Workforce reform in schools: has it made a difference?

An evaluation of changes made to the school workforce 2003–2009

This is the fifth report by Ofsted to evaluate the effectiveness of workforce reform. This small-scale study shows that, in the most effective schools visited, workforce reform had made a considerable difference to pupils' learning because leaders had ensured that all their staff had clear professional status, were well trained, were deployed effectively and were held accountable for contributing to pupils' learning and well-being. Despite the recommendations of the four previous reports by Ofsted, only a minority of the schools visited had a secure knowledge of the national occupational standards and the career development framework to help them develop their workforce.

Contents

Executive summary

Since 2003, schools have recruited a wider range of staff to meet the requirements of the National Workforce Agreement on raising standards and tackling teacher workload.[1] This is the fifth report by Ofsted to evaluate the effectiveness of these changes. The survey found some schools were now making much better use of the wider workforce than those visited soon after the reforms were introduced. However, others were still not realising the benefits of the reforms, even if they were complying with the letter of the national agreement.

The survey on which this report is based was conducted between May 2008 and March 2009. Inspectors visited 16 primary schools and 14 secondary schools to evaluate how effectively workforce reform had been implemented and to assess whether it had made a difference to the quality of teaching, to pupils' learning, and to outcomes for pupils and their families. During this and the previous survey, inspectors found that schools were monitoring and evaluating the impact of workforce reform more accurately.[2] Twenty four of the 30 schools visited could provide evidence of how members of the wider workforce had contributed to improving pupils' learning.[3]

The six most effective schools were two secondary schools, three primary schools and a nursery school. All had raised standards and achievement significantly since 2004 and could provide secure evidence of the contribution that workforce reform had made to this improvement. Schools leaders had ensured that all their staff had clear professional status, were well trained, were deployed effectively and were held accountable for pupils' learning and well-being.

In 10 primary schools and eight secondary schools visited, workforce reform had made less difference to pupils' learning. In these, success depended on individuals working in isolation and was not underpinned by an ambitious overall plan to introduce new and better ways of working.

In the four primary schools and two secondary schools where impact had been limited, the formal requirements of the national agreement had mostly been met and structural changes had been made. However, these schools did not give sufficient consideration to whether and how the newly created roles of the wider workforce had contributed to raising standards. Members of the wider workforce did not always understand how their work related to that of other staff across the school and how

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[1] *Raising standards and tackling workload: a national agreement*
www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/na_standards_workload.pdf
[2] *The deployment, training and development of the wider workforce* (070222), Ofsted, 2008;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070222
[3] In this report, the term 'wider workforce' is used to describe any person, other than a qualified teacher, who works in or with a school. See also paragraph 1.

they could make a difference to pupils' learning. In these schools, there was a huge variation in the levels of knowledge, expertise and ability of support staff and in the capacity of leaders and teachers to provide meaningful direction for their work. This led to situations where too many demands were made of support staff or their skills were underused.

There are no national requirements for support staff to have a qualification. In November 2005, the Training and Development Agency for Schools created a career development framework that provided information about the training and qualifications available.[4] By showing opportunities for progression within and across different roles, it should help school leaders and support staff to consider potential career pathways. The national occupational standards for supporting teaching and learning in schools were approved in 2007.[5] However, in the schools visited, members of the wider workforce and those managing them did not have a secure knowledge and understanding of the national standards or the framework, and there was confusion over the pay and conditions assigned to the increasingly diverse range of roles and responsibilities. This reduces the opportunities for the wider workforce to become a coherent, fully trained professional body.

Key findings

■ In the most effective schools visited, workforce reform made a considerable difference to pupils' learning when leaders deployed their staff well, gave them clear professional status and held them accountable for their work. The quality of support depended on the ability and commitment of leaders, managers and teachers to provide members of the wider workforce with clear direction.

■ A key feature of the most effective schools was that all members of the workforce, including those who managed school systems and supported pupils' development and welfare, understood how they contributed to pupils' learning and what they needed to do to make the school more effective. All staff had a clear understanding of their own roles and those of others.

■ Collaborative planning between teachers and support staff, a shared understanding of what constituted good learning, and the direct involvement of support staff in assessing and recording pupils' progress led to more effective classroom support and intervention.

■ High-quality intervention from members of the wider workforce who had qualifications and training that were directly relevant to the specific areas in which they were working had the greatest impact on learning.

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[4] For further information on the career development framework, see:
www.tda.gov.uk/support/cdf.aspx
[5] The professional and national occupational standards for supporting teaching and learning:
www.tda.gov.uk/leaders/supportstaff/nos/nos_stl/using_nos.aspx
www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/na_standards_workload.pdf

- In the best provision, members of the wider workforce who had the skills and sensitivity to provide high-quality advice, guidance and support were very successful in engaging pupils at risk of underachievement or permanent exclusion. By developing close links with the community, they also succeeded in re-engaging parents and carers in education so that they were in a better position to support their children's learning.

- Workforce reform had freed a substantial amount of time for leaders, managers and teachers. School leaders and teachers were adamant that this had led to better use of resources. However, they could not substantiate this because very few of them monitored how the extra time was being used or evaluated its impact.

- Members of the wider workforce and their managers were confused and uncertain about the pay and conditions attached to the increasingly diverse roles that have developed as a result of workforce reform.

- In all but three of the schools visited, those involved in the induction, training and management of the performance of the wider workforce did not have a secure knowledge and understanding of the national occupational standards and the career development framework because they did not know where to go for information and guidance. This delays the development of the wider workforce as a coherent, fully trained professional body.

Recommendations

The Training and Development Agency for Schools should:

- help the wider workforce and its managers gain a secure knowledge and understanding of the national occupational standards and the career development framework by providing accessible information and guidance.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should:

- provide guidance on appropriate levels of pay and conditions for the increasingly diverse roles that have been introduced as a result of workforce reform.

