News story: Allegations of wrongdoing in Edexcel’s C4 maths paper

We are aware of the allegations of malpractice or wrongdoing in relation to Edexcel’s C4 maths paper taken today. We are working with Pearson to establish the facts. We recognise the concerns of students, who should continue to prepare for their forthcoming exams as normal. If anyone has information relevant to these allegations we would urge them to contact Pearson or us in confidence.

Contact Pearson: pqsmalpractice@pearson.com

Contact Ofqual: public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk

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Speech: Educate our daughters with the same care that we educate our sons

For centuries human beings have been in search of a panacea, a cure for all ills, a philosophers’ stone that could turn dross into gold.

After two years as Foreign Secretary, I have concluded that we could go a long way towards solving many of the world’s most serious problems – from infant mortality to unemployment to unsustainable population growth – if only

we could provide every girl in the world with at least 12 years of quality education.

At this moment, 130 million girls are not in the classroom. Female illiteracy in some countries exceeds 60 per cent, not least because of bigoted fanatics who do all they can to stop girls from going to school.

In northern Nigeria, the terrorists of Boko Haram are waging a demented campaign against female education, raiding schools and abducting children. When I visited Borno state last year, I met girls who had been told they would be shot if they dared learn to read, as the Taliban shot Malala.

I am lost in admiration for those who defy these threats and press on with their studies – and for the teachers who are brave enough to help. But the reality is that almost 800 million adults across the world cannot read or write and two thirds of them are women.

Think of the squandered talent and the opportunity cost to humanity contained in that figure. But just imagine what we could achieve if we turned this upside down and ensured that every girl received the education they deserve.

If all girls went to secondary school, then a United Nations study has found that infant mortality would be cut in half, saving three million young lives every year. About 12 million children would not have their growth stunted by malnutrition.

The future wages of girls would rise by 12 per cent for every extra year in the classroom, a tonic for the economies of poor countries that would create jobs and strike a blow against the Boko Harams and the other maladjusted chauvinist fanatics.

The conclusion is obvious: educating our daughters with the same care that we educate our sons is the single most powerful spur to development and progress.

This year, the British Government has devoted an extra £500 million to female education, benefiting 1.5 million girls around the world. At the Commonwealth summit in London in April, all 53 countries endorsed the goal of 12 years of quality education for every girl.

But the material benefits should not be the sole or even the primary reason why we must achieve this target. It’s not just that universal female education will make us more prosperous and expand our GDPs – though it will.

We should educate girls because it is manifestly right in and of itself. We can build the schools and train the teachers and surmount all of the other barriers: in the end, it is only a question of priorities and of will.

Further information

News story: Pubs Code Adjudicator (PCA) Bulletin June 2018

Speech: Nick Gibb: Teachers are taking control of their profession

Thank you.

It is a pleasure to be attending the Festival of Education again, particularly given the opportunity to celebrate the life of Jo Cox and reflect on what unites us on her principle that "we have more in common than that which divides us."

Something we all have in common is a memory of a teacher who inspired us and changed the course of our life. But it is defining what teachers share in common that is a question being considered by the Department for Education – working closely with the profession.

Professions are defined by their shared bodies of knowledge and expert practice. The formative years of careers in accountancy and actuarial practice are punctuated for example by exams, ensuring all prospective members of those esteemed professions share in the accumulated knowledge of the profession.

Similarly, whatever their eventual specialisation, all prospective solicitors must demonstrate proficiency in a range of legal areas and undertake the professional skills course.

As with these other top professions, teaching has a shared body of knowledge and professional skills that define what it is to be a teacher.

In recent years, teachers have taken much greater control of their profession and have begun to define what it is to be an expert teacher.

Teachers have allowed themselves into what has been called the secret garden of pedagogy and curriculum. Some free schools and leading multi-academy trusts have radically raised expectations.

