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Scrutiny Report to the City Council

Reducing the Bureaucratic Burden on Teachers

Further copies of this report can be obtained from:

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2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The investigation by the Learning City Overview and Scrutiny Committee into reducing the bureaucratic burden on teachers was prompted by concerns expressed by the Birmingham branches of the national, recognised teachers' associations. Those concerns related to the Government's declared commitment to reduce bureaucracy and to the Government's recommendations to local education authorities and schools for achieving this aim.
- 2.2 The Committee accepted the results of national surveys into the nature and amount of administration undertaken by teachers. It also acknowledged that some administration was necessary in schools and that much of the extra administration undertaken by teachers was the result of Government policies. It decided that, within these constraints, the situation could be ameliorated to some extent, and made recommendations for reducing and improving administrative procedures.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Circular 2/98, 'Reducing the Bureaucratic Burden on Teachers', was sent to schools by the Department for Education and Employment in June 1998 following the report of a working group established by the then Minister of State, Estelle Morris, in July, 1997. It was prefaced with a quotation from the then Secretary of State, David Blunkett, that "cutting unnecessary burdens on teachers helps us to raise standards in schools, and that is our top priority."
- 3.2 Publication of the Government's circular followed a period of industrial action by members of the NUT and NASUWT aimed specifically at reducing unnecessary bureaucratic burdens on teachers. NASUWT ended its action in June 1998 and NUT declared that it would end its action when Circular 2/98 was implemented. During the consultations between the Government and the teaching unions over the dispute there had been disagreement over the number of after-school meetings which teachers could reasonably be expected to attend and Circular 2/98 made no recommendation on a number. The national disagreement was reflected in local discussions in Birmingham over guidance to schools on the implementation of Circular 2/98. Guidance was given to schools in the city in circular SD935.
- 3.3 At the end of July 1998 the then Secretary of State and the Chair of the Local Government Association Education Committee wrote to all chief education officers with a framework for reviewing how local authorities could reduce the bureaucratic burden on teachers.
- 3.4 In Birmingham the information technology service to schools, EdIT, worked with the teachers' associations and schools on various ways in which computers could be used to reduce the amount of administration and paperwork in schools. There were discussions with the teachers' associations on monitoring the impact of Circular 2/98 by telephone survey of a selection of schools. The proposed questions concentrated on the current situation in those schools rather than a comparison with the situation before the issue of Circular 2/98.
- 3.5 The Government's continuing commitment to the subject was demonstrated in various ways. It commissioned PriceWaterhouse Coopers to undertake a Teacher Workload Study. The interim report on the Study was published in August 2001 and the final report in December 2001, when it was referred by the Secretary of State both to the School Teachers' Review Body and to a working group including the teachers' associations and other interested parties. In the meantime the Government had undertaken a review of the regulatory framework by its Better Regulation Task Force based in the Cabinet Office. The Department for Education and Skills had made some changes to the way in which it communicated with schools, and had included commitments to reduce administration in its revised Code of Practice on LEA-school relations (February, 2001) and in the White Paper 'Achieving Success' (September, 2001).

- 3.6 The proposal that the Learning City Overview and Scrutiny Committee should review the implementation of the Government's guidance on reducing the bureaucratic burden on teachers came from the Birmingham branches of the national, recognised teachers' associations. Despite the national and local developments described above the associations expressed concern about the continuing demands of administration and paperwork on their members and saw this burden as part of a general problem over teachers' workload. The local education authority acknowledged this concern and its relationship to teachers already in employment and the prospects for future recruitment to the teaching profession.
- 3.7 The subject was accordingly referred to the Learning City Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee began its investigations in October, 2001, and established a working group, whose meetings were chaired by Councillor Jordan and attended by Councillors Bamford, Fuller, Kennedy, Lawrence, Murphy, Nangle and Spence, Mr. R. Bamford and Ms. M. Edwards.

4. Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The remit to the Committee for this investigation was

“To examine the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce the bureaucratic burden on teachers and to identify good practice nationally and locally in reducing the bureaucratic burden on teachers”

- 4.2 Five objectives were set within this remit:

- To examine the Birmingham response to Circular 2/98
- To assess the effectiveness of monitoring schools' response to the guidance produced by Birmingham LEA
- To assess the relationship between the bureaucratic burden on teachers and the difficulties in teacher recruitment and retention
- To examine the value for money considerations raised by the increased bureaucratic burden on teachers
- To make recommendations on the above

- 4.3 In accordance with its remit the Committee decided to limit its investigations to bureaucracy rather than seek a wider brief covering workload in general. It took the view that it should conclude its investigations and make some useful recommendations within a reasonably short period of time. Tackling the wider subject of workload would have led to an unacceptable delay in its report.