Schools should:

- ensure that teachers and members of the wider workforce plan collaboratively, agree intended outcomes for pupils, adopt a consistent approach to managing behaviour and agree procedures to assess and record pupils' progress

- be clear about each member of staff's responsibilities for improving teaching and learning and ensure effective monitoring of the specific contributions made by members of the wider workforce

- introduce a comprehensive system for setting performance objectives for all members of the wider workforce; identify training and development needs; review progress against targets; and encourage them to take the initiative in developing their roles and responsibilities

- extend their knowledge and understanding of the role of the Training and Development Agency for Schools and make full use of the national occupational standards and the career development framework to develop the wider workforce.

Changing the culture of the school workforce

1. In 2002, the Government published *Time for standards: reforming the school workforce*.[6] Since then, all schools have increased their recruitment to include a wider workforce of support staff who work in many important and often multiple roles. These fall into four broad categories:

    - learning support staff who work with teachers in the classroom, including teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants, nursery nurses, sports technicians/assistants and cover supervisors

    - pupil support/welfare staff who help pupils with learning outside the classroom and are also responsible for the welfare of pupils during break times, lunch times and outside school hours

    - administrative staff, including school business managers, administrative assistants, secretaries and examinations officers

    - specialist and technical staff, including librarians and library staff, information and communication technology technicians/assistants, design and technology technicians/assistants, food technicians and science technicians.[7]

    In the schools visited, members of the wider workforce typically comprised between one third and one half of the total staff.

2. In the six schools visited where the impact of workforce reform was outstanding, the headteachers shared a strong commitment to the underlying principles of the national agreement and understood that the ultimate aim was for the whole school workforce to work together to raise pupils' achievement. When these headteachers talked about their staff, they meant everyone who worked in the school and they regularly reminded them that they all had the potential to make a difference to pupils' learning. This had brought about a fundamental shift in the culture of these schools. This is illustrated by the

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[6] *Time for standards: reforming the school workforce*
www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=3181
[7] Based on the definitions of the Training and Development Agency for Schools: www.tda.gov.uk

headteacher of an inner-city primary school who had radically changed the approach to learning for staff and pupils and had sustained exceptionally high achievement for the previous five years. The headteacher said:

> Each member of our team understands how their role contributes to the overall effectiveness of the school. They know where they are going to go and how they are going to get there. The senior leadership team carefully evaluates the skills of the organisation to ensure they are fit for the intended purpose. We are careful to maintain a good balance between a high level of challenge and a sufficient level of support and to empower associate staff to assume key leadership positions. To illustrate this point, I use a well-known story. Apparently, on a visit to the NASA space centre, President J F Kennedy spoke to an employee sweeping up in one of the buildings. 'What's your job here?' asked Kennedy. 'Well, Mr President,' replied the sweeper, 'I'm helping to put a man on the moon.'

3. The headteacher of a large secondary school was also very clear about what had led to dramatic improvements in standards and achievement. The characteristics of the intake had remained the same, but the essential change had taken place in the attitudes and working practices of the wider workforce, as a result of the increased status and recognition given to them. Teachers and members of the wider workforce had developed a shared understanding of what constituted good teaching and good support. In three years, GCSE results, including English and mathematics, had improved by 30% and contextually value-added scores showed that the pupils' progress was in the top 8% of schools nationally.

4. In the schools where the impact of workforce reform was outstanding, everyone, not just selected members of staff or those who chose to do so, took part in putting together the school improvement plan. Two of the schools held annual conferences to ensure everyone understood what the priorities for improvement were and how they could contribute to achieving them.

5. All staff had a clear understanding of their own and others' roles and responsibilities and how these were inter-related. Job descriptions were clear, specific, up to date, relevant and linked directly to pupils' learning and the school's improvement priorities. Members of the wider workforce were confident that their managers understood the purpose of their work and could therefore set appropriate objectives and review their performance effectively. Staff who worked in these schools spoke of a strong team spirit, an inclusive ethos and a common goal of helping pupils to do their best.

6. The most effective headteachers saw the reforms as an opportunity to change their leadership and management structures so that the wider workforce was represented at all levels. They ensured that the senior leadership team included members of the wider workforce who could act as professional role models and set clear expectations for their colleagues. They also recognised that a new

workforce needed a new title to give it status and a corporate identity. Three schools chose the title of 'associate staff'.

7. Some schools organised the wider workforce into teams, each with a responsibility for a specific area of learning. These teams were very clear about their remits and knew exactly how their work related to that of the teaching staff. This ensured good communication and efficient work practices that made a clear difference to pupils' learning.

> A large secondary school that had sustained a trend of rising standards and achievement had grouped support staff into three directorates. The Curriculum Directorate was led by a higher level teaching assistant who managed a team of support staff who had been trained to provide assistance in specific subjects. They worked very closely with heads of faculty and subject teachers on the common aim of raising pupils' attainment.
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> The Student Services Directorate was led by a member of the wider workforce with a social work background who managed a team of learning mentors and behaviour support workers attached to year groups. They liaised with and worked alongside heads of year with the clear purpose of improving attendance and behaviour, so that pupils could re-engage in lessons and with the curriculum.
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> The Inclusion Directorate was led by the special educational needs coordinator, who managed a team of learning support assistants and teaching assistants who supported pupils with specific needs, including those who spoke English as an additional language or those new to this country. Team members were clear about how they contributed to the overall work of the school and how, together, they could make a difference to pupils' learning.

