

# School leaders crack down on workload

School leaders are taking decisive action to reduce teacher workload, according to new research out today (Weds 17 July).

In a survey of 836 school leaders and over 1,000 classroom teachers, 94% of leaders reported reducing workload related to marking, compared to 88% at this time last year. More than three-quarters (78%) reported they had reduced workload related to planning, compared to 71% last year.

Almost half of leaders surveyed (46%) reported they were already making use of the Department's Workload Reduction Toolkit, a series of online resources to help school leaders crack down on unnecessary workload, in the first year they've been available.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

The number of hours teachers work, particularly on unnecessarily burdensome tasks outside the classroom, was the very first issue I wanted to tackle when I took on this role.

So it's hugely encouraging to see school leaders having the confidence to do away with those unnecessary tasks that are stopping teachers from doing what they do best.

The results of the TALIS survey published last month show there is still a long way to go to address all of the frustrations I regularly hear from teachers and heads. However, I intend to continue my battle to reduce teachers' workload and back schools who make sure they are doing everything they can to reduce the number of hours teachers are spending on non-teaching tasks.

Since being published, the Workload Reduction Toolkit – which includes materials to support schools on data management and curriculum planning – have been viewed nearly 250,000 times and downloaded more than 158,000 times and was updated in March with new content.

The Secretary of State has today written to all local authorities and academy trusts today to ask for their support in addressing workload issues throughout the school system and remind them of their responsibility in reducing data burdens on schools.

The Education Secretary's letter to local authorities and academy trusts builds on his pledge to help school leaders reduce teachers' workload in the Recruitment & Retention Strategy, published in January 2019: \* Tackling the 'audit culture' of excessive data tracking in schools; and \* simplifying the accountability system to clarify when a school may be subject to intervention or offered support.

David Lowbridge-Ellis, Deputy Headteacher, Barr Beacon School said:

I have had the pleasure of guiding hundreds of school leaders through the Workload Reduction Toolkit and everyone I have spoken with has said they have taken something useful away from it.

The three-stage process of the toolkit really helps leaders get to grips with their workload challenges, from the first stage of identifying where changes need to be made to the third stage, which is evaluating the impact of those changes. At our school, we have cut workload significantly, particularly around marking, where teachers were able to cut their burden by 75%.

Conducted twice a year, the school snapshot survey, which aims to provide an insight into teachers' and school leaders' views across a range of departmental policy areas, also shows that:

- the number of schools with a designated lead for pupil mental health has significantly increased – from 70% in 2017 to 82% in 2018, with a major jump at primary level, from 67% to 81%
- 100% of schools indicated that they monitor wellbeing through one to one discussion with pupils and parents
- 85% of maths teachers said they were confident in teaching their reformed GCSEs
- Almost all leaders (just under 100%) and 99% of teachers had accessed at least one type of CPD in the past 12 months

The Workload Advisory Group, set up by the Education Secretary, published its report in November last year, outlining the ways that schools, Government and Ofsted can tackle the cultures that are leading to excessive workload in schools, and to reduce the data burdens on teachers.

In a joint letter to all school leaders, co-signed by multiple organisations including Ofsted and The Confederation of School Trusts, Damian Hinds committed to meeting all the recommendations of Professor Becky Allen's report, including:

- only asking for pupil attainment data if a school is at risk of failure, above that which is collected for national assessments, if a school is failing;
- requesting data in a school's existing format, where possible, to avoid duplication; and
- updating the workload reduction toolkit with new sections on behaviour management and tools for governing boards.

The Department has worked with Ofsted on its new inspection framework, which will be implemented in September 2019. This will:

- have a strong focus on reducing teacher workload;
- consider staff workload as part of the leadership and management judgment;

- look unfavourably on schools that implement burdensome data practices;  
and
- refuse to look at internal assessment data.