- 4.4 The introduction to Circular 2/98 'Reducing the Bureaucratic Burden on Teachers' defined bureaucracy as "paperwork and administration". The Committee's working group accepted this definition. The group noted that the Circular 2/98 gave advice on meetings, written communications, preparing documents, dealing with external documents, reports on pupils,

schemes of work and lesson plans, use of information technology and non-teaching staff, OFSTED inspections, setting targets, the national curriculum and assessment, special educational needs, prospectuses and annual reports.

5. Method of Investigation

- 5.1 Evidence was invited from various organisations and individuals in order to assess the situation in Birmingham and receive comments and suggestions as to how the bureaucratic burden might be reduced. The working group met with the teachers' associations, one of the non-teaching unions, senior officers and advisers, and Professor Anne Edwards from the University of Birmingham's School of Education. It also listened to a description of the work undertaken at Prince Albert J.I. School as part of the PriceWaterhouseCoopers Teacher Workload Study. Some members of the Committee visited five schools in the city, including two other schools which had participated in the Teacher Workload Study.
- 5.2 The group decided that, whilst bureaucracy was often used as a pejorative term, some administration and paperwork were necessary to promote and support pupils' achievement in the complexity of the modern educational system. It saw the problem in relation to teachers as determining the administration essential to the purposes of education and producing it as effectively as possible.
- 5.3 The group also heeded the professional advice of Professor Edwards that it did not have the information necessary to determine the effectiveness of Birmingham's response to Circular 2/98. It was aware that if an attempt had been made to collect such information in 1998 and again in 2001 these surveys would themselves have been regarded as imposing an unnecessary bureaucratic burden on schools. It therefore decided to rely on the national surveys conducted by the Teacher Workload Study and other organisations and to accept the views consistently reported by these surveys that there were excessive administrative demands on teachers. An extract from the executive summary to the Teacher Workload Study is attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.4 The working group acknowledged that its conclusions were affected by the developing national situation, in particular the Government's decision to establish a working group on teacher workload. The group therefore decided that the Committee's recommendations would be of three kinds.
 - It could identify ways in which Birmingham LEA might make a direct contribution to reducing the bureaucratic burden on teachers, by reducing or simplifying the administration required of schools by the LEA.
 - Within the legal framework giving responsibility to school governing bodies and head teachers for running schools, including setting budgets within the overall resources allocated, the Committee could make recommendations to

help promote good practices in schools. These could include greater use of non-teaching employees for administrative tasks not requiring the knowledge and experience of a teacher, more non-contact time for teachers and better use of information and communications technology.

- It could also consider how the LEA might influence the wider, national picture, for example, by publicising local examples of good practice to a national audience and by making representations to national organisations.

6. Findings

- 6.1 The Committee accepted the findings of national surveys that teachers carry a heavy burden of administration and paperwork and concluded that those in Birmingham face a similar level of work.
- 6.2 They found that the local education authority was striving to reduce its own administrative demands on teachers and to support schools in improving their administrative systems, but that in this as in all aspects of the service there was always room for more improvement.
- 6.3 They also found that much of the paperwork deemed excessive by teachers was a consequence of Government policies for education.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Committee concluded that some administration and paperwork is a necessary accompaniment to the provision of a modern educational system but that Government policy resulted in some unnecessary bureaucracy.
- 7.2 The Committee agreed that within these constraints steps could be taken to improve administrative efficiency and reduce the amount of time and paper needed for effective administration. It made recommendations for continuing and developing improvements already being undertaken in the Birmingham.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Direct contributions from the LEA

- 8.1.1 Officers and advisers were questioned closely on the Education Department's review of communications with schools, with members of the Committee seeking assurance that the Department continues to search for new ways of reducing the number of such communications and particularly the number of requests to schools for information.
- The Committee commended the work of the Research and Statistics Section of the Education Department as summarised in the paper attached as Appendix 2 and recommended the establishment of a group to vet requests to schools for data to ensure that no request is made for information already available elsewhere or obtainable in another way. (June 2002)

- The Committee noted the Education Department's planned review of communications with schools, including the use of both paper and electronic means, and the inclusion of sustainability targets and the need to monitor efficiency in the performance targets of the Chief Education Officer, Deputy Chief Education Officer and all Assistant Directors. It recommended that this review should take account of the experiment in electronic communications with schools on which a report is to be published in the summer term. (October 2002)
- The Committee approved the proposal by the authority to encourage establishments for initial teacher training to offer students training in managing the paperwork and other administration expected of a teacher. It also supports the plans to offer similar training to newly qualified teachers coming to work in Birmingham schools. (December 2002)
- The Committee indicated that it would consider a proposal to review the accretion of surplus balances in some schools in the city, including the extent to which financial and administrative systems contribute to this situation. (June/July 2002)

8.1.2 The Committee noted that there had been consultations with head teachers on the best way of supporting them in meeting demands from external organisations.

