

[Home](#) > [Education, training and skills](#) > [Teaching and leadership](#)

Speech

Damian Hinds speech at the Association of School and College Leaders' annual conference 2019

Education Secretary addresses the Association of School and College Leaders' annual conference in Birmingham

Published 15 March 2019

From: [Department for Education](#) and [The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP](#)

Delivered on: **15 March 2019** (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)



This morning I woke up to news of a terrible attack in New Zealand. In the never-ending battle against hate, education plays a leading role in tackling intolerance and teaching mutual respect. My thoughts and prayers are with those in New Zealand.

Good morning everyone and thank you Rachael for that welcome.

I am very pleased to be here, joining you for a second year. When I stood up this time last year, I had been in the job for just two months.

I told you then how pleased I was at the prospect of working with you, and how I was acutely aware of the enormous weight of responsibility this job carries. It is a responsibility to you and all those school and college leaders like you, as well as the teachers, the support staff, the governors and of course the children, young people and families we all serve.

One year on, I can say for certain that the best part of my job is getting out to visit as many of those schools and colleges as possible. In the last few weeks I have heard that I'm not meeting headteachers. This came as a bit of a surprise to me.

I'm visiting schools, nurseries and colleges week in week out and I've heard from hundreds of headteachers about their ambitions for their students and the challenges they face. You couldn't do this job without talking to headteachers.

And I can reassure you that I have heard the message on funding loud and clear and before I go any further – I want to address this directly.

I understand that there are real concerns on funding, that finances are challenging for schools and that many of you have had to make, and are having to make very hard choices. I know that rising costs from suppliers to supply agencies add to these pressures, alongside the particular pressures in High Needs.

On Wednesday the Chancellor announced the next spending review, which is when Government sets out spending allocations for the year ahead. I will take that opportunity to make the strongest possible case for education. For me, its not only a moral argument about our priorities – though that can't be overstated.

From a hard-headed point of view, for a strong, highly skilled, productive economy clearly we need the right level of investment in our schools. And so too, to deliver the revolution we need in technical education we need investment in our colleges.

I stood on this stage last year and said that I would back head teachers.

Since then, when I was challenged to ban mobile phones in every school, I backed heads to make that judgement because you are best placed to make decisions in your schools.

When I have been challenged to intervene to centrally direct behaviour policy, I've backed heads to know what is right for their schools, their staff and their pupils.

And as we approach the next spending review, I will also back heads to have the resources they need to deliver a world class education.

Of course there will be competing demands on the public finances, as there always are, but ours is a very strong case, because so much else relies on what you in our schools and colleges do.

It is our education system that will shape the doctors, police and nurses of the future. It's our education system that will produce the engineers, builders and lawyers of the future. And it's our education system that will give us the teachers of the future.

I want to work with you on this just as we've worked together in other areas – in particular on recruitment and retention.

I'd like to say a special thank you to ASCL here, for their contribution and to Geoff in particular. And I'm also very grateful to the heads on our expert advisory group: Maura Regan, Jo Heaton, Vijita Patel and Lesley Powell.

Making sure that teaching is a profession that attracts and retains top talent is our shared priority, and the strategy sets out a clear plan to put this into practice.

Ultimately, a school can only be a great place for pupils to learn if it's also a great place for teachers to teach.

Clearly, it's school leaders like you that shape a school's working environment, its ethos. But it's my responsibility to support headteachers to create great cultures in their schools. Critical to this is enabling you to be able to hire the best teachers possible and to keep them in post.

You know that teaching can be an incredible career. But you also know it's often a challenging and tiring one as well as one where you get to spend every day working with inspiring and inquiring young minds.

I'm well aware that many of the people in this room regularly put in a working week which is just too long. The pressures that you and your staff face are not good for your quality of life and your families. This is why I made a promise to you last year that I would take an unflinching look at workload and its causes.

Its why, for example, I asked Professor Becky Allen to take a hard look the issue of data and the burdens it creates. Our workload reduction toolkit, published in July, has been downloaded more than 95,000 times.

We have just updated it with a new section on reducing workload linked to behaviour management and advice for governors in response to recommendations in Professor Allen's report.

And today we are also publishing updated guidance helping schools to

reduce the workload and data collection burdens that often go with the pay and appraisal processes.

But to make lasting progress on workload, we also need to do more to set up a system that works for both teachers and leaders.

At the heart of this systematic approach – and as set out in the recruitment and retention strategy – are our reforms to the accountability system. Children only get one shot at an education so accountability is vital – and I know that you recognise that.

But I do recognise that the current system can have unintended consequences that add unnecessary burdens, especially for schools in some of the most challenging circumstances.

So we are radically simplifying the system to reduce the pressure on school leaders. As part of this we intend to make “requires improvement” the sole trigger for an offer of support – replacing floor and coasting standards.

School accountability needs to be simpler and more supportive. Heads should have complete clarity on the way the system works, the distinct role that each actor plays within it and the support available to them.

Central to this is the new Ofsted framework, Amanda Spielman and I are totally aligned on the need for an active focus on teacher workload, supporting and recognising leaders in managing this well alongside a commitment to reduce data burdens.