8. Ofsted's earlier reports on workforce reform showed that, before the introduction of the national agreement, support staff usually worked in isolation, adapting to different styles of teaching and working practices as required. Most worked part-time and had little involvement with other staff in the school. Schools struggled to achieve a balance between professionalism and accountability. For example, although there was often an expectation that support staff should attend briefings and staff training and contribute to teachers' planning, few schools provided time for these. Support staff differed greatly in their attitudes, ranging from those who were willing to work beyond their contractual hours and develop their careers to those who were very reluctant to extend their commitment or take on any additional responsibilities.

9. The survey found that there were still schools where the only briefings that support staff received were during spare moments between lessons or through impromptu conversations in the staff room. The most effective leaders realised

that structural changes in the workforce needed to be supported by a regular framework of meetings during which support staff could contribute to planning and provide feedback on pupils' progress. Nine of the schools visited had introduced regular meetings for teaching assistants. One of the secondary schools had set time aside for learning mentors to meet. In a primary school, daily briefings for support staff told them what was happening and gave them an opportunity to discuss relevant concerns. In addition, time was allocated every Monday morning for teachers to meet teaching assistants to share plans and discuss support strategies for the week ahead. In one of the secondary schools visited, teaching assistants were allocated an hour each week for planning. Higher level teaching assistants, responsible for intervention programmes, had time for planning, preparation and assessment.[8] The following example shows how regular meetings helped teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice:

> The headteacher of a primary school recognised that teachers were becoming more thorough in directing the work of teaching assistants but were not giving them the opportunity to contribute their views. He therefore introduced regular meetings where the teaching assistants could voice their opinions and discuss issues relevant to their work. At first, the meetings involved a considerable amount of grumbling but they eventually became more productive and highlighted several important concerns. Among them was the need to tackle the anxiety and lack of self-confidence among some of the teaching assistants. It also opened up a debate about variation in the direction and guidance provided by teachers and managers.

10. The quality of the support for teaching and learning depended very much on teachers' ability to manage and evaluate the effectiveness of members of the wider workforce. It is a considerable challenge for teachers to direct the work of additional adults in the classroom and also to liaise with the increasing number of staff with support roles across the school. The teachers interviewed during the survey had developed strong personal relationships with the adults they worked with and valued their support. A frequent comment was to wonder how they had managed without them. One teacher described a teaching assistant as her 'eyes and ears'. Another praised a teaching assistant's skill in identifying the 'invisible child'. The teachers recognised the benefits to teaching, especially in relation to managing behaviour or providing for pupils with special educational needs, but they did not always consider if such support made a difference to all pupils' learning.

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[8] The purpose of guaranteed time for planning, preparation and assessment is to support the raising of standards. The time forms part of teachers' contracts and is also designed to improve their work/life balance.

11. To deploy teaching assistants effectively, teachers need a clear understanding of their colleagues' knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications. The teachers in this survey had built up a good working knowledge of the abilities of support staff through close contact in the classroom but few had a good understanding of what their qualifications enabled them to do. This was particularly the case where higher level teaching assistants were concerned.

12. The most effective schools not only provided opportunities for members of the wider workforce to develop their own skills but also drew on their expertise to disseminate good practice.

> Professional development was a regular agenda item at the meetings of teaching assistants in a primary school. It became clear that not all the teaching assistants were confident in supporting mathematics, because of the range of calculation methods used across the year groups. They wanted a clearer understanding of all the possible methods, so they could support pupils more effectively. In organising the training, the mathematics coordinator asked a teaching assistant who was particularly skilled in this area to demonstrate various methods to her colleagues. This encouraged those who lacked confidence to ask questions. The resulting boost to their self-esteem led to clear improvements in the quality of the support that they provided.

13. Two secondary schools with a strong commitment to continuing professional development had altered the timing of the school day once a fortnight to allow all staff, including the wider workforce, to attend an afternoon of in-service training. Here again, sessions were provided where teachers and support staff demonstrated and disseminated good practice.

14. All the schools visited had introduced some form of performance management for the wider workforce. The most effective schools had introduced a new culture of professionalism and accountability. They did this by changing attitudes and preconceptions and creating an ethos where teachers and the wider workforce were determined to learn from, and work with, each other. For example, one primary school made sure that senior leaders from the wider workforce, or senior managers who managed members of the wider workforce, received appropriate training. Joint coaching sessions for members of the leadership team and associate leadership team developed new skills, built confidence and ensured consistent practice.

> A member of the associate leadership team managed three members of the wider workforce in the school. She was aware that one of her team was not completing his work on time and tackled this in his performance reviews. It was difficult at first as he felt threatened by her approach, such as direct questions about why a job had not been completed. After the joint coaching sessions, she realised that by being positive she was likely to get much more out of him. She changed her approach as a result,

assuring him that she was there to help, not to criticise. By using open questions, she was able to help him to identify the problem as a difficulty with his management of his time. They worked together to create a 'job book'. This listed tasks in order of priority and allocated specific times for each one. He gained great satisfaction from ticking off each job and became far more efficient as a result.

15. To support performance management of the wider workforce, three primary and four secondary schools had introduced formal observations to evaluate the work of teaching assistants. They found this a challenge because of the lack of established practice in this area. Lesson observations have often included comments on the work of assistants but the main focus has been on the work of the teacher. Two schools were particularly successful because they provided training to ensure that teaching assistants and reviewers had a clear, shared understanding of the purpose of the observations. These were part of a comprehensive process that assessed the impact of support on pupils' learning and were conducted in a supportive, non-threatening way. The performance objectives clearly related to pupils' progress and identified ways of developing and improving professional practice. They focused on factors over which the teaching assistant had direct control and therefore could improve. The feedback from the reviewers was constructive and timely. The following examples from two primary schools shows this in action:

The first school had drawn up guidance on what 'good' teaching assistance or support looked like. It included clear criteria, based on those used by Ofsted, to assess lessons and practical examples of how to meet them. Leaders from the wider workforce carried out joint observations with members of the senior management team to ensure that judgements were fair and consistent.

