DfE Update: rising to the challenge of the recommendations of the eliminating unnecessary workload reports

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What you will find out from this session:

• Policy context
• The workload challenge – background, findings and ongoing work
• What the DfE is doing to meet the recommendations set by the three review groups
Policy Context

• The evidence base needed to be strengthened
• ‘Red tape challenge’ was already running in Whitehall
• An opportunity to engage stakeholders – including unions, for whom workload was a high priority
What was the Workload Challenge (WLC)?

The WLC survey asked three open questions:

- **Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time. Where do these come from?**
- **Send us your solutions and strategies for tackling workload – what works well in your school?**
- **What do you think should be done to tackle unnecessary workload - by government, by schools or by others?**

- 20,000+ detailed replies – all read. The results were used to develop a programme of action, published on 6 February 2015 in the Government’s Response to the Workload Challenge.

- Ministers re-committed to the actions and outcomes of the WLC in June 2015 and went further by establishing 3 review groups.
Key Findings

There were two specific tasks that were reported as being burdensome for the majority of sample respondents:

• recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data (56%)
• excessive/depth of marking – detail and frequency required (53%)

Six other tasks were reported as adding unnecessary burden to the general workload by at least 20% of respondents:

• lesson/weekly planning – detail and frequency required (38%)
• basic administrative and support tasks (37%)
• staff meetings (26%)
• reporting on pupil progress (24%)
• pupil targets (setting and continual review – including target culture) (21%)
• implementing new initiatives/curriculum/qualification change (20%)
### Unnecessary and Unproductive Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<td>Excessive/depth of marking - detail and frequency</td>
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<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing new initiatives/curriculum/qual change</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arranging/ordering materials and resources</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>Communications with parents (e.g. queries, complaints)</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>Arranging school trips, attending evening events/clubs</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance management</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderating marking and cross referencing</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing behaviour monitoring forms for class/school</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logging homework and teacher/class test scores</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEN issues - reporting/evidencing requirements</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents’ evenings and providing feedback to parents</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline and investigating discipline issues</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervising lunch/break times</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reporting / managing detentions</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing, updating policies and action plans</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>Training (e.g. health and safety)</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>Risk assessment</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working within policy remits, related paperwork</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEN issues - referral/liaison with external agencies</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastoral care</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment and management of staffing issues</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaising with external agencies</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing incident reports</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAL pupils - reporting evidence requirements</td>
<td>1%</td>
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Tasks identified as ‘unnecessary and unproductive’ by respondents [percentages of the 10% sample]
Drivers of workload

Respondents most commonly said that the burden of their workload was created by:

- accountability/perceived pressures of Ofsted (53%)
- tasks set by senior/middle leaders (51%)

Working to policies set at local/school level (35%) and policy change at national level (34%) were also significant drivers for teacher workload.
Main findings - the solutions

For respondents answering the two questions around solutions and ways forward, changes in accountability (40%) and support offered (34%) were the most common type of responses.

The most common solutions in relation to the most burdensome tasks:
- modify marking arrangements (32%)
- reduce the need for data inputting and analysis (25%)
- increase time for planning, preparation and assessment (25%)
- trust teachers as professionals (24%)
- reduce frequency of curriculum/qualification/examination changes (22%)
- review/change Ofsted processes (21%)

12% of respondents requested clearer guidance on Ofsted requirements for evidencing, to help ease this aspect of their workload.
The Action Plan – based on the survey and analysis

Three key areas:
• actions for **government**; supporting **school leaders**; and supporting **teachers** as professionals.

Progress against this action plan:
• DfE Protocol was published (23 March 2015) - sets out commitments in response to the WLC: to introduce minimum lead in times for significant changes to **accountability, assessment, curriculum and qualifications**; and for teams to do more to consider the impact on schools when introducing such changes.

• 14 ‘case study’ blogs of what is working for different schools related to the key areas raised by teachers in the WLC have been published since March 2015.

• Ofsted ‘clarification for schools’ document about what Ofsted do and do not need to see in inspections has been integrated into the School Inspection Handbook.

• Fieldwork for a **large scale survey** to track teacher workload has taken place – unions represented on the steering committee.

• **3 Review groups have reported** – and Secretary of State accepted all the recommendations for government – including working with system leaders to disseminate the reports.
Reducing unnecessary workload for teachers is a priority for this government. To this end, I would like the group to create a set of principles and consider recommendations on effective practice in schools which raises standards for pupils and helps raise expectations without creating unnecessary workload.

I have commissioned groups with broad representation .... I am particularly pleased that teachers who completed the Workload Challenge survey have agreed to be part of the groups, continuing the investment of interest, commitment and time they began last year.

Secretary of State’s letter of invitation to the Chairs, September 2015
Review Groups Summary

Overall, the groups believe:

– The **purpose** should always be driven by what has most impact on pupils, whilst being time efficient for teachers.

– It is essential to maintain a **proportionate** approach.

– There is a **cultural aspect** that needs to be challenged - the quality is more important than the quantity.

– Schools are urged to use the reports to **reassess and streamline** their practice and systems and review on an ongoing basis.
Workload review groups

Be streamlined; be ruthless; be prepared to stop activity; be aware of workload issues.

Marking should be manageable, meaningful and motivating.

Planning a sequence of lessons is more important than writing individual lesson plans.
Recommendations for DfE

DfE should:

- commit to using its influence to disseminate the principles and messages of the reports through system leaders.
- DfE should review the DfE protocol to ensure it is fit for purpose, and takes full regard of the workload implications of any change.
- DfE and its agencies should commit to sufficient lead-in times for changes for which the sector will have to undertake significant planning to implement. This includes releasing relevant materials in good time.
- ensure that officials, Regional Schools Commissioners, and system leaders supported by Government (e.g. NLEs) commit to the principles.
- Consider including data management skills in national qualifications for school leaders.

The Data Management report also made a number of data specific recommendations to reduce workload which are being taken forward by the Directorate responsible for data exchange.
What is the DfE doing?

4 overarching key aims:

1. Meet the recommendations set for DfE – working with colleagues inside and outside the DfE
2. Raise awareness of the reports through DfE and associated communications channels
3. Develop strategic approaches – to embed principles and recommendations for system leaders
4. Support the profession to develop its own approaches to meet the recommendations.
How is the DfE doing?

We know there is always more to do but:

- Large scale survey will be repeated in two years’ time – comparisons to this year’s baseline will be possible
- Additional evidence gathering to find out about impact of reports and changes in schools
- Protocol currently being reviewed with Unions, Ofsted and Ofqual
- Ongoing work with policy teams RSC office (RSC and HTB May 2016); leadership; governance; academies (September 2016)
- Increased the reach of the blogs and reports.
How is the DfE doing (2)

- MATs/Trusts taking on the messages with impact across a range of schools - e.g. The Co-operative Academies Trust (Manchester) – full review involving cross-section of staff agreeing action points and ways of working
- ITT providers taking on the messages for the new generation and their host schools, e.g. University of Greenwich’s Primary Partnership 300+ schools
- LAs - Nottingham City Council – Education Improvement Board has introduced a ‘Fair Working Charter’, citing the three reports.
For more information

- Teaching Blog – [https://teaching.blog.gov.uk](https://teaching.blog.gov.uk)
- If you would like to share practice examples of how your school has helped to reduce workload whilst maintaining standards for pupils in light of the reports, please contact us: [workload.solutions@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:workload.solutions@education.gsi.gov.uk) (from 1 October)

[Department for Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education)
Please find here the link to the DfE templates referred to in the presentation on pupil premium reviews:

http://tscouncil.org.uk/resources/guide-to-effective-pupil-premium-reviews/