For example, Dixons Trinity Academy – a free school based in Bradford – achieved extraordinary results in 2017 with its first set of GCSEs, placing it amongst the top schools in England for the progress achieved by its pupils. Strikingly, the progress score for disadvantaged pupils was higher than for that of their more affluent peers. This school – and many others – shows that socio-economic background need not be a barrier to academic excellence.

And leading multi-academy trusts – often led by inspirational head teachers – demonstrate that excellence need not be restricted to isolated schools. Thanks to a forensic approach to curriculum design and the implementation of evidence-based approaches to managing behaviour, the Inspiration Trust and the Harris Federation – two of the best performing multi-academy trusts – have conclusively demonstrated that all pupils can achieve – whether they live in coastal Norfolk or inner-city London.

In doing so, these teachers – and countless others around the country – are taking back control of their profession. They are helping to define excellence and raise standards. But, unlike other professions, this shared body of knowledge remains largely uncodified.

Perhaps because each and every one of us is familiar with teaching – unlike law or accountancy – what it takes to become an expert teacher is too often taken for granted. As with so many complex skills when performed by a true expert, teaching appears effortless.

Close to a decade and a half of benefitting as pupils from expert teaching can desensitise us to fully appreciating the knowledge and expertise on show, as well as the range of techniques and behaviours being employed; a phenomenon well known to trainee teachers observing their experienced colleagues dealing expertly with a tricky group of year 8s.

When observing an expert teacher, it is easy to take for granted the innumerable decisions that have contributed to the sense of purposeful calm in their classroom:

- Where to stand, so as to see all the pupils;
- How to use and vary tone of voice throughout the lesson;
- Who to question, what to ask, and how to ask it;
- How to sequence examples and explanations;
- How to use humour;
- Where to sit particular pupils;
- How to build on prior knowledge; and
- How to build a class culture over the course of an academic year.

All of these decisions – and innumerably more – are critical to teaching expertise. Yet, these decisions remain invisible to lay-observers. And perhaps because this expertise is invisible, it is too often taken for granted.

But this list of decisions doesn't touch on questions of curriculum planning and other important roles that teachers take on around school.

Furthermore, it doesn't even touch on how expert teachers use their understanding of evidence from education, cognitive science and other relevant domains to inform their decisions in class.

All of this lies beneath the surface of decisions made by expert teachers, and yet it remains invisible to the lay-observer, and – critically – to new teachers.

And – as research has shown – even experienced head teachers struggle to identify expert teaching over a short period of time. As Becky Allen and Sam Sims highlight in their new book 'The Teacher Gap', head teachers are able to identify their strongest teachers on their staff – with whom they are familiar – with good reliability, but they are much less reliably able to discern good and bad teaching during interview lessons.

Expertise in teaching is difficult to discern except over an extended period of time. That is why it is pleasing to see the practice of grading individual lessons slowly being driven out of the system. And it is also why the government has urged Initial Teacher Training providers to ensure they are making offers to applicants who are ready to train to teach.

It is my view that in previous years too many universities rejected candidates who were ready to be trained to become highly effective and inspirational teachers. The government has worked with universities and Ofsted to ensure that they are incentivised to take on applicants who are ready to train to teach.

Whilst many people grow up aspiring to be a teacher, teaching expertise still needs to be taught. As with all walks of life, some natural dispositions give a head start to some prospective teachers, but the craft of expert teaching like all expertise needs to be taught. And teaching expertise – as with the expertise required of other top professions – cannot be mastered in just one year.

That is why the government has been working closely with the profession, with experts and teacher representative groups to develop proposals to strengthen career progression for teachers. This spring, the government – after extensive consultation – announced the development of an Early Career Framework.

In the future, newly qualified teachers will have two years of structured training to support them through an extended induction period. These two years of training will help ensure that all newly qualified teachers can share in the professional knowledge that defines what it is to be a teacher.

The Early Career Framework will seek to codify the core knowledge and skills required to develop into an expert teacher, so that all teachers – wherever they train – are taught this shared body of knowledge.

