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Department
for Education

Policy paper
Reducing teacher workload

Updated 20 March 2019

Contents

We are working to remove unnecessary workload for teachers and leaders, so they can focus on supporting their pupils and their own development.

The Secretary of State for Education has spoken about the importance of removing unnecessary workload at the:

- Association of Schools and College Leaders conference 2019
- Association of Schools and College Leaders conference 2018
- National Association of Headteachers conference 2018
- National Governance Association conference 2018

Support for schools

For school leaders, teachers and staff, we have:

- published a workload reduction toolkit in July 2018, with an update in March 2019 - this provides support to help review and streamline workload through solution-focused and collaborative discussions, and is accompanied by practical tools and case studies of successful methods schools have used to remove unnecessary workload
- published a short advice document with tips from school leaders on ways to reduce workload
- launched a video explaining how the department is working with the profession, the teaching unions, Ofsted and others to remove workload in schools

- published reports from independent teacher workload review groups, offering advice for teachers on:
  - marking policy
  - planning and teaching resources
  - data management

In November 2018 the Secretary of State for Education, Ofsted, ASCL, NAHT, NGA and CST wrote to all school leaders confirming their support to help them reduce workload in schools.

For governing boards and trustees, we have:

- given support in the workload reduction toolkit
- introduced workload considerations into the governance handbook

For teacher training providers and teachers in the early stages of their career, we have:

- published advice to support and encourage ITE providers to take action to reduce the workload burdens faced by trainee teachers and their schools
- published advice to support teachers in the early stages of their career to help reduce workload

Actions to address national drivers of workload

We have:

- introduced a simpler system of accountability, where schools feel supported

not restrained - including publishing the [principles for the system](#)

- introduced a period of stability with no new tests or assessment for primary schools and no changes to the national curriculum, GCSE or A levels for the remainder of this parliament, beyond those already announced
- given schools a minimum lead-in time for significant changes to policy in accountability, curriculum and qualifications - and committed to do more to consider the impact on schools when introducing such changes in the [DfE protocol](#)
- accepted all recommendations from the [Workload advisory group](#) in their [Making data work](#) report
- carried out work to reduce DfE's data burden on schools, in a way that also enables more efficient movement of data elsewhere in the system

Research and evidence

We have:

- committed to collecting robust evidence on teacher workload at least every 2 years - we published the results of the [first survey](#) in February 2017 and a [follow-up survey](#) in March 2018
- included questions in the School Snapshot survey to gather the views of leaders and teachers on actions taken to reduce unnecessary workload – the results on the [Summer 2018 survey](#) were published in January 2019
- [funded groups of schools](#) carrying out collaborative projects into reducing workload – we published the [12 project reports](#) and a [summary report](#) in March 2018
- published a [review of packages of support and continuing professional development (CPD)](#) available to schools in relation to reducing teacher workload

Background

The workload challenge

In October 2014, we launched the workload challenge. This was a month-long survey where we asked teachers for their views on how to reduce unnecessary workload.

The survey asked about:

- unnecessary or unproductive tasks
- strategies that work in schools to manage workload
- what government and schools can do to minimise workload

More than 44,000 people responded to the workload challenge.

Teachers said 3 of the biggest areas that can lead to unnecessary workload are:

- marking
- planning
- data management

On 6 February 2015, we published:

- an analysis of the responses we received from teachers
- our response to the workload challenge

In October 2014 Ofsted published guidance explaining what inspectors do and do not expect to see when they inspect a school. These clarification statements should help teachers and school leaders avoid some unnecessary tasks. The statements were revised and incorporated into Ofsted's 'School inspection handbook 2015' (paragraph 28).

Contact us

Email us if you would like to get in touch about workload or if you want to share examples of effective practices that reduce workload in schools.

Teacher workload unit
Email
workload.solutions@education.gov.uk

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