



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership



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Three reports from the Independent Teacher Review Groups (DfE, 2016a; DfE, 2016b; and DfE, 2016c) included findings from the DfE Workload Challenge Survey in which 56% of respondents indicated that data management caused unnecessary workload (DfE, 2016a, 6), 38% identified detailed lesson and weekly planning as adding an unnecessary burden to their workload (DfE, 2016b, 6), and 53% thought that the excessive nature, depth and frequency of marking was burdensome (DfE, 2016c, 6). The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) commissioned 11 school-based research projects to investigate practical and sustainable solutions for tackling teacher workload and provide evidence of impact of successful workload reduction strategies related to data management, planning and marking.

The aim of this review is to analyse the reports from the 11 commissioned research projects, and a further independent research report, to determine the methods trialled and resulting outcomes. The independent report is from a consortium of schools that did not receive NCTL funding, however, the consortium decided that their project was important to the schools and proceeded with the research without the funding. The schools submitted their report to the NCTL and this was published alongside the others due to the quality of the work and the importance of the findings.

The analysis was conducted by developing a report recording card with headings to capture the key points from each of the research reports; this was trialled with a sample of the reports, then amended to include additional headings. The report recording card was then used to capture findings relating to: the methods trialled to reduce unnecessary workload; their impact on teacher workload and pupil outcomes; factors which facilitated and challenged practices associated with reducing workload; and recommendations for policy and practice. Findings were analysed in the context of three distinct areas - data management, planning and marking.

Eleven research projects (ten of the commissioned projects and the independent project) were conducted in existing networks of schools, comprising of between three and 25 schools; primary, secondary and, in a small number of cases, middle schools and special



developed to inform future practices aimed at reducing workload around data management. This project did not report on findings relating to the implementation of these recommendations.

4. *Exploring the use of Turnitin, an on-line essay hand-in platform, which enables pupils to view essay grades and feedback on-line (see Hatcham College report).* The use of Turnitin for handing in essays with Key Stage 5 pupils is currently being trialled in one school. Key Stage 5 teachers have been asked to track the amount of time spent on different data management tasks, and a teacher survey and interviews will be conducted at the end of this academic year to explore the impact of the initiative. Findings from this project have not yet been reported.

Drawing on insights gained from the above four research projects, recommendations for data management policies, and factors to support the reduction of teacher workload associated with data management, were developed.

- Consider whether expectations of linear progress and performance management criteria have the potential to discourage accurate reporting, and whether particular data are to be used as proof of good practice rather than as a resource for improving practice.
  - Ensure staff: are aware of the purpose and significance of data demands and the inherent limitations of the data; have opportunities to contribute to the creation and use of KPIs and tracking systems; have the statistical literacy required to confidently interpret and use assessment data.
  - Ensure assessment reporting cycles allow adequate time to identify and support specific pupils before a new reporting cycle begins, and build in collective staff moderation time prior to, or concurrent with, data entry deadlines.
  - Review the culture around data use and if teachers deem tasks a hindrance consider whether the tasks could be removed or whether their purpose and importance could be communicated more clearly.
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- Reduce data demands placed on multiple individuals where processes could be completed centrally and shared with relevant staff.
  - When using summative assessment, develop clear KPIs and depth descriptors for subjects in each year group so teachers can assess whether

every child has achieved the key learning they need to ensure a smooth transition into their next year group.

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gives a five-minute flick review of 3-5 books and uses the information gained to inform the next sequence in teaching and learning.

Each of the measures to reduce marking workload through increasing verbal feedback were found to reduce teacher workload, with no negative impact on pupil outcomes. The approaches enabled pupils to immediately apply the new learning during lessons, and this led to an increase in pupils' confidence, self-esteem and motivation as they saw their work improve. However, some pupils expressed a preference for written feedback and for their work to be graded, especially when they had put a lot of effort into their work. Additionally, teachers expressed that finding time for small group and 1:1 marking conferences was challenging as these approaches relied on other pupils in the class being able to work independently.