Already, many new teachers are fortunate enough to have mentors who help them to develop expertise in the classroom, but we want this to be the norm for all new teachers. So we are strengthening the mentoring provision for early career teachers to ensure that all schools have excellent mentors with access to high-quality training. We know that good mentoring is not generic, but is highly specific. It should on draw high-quality evidence and the mentor's own expertise, providing relevant feedback to new teachers and opportunity to practise and hone new skills.

But the government wants to ensure that support exists throughout a teacher's career, as it does for other top professionals.

Following 5 years of training, medical students progress to full employment, completing two years as foundation stage doctors. These two years of full-time, post-qualification employment support doctors – with structured mentoring from senior colleagues – to implement and build upon what they have learnt in their training.

But a doctor's development doesn't stop there. Whichever of the many areas a doctor wishes to specialise in, there are recognised training routes with defined bodies of specialist knowledge that doctors must acquire in order to be considered expert.

The government intends to consider how the Early Career Framework can be built upon, so that teacher acquire particular expertise – and recognised qualifications – in an area of teaching, such as curriculum development or teacher development.

Because teachers deserve a framework of qualifications and support that recognises the core body of professional knowledge and skill that defines what it is to be a teacher.

Importantly, this must not be – and will not be – a decision taken and implemented by government. These reforms cannot be 'done to' teachers.

Leading academy chains, such as Outwood Grange and Ark, have developed distinct career paths for teachers to choose from, including curriculum experts working across trusts, teacher-development mentors and traditional leadership routes.

We want these opportunities to be open to all teachers, regardless of where they work. And we want teachers to be at the heart of designing these proposals because it is for teachers to define the common body of professional knowledge and skills that defines their profession.

Because it is important that teachers continue to take control of their profession. The last 8 years has seen a necessary, but radical series of reforms.

Teachers have responded well to the government's promotion of evidence-based approaches to teaching reading, and the government's drive to ensure that pupils have access to core academic subjects at GCSE.

In the face of opposition from some unions and academics, the teaching profession has embraced systematic synthetic phonics. In 2012, just 58% of 6-year-olds passed the phonics screening check. Thanks to the commitment of teachers to pursuing the evidence, 81% of 6-year-olds passed the phonics screening check last year, rising to 92% by the end of year 2.

And this commitment to evidence-based approaches has translated into a rise in the international league tables. In the latest PIRLS results, England saw a statistically significant improvement in the reading ability of 9-year-olds. This cohort of pupils were the first to sit the phonics screening check, so I hope that improvements in phonics screening check results will translate into further rises in our international league table position in years to come.

Teachers are pursuing the evidence and taking control of their profession. Teachers and head teachers are making use of the Education Endowment Foundation's RCT findings to help guide what they do.

And teachers are ensuring that more pupils than ever before have the best opportunities at GCSE. Since 2010, the proportion of pupils taking at least two science GCSEs has risen from 63% to 91%, as teachers encouraged much greater numbers of pupils to take science GCSEs over equivalents, spreading opportunity more widely.

These opportunities exist across the curriculum. I have been delighted with the progress made by teachers working on the Mandarin Excellence programme, which aims to have 5000 fluent Mandarin speakers by 2020. I recall China's Education Secretary remarking at the proficiency of pupils after just one year of the programme.

And teachers continue to promote the importance of a high-quality arts education, inspiring generations of pupils. Between 2016 and 2020, the government will spend almost £500 millon on music and cultural education programmes, enabling more disadvantaged pupils to reach their potential and giving the most talented pupils the opportunity to attend prestigious music, dance and drama schools.

Throughout the system, teachers are at the forefront of raising standards for pupils and taking a lead on defining and furthering what it means to be an expert teacher.

Teaching is – and will continue to be – a career that attracts the very best applicants. It is, therefore, essential that government continues to raise the status of the profession by spreading the best opportunities right across the system – for both pupils and teachers.

It is fitting – on a day for reflecting and celebrating on what we all share in common – to also consider how we can support teachers who do so much to

form who we are, and to bring us together.

Thank you.