- It recommended that the Department consult further with head teachers on offering additional services to schools to relieve them of some administration. It recognises that constraints on centrally held budgets require the authority to charge schools for such services, but believes that in many cases these charges would be offset in schools by savings on extra administration or by improved recruitment and retention due to a reduction in workload. (Summer/Autumn 2002)

8.2 Promoting good practice in schools

The Committee recommended officers and advisers working with schools to give a higher priority to the promotion of good practices relating to administration and workload.

- In particular it recommended that the annual conferences of primary and secondary head teachers in 2002 should include sessions in which selected schools, particularly the participants in the PriceWaterhouseCoopers Teacher Workload Study, are invited to share good practice. Such practice includes the contribution of selected schools to the Teacher Workload Study, now published as 'Good Practice in Cutting Burdens 2' (Project Summary attached as Appendix 3), and of other examples of good practice in the city. It noted that the Education Department was already seeking to implement this recommendation. (June/July 2002)

- It recommended that the Advisory and Support Service offer support to school-based discussions of the various options set out in the letter to schools from the Secretary of State on 12th March 2002 (Appendix 4). (September 2002)
- It also recommended that the Department seek other suitable ways of promoting use of the 'Reducing Bureaucracy Toolkit', noting the research finding that it had been used by only ten per cent of schools, and its successor 'Good Practice in Cutting Burdens 2'. The Committee noted particular concerns amongst teachers over lesson planning and the work involved in bidding for funds. (September 2002)
- It welcomed the Department's continuing work with schools on reviewing the use, job descriptions and training of non-teaching employees. (December 2002)
- It recommended schools unable to afford to employ additional administrative staff to consider co-operating with other schools by sharing an employee such as a bursar. (September 2002)
- It also welcomed the LEA's initiative, with the active support of the teachers' associations, in encouraging a number of schools within the city to develop new ways of working in parallel with the Government's scheme for such developments in thirty 'Pathfinder' schools across the country. (September 2002)
- It recommended schools to publicise their good practice when advertising for teachers and support staff, as a recruitment incentive. (September 2002)

8.3 Influencing Government policy and other external constraints

- 8.3.1 The evidence given to the Committee by Professor Anne Edwards of the University of Birmingham (see Appendix 5) started from the principle of 'Fitness for Purpose' and asked searching questions about the functions of schools. The Committee noted that some of the administrative tasks required of teachers derive from excessive regulations restricting their professional decisions.
- 8.3.2 The Committee expressed disappointment in the final report of the Teacher Workload Study, regarding it as a missed opportunity. The report concentrates on managing the existing workload rather than challenging aspects of the educational system which are not essential to developing pupils' abilities and which therefore impose unnecessary administrative burdens.
- The Committee therefore recommended members and officers of the LEA and of the teachers' associations to use any influence they might have on

participants in the national negotiations on workload and conditions of employment. (Summer Term 2002)

- It also recommended that national recognition should be sought for the results of the proposed local Pathfinder scheme, by publication in the national press and by seeking Government support for dissemination of the findings. (September 2003)

Executive summary PriceWaterhouseCoopers Teacher Workload Study 5 December, 2001

1. In March 2001 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to undertake a review to identify the main factors that determine teachers' and head teachers' workload, and to develop a programme of practical action to eliminate excessive workload and promote the most effective use of all resources in schools in order to raise standards of pupil achievement. We report to a Steering Group comprised of DfES, the National Assembly for Wales, the relevant unions and professional associations, OfSTED, two independent members and the relevant employers, together with the School Teachers Review Body secretariat as observers. Our remit includes both England and Wales.
2. This is our final report, based on fieldwork in over 100 schools, discussions with many national and local bodies, an exercise to benchmark teachers' hours against other UK occupations and against overseas teachers and a national seminar with key stakeholders. It reflects comments from interested parties and has led to production of a costed Action Plan.
3. We have identified the following issues relating to the current position on teacher, headteacher and senior manager workload and on use of resources within schools:
 - Teachers and headteachers work more intensive weeks than other comparable managers and professionals. On an annual comparison, teachers work at similar levels to other managers and professionals
 - Teachers in many schools perceive a lack of control and ownership over their work, undertaking tasks – particularly documentation - which they do not believe are necessary to support learning, or which could be done by support staff rather than by teachers or more efficiently using Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Some headteachers and senior teachers also report perceived lack of ownership
 - Although in general teachers, headteachers and senior teachers welcomed the spirit of many government initiatives, they felt that the pace and manner of change was working against achieving high standards, that they were insufficiently supported to meet these changes, and not accorded the professional trust that they merited. This is notwithstanding the additional resources that in recent years have been made available to schools¹

¹ DfES statistics show average real terms funding per pupil rising by £540 to £3,520 between 1997-98 and 2001-02.