2. *Supporting pupil peer- and self-assessment skills (see Southwark TSA, Candleby Lane TSA reports, and the Independent research report).* Strategies used to support pupil peer- and self- assessment include: *Marking symbols* which were used by pupils to assess their work and set their 'next steps'; and *Self-assessment grids* with a traffic light system for pupils to indicate how well they have met success criteria. Some self-assessment strategies also included spaces for pupils to write evidence of success criteria and next steps. Teacher ratings in the form of 'Red, Amber, Green' were used to indicate where learning objectives had been met and, on occasions, teachers identified some spelling and grammatical errors and made written comments relating to pupil/peer assessment. Although teachers reported reduced marking workloads without impacting negatively on pupil outcomes, they also reported feeling frustrated by not being able to provide a written model and correct all spelling.

3. *Applying measures to reduce marking through the use of marking symbols (see*



- A well-developed collaborative ethos within and/or across schools.
- All teachers equally highly committed to the implementation of new initiatives.

#### *Organisational factors*

- SLT resistance to allowing time for staff to receive training in, and to implement new initiatives.
- Accountability measures that place heavy workload burdens on teachers, e.g. through lengthy and/or frequent reporting requirements.

#### *Cultural factors*

- Guilt that some teachers associate with time-saving methods, and the tendency by some teachers to view high workload as a proxy for teacher professionalism.
- Feeling pressure (from parents, pupils, governors and Ofsted) to demonstrate and conform to a perceived 'good practice' model of data management, planning and marking which entail time-consuming working practices.
- Teacher sub-cultures with varying dispositions to collaborative working within and across schools.

The range and quality of research and development presented in the 12 research reports exemplify exciting and promising programmes of research-informed innovation. These projects have important implications for teachers' practices and school systems, and for policies related to teacher workload reduction. It is clear from our review that the school-based research studies have influenced thinking about policies and practices of workload reduction within and across the schools that featured in the reports. We recommend that the Department for Education also use the findings of the studies to support policy development relating to school processes, structures and cultural factors.

When considering teacher workload reduction strategies around data management, planning and marking, it must be acknowledged that activities associated with each of

these cannot be viewed in isolation as activities in one area will impact on other areas. Consideration, therefore, needs to be given to the interaction between the three areas of data management, planning and marking, and how strategies relating to each can be integrated.



marking that could be shared with others. In addition to the 11 commissioned research projects, a further independent research report is also included in this review. The independent report is from a consortium of schools that did not receive NCTL funding, however, the consortium decided that their project was important to the schools and proceeded with the research without the funding. The schools submitted their report to the NCTL and this was published alongside the others due to the quality of the work and the importance of the findings.

This reports details findings from 12 research reports (11 commissioned, and one independent school-based research report). To ensure the reports were reviewed and analysed in a rigorous and timely way, the following review processes were followed:

*1. Development of a report recording card with headings designed to capture key points from the research reports.* An initial report recording card was developed based on the key points relating to the study aims. Both researchers independently trialled the report recording card with the same two research reports. Following discussions about the outcomes of the trial, the recording card was amended to include some additional headings to reflect more nuanced findings from the research reports.

*2. Review of remaining research reports.* Both researchers reviewed different research reports simultaneously to enable discussion and refinements of the process as necessary. During the simultaneous reviewing process, both researchers intentionally reviewed reports from each of the three focus areas – data management, planning, and marking. This increased their understanding of issues relating to each of the key domains, and facilitated critical discussion around the findings to be reported.

*3. Development of a draft reporting structure and writing of draft report.* Following the review of the research reports a draft reporting structure was developed and a draft report written.

*4. Critical review of draft report and writing of final report.* Following a critical review of the draft report by the DfE and one of the researchers, a final version of the report was produced.

Data security was ensured throughout the reviewing process by storing all data on password protected computers, and any printed work was stored in locked cabinets within the university.





interventions on teacher workload, or for changes in pupil attainment to be confidently attributed to the intervention.

- Relatively small numbers of participants were involved in each of the projects. Thus, the participants' views that are reported may not represent all, or even some, of the teachers' and pupils' views at the schools involved in the research; and it is unlikely that their views can be generalised further afield to teachers and pupils at other schools not directly involved in the projects.
- There is the potential for the 'Halo effect' within the research findings, whereby respondents give answers that they feel are expected of them, particularly when questions are posed to them by senior colleagues.
- Some of the findings are reported in more detail than others, the detail presented in this report is commensurate with the depth of the research.