In the second school, members of the senior leadership team carried out additional observations of teaching assistants to moderate the judgements of line managers. The headteacher felt that this approach gave a much clearer view of impact than the methods used previously. Those had lacked clear measures of effectiveness and gave little indication of how well staff were working together. Feedback had previously consisted of comments such as, 'She is really helpful,' and had not taken sufficient account of the impact of the support on learning. The new model gave teachers and teaching assistants a more professional system of reporting. Observers did not feel they were betraying a colleague by identifying areas for improvement.

16. In only three of the schools visited did senior leaders have a secure knowledge of the national occupational standards or the career development framework. In these schools, the headteachers had used the guidance to put together very

clear job descriptions for each level. These outlined the necessary experience, qualifications, knowledge and skills and listed the requirements for supporting pupils, the teacher, the curriculum and the school. Where appropriate, they also identified line management responsibilities. To allow for career progression, one of the secondary schools visited employed all teaching assistants at level 1 initially and gave them more responsibilities as they moved to levels 2 and 3. This ensured that teachers and teaching assistants were very clear about the expectations and competences at each level.

17. The members of the wider workforce interviewed during the survey had very high levels of job satisfaction. However, most were unclear about how their levels of pay or conditions of service related to others doing the same role or how they fitted into the national picture. This confusion resulted largely because some schools created their own roles, guidance on pay levels varied between different local authorities and few schools referred to the levels identified in the national occupational standards.

18. A central aim of the national agreement was to provide teachers and managers with more time to manage their increasing workloads. The headteachers interviewed were strongly of the opinion that the additional time gained had led to improvements in the management and efficiency of their schools. However, they were not able to provide evidence to support this view because they had not evaluated systematically the impact of the extra time on improving leadership, management, teaching and learning. In many cases, particularly in secondary schools, they were unclear how staff were using the time.

19. The impact of the changes was clearer in the primary schools. Many employed specialist sports coaches or teachers of modern foreign languages, music or art. This created opportunities for staff to plan together. A group of primary teachers highlighted the advantages.

'We've been enjoying PPA [time for planning, preparation and assessment] together as a year group for three years now and it has brought great benefits. It gives us an allocated, protected time slot to plan and work together which ensures we do what we need to do thoroughly, as opposed to just fitting it in at lunch time or after school. We can be assured of consistency across the year group in terms of planning and standards. If we plan our curriculum together, we are more likely to be teaching the same thing and assessing to the same standards. We believe that teaching is about sharing good practice, so year-group PPA is an ideal way to do this. We can share our successes and pitfalls in a way that may get lost if we were planning independently. It gives teachers a sense of team work and provides a network of support for newly qualified teachers and new members of staff, so that they never feel isolated. Even more experienced members of staff see the benefits of having others to learn from.'

20. The schools visited had not conducted any meaningful analysis or evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of workforce reform or the value for money it provided. When asked, some provided data that showed where money had been saved. One school had seen significant reductions in the costs of teacher sickness and vacancies between 2003/04 and 2007/08. In another, 81% of the budget in 2004/05 was spent on teachers' salaries. In 2007/08 it was 68%. In the same period, the budget for employing the wider workforce had increased from 16% to 20%, a net salary saving of 9% in the salary budget. The area where schools could most readily identify savings was in reducing the budget for supply teachers. One primary school visited calculated that its expenditure on providing cover for teachers who were absent had reduced from £12,000 in 2002/03 to £400 in 2007/08. This had been achieved by using highly skilled support staff, where appropriate, and employing specialist teachers to provide time for planning, preparation and assessment. It might be inferred that the increased stability of staffing should lead to better teaching and learning. However, although these schools could identify the savings they had made, this was not part of their usual monitoring and they had not evaluated the impact of such savings on pupils' learning and achievement.

The impact on pupils' learning

21. The following key features were evident in the most effective schools visited.

- All members of staff contributed to the school development plan, understood the school's priorities and objectives and saw how they contributed to improvement.

- The roles for the wider workforce who supported teaching were defined in clear and specific job descriptions which were up to date, relevant and linked directly to pupils' learning and the school's improvement priorities. This information was used by teachers to deploy support where it had the greatest impact.

- The wider workforce had a defined status, professionalism and accountability.

- A supportive professional culture encouraged all staff to have high expectations of their work and to be held accountable for pupils' learning.

- The ethos was one where teachers and members of the wider workforce were determined to learn from and work with each other.

- Members of the wider workforce were managed and deployed in teams that focused on key areas of the school's work. Clear lines of responsibility and accountability ensured that they understood how their work related to that of other staff across the school and what difference they could make to pupils' learning.

- Regular meetings and formalised working practices gave members of the wider workforce opportunities to share opinions and identify training and

development needs that linked well to the priorities for school improvement. These meetings provided a useful forum for demonstrating good practice as well as disseminating the outcomes of training.

■ Leaders, managers and teachers provided good-quality guidance and direction to make sure that the work of the wider workforce achieved outcomes that linked to pupils' learning.

■ There was a comprehensive system for setting performance objectives for the wider workforce; identifying training and development needs; reviewing progress against targets; and encouraging staff to take the initiative in developing their roles and responsibilities.

■ Leaders and senior managers had a secure knowledge of the standards or the career development framework which they used to review job descriptions, set performance objectives and identify professional development opportunities.

