know workload is still a major concern for teachers across the country. The Teacher Workload Survey 2016 (TWS) – a commitment from the 2014 Workload Challenge - suggests that we are right to focus on removing unnecessary workload related to marking, lesson planning and administration of data. However, the findings provide additional information about where we should be targeting workload reduction, and this plan sets out further steps we will take to do this. This includes an offer to schools of targeted support to help them remove unnecessary practice which does not improve pupils' life chances.

This plan shows our continued dedication to solving this problem. But we know that everyone involved in education has a role to play in relentlessly challenging and removing practices which add unnecessary burdens. Only then can teachers fully focus on providing the best education to their pupils, and have time to spend on their own development.

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Area to address	Action	Timing
Marking, planning, data and general administration were identified in the workload challenge (2014) and the Teacher Workload Survey (2016) as creating unnecessary work for teachers. DfE committed to all the recommendations of the three independent reports on workload (published March 2016), including to disseminate the messages of the three reports widely.	**We have:** • Embedded the principles and messages in Departmental guidance and advice, such as Multi Academy Trusts: good practice guidance and expectations for growth, a revised Governance Handbook and the revised Staffing and Employment Advice for Schools. • Published a poster and pamphlet for schools to download, with messages from the three reports – endorsed by DfE, Ofsted and teaching unions. • Targeted communications to system leaders, including letters to National Leaders of Education and National Leaders of Governance to make clear our commitment to the reports and our expectation that system leaders should act on the recommendations. • Shared examples of practice in schools to remove unnecessary workload via our Teaching Blog. Schools can also use our dedicated inbox to tell us about their practice or make enquiries: workload.solutions@education.gov.uk. • Ofsted has continued to publicise and keep under review the key messages in the 'Clarification for schools' document to dispel myths about preparing for inspection and presenting data, planning and marking in particular ways for Ofsted. These messages are also embedded in the school inspection handbook. Ofsted has also used blogs and social media to respond to specific queries or misconceptions about inspection requirements. • Ofsted has continued to monitor inspection reports to ensure that no particular method of	Ongoing

Area to address	Action	Timing
	planning, marking or assessment is referred to as an exemplar of best practice. Inspector training has reinforced key messages from the Clarifications document and reports have been checked through Ofsted's quality assurance process so that inspectors adhere to the guidance. **We will** continue to raise awareness with the whole profession through a sustained campaign of action to embed the messages and principles from the reports, including roadshows across the country to spread effective practice.	From Spring 2017
The independent report on data management included a number of recommendations for DfE, including implementing common data standards and releasing assessment data earlier. General administration was also reported as burdensome in the Teacher Workload Survey - this was broken down into a number of non-teaching tasks, including use of data.	**We have:** • Set up the 'DfE data exchange' project to reduce burdens and improve the way data is moved around in the system. We have completed proof of concept (improving ways of moving data from a school to DfE) and pilot work to reduce DfE's data burden on schools, in a way that also enables more efficient movement of data elsewhere in the system. • Continued to develop the new Performance Tables service, so that it presents the new accountability measures in an intuitive way, and offers better ways for schools to compare their own performance with that of others. • Successfully progressed the 'RAISEonline' replacement and a replacement for Edubase. The RAISEonline project is working with headteachers and other users to co-design a new service, and an accreditation approach for third parties to build more sophisticated products. • Undertaken work with schools, teachers and the market to explore in depth the pressures and opportunities around advertising teacher vacancies.	Testing concluded in December 2016

Area to address	Action	Timing
	• Published a schools' buying strategy that will help all schools to streamline processes and improve how they buy goods and services.	Strategy published January 2017
	We will continue work to make data available earlier so that it has more impact, and to reduce data burdens throughout the system:	
	• The DfE data exchange project will be sharing what it has learned from the previous phase with stakeholders, and subject to approvals will begin building long term solutions from Spring 2017. Common standards will be at the heart of that design.	From Spring 2017
	• The replacement to RAISEonline will include Question Level Analysis of KS2 performance being available to pupils' new secondary schools, as part of doing more to support schools identify and support areas where pupils may need to 'catch up'.	By Summer 2017
	• The Edubase replacement is on track for delivery by Summer 2017, making it easier for establishments to update the information held about them, and will also provide an enhanced service which will seamlessly integrate the data held on Edubase with other key systems.	By Summer 2017
	• We will hold more systems behind our single secure login. Notably the new in-house RAISEonline solution and Edubase replacement will use this, offering an easier, more consistent experience for schools.	
	• We are working through a range of solutions to make it easier for schools to advertise teacher vacancies.	
	• We will investigate further how the effective and evidence-based use of technology can be used as a means to remove unnecessary workload.	

Area to address	Action	Timing
The majority of respondents to the Teacher Workload Survey reported that workload continues to be a serious problem in their schools. There was some variation between primary and secondary teachers and school leaders.	**We have:** • Offered groups of schools grants to carry out their own workload reviews. Grants have been awarded to 11 groups of schools and the outcomes will be published and shared across the sector. • Stressed the importance of workload considerations in our revised content for National Professional Qualifications for school leaders. These include specific mention of the need to make proportionate use of data in schools and to review the cumulative impact of initiatives on teacher workload. • Published workforce planning guidance that encourages school leaders to consider staff workload and morale as part of the business planning cycle, including taking account of the principles of the three workload reports, and the way workforce planning affects workload. **We will** also work with teachers and their representatives to develop an offer of targeted support. We will ensure there is an integrated package, funded by government, which will explore the best way to support school to school initiatives, including consideration of tailored packages of support for classroom teachers and middle leaders working in primary and secondary schools.	Reviews are due to be published in Spring 2018 From academic year 2017/2018 Published in January 2017 Proposals to be developed Spring 2017 onwards for delivery in 2017/18
The independent reports included recommendations for DfE to commit to sufficient lead-in times for changes for which the sector will have to undertake significant planning to implement, including a review of the DfE protocol.	**We have:** • Made clear that there will be greater stability in primary assessment, with no new national tests or assessments to be introduced before the 2018 to 2019 academic year and a consultation on primary assessment and the implications for accountability. • Reviewed and reissued the DfE Protocol to provide schools with enough notice and lead in	Consultation to be launched in early 2017