- Support staff to develop the appropriate statistical literacy required to confidently interpret and use assessment data.
  - Regularly review assessment data to ensure it is valid and reliable for the purposes intended. Ensure staff are aware of the purpose and significance of particular data demands, and the inherent limitations of the data produced in their school. Consider if particular data are used as proof of good practice or as a resource for improving practice.
  - Provide opportunities for staff to contribute to the creation and use of KPIs, depth descriptors, tracking systems, and assessment cycles, to ensure they align with teacher expectations.
  - Assessment reporting cycles need to allow adequate time to identify and support specific pupils before the process begins again, otherwise the analytical work is unlikely to have an impact upon learning. Ensure assessments are well designed and enhance the schemes of work to which they relate.
  - Build in collective staff moderation time prior to, or concurrent with, data entry deadlines.
  - Regularly review the culture around data use. If teachers deem tasks a hindrance, consider whether the tasks could be removed or whether their purpose and importance could be communicated more clearly. Ensure teachers and senior leaders have shared understandings about the usefulness and need for data management systems.
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- Reduce data demands placed on multiple individuals where processes could be completed centrally and shared with relevant staff. Designate data managers to process data and reduce reporting frequency. Aim to free up teachers to respond to, rather than process data.
  - When using summative assessment, teachers should not be assessing every national curriculum objective, instead, they should develop clear KPIs and depth descriptors for subjects in each year group so they can assess whether every child has achieved the key learning they need to continue into their next year group. Provide support to ensure teachers understand the KPIs and depth descriptors, and have clarity over what they are assessing.

- Use tracking systems that allow teachers to enter KPIs and/or objectives that reflect the curriculum they teach, and that measure progress in terms of depth from prior attainment.
- Use tracking systems that allow data to be entered once and used within and across schools, and ensure staff are fully trained in using the tracking systems. Implementing common tracking systems across a network of schools enables a common language and format to be used within and across schools.
- Implement clear summative assessment cycles, ensuring clarity for all staff about the timing and type of summative assessment to be carried out and an even cycle of assessment over the academic year.

Detailed lesson and weekly planning were identified by 36% of the respondents to the Workload Challenges Survey as adding an unnecessary burden to teacher workload (DfE, 2016b, 6). The analysis of responses drew out issues relating to requirements around the level of detail in plans teachers needed to submit, having to produce annotated seating plans for each lesson and justifying decisions for these, having to change and revisit plans during the course of the week as lessons developed, and having tight deadlines for submitting weekly plans (ibid.).

The report acknowledged that effective planning is key to effective teaching, however, it was the unnecessary nature of the work around lesson plans that the Independent Teacher Review Group sought to address. The review group set out five principles relating to planning practices which they considered were needed to ensure that planning is productive and that workload for teachers is manageable. These principles are as follows (see DfE, 2016b, 6-9):

1. Planning a sequence of lessons is more important than writing individual lesson plans.
2. Fully resourced schemes of work should be in place for all teachers to use each term.
3. Planning should not be done simply to please outside organisations.
4. Planning should take place in purposeful and well-defined

5. Effective planning makes use of high quality resources.

The report also refers to Hattie's (2012) work which asserts that planning is more powerful when teachers work together to develop plans and common understandings of what is worth teaching, when they collaborate on understanding their beliefs of challenge and progress, and when they evaluate the impact of their planning on student outcome (DfE, 2016b, 10).

Three research projects focused on reducing teacher workload in relation to planning; of these, two focused on collaborative planning and one on shared planning. The major difference between collaborative and shared planning approaches is that collaborative (or joint) planning involves a small number of people planning together simultaneously; shared planning, by contrast, involves sharing the planning workload amongst teachers in a strategic way. An outline of the approaches taken within these projects, and the resulting outcomes are detailed below.