Making a difference to pupils' learning

Teaching and learning

22. Members of the wider workforce who were well trained and deployed appropriately made a considerable difference to pupils' learning when they provided intervention for specific groups or individuals. In ten primary and eight secondary schools, higher level teaching assistants, teaching assistants or learning support assistants provided clearly structured and defined intervention programmes for pupils identified as not meeting their targets. Typically, these consisted of additional support for work on phonics, reading, writing and mathematics in primary schools, and booster groups for English, mathematics and science in secondary schools. Support was most effective when the teaching assistants:

■ were well trained

■ knew what was expected of them

■ were aware of pupils' targets

■ were confident about assessing pupils' progress.

23. The schools tested pupils when they began these programmes and again at the end. Therefore, they had evidence of the positive impact of such intervention. They were confident that members of the wider workforce who provided the programmes were effective because they were observed as part of the monitoring process. The following example from a primary school shows how one intervention programme helped pupils to overcome specific barriers to learning:

> Several pupils showed mathematical competence but were underachieving because they struggled to understand and use mathematical vocabulary. Together, the senior teaching assistant and the subject coordinator attended training provided by the local authority. They passed on information about the programme to all the teachers and trained all the teaching assistants to use it. Pupils identified by teachers as needing extra help attended a small group activity, led by the teaching assistants, for 30 minutes each morning. The sessions were practical, with a specific focus on understanding the language of mathematics.
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> The pupils talked confidently about their increased understanding and enjoyment of mathematics as a result of this extra support. They could identify aspects of mathematics that they had struggled to understand and where they now felt confident. One pupil commented: 'I find these sessions very helpful because, when I go back to my table, I know what my teacher means'. A teacher reported that intervention had a tremendous impact on mental mathematics sessions. Because language was no longer a barrier, the lessons could move at a faster pace. The pupils were assessed and given a score at the beginning and end of the programme which, in most cases, showed improvement. More importantly, over the year, 90% of them progressed by two or more National Curriculum sub-levels.

24. The most effective schools did not view intervention in isolation but looked to see if the knowledge and skills gained were consolidated and developed further in the teaching and learning in the classroom. They tracked pupils after the intervention to see whether the improvement was sustained. They also evaluated the impact of intervention on other aspects of their development, such as confidence, self-esteem and the ability to work independently. The evaluations were used to modify intervention programmes and to deploy members of the wider workforce where they would have most impact. This example comes from a medium-sized primary school:

> Well-trained and confident teaching assistants provided a wide range of short-term interventions to meet the particular needs of pupils in all year groups. The programmes included support to 'catch up' on lost learning, to develop a strength further or to meet specific emotional and/or learning needs. The pupils requiring support were identified through a simple but effective system that included observation by teachers and teaching assistants and more formal assessments against National Curriculum levels. As a matter of policy, the school did not confine itself to any particular provider or package of support but took a very flexible approach to selecting the resources that were best suited to the pupils' particular needs. The teaching assistants played a significant role. They planned the interventions and had to account for the pupils' progress. This measuring of progress was also used to modify the programmes where progress was

too slow. Very careful planning of the teaching assistants' time ensured that every session counted. As a result, all the pupils involved made good progress.

25. When teaching assistants provided general support in class, they made less of a difference to pupils' learning. Inspectors found a huge variation in the knowledge, expertise and abilities of support staff and in the capacity of teachers to supervise and direct their work. Support was not effective when teachers became over-reliant on teaching assistants or made demands that were beyond the capabilities of these staff. Similarly, impact was limited when support staff were given passive roles that made too little use of their skills and expertise. In the most effective lessons, staff had a shared understanding of what constituted good teaching and good support. Collaborative planning ensured that the teacher and the support staff agreed on the intended outcomes for pupils and were consistent in their approach to managing behaviour, in the language that they used and in the level of challenge for pupils.

26. In nearly all the sessions of general support observed during the survey, teaching assistants worked with lower-attaining pupils or those most likely to disrupt the lesson. These were also the pupils that were likely to be withdrawn from classes for specific intervention programmes. As a result, they spent considerably less time than other pupils being taught by a qualified teacher.[9] Only two of the schools visited used the wider workforce to provide support and challenge for higher-attaining pupils.

27. In the schools visited, the roles and working practices of learning support assistants who supported pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with statements of special educational need, had not changed or developed significantly in response to workforce reforms. Nearly all the teachers interviewed reported that they valued support in lessons, because pupils with moderate or specific special educational needs and associated emotional, social and behavioural needs demanded a considerable amount of teachers' time and often distracted other pupils. The learning support assistants in the schools visited were well trained. They had attended many external courses and acquired high levels of specialist knowledge and expertise in helping pupils who had dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autistic spectrum disorders. However, the extent to which they were given the opportunity to apply their knowledge in lessons varied considerably within and between schools. The same was true of the extent to which they were involved in planning lessons and giving feedback on

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[9] In 2002, Ofsted published *Teaching assistants in primary schools: an evaluation of the quality and impact of their work – a report by HMI* (HMI 434). The report recommended that schools should 'monitor the amount of time individual pupils or groups of pupils spend with teaching assistants'.

pupils' progress. They knew the long-term targets in pupils' individual education plans but, unless these were precisely focused on pupils' learning, they found it difficult to relate them to lesson objectives.

28. The most effective schools had clear guidance for teachers and learning support assistants, so that:

- information about pupils' targets was shared among all staff
- work was set at the appropriate level and the learning support assistant understood exactly what was being taught
- the criteria for recording and measuring the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were agreed
- feedback was recorded systematically
- feedback focused on how much pupils had learnt rather than being limited to a description of the support or qualitative comments about the pupils' attitudes and behaviour
- learning support assistants worked with a range of pupils across the class so that none of the pupils became too reliant on support and lost the ability to work independently.

29. The pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities to whom inspectors talked during the survey had established strong relationships with the staff who supported them. Those who were making good progress were able to explain how the learning support assistants broke down the work into manageable chunks of information or explained things in a way that they were able to understand so that they could take part in the lesson.