Area to address	Action	Timing
	time for changes to the curriculum, accountability and qualifications. **We will** continue to ensure the Protocol is applied to policy development so that the profession has enough lead-in time for significant changes which will impact on workload.	 Ongoing
The Teacher Workload Survey found that teachers in the early stages of their career reported working longer hours than their more experienced counterparts.	**We have** provided curriculum support programmes (which mainly focus on STEM) to encourage schools to take systematic school-level approaches to detailed curriculum planning. These include the Maths Hub programme, Science Learning Partnerships, Further Maths Support Programme and the Computing Network of Excellence. Alongside this, we are promoting the use of high quality textbooks and related resources in teaching with the aim that these better support curriculum planning at school level and meet the needs of teachers, including early career teachers. **We will:** • Develop, with teachers and their representatives, a package of support for teachers in the first five years of their careers to help them manage workload, as part of our offer of targeted support. • Strengthen the process by which teachers qualify and look carefully at what more we can do to cement the relationship between high-quality initial training, early career support, and on-going development opportunities. We will also explore how we can improve career progression for teachers at all stages of their career, including those who wish to stay in the classroom, and will ensure that any potential workload implications are fully considered. We will engage widely with the profession throughout to ensure that any new policies are truly co-designed with the sector.	Ongoing Proposals Spring 2017 for delivery in 2017/18 From Spring/ Summer 2017 Strengthened QTS to be implemented from September 2019

Area to address	Action	Timing
Respondents to the Teacher Workload Survey reported that their school supported professional development activities but felt they did not always have time to take part in such activities.	**We have** announced the £75m Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund (TLIF) – a means of delivering high quality professional development to teachers throughout their careers. We want to fund programmes that respond to what teachers and leaders in schools want and need, and that have an impact. We plan to support evidence-based approaches where they exist, and support the development of new approaches where there are gaps. The TLIF has three main aims - to: • stimulate more/better provision of teachers' continuing professional development and leadership development in challenging schools/areas; • stimulate demand for provision of high quality teachers' continuing professional development and leadership development in challenging schools/areas; and • support the development of a sustainable market. Bids into the fund should build in thinking of how to enable participants and schools to make time to participate, as we know from research with teachers that time and workload are key barriers to taking up professional development. The Secretary of State announced the first bidding round into the Fund on 16 February in her keynote speech at the inaugural national conference of the Chartered College of Teaching. We published a Prior Information Notice alongside this. **We will**: • Announce further details about the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund in due course. If someone is interested in delivering or piloting innovative programmes to support this type of professional development, they can register their interest so that we can keep them up to date with developments.	Announced in October 2016 Bidding round to run mid-March to mid-April 2017

Area to address	Action	Timing
	• Run supplier information events for interested organisations to learn more about the TLIF in week commencing 27 February 2017.	w/c 27 February 2017
The Teacher Workload Survey found that some part time teachers work disproportionately longer hours out of school compared to those working full time. We also know that an increasing number of teachers are seeking flexible working opportunities (TES part time research 2015).	**We have:** • Published Flexible working in schools guidance intended to provide teachers with the information they need to make informed choices about flexible working, and to help schools overcome what they might see as barriers or misconceptions around offering more flexible working opportunities which work for everyone. • Funded the Returners Engagement Programme Pilot which enables schools in the North West and South East to support and employ maths, physics and MFL returners on a part-time or flexible basis. Additionally at a national level, returners can access one-to-one support from a dedicated adviser, including help in assessing their readiness in returning to teaching, and access to helpful resources to build their confidence. **We will:** • Develop further support to enable schools and employers to offer flexible working opportunities. • Investigate ways to remove the barriers which might deter schools from advertising posts on a flexible basis and to make it easier for prospective applicants to find these opportunities. • Ensure that schools participating in the returners engagement pilot give a bespoke programme of support to those returning teachers accessing the pilot, to help them get	Published February 2017 From November 2016 From March 2017 February to June 2017

Area to address	Action	Timing
	back into teaching.	
In 2014 the Teachers Working Longer Review was set up to consider the health and deployment implications of teachers working beyond the age of 60 years following changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme.	**We have** published the Teachers Working Longer Review (WLR) interim report. The group's initial findings suggest that there is a need to improve some employment practices and procedures, including offering more flexible working and occupational health. Two further studies were carried out after the interim report was drafted - the first study related to motivations for working beyond normal pension age and barriers to doing so; and the second is investigating the impact of teaching roles on leaving the profession by analysing ill-health retirement data against teaching roles and subjects taught. The outcome of both studies will help the group produce their final report and to form their recommendations. **We will** publish the final recommendations of the group this year. It is likely that these will focus on supporting those who choose to work longer, for example through more flexible working, including part-time working; providing more consistent access to occupational health; and helping teachers to plan well ahead and understand their retirement options from very early in and throughout their teaching careers.	Interim report published February 2017 Final report to be published in 2017
The Department for Education should continue to gather evidence on the causes of excessive workload in the future.	**We have** committed to biennial surveys to track teacher workload. **We will** continue to use the data provided by the Teacher Workload Survey 2016 to develop further evidence around factors which lead to high workload, and conduct additional evaluation of the effect of the government's efforts to remove unnecessary workload.	Fieldwork - Spring 2018 Spring/ Summer 2017

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