*Overview of approach:* Teachers in Years 1-5 within an existing network of schools were supported by school senior leaders to trial collaborative planning activities. The work was guided by the 'three M's' – meaningful, manageable and motivational – as outlined in one of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group's reports (DfE, 2016c). Within the Transform Trust TSA report, the three M's were defined as follows:

*Meaningful* - meeting teachers' professional needs and improving their practices;

*Manageable* – improving the time-effectiveness of planning;

*Motivational* – motivating teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Collaborative planning days were held during which teachers spent time in year group networks with peers from other schools collaborating on planning and resource development. Expertise from subject leaders were present during these days to quality assure the plans and resources produced by teachers.

An online survey was distributed to all Year 1-5 teachers, and focus group interviews with some of these teachers were conducted at the beginning of the project to record teachers' views on planning activities. The survey was repeated a term later and further focus group interviews were conducted to identify any

workload around planning. Seventy-two teachers completed the baseline survey and 40 fully or partially completed the follow-up survey.

*Outcomes:* Findings from the baseline data indicated that planning was a major workload issue. Teachers found planning to be time consuming, it impinged on evenings, weekends and holiday time, it was



perception can be generalised beyond the teachers participating in both baseline and follow-up surveys.

- Teachers found it difficult to quantify the time they had saved since the introduction of collaborative planning.
- The pupil questionnaire focused mainly on ascertaining pupils' perceptions of teaching and learning generally, rather than specifically about changes in pupils' views prior to, and following, the collaborative planning activities. There was, therefore, no robust evidence linking collaborative planning to pupils' learning experience from pupil's points of view.
- The project ran for only two terms and some of the collaborative planning was in preparation for units to be taught at a later stage, thus, it was too early to draw any direct relationship between the intervention and changes in teachers' classroom practices or pupil outcomes.

*Overview of approach:* The SLT in the three schools within the Meads Academy Trust focused on developing subject leaders as Collaborative Planning Leaders. The schools sought to explore whether the collaborative development of curriculum plans within and across the three schools by subject specialists in Science, Design and Technology (DT), and Computing, would help to increase teacher confidence and reduce their planning workloads. With this in mind, the schools implemented the following measures:

1. SLTs in the three schools gained an initial understanding of the issues under (g )pisa (s)-1 ( )Ts



Science teaching was being undertaken, and the use of subject specific vocabulary was demonstrated more consistently in pupils' writing.

*Cautions to acknowledge when interpreting outcomes from the above project:*

- There were relatively small numbers of responses to the teacher questionnaire (35 responses to the first, and 29 responses to the second), and very few teachers were involved in the semi-structured and in-depth interviews. It is unlikely, therefore, that the data developed are representative of teachers from across participating schools, and findings cannot be generalised with confidence to teachers and schools that did not participate in the project.
- Interview data was gathered from only a small number of pupils; therefore, claims that the enthusiasm they reported about recently covered topics are difficult to substantiate.
- As the project was conducted in a relatively short time-frame, it is difficult to comment on the long-term implications of the intervention on teacher workload and pupil outcomes.

*Overview of approach:*

*Outcomes:* Findings from the post project questionnaire and interviews indicated the following positive outcomes relating to shared planning approach:

- It opened up opportunities for non-threatening professional dialogue amongst staff, encouraged

- The task of quantifying the time spent on planning activities was not straightforward, thus it is difficult to draw definite conclusions around actual reductions in the time teachers spent on these activities.
- The short time scale of the project, and the nature of the data gathered, makes it difficult to substantiate the claims about the impact of the project, and to comment on the long-term implications of the intervention on teacher workload and pupil outcomes.

Drawing on insights from the above projects, the following recommendations were developed.

- Set aside time for shared and/or collaborative planning activities, especially in the early stages.
- Organise shared and collaborative planning activities to exploit teachers' specialisms and support the learning of staff with less expertise in the area.
- When facilitating shared and/or collaborative planning events, use teachers with subject specific expertise to facilitate these and quality assure the content of work produced. Invest in the development of subject leaders who can focus on management and facilitation skills to support shared and collaborative planning activities.
- Build on the existing team spirit within subject departments and/or across schools and networks.
- Ensure that everyone is on board and understands the aims, and agrees from the outset, the fundamentals of the approach to be taken whilst remaining flexible to individual predispositions.
- Encourage continuity and progression in pupils' experiences.
- Strike a balance between shared and collaborative specialist plans, and fostering ownership and autonomy of individual users of the plans.
- Make provision for staff in one-person departments to plan with colleagues elsewhere.
- Ensure that the technology infrastructure can support any demands that will be made of shared and collaborative planning activities, especially when teams are working across schools.