Care, guidance and support

30. Because of their diverse backgrounds and experiences, members of the wider workforce often have specific knowledge and skills that enable them to engage successfully with a broad range of pupils. In the schools visited, workforce reform had improved the range and quality of care, guidance and support for pupils. The most effective schools had recognised and used support workers' expertise effectively to produce measurable improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance. Particularly notable was the improved stability of care given to pupils whose circumstances meant they were disadvantaged or vulnerable in other ways. During the survey, the schools provided case studies for inspectors of individual pupils who had been helped to transform their attitudes, re-engage with learning and to develop their social, emotional and communication skills.

31. Of the schools visited, 15 employed learning mentors who were very successful in re-engaging potentially disaffected pupils or those experiencing problems with behaviour, personal organisation, attendance and punctuality. Eight of the

secondary schools had introduced units, staffed by members of the wider workforce, overseen by a teacher, to support disaffected pupils. They provided an alternative curriculum and helped to develop their self-esteem.

32. These interventions were highly valued by the pupils and their teachers and had a substantial impact on pupils' short-term achievement. However, they were not so effective if they were used to compensate for weaknesses in teaching or a curriculum that did not cater for pupils' needs. In one school, for example, pupils who had made considerable progress in the inclusion unit described the problems they experienced when they returned to mainstream classes. The teachers used language they did not understand, the lessons moved on too quickly for them and instructions were unclear. In another school, pupils at Key Stage 4 found it difficult to re-engage with mainstream lessons because they were struggling with subjects that they did not find interesting or that were too difficult for them. In the most effective schools, teams of learning mentors, counsellors and staff from the inclusion units worked closely with teachers and pupils to review provision and eliminate any barriers to re-integration into mainstream classes.

33. Few of the schools in the survey tracked the effectiveness of support throughout a pupil's schooling. Problems could re-emerge when pupils who had been successfully supported at primary school moved on to secondary school or from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. The following example illustrates how effective transition arrangements can support pupils:

> A learning mentor in a primary school provided a carefully designed programme of support for pupils whose behaviour was challenging. Regular monitoring took place as the learning mentor and pupils completed structured assessment scales. Evaluation sheets kept teachers well informed by identifying areas of clear improvement in pupils' concentration and listening skills, behaviour, attitudes to peers, relationships with staff in the playground and their work rate in class. The pupils also used 'smiley' faces to provide feedback on the quality of the mentoring. Their responses were checked in conversations with their teachers. The evaluations were sent to the pupils' secondary schools. Because they were in quantifiable form, if further support were needed, they could be used again to re-assess pupils' attitudes, self-awareness, self-confidence, and learning and literacy skills.

Curriculum and the community

34. In seven of the primary schools and four of the secondary schools visited, workforce reform had made an outstanding contribution to extending and enriching the curriculum, as the following example from a secondary school illustrates:

The achievement of boys at Key Stage 4 had improved as a result of a programme of support involving teachers, parents and specialist instructors. The school rented and equipped two nearby workshops and employed instructors with a background in further education or employment to teach vocational courses in motor vehicle mechanics and construction, as well as in hairdressing. They focused particularly on boys who did not perform well academically or had become disaffected. They proved very popular with the boys and also led to improved attitudes to learning in other subjects.

The instructors and teachers worked together to show the boys how the mathematics and science they learnt in core lessons had a practical application in motor vehicle maintenance and construction. As a result, the pupils became more responsive in science and mathematics lessons. In addition, a specialist literacy teacher provided one-to-one support which improved the boys' confidence in tackling examination questions. She built up strong links with their parents, many of whom had very low levels of literacy themselves. She encouraged them to support their children in practical ways, for example by reading tabloid newspapers together and talking about the stories. Many of these parents had had practical experience of building work or repairing cars and found it easier to talk to instructors because they understood the content of the lessons. This meant they were much more likely to attend parents' evenings and take an interest in their children's education. The boys' standards rose and their opportunities for further study increased. All but one progressed to employment, higher-level college courses, apprenticeships or to study graphics and design in the sixth form.

35. In all the schools visited, members of the wider workforce led a range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. When teaching assistants and higher level teaching assistants were deployed in specific key stages or subjects, they were able to develop and broaden their knowledge of the curriculum, contribute to lesson planning and provide continuity of support for pupils and teachers. For example, a teaching assistant who worked with Year 9 students, as part of the Aimhigher programme, continued to support them when they went on to study a construction course in Year 10.[10] In an inner-city secondary school, the school nurse and the police officer assigned to the school made a major contribution to the sex education and crime prevention aspects of the personal, social and health education programme. The school had evidence that teenage pregnancy rates had reduced and fewer students had committed criminal offences as a result.

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[10] The BIS's 'Aimhigher' campaign encourages young people to think about the benefits and opportunities of higher education, especially young people from families with no tradition of higher education. Details can be found at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/aimhigher/

Workforce reform in schools: has it made a difference?

36. In ten of the schools, as part of a broader programme, members of the wider workforce provided support for study skills after school and during lunchtimes and school holidays. Pupils particularly appreciated the help they had received with coursework, homework and revision and felt that this had improved their confidence, motivation and ability to work independently. In one secondary school, pupils reported that their coursework marks had improved by two grades as a result of the help they had received.

37. In the most effective schools, members of the wider workforce played a major role in ensuring that pupils' experiences outside the classroom benefited their learning, as the following two examples show:

A primary school where pupils' behaviour was often challenging appointed a learning mentor as a playground leader to work with specialist coaches on improving the organisation and quality of outside play, and developing the pupils' social skills. The local college provided training and weekly support for the project. The school allocated a budget to buy equipment and games which were chosen in consultation with the pupils. The playground was organised into four different coloured areas for specific activities. There was also a quiet area for reading and playing board games.