- Teachers feel that these pressures are added to by rising expectations about what schools can achieve, together with what they perceive to be deteriorating pupil behaviour and a lack of parental support to schools
 - Teachers believe that headteachers do not always recognise the need to help to manage the workload of their staff, leading to approaches which are driven by a desire for high quality, but not always balanced by a need to ensure sustainable workloads
 - Headteachers' own workloads are higher than average – by some 300-400 hours a year. The pressures perceived by headteachers relate to the need to support their school through a changing environment. They believe there are high expectations and levels of accountability (in particular through OfSTED inspection reports and school performance tables). They, like teachers, believe that the pace and manner of implementation of change has added significantly to their workload. Some of them also perceive themselves to be inadequately supported by staff and by ICT. These issues can be particularly great for headteachers in small schools and in special schools. Middle and senior managers have reported particular issues in terms of combining teaching with management and pastoral roles.
4. On the basis of the issues above and our discussions with the whole range of school staff in the course of this work, we believe there is much to be gained in addressing these issues. Not least is the more effective use of the considerable investment being made in schools in terms of achieving improved teacher morale, better retention rates and school managers equipped more fully to respond to demands for change. The key to this is creating and supporting, on a sustainable basis, the capacity and the professionalism needed to underpin the drive for higher standards that parents and pupils are entitled to expect.
 5. Within the context of DfES' national programme to transform the school workforce and secondary education, we therefore believe an essential strand will be to reduce teacher workload, foster increased teacher ownership, and create the capacity for managing change in a sustainable way that can lay the foundation for improved school and pupil performance in the future. We therefore set out a comprehensive programme to achieve that.
 6. As a starting point we propose that government and the main relevant bodies should seek to reach a common understanding over the main objectives of the programme. We have offered a possible draft of such an understanding in our main report, as a basis for discussion. Those bodies should then put in place arrangements to monitor the programme, ensure its effectiveness and ensure sufficient early momentum, as part of the overall drive to transform schools. The programme provides a basis for workload reduction through reforms at national level, and through work at the school level based on discussion between staff and managers, and in discussion where relevant with LEAs.

7. To support the work at school level, schools would be able to access a menu of approaches. Some of these may require little by way of external resource and therefore ought to be achievable relatively quickly, subject to schools having the capacity to respond and in some cases to piloting and development of guidance. Others depend more on the availability and phasing of funding. A summary of the main approaches is set out below:
- Guidance and good practice examples on issues such as:
 - Fit-for-purpose and electronically assisted approaches to lesson planning, marking, recording pupil assessments and producing reports to parents. Such approaches save teachers time and allow them to focus on the core value-added parts of the task, rather than documentation
 - Transferring routine and administrative tasks, exam invigilation, pupil supervision outside contact time and aspects of pastoral work from teachers to a wide range of support staff and specialists. This could help relieve pressure from teachers, and improve performance where specialists can be involved
 - Redesigning some aspects of school work, such as creating more effective pastoral systems, moving some aspects of planning and Continuing Professional Development out of the school week and into paid pre-term or pre-year holiday time and consideration of changes to school days, timetabling practices and changes to the pattern of the school year. This can make some tasks, such as group planning, more effective and easier to arrange, and help to smooth out the peaks and troughs of the teaching year
 - New and more flexible approaches to staffing, including administrative and business management support for headteachers, administrative support for teachers, more in-class support for teachers, introduction of more specialists such as IT technicians, Educational Psychologists, School Welfare Officers and Social Workers. Where we have seen such staff within schools, the teachers to whom we spoke have felt more able to concentrate on what they see as being their core professional activities
 - Better access to ICT and school networks and improved web-based teaching and planning resources. Although our observations have indicated that ICT in schools has tended to raise quality rather than save time, access to adequate ICT is key to being able to implement many of the strategies we discuss
 - Access to appropriate and affordable consultancy support. External support and advice has been shown to be an effective way of supporting internal staff and managers in reviewing and implementing new processes, and through that, building capacity for sustainable change.