- Encourage and support shared and collaborative planning activities so that teachers do not have to plan every lesson from scratch, and if embarking on shared planning, ensure that the workload is evenly spread.
- Invest in or create, high quality schemes of work that can then be personalised by teachers for their individual contexts.
- Align the focus and timing of shared and collaborative planning events with individual schools' curriculum priorities so that planning events are not an 'add on' but support school's curriculum development initiatives and enable teachers to use their plans within clear timescales.

Four of the commissioned research reports focused on reducing teacher workload around marking while maintaining or improving outcomes for pupils. Of these projects, two focused on reducing written feedback through the general provision of high quality verbal feedback (see Aquinas Trust school and Southwark TSA reports), and two focused on implementing specific verbal feedback strategies (see Tarporley/Helsby/Queen's Park High Schools' report and Candleby Lane TSA report). Some schools within the Candleby Lane TSA also focused on reducing teacher marking workload through increasing pupil self- and peer assessment.

Each of the research projects recorded teachers' perceptions of time spent on marking both before and after implementing interventions aimed at reducing marking workload. Teachers' perceptions were ascertained mainly through questionnaires, diaries/logs and interviews and, in some studies, pupils' perceptions about the implementation of marking interventions were also ascertained. Three of the projects - those undertaken by the Aquinas Teaching and Learning Trust schools, Southwark TSA and Tarporley/Helsby/Queen's Park High Schools - included both control and intervention groups.

The independent research report also detailed findings relating to reducing teacher workload around marking. The report includes findings from studies conducted in 14 primary schools, including special schools, within the *With Others We Succeed*

*i) Overview of approach adopted by Aquinas Teaching and Learning Trust: Seven schools participated in this research – three primary, one infant, two secondary, and one special school. Within these schools 24 parallel classes in Years 4, 5 and 7 were divided into intervention and control groups. In the intervention classes teachers were required to undertake formative assessment and give verbal feedback during the lessons instead of written feedback. Teachers in the control classes continued with their current school practice of giving written feedback according to their schools’ marking policies.*

Teachers from all classes addressed the same learning outcome for pupils - *Draft and write using a wide range of devices to build cohesion within and across paragraphs*. They were able to choose the writing genre most suitable for their classes, however, the lessons were no longer than 45 minutes, and all followed a set procedure over four days, as follows:

Day 1 - Teachers provided a general outline of the new concepts being taught and modelled examples that exhibited the planned outcomes. Pupils generated their own examples that incorporated the taught material. Teachers assessed pupils’ outcomes throughout the lesson offering personalised feedback and requiring pupils to make improvements in their next attempts.

Day 2 - The lessons continued in similar manner in order for pupils and teachers to master the skills.

Day 3 – Pupils were given opportunities to apply the learned skills. The teachers shared the expected standard of writing and asked pupils to produce an extended, purposeful piece of writing that was marked in depth (by the end of 13 (m) 0 (9) 1 (488) 13 (i) 11 (10) 1 (41) 50 (s) 1 (s)



educational needs as they saw their work improve immediately, and the extent to which they were willing to redraft was markedly improved.

- Teachers in the intervention group thought more about what they expected from different ability groups, and reported their planning was more thorough than it had previously been. Teachers also considered that using verbal feedback impacted positively on the quality of written work produced by pupils by the end of the week, more so that was evident in pupils' work during the previous week.
- Teachers considered that lower attaining pupils need more reassurance about the work they need to do and that verbal feedback provided this reassurance.