The playground calmed and there was a noticeable difference in behaviour and manners. One pupil commented: 'Two years ago, everything was boring and disorganised. When boys were playing football, the ball went into the rope when the girls were skipping. It would sometimes hit the girls and the boys would sometimes trip on the rope. We started to improve with sports games like stilts and pat ball. We also came up with plate spinning, reading and board games. We decided to cancel football because it was too dangerous. Now things are more organised.'

One of the challenges facing a secondary school was to raise students' aspirations and self-esteem. As an extension of their specific support roles, members of the associate staff provided opportunities for additional learning through a range of imaginative extra-curricular activities. The senior managers deployed the staff in a way that ensured that they could use their skills to best effect and make links to the taught curriculum. For example, the newly appointed sports development officer was very effective in increasing the scope and availability of lunchtime and after-school sports and games. Questionnaires were used to gather the students' views, to ensure that the provision met their needs and that there were high levels of participation. The range of activities was extended to include inter-form games, non-competitive team sports, skipping and table tennis. The school invested in new equipment and

created a concrete, fenced area for supervised ball games and playground activities.

At lunch times, under the supervision of the behaviour mentor, the students had access to an indoor sports activity station where they could play snooker and table football or use a dance machine. The librarian ran a personal study and homework club; technicians ran information and communication technology and science clubs, a haven for vulnerable students. The learning skills centre provided study support and access to computers and games for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All the students joined at least one club or activity and were able to develop new skills, improve their confidence and interact with a wide range of students and staff.

38. In the schools where workforce reform had had less of an impact on the curriculum, members of the wider workforce would willingly take on activities well beyond their job descriptions. However, their contributions were not coordinated and did not form part of a coherent curriculum. It was sometimes difficult to see how the quality of an activity was assessed or how it related to the work of the teachers.

39. Members of the wider workforce were particularly successful in developing links with parents and the wider community because they often had local knowledge or lived in the area. They had developed new ways of listening and responding to the community, especially when communicating with parents who lacked confidence socially or who held negative views of education and were, therefore, reluctant to talk to teachers. The following case study illustrates how one school successfully engaged parents in their children's education:

In order to maintain the excellent progress being made by Somali pupils, the school wanted to establish sustainable links with their parents. Members of the wider workforce who supported these children worked closely with the refugee support service. A quilting group was set up in school to provide opportunities for mothers to meet each other but, more importantly, for them to become familiar with the school environment. After 12 sessions, the mothers were awarded certificates which were presented to them by their own children in assembly. This was an important factor in encouraging parents to take a more active interest in their children's education. As a result of participation in the quilting group, 12 Somali families attended an information session on 'The English National Curriculum at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2'.

40. Four of the primary schools and four of the secondary schools visited were extended schools.[11] In three of these, members of the wider workforce were making a very effective contribution to extended provision. The school leaders recognised the potential of extended services, such as breakfast clubs and after-school clubs, to support and complement learning in the school and to raise standards. Most of the provision was therefore staffed by members of the wider workforce. The fact that most of them also worked in the school provided continuity for pupils and parents. The most effective schools deployed staff according to their interests and abilities and provided appropriate training if required. These schools could provide evidence of improved attendance and punctuality, better concentration and behaviour from pupils attending the extended provision.

> The manager of extended services in a community primary school worked closely with the headteacher to make sure that provision was not a 'bolt on' but was integrated fully to meet the needs of pupils, parents and the community. Evaluation of the impact was extremely thorough. The manager identified all pupils who attended a club or activity and monitored improvements in their attendance, behaviour and standards. Extended provision made a major contribution to community cohesion. The greatest success was the increased number of parents who approached the school when they had concerns. They were more willing to be involved in their children's education and to extend their own skills.

41. The least effective schools saw extended provision as a way of offering their support staff some extra money, without considering how well they understood the nature of their role or its purpose.

42. Key features in the schools visited that enabled members of the wider workforce to make a difference to pupils' learning included:

- collaborative planning and good-quality direction from teachers, ensuring that members of the wider workforce were directly involved in supporting teaching and learning and in assessing and recording pupils' progress

- a shared understanding by staff of what constituted good teaching and learning and effective support for these activities

- careful monitoring of pupils' progress after intervention programmes, ensuring that improvement was consolidated and sustained in the classroom

- consistent evaluation of interventions for disaffected and/or vulnerable pupils, undertaken across all key stages

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[11] *Extended schools: access to opportunities and services for all: a prospectus* (DFES 1408-2005), DfES, 2005.
www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/13061/esp2008.pdf

- a coherent programme of high-quality curriculum support and extended provision that related clearly to teachers' work and focused on extending and enriching pupils' learning.

The future

43. During the previous four surveys on workforce reform, inspectors invited the schools visited to provide evidence of the impact on pupils' learning of the changes they had made to their workforce.[12] Since September 2009, when Ofsted's new inspection framework came into force, inspectors take into account how effectively staff are deployed and how well leaders and managers promote the professional development of the whole school's workforce. Evidence about these aspects of leadership and management contributes to judgements on the effectiveness with which the school deploys its resources to achieve value for money and the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

44. The new inspection framework places a greater emphasis on outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils and on their learning. In reaching judgements on the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning, inspectors take into account whether teachers and other adults have high expectations of all pupils, and the extent to which other adults' support is well focused and contributes to the quality of learning. In order to determine the extent to which a school achieves value for money, inspectors also take into account how effectively staff are deployed and the impact of their professional development on standards.

45. By 2010, every school will be required to provide extended provision. Extra roles and responsibilities are being developed for members of the wider workforce. This will challenge leaders and coordinators of extended services to provide a coherent programme of induction, appropriate training, and relevant continuing personal and professional development to ensure that workforce reform can continue to make a difference.