Support from the Research and Statistics Section of the Education Department to reduce the bureaucratic burden on teachers

- (1) Data processing and analysis on behalf of teachers to assist with target setting and self-evaluation. The Research and Statistics Section and Assessment Unit prepare a range of data analyses to help teachers set pupil level targets and measure pupil progress. Comparisons with other similar schools are also provided to enable teachers to 'benchmark' their achievements ('Family Groups'). The information is made available to schools in electronic format, thereby reducing paperwork and data processing demands on schools.
- (2) Support to assist schools to extract information from their SIMS system and transfer data electronically to meet statutory statistical returns. For example, the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC), and school annual attendance returns.
- (3) Support schools to meet external demands for data by replacing paper forms with electronic data extractions. For example, DfES requirements for pupil level data to monitor the use of EiC funds (National evaluation) have been met through programmes prepared with EdIT which extract the data from schools' systems
- (4) Supporting the transfer of pupil data between schools and acting as a 'clearing house' for pupil performance data where this information has not been transferred or is missing.
- (5) Combining school and pupil level data electronically from our central database to support formula funding and other resource allocation requirements e.g. allocation of Standards Funds. Again, this reduces the requirement on schools to provide information in a paper format or the need to extract the data from their own systems.
- (6) Meeting external demands on schools for data. Divisions within the Education Department, other City Council Departments, Councillors, members of the public and external organisations (e.g. LSC, Connexions, Children's Fund, Health Authority, Government agencies, Universities) regularly request information about Birmingham's schools. The Research and Statistics Section act as a 'clearing house' for these requests. The data can usually be supplied from our central database, thereby reducing the demands on schools to provide the information.

Good Practice In CuttingBureaucracy/2

- **The introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) and electronic data handling**
- **The transfer of tasks from teachers to support staff**

**Companion volume to
Bureaucracy Cutting Toolkit
Good Practice in cutting Bureaucracy**

Introduction to Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2

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Project summary

In January 2000 the then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) asked PricewaterhouseCoopers to undertake a project to “Investigate, Test and Implement a Holistic Approach to Reducing Bureaucratic Burdens in a Range of Schools”. This was a second phase of work, which aimed to build on the work of Phase 1² by focusing on how individual schools could implement good practice in setting up “lean burn” management and administrative systems across the full range of their activities. Phase 2 focused in particular on:

- The introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) and electronic data handling
- The transfer of tasks from teachers to support staff.

Phase 2 methodology

PricewaterhouseCoopers worked with six schools drawn from Surrey and Birmingham LEAs comprising two primary, three secondary and one all-age special school. The LEAs and schools were chosen as in one way or another they had demonstrated innovative approaches to use of ICT or to reducing bureaucracy in other ways. The work had five main components:

- 1 Planning and project set-up - the LEAs and schools were selected and initial aims were clarified
- 2 Process mapping and baseline evaluation - each school, with consultancy support (from PwC and DfES), identified how a large number of different processes were carried out and the time taken by them. From this, schools selected those where there was greatest scope for savings and improvement
- 3 Redesign - the schools, with PwC and LEA support, identified new ways to undertake certain processes, and the resources and changes that would be needed to implement them

² In the Phase 1 project, PwC worked with 14 schools in Kent and Derby City LEAs to identify how schools could set up low burden administrative systems and how LEAs can play an effective gatekeeper role. Outputs included good practice examples, a self-review toolkit for use by school managers, criteria for LEAs in their gatekeeper role, a methodology for testing the impact on schools of DfEE policy initiatives before such initiatives are finalised and launched, advice to the Department on the feasibility of its vision of the school of the future, and a Cutting Burdens web site where schools can exchange ideas on reducing bureaucracy and visit and add to the good practice examples and toolkit.”Link to the <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cuttingburdens> Cutting Burdens website {finish link}”.

- 4 Implementation – the schools and LEAs procured new hardware, software and other necessary infrastructure and training to support introduction of the new processes
- 5 Evaluation – PwC and DfES consultants reassessed the processes in order to measure the impact of the change; and the schools conducted a range of staff surveys within a common framework in order to capture staff views.

Key findings

The outputs from Phase 2 consist of a set of 12 project descriptions from the six participating schools. Whilst the project descriptions contain specific findings for each project, there are a number of more general findings that can be summarised in terms of the benefits, costs and enablers.

Benefits

All six schools found that the redesigned systems allowed more efficient processing of tasks, and allowed support staff to take on a range of tasks previously undertaken by teachers, such as data entry and record management. One school was also able to pass to support staff a range of administrative tasks such as filing, collation of records, collecting money for/ organising school trips, proof reading and correction of reports, installing software and changing print cartridges.

All schools reported that these improvements resulted in time savings. These were measured in a variety of ways – for example

- 2000 teacher hours a year were saved across one school through transfer of administrative tasks to support staff
- A faster network link saved a small group of staff some 5 hours a week
- A collaborative planning tool saved each relevant teacher around two hours in their weekly planning work
- Software to support SEN reviews has already saved an estimate of 40 hours across the school staff each school year, with further gains expected as the project develops.