*Cautions to acknowledge when interpreting outcomes from the above project:*

- The marking intervention took place over a one-week period. The claims made relating to the outcome of the intervention are, therefore, based on a project with a very limited time-frame, and which was limited to pupils from Years 4, 5 and 7 in one curriculum area with a particular set of teachers. The conclusions drawn from the research, therefore, need to be interpreted within this context.
- A potential source of bias in the outcomes is that all participating schools were faith schools and belonged to the same Trust that sought to share similar policies and practices in their schools.
- Outcomes reported relate to only those of the intervention group, with no reference made to the experiences or views of those in the control group.

*ii)*

independently. Marking Conferences were used across Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 by nine teachers in two schools.

3. *Minimal Marking* – this involves teachers replacing some or all written feedback using a combination of marking in the moment, small group conferencing, and using marking symbols. Nine teachers across three schools trialled this approach.

Differences in teachers' marking workload were ascertained through pre- and post-intervention survey.

*Outcomes:* Findings from the surveys indicated that:

- Teachers who adopted Marking in the moment, Marking conference, or Minimal marking, or a combination of these approaches reported a (om)-lem0.001 Tw -1





group spent six weeks developing classroom cultures and teaching pupils' effective self- and peer- assessment skills. During these six weeks, the following measures were taken:

1. *No written marking in pupils' books in English and Maths.* This was in contrast to most books being marked daily either during or after the lesson, including pupils being given 'next steps' to complete.
2. *An intentional shift in focus from assessment to planning.* Instead of written marking, teachers read pupils' work and put books into three piles – re-teach, consolidate or extend. As most work in Maths would have been peer assessed, this was a relatively small task. For writing tasks, the teacher would read the work and record what the pupil needed to do next, this might inform whole class feedback and planning, or pupils might be put into groups depending on their needs.
3. *Introduction to conferencing and peer-assessment approaches.* Teachers conferenced with groups identified by the analysis of the previous day's learning outcomes. The expectation was for a pupil to be conferenced at least once per week. Teachers also developed pupils' abilities to peer and self-assess.
4. *The process was supported through efficient record-keeping of what each pupil needed to do next and when they had been conferenced with.* Three different stickers were used to record feedback conversations – *I spoke to my teacher and I need to...; I spoke to my friend and I need to...; and I checked my own work and I think I need to...*

Three of the schools returned Maths data (259 pupils in total) and all returned Writing data (380 pupils in total); data was collated from teachers in both intervention and control classes. A survey of participating teachers also collected data on teachers' views on their marking practices pre and post the intervention period.

*Outcomes:* Findings from the teachers' survey suggested:

- All teachers in the intervention group had made significant changes to their practice over the term, reducing written methods to zero and providing verbal feedback on all or most pieces of work; they considered this form of marking practice to be time effective.
- Teachers reported feeling frustrated by not being able to write in books either by giving a written model or correcting spelling; they considered that time spent on written marking was worthwhile in terms of impact on pupil outcomes.
- Across the term the intervention had no measurable positive or negative impact on pupils' progress in Writing or Maths when compared to the control group data.

- Five of the seven teachers in the intervention group were more likely to agree post-intervention than pre-intervention that the change in marking practice had a positive impact on their pupils and their levels of progress and pupil motivation. The remaining two teachers who did not share these views were both from the same school and neither of them implemented the feedback methods to the same extent as others in the intervention group.
- Some teachers in the control group felt they made 'partial' change to their practice; half reported increased levels of verbal feedback throughout the study, which suggests some 'contamination' of the study.

*Cautions to acknowledge when interpreting outcomes from the above project:*

- The short duration of the intervention (one term) meant there was limited scope for changes in teachers' practices to become embedded, and for pupils to adjust to new marking strategies and to change their learning behaviours in ways that may influence their performance on learning outcome measures.
- Teachers in the intervention groups were reported to be less experienced than those in the control groups. This suggests that those who agreed to take part in the intervention may have been more amenable to change. The limited information about the composition of participating teachers in the control and intervention groups makes it difficult to interpret and draw conclusive findings from the data.

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learning objectives. In some cases, spellings and grammar errors were identified by the teacher.