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[12] The reports are listed in the further information section.

Workforce reform in schools: has it made a difference?

Notes

Between May 2008 and March 2009, inspectors visited 16 primary schools and 14 secondary schools, selected to represent inner-city, suburban and rural locations across England. The visits focused on whether workforce reform had made a difference to the culture of the schools and to pupils' learning. Inspectors held detailed discussions with members of the wider workforce, teachers and school managers, representing a wide range of roles and responsibilities, and with school governors and pupils.

Further information

Publications by Ofsted

Remodelling the school workforce: Phase 1 (HMI 2298), Ofsted, 2004.

Remodelling the school workforce (HMI 2596), Ofsted, 2005.

The logical chain: continuing professional development in effective schools (HMI 2639), Ofsted, 2006.

Inclusion: does it matter where pupils are taught? (HMI 2535), Ofsted, 2006.

Reforming and developing the school workforce (070020), Ofsted, 2007.

The deployment, training and development of the wider workforce (070222), Ofsted, 2008.

Other publications

Time for standards: reforming the school workforce (DfES/0751/2002), DfES, 2002.

The Children Act Report 2002 (ISBN 1-84478-038-4), DfES, 2003.

Every Child Matters: change for children (DfES-1110-2004), DfES, 2004.

Common core of skills and knowledge for the children's workforce (ISBN 1-84478-375-8), DfES, 2005.

Websites

Raising standards and tackling workload: a national agreement
www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/na_standards_workload.pdf

Information on remodelling
www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling

The extended schools prospectus: Access to opportunities and services for all
http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-1408-2005&

The national occupational standards for supporting teaching and learning in schools
www.tda.gov.uk/search.aspx?action=search&keywords=national+occupational+standards&Go=Search&atleast=&allwords=&exactphrase=

The career development framework has been created to help school leaders and support staff identify appropriate training and development. By showing progression opportunities within and across different roles, it should help staff to consider potential career pathways.
www.tda.gov.uk/support/cdf.aspx?keywords=Career+development+framework

www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/cpdleadership/identifying_needs/further_reading.aspx?keywords=Career+development+framework

The National Advisory Group for the Professional Development of the Children's Workforce in Schools was established in autumn 2008 to advise the Training and Development Agency for Schools on the professional development of teachers and support staff. It replaces two separate stakeholder reference groups: the National Reference Group (NRG) for teachers' professional development and the School Workforce Development Board.
www.tda.gov.uk/partners/cpd/pds

Annex A. Schools visited

Alderman Richard Hallam Primary School	Leicester
Benfield School	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Castle Community College, Deal	Kent
Chesterton Primary School, Battersea	Wandsworth
Dene Community School of Technology, Peterlee	Durham
East Stour Primary School, Ashford	Kent
Eltham Hill Technology College for Girls, Eltham Hill	Greenwich
Ferryhill Business Enterprise College, Ferryhill	Durham
Forches Cross Community Primary and Nursery School, Barnstaple	Devon
Four Marks Church of England Primary School, Alton	Hampshire
Haydon School, Pinner	Hillingdon
Hodge Hill Sports and Enterprise College	Birmingham
Horden Nursery School, Peterlee	Durham
Lawrence Community Primary School	Liverpool
Marsden Community Primary School, Nelson	Lancashire
Northdown Primary School, Margate	Kent
Our Lady of Good Help Catholic Primary School	Liverpool
Pilton the Bluecoat Church of England Junior School, Barnstaple	Devon
Prospect School, Tilehurst	Reading
Redmoor High School, Hinckley	Leicestershire
Servite RC Primary School	Kensington and Chelsea
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	Hammersmith and Fulham
St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Walworth	Southwark
Staplegrove CofE Primary School, Taunton	Somerset

Stockland Green Technology College, Erdington	Birmingham
Stretford High School, Stretford	Trafford
Sturry Church of England Primary School, Canterbury	Kent
Testwood Sports College, Southampton	Hampshire
The Ravenscroft School A Technology College	Barnet
Wadebridge Community Primary School, Wadebridge	Cornwall
Walbottle Campus, Walbottle	Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Annex B. The national workforce agreement

In January 2003, the Government, employers and trades unions (with the exception of the National Union of Teachers) agreed to the principles of *Raising standards and tackling workload: a national agreement*.[13] This agreement, below, set out a seven-point plan, to be implemented over three years, to reduce teachers' workloads and improve standards.

1. Progressive reductions in teachers' overall hours over the next four years.

2. Changes to teachers' contracts, to ensure teachers, including headteachers:

■ do not routinely undertake administrative and clerical tasks

■ have a reasonable work/life balance

■ have a reduced burden of providing cover for absent colleagues

■ have guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment time within the school day to support their teaching, individually and collaboratively

■ have a reasonable allocation of time in support of their leadership and management responsibilities

■ do not invigilate external exams.

3. Changes to headteachers' contracts to ensure that they have dedicated time that recognises their significant responsibilities for their school.

4. A concerted attack on unnecessary paperwork and bureaucratic processes for teachers and headteachers. An implementation review unit will be established, featuring a panel of experienced, serving headteachers.

5. Reform of support staff roles to help teachers and support pupils. Personal administrative assistants for teachers, cover supervisors and higher level teaching assistants to be introduced.

6. The recruitment of new managers, including business and personnel managers, and others with experience from outside education where they have the expertise to contribute effectively to schools' leadership teams.

7. Additional resources and national 'change management' programmes to help school leaders achieve in their schools the necessary reforms of the teaching profession and restructuring of the school workforce.

8. Monitoring of progress on delivery by the signatories of the agreement.

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[13] www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling/nationalagreement.aspx