Saving teacher time on such tasks had a number of consequential benefits for some staff such as improved teacher morale, reduced stress and frustration. There was also a perception that better use was being made of the time saved.

There were a number of other benefits for teachers including:

- Improved teacher ICT skills and confidence
- Better communication between staff
- Better collaboration over planning leading to more efficient and higher quality planning

- Data accessed and used more frequently, leading to improved accuracy of records.

There were also direct benefits to parents, in terms of clearer reports and better parental access to data on pupil progress.

Whilst all the above would be likely to have consequential benefits for pupils, there were some improvements reported that would have a direct link to improved teaching and learning including:

- Better pupil data, combined with better quality planning, allowing greater focus on individual pupil progress and higher quality teaching
- Greater clarity over assessment due to establishment of common approaches between departments
- Improved pupil behaviour management due to a combination of better monitoring (due to better and more timely data) and greater consistency of application of sanctions.

Enablers and costs

The project highlighted the need for sufficient access to ICT (in terms of location of access points and system functionality and speed) as a precursor to:

- Teachers being able to use ICT management systems as a replacement for, not duplication of, paper-based systems
- Teachers using ICT on a sufficiently regular basis to become confident – and therefore more efficient in – using ICT.

The costs of establishing this level of sufficiency were from around £10,000 to £30,000 per school, although most of the schools were starting from a relatively high base position.

In terms of software to support data management, all six project schools reviewed the commercial market (or had recently done so before the project started) and, as a result, three schools used nationally available commercial software; and three schools developed in-house solutions. Most of the schools were pleased with the route they had taken, although by the end of the project, at least one of those using commercial software was exploring alternatives, having encountered some frustrations.

All six schools found that increased access to technical IT support was necessary in order to develop and maintain new systems.

Significant management and teacher time was required in the early stages to develop and manage the projects, and to undertake associated tasks, such as designing school-wide planning systems. Significant administrative time was usually required, for example to load paper-based plans onto electronic systems.

Conclusion

All the schools found the project of significant value and believe that the benefits achieved can have wider application in other schools. Details of each project, and contact details for the schools, are contained in the following reports.

We are grateful to the schools and LEAs for the time and support they provided, without which the study could not have taken place.



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 Rt Hon Estelle Morris MP

PLEASE SHARE THE CONTENTS OF THIS LETTER WITH ALL STAFF

Dear Colleague

School standards and teacher workload

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's report last December showed that our 15 year-olds are among the best pupils in the world. Ofsted's annual report recently confirmed that the school workforce is more professional than ever - better led, better trained, more proficient and more accountable.

But it's clear that progress with the next phase of raising standards will depend a great deal on progress in reducing excessive teacher workload. As I said last November in my pamphlet "Professionalism and Trust", we shall only raise standards still further if we free up more of our teachers' time to do the job they came into schools to do - teaching.

We have to look at how our schools are organised and staffed and make sure that teachers can focus on their most important professional responsibilities - teaching, developing their skills, supporting and managing others. The findings of the recent PricewaterhouseCoopers study of teacher workload I commissioned suggest that some 20% of teachers' time is spent on tasks not directly related to classroom teaching. Many of these tasks need not routinely be carried out by teachers and should, as soon as practicable, be transferred to support staff or ICT.

Tackling workload will raise standards, boost the status of the profession, improve the job satisfaction and work-life balance of head teachers, teachers and support staff and attract more of the best graduates into our schools. I hope that together we can celebrate the successes of schools and remind everyone how valuable the work of teachers is.

Building momentum

I know that my Department has made huge demands of all who work in our schools. There will always be a need to reform to improve standards. But I will try to make sure that this is implemented in a way that minimises the burden on schools. So I have:

- Asked the School Teachers' Review Body whether it is possible to move to a meaningful guarantee of professional time for teachers and managers, and whether it is possible to moderate the impact of paragraph 59.8 in the Pay and Conditions Document, which is open-ended and can lead to high demands on teachers. A report is expected by the end of April.

department for
education and skills
 creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence



- Commissioned work on best practice in planning and marking. From this, we will develop, with Ofsted and QCA, guidance that will help many teachers reduce time spent on these activities.
- Begun work to establish what new staffing roles might be needed, and to develop a strategy to enable schools to develop and train support staff to fulfil them.
- Begun consultation on new guidance on exclusions that will lead to improvements that could remove a significant barrier to effective teaching and learning. Consultation ends on 19 April.
- Enabled a further 100,000 teachers and all Heads to have access to laptops at no personal cost and allocated an extra £50 million for capital projects aimed at improving staff workspaces.
- Announced a project for 30 schools to take part in workforce pathfinders that will explore new ways of reducing workload. These will run during the school year 2002/3 and we will publish the results to help guide further progress across the country.