*Outcomes:* Findings from initial and end of project teacher surveys, teacher research journals and focus groups, and from pupil interviews suggested the following:

- All teachers reported spending much less time on marking and considered that pupils had become more independent and skilled at assessing their





marking practices was conducted and evaluated against the three principles of effective marking identified by the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group – *Meaningful, Manageable and Motivating* (DfE, 2016c). School leads then presented and discussed recent and current practice relating to marking within their schools.

Staff developed proposals for changing marking practices and drafted criteria for evaluating the changes; school leads reported back on their school's decisions around future marking practices, including the expected impact on teaching, learning and workload; and all schools agreed on the evaluation criteria to be used for capturing outcomes.

*Second half-term.* A variety of interventions aimed at reducing marking workload were implemented in the participating schools.

*Third half-term.* Staff fed back on the outcome of their implementations, including suggestions of recommendations. The group then drafted, reviewed and redrafted, and then published the final report.

Staff and pupil questionnaires were used to elicit views on the implementation of new marking practices within the schools.

*Outcomes:* Findings suggested that many of the marking strategies in place at the beginning of the project were time consuming with teachers often writing more than the pupils themselves. Following the interventions to reduce marking workload, findings from the project questionnaires indicated:

- Teachers had more clarity with regard to the purpose of feedback, and the intended audiences was viewed as the pupils themselves, rather than SLT or interested third parties, such as Ofsted. Teachers also reported reduction in time spent marking and recording, and an improvement in teacher morale. In many schools, teachers no longer took work home to mark in the evenings or at weekends.
- The application of the principles contained in the workload report helped with removing previously bureaucratic marking processes that were burdensome and unhelpful, and schools now emphasised the manageability of feedback, its meaningfulness, and the extent to which it motivates pupils.
- Changes to new marking practices resulted in no reports of negative impacts on pupils' learning. Some schools reported pupils' enhanced engagement with the learning process, and the early detection and immediate rectification of pupils' misunderstandings led to clear gains in pupils' progress. Additionally, the early interventions to tackle





Within the research reports it was common for reference to be made to factors which either facilitated or created barriers to implementing measures to reduce teachers' workload around data management, planning and marking. The key factors are outlined below.



- Teacher sub-cultures with varying dispositions to collaborative working within and across schools.











Drawing on findings that were common across the research reports, we highlight practices which should be encouraged when developing and implementing policies and approaches to reducing teacher workload:

- Support from the school's SLT is needed to enable the successful implementation and embedding of new practices. In particular, for interventions to be developed and implemented, teachers need support during the period of transition when new initiatives are introduced. Time also needs to be given for teachers to become familiar with, and understand, the purpose of new initiatives, for the implementation process, and to review the impact of the intervention on their workload and on pupil outcomes.
- School leaders and governors should ensure that the purpose of activities relating to data management, planning and marking, go beyond adherence to policies and 'delivery' of target test results, and focus on improving the quality of learning opportunities, experiences and outcomes for all pupils. The precise nature and purpose of specific interventions must be clearly communicated to, and understood by, teachers.
- Staff should be encouraged to contribute to, and take ownership of new initiatives, and school governors, parents and pupils should be supported to understand the principles behind them.
- Any new initiatives should be monitored and its effectiveness for reducing teacher workload and improving outcomes for pupils evaluated.

When developing ways of implementing these approaches, consideration will need to be given to how measures to reduce workload may vary according to the diversity of teachers and pupils and different school contexts. Acknowledgment will also need to be given to the fact that each school has unique features pertinent to individual pupils, teachers and their school which need to be taken into consideration when implementing potential new practices.

Issues of teacher workload should be seen in the broad context of current challenges within the education system, including curriculum innovation and other initiatives which impact on school policies and practices, and often serve to increase teacher workload.

When considering teacher workload reduction strategies around data management, planning and marking, it must be acknowledged that activities associated with each of these cannot be viewed in isolation as activities in one area will impact on other areas. For example, changes in practice relating to marking will impact a school's overall

assessment strategy, and are likely to impact on the school's data management and lesson planning policies and practices. It is therefore, difficult, if not impossible to attribute any changes in pupil outcomes to any one change in practice, and consideration needs to be given to the interaction between the three areas of data management,



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