Amanda and her team have been working hard to combat the myths about ‘what Ofsted wants’. And more broadly, this new inspection framework will – rightly – rebalance inspection towards the substance of what happens in a school.

I recognise that workload is a tough one to crack. For many years now teachers have been reporting working excessive hours, but I hope we may now, with will and concerted action from all the actors in the system, be at a turning point. And what is making the biggest difference by far is what headteachers and principals are doing.

From surveys we know that now virtually all schools – over 90% – have taken specific action on workload reduction. We’ve published some great examples today in the workload toolkit, from King Charles I School, and Ascent Trust, among others.

Tackling workload is one of the ways we can build a supportive culture in schools. Another is to ensure that we’re providing our teachers with a proper professional pathway. The way in which teachers enter and progress in the profession must enable staff to achieve the things that brought them into teaching in the first place: inspiring children and

ensuring they can fulfil their potential. This is already the case for many, but not yet for enough.

You've all had talented teachers, who have decided they no longer want to do the job.

It is a sad fact that more than 20% of new teachers leave within two years and 33% within five. And this problem is most acute, as you'll know, in areas of disadvantage, where schools can least afford that kind of professional churn. They are hit particularly hard by high turnover in some subjects, like maths and science.

The great tragedy of this situation - and it is a tragedy - is that teachers all come into the profession with such a burning vocation, such optimism - they want to change lives; they are passionate about their subject and sharing their knowledge.

Retaining teachers in the first years of their practice is now the biggest challenge we face in the teaching profession.

That's why at the heart of the Recruitment & Retention Strategy is the Early Career Framework, the most significant reform to teaching since it became a graduate-only profession.

Today, not enough early career teachers receive the high quality professional development they need to build the foundation for a successful career. We'll change this by putting in place a fully-funded, two-year package of support for these teachers, linked to the best-available research evidence.

The Early Career Framework will provide much needed structured support for all teachers at the start of their career. The headteachers were extremely clear during the creation of the Recruitment & Retention strategy that for the career framework to work, additional funding was required. We heard you.

So by the time the framework is fully in place we will back it up with substantial extra investment and we expect to be spending at least an extra £130 million every year on its delivery.

The framework covers the key areas that will form the building blocks of any teacher's career: behaviour, management, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and professional behaviours; and it underpins an entitlement to support and training in these areas for all new teachers, including a strengthened mentoring offer.

To enable this, we are extending the induction period from one year to two and we are guaranteeing that every new teacher will have more time to consolidate what they are learning - with a fully funded 5% off-timetable in their second year.

And our vision for the framework isn't just to transform the experience for early career teachers joining the profession. We want the framework to become the key link that brings together professional development at all stages of a teacher's working life. This covers everything from the reformed ITT core content, to the development of specialist NPQs that support those teachers who don't want to go into leadership to continue to develop and progress.

I want to enable more teachers at every stage of their careers to benefit from a clear, coherent professional pathway.

Similarly, as people's working patterns change, so it is increasingly important that schools are able to adapt their working practices, so that teachers are able to have the greater flexibility that is becoming more and more important throughout our country. Although more teachers are now working part time, it is still a smaller proportion than the working population as a whole.

I appreciate that this can be a real challenge in schools which is why we are taking steps to help you make it more achievable.

We will be creating a new jobshare matching service to support teachers who are looking for a potential jobshare partner. We have also launched a competition among EdTech providers to come up with innovative solutions to enable schools to accommodate more flexible working patterns, including through timetabling tools.

In developing the R&R strategy, teachers told us that they don't mind working hard when they can see the difference they are making. But their wellbeing is not something that we can take for granted or ignore.

Today I'm announcing the creation of an expert advisory group on wellbeing. Among the experts who have agreed to take part are Paul Farmer, of Mind, Peter Fonagy, from the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, Nancy Hey, of the What Works Wellbeing Centre and other leaders in the field. I am pleased to say that ASCL and other representatives of the school and college sector will also be involved, as well as serving teachers and leaders.

The group will provide expert advice and work with us to look at what government, local authorities and academy trusts can do to promote wellbeing.

I know there is a lot of excellent work already being done by schools and colleges involving charities such as the Education Support Partnership and I want to build on that.

Of course, motivated, well-supported teachers are more likely to have motivated pupils in their classrooms.

This point - that the success of teachers is inextricably linked to the success of their students – shapes my entire approach to education. It's an idea formed through countless conversation with the people in this room and with the terrific teachers who work for you.

I began this morning by talking about the sense of responsibility that I feel in this job. But it's teachers and school leaders that shape the lives of their pupils – and in turn the future of our country. My job in government is to do everything I can to support you.

We have made good progress on the Recruitment and Retention Strategy, the accountability framework and CPD. Make no mistake though, I see these efforts as a work in progress and something we must continue to shape together.

I know that each one of you will continue to work tirelessly on behalf of your staff and students. In return, you can expect me to back your right to be the ones making the decisions in schools, and doggedly determined in working to ensure we have the resourcing we need for our schools.

I very much look forward to seeing you again this time next year and to seeing the progress I know we are going to make between now and then.

Published 15 March 2019

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