I have set up a new Working Party (comprising teacher, head teacher and support staff unions, employers and national bodies) to advise us on these issues - they have been consulted on this letter. I welcome the dialogue in which we are all engaged. Of course, we don't agree on everything, but we are agreed that genuine change is essential and that the way ahead on school standards is also the way ahead on tackling workload.

So there is some real momentum and I am determined that we will make progress in this area. But there are some things that can only be done at school level. I need your help with this.

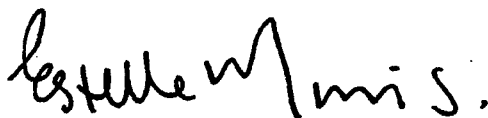
What you can do

Many schools have put in place strategies that have helped to reduce teacher workload. The accompanying poster provides details of the advice that is already available.

I would encourage you to use it to engage your teachers and support staff in a debate about what can be done in your school. I'm not saying that all this can be done overnight, which is why I have pledged at least 10,000 extra teachers and at least 20,000 extra support staff over the next four years. But I would like you to consider the way you staff your school, the future role of your support staff and what progress you can make by refocusing existing resources.

Giving teachers the time and support they need to focus on what they do best - teaching - and developing all who work in our schools so that they can make a full contribution must be a priority for us all. I look forward to working with you, and I will write to you again as our work develops.

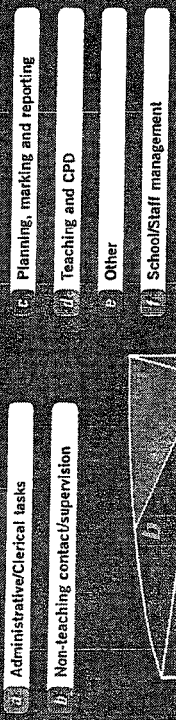
Best wishes



Estelle Morris

1 What is the problem?

Breakdown of teacher working time – based on individual activities undertaken by classroom teachers



2 The following common tasks need not routinely be carried out by teachers and should, as soon as practicable, be transferred to support staff or ICT:

- ✓ collecting money
- ✓ chasing absences
- ✓ bulk photocopying
- ✓ copy typing
- ✓ producing standard letters
- ✓ producing class lists
- ✓ record keeping and filing
- ✓ classroom display
- ✓ analysing attendance figures
- ✓ processing exam results
- ✓ collating pupil reports
- ✓ administering work experience
- ✓ administering examinations
- ✓ invigilating examinations
- ✓ administering teacher cover
- ✓ ICT trouble shooting and minor repairs
- ✓ commissioning new ICT equipment
- ✓ ordering supplies and equipment
- ✓ stocktaking
- ✓ cataloguing, preparing, issuing and maintaining equipment and materials
- ✓ minuting meetings
- ✓ co-ordinating and submitting bids
- ✓ seeking and giving personnel advice
- ✓ managing pupil data
- ✓ inputting pupil data

3 What the Government is doing

- **Supporting an extra 10,000 teachers and 20,000 support staff by 2006** In addition to the 11,000 more teachers and 22,000 more support staff in excess compared with 1997, the Government is considering whether it is possible to have a further 10,000 teachers and 20,000 support staff in schools. A report is expected by the end of April 2002. Implementing in a way that minimises burdens on schools.
- **Continuing to work closely with the teacher-led teacher and support staff unions, employers and other key partners** such as the ITTA, the GTC, the National College for School Leadership and OISTE.
- **Developing guidance on best practice in planning and marking to help teachers save time**
- **Making new resources through Curriculum Online available to all schools**
- **Developing more training for support staff so that they are equipped to take on new roles**
- **Considering of new guidance on exclusions that will lead to improvements that could remove a significant barrier to effective teaching and learning**
- **Using a further 100,000 teachers and 200,000 support staff as personal assistants, allocating an extra 250 million for capital projects aimed at improving staff workspaces**
- **Supporting 20 schools in testing an innovative way of reducing excessive workload**

4 Reducing teacher workload

- **PwC study of teacher workload** Analyses teacher workload and proposes a range of options to alleviate burdens, including guaranteed professional time, more support staff/ICT and process redesign.
- **Professionalism and trust** Sets out Estelle Morris's vision for the future of teachers and teaching. A key statement of Government thinking.
- **Reducing Bureaucratic Burdens Project (Phase 2)** Describes the progress of six schools undertaking a detailed review of administrative structures. Many of the schools achieved significant results in terms of quality, and time saved.
- **Circular 2/98** Help in reducing bureaucratic burdens on teachers. It covers a range of issues, from meeting and preparing documents to OFSTED inspections and SEN.
- **Reducing Bureaucracy Toolkit** Provides simple but effective solutions that can be implemented quickly and cheaply. Those schools that have used the toolkit have found it very helpful, but only 10% have done so.
- **Working with Teaching Assistants** Documents practical ways in which schools are making better use of their teaching assistants.
- **Work/Life balance website** Provides practical support and encouragement to help strike a balance between work and other areas of life.
- **Small Schools website** Advice, case studies and innovative ideas to help small schools make best use of resources.
- **NER study of administrative staff** Covers the impact of administrative staff, school structures for administration, delegation to support staff, the tasks they can carry out and their role in the best use of ICT.

5 Listed below are some sources of advice and guidance on what schools can do to reduce workload. More details are available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling

- **Improving Inspection, Improving Schools** The new OFSTED inspection framework will be more responsive to schools' circumstances and priorities, seek pupils' and parents' views and better support school improvement.
- **National College for School Leadership** Offers school leaders at all levels training and development to help them lead and manage more effectively.
- **Information Management Strategy** Aims to reduce burdens by improving the way that information about pupils is defined, collected, analysed, shared and used.

Responses to 2/98: a consideration of the purposes of teaching and how it is inhibited and supported by paperwork

Some comments to assist discussions of *Fitness for Purpose* in the evaluation of the bureaucratic demands made on teachers, following a meeting of the Review Group on November 28th.

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Methodological issues raised at the meeting of November 28th

- An evaluation of how Birmingham has responded to 2/98, requires baseline information gathered in 1998/1999 in order to allow valid comparisons with the situation in 2001/2002. It is therefore difficult to undertake a clear cut evaluation of the impact of the City's responses to the Circular without comparable evidence from three years ago. An alternative evaluation framework is therefore probably necessary.
- Methodology (i.e. research design and the selection of research methods for an evaluation) springs from the framing of the research questions and the reasons for the study.
- Evaluations (indeed any research study) need to identify the research questions that matter. Our discussions on November 28th showed clearly that enabling teachers to teach is the core concern for the Review Group.
- Following a brief discussion of methodology it was agreed that it would be worthwhile to focus on the purposes of teaching in order to develop an evaluation methodology which respects the Review Group's beliefs about the roles of teachers and the purposes of teaching.
- It was suggested in the discussion that a *Fitness for Purpose* evaluation might be a good way forward. In such an evaluation, judgements might be made about the current usefulness of the paperwork received by and demanded of teachers.
- It was also noted that for many classroom teachers, their roles involve some managerial responsibility such as subject leadership in primary schools or departmental responsibilities in high schools. Any evaluation employing fitness for purpose criteria would have to take such differences in teachers' roles into account in its design.

The purposes of teaching discussed and their implications for the evaluation of paperwork

- Teaching is a complex activity in which teachers need to be able to respond to the learning needs of pupils in classrooms. Teachers need to be trusted as professionals. (See Edwards, 2001 enclosed) *Paperwork which restricts the professional decisions of teachers in classrooms should be limited.*
- We need pupils who are able to produce as well as use knowledge so that they can contribute to the knowledge economy. Such pupils need teachers who can do more than deliver an agreed curriculum to a predetermined script. They need teachers who can encourage their thinking. *Paperwork which inhibits teacher's professional decision making or which keeps knowledgeable teachers away from contact with pupils should be limited.*

- Teaching is informed by good assessment of learners. A large scale study the impact of teachers' assessments on pupil performance shows that the emphasis in assessment should be on assessment which informs teachers' actions in classrooms (Black and Wiliam, 1998). *Assessment evidence is useful for teachers. There is no research which suggests that time spent on extensive written reports benefits pupils.*
- Studies of how teachers spend their time point to teachers' conscientiousness. Teachers read and respond carefully to paperwork (e.g. Campbell and St. J. Neill, 1994). *Teachers should be encouraged to prioritise paperwork and to make professional judgements about its relevance.*
- Classroom assistants can be a useful source of help for teachers and should be used to ensure that teachers are able to spend as much time as possible with pupils. *Ways of ensuring that classroom assistants decrease rather than increase teachers' paperwork are worth exploring.*
- Teachers have learnt a great deal over the last fifteen years about planning and assessment. *It is time now to ease up on mechanisms which aim only to check whether teachers have acted responsibly. (Indeed it is clear that Ofsted under Mike Tomlinson is now of the same view.)*
- Recruitment and retention remain huge problems. A recent study undertaken in London (reported in the *Times Educational Supplement* on January 21st 2000) showed that the two reasons for leaving the profession most mentioned by teachers were a desire to use their initiative and wanting scope for creativity (some details from the study are attached). It was noted that those who left frequently took a pay cut to regain a social or family life. *There is an urgent need to examine the extent to which paperwork supports teachers in their roles as responsible professionals.*