

# The Well-Being Programme

## Practical ideas from schools which have looked at the workload issue

- Reviewing the pattern of the school year - spreading out more evenly times of high workload.
- Publishing deadlines well in advance.
- Employing support staff for non-teaching duties e.g. reprographics, display, report collating, exam invigilation.
- Paying support staff to attend meetings / INSET - more fully informed about work issues.
- Reviewing planning documentation - use of ICT for school plans which can be adapted to suit needs of specific classes.
- Simplifying assessment procedures.
- Non-contact time for report writing - use of ICT.
- Non-contact time for teachers in primary as well as secondary phase.
- Professional review for all staff with senior management - opportunity to review workload and other professional issues on a one to one basis.
- Skills audit.
- Paperwork filtering - reviewing information going into staff pigeon holes - what is essential?.
- Staff oral briefings rather than communication by memo.
- Reviewing SEN paperwork.
- Prioritising initiatives.
- Focused meetings: agenda in advance, start / finish time, concise minutes.
- Meetings timetable - avoiding excess of meetings.
- Staff open forums / circle time - to raise issues of concern.
- Training opportunities - time management.
- Publicity about support and help available - Norfolk Support Line.

# Monitoring Teaching and Learning

## Main issues as perceived by staff

- There is too much monitoring and teachers may feel threatened by the process.
- The purpose, focus and arrangements for monitoring are not clear.
- Monitoring increases the workload of teachers because additional planning and documentation is requested.
- Feedback is not organised well.

## Possible solutions that can be introduced within and by the school/service

- A school should establish how often teachers should be observed, particularly since the introduction of Performance Management. Gathering evidence about teaching need not always involve classroom observation. Work-sampling, the analysis of performance data and talking with pupils about their learning can also provide good first-hand evidence.
- The purpose and focus of monitoring must always be clear to everyone involved and it should be clear how the teaching is to be assessed. Teachers are keen to teach to the best of their abilities and, therefore, the purpose of monitoring should be to help teachers improve their teaching and pupils' learning. It needs to be clear who should monitor what, in what way, and how often. Monitoring teaching should be seen as an opportunity to encourage self-evaluation and professional dialogue.
- Monitoring should be managed at school level and should not increase the workload of teachers, for example, in producing additional planning documents or other additional information. A school needs good information about the quality of teaching and learning but should not be seeking to replicate an inspection.
- The objective of giving feedback is to help improve the teacher's effectiveness. How well the messages are received depends on the trust, respect and rapport established between the observer and the teacher. The way findings are communicated is therefore important.

## Implications for consideration as a result of adopting a possible solution

- It is likely that schools will have teachers who need intensive, medium and light-touch monitoring and support, matching the differentiation and 'intervention in inverse proportion to success' which applies to schools.
- All schools need policies for Performance Management, for Monitoring and Evaluation, and a Teaching and Learning Statement. Schools need to be clear about roles and responsibilities and to have thought through how they want to use external support for monitoring and evaluation.
- Establish protocols for feedback which include:
  - Making time available and give some feedback as soon as possible after the observation;
  - Gaining acceptance;
  - Encouraging self – evaluation;
  - Providing clear reasons for judgements;
  - Being selective. Try to identify the key areas for improvement which will make the most difference;
  - Endorsing good practice. If it is good, make sure that the teacher knows that it is good;
  - Identifying problems clearly. Equally, identify how satisfactory and good teaching can be improved further;
  - Agreeing desired changes, identify points for development, and plan support;
  - Signing off properly. Try to ensure that the teacher goes away with a sense that the strengths of the teaching have been recognised and celebrated and that constructive advice and practical support has been provided to improve any areas of weakness.

# Curriculum Planning in Primary Schools

## Main issues as perceived by staff

- Teachers are feeling overburdened by demands for planning and are spending excessive amounts of time on planning the what and finding little time to concentrate on other important areas such as the how and the impact of the planning on pupils' learning. In these schools, it is clear that planning has become an end in itself and is not being seen as an adjunct to successful, well-focused and well-differentiated lessons which deliver the intended curriculum.

## Possible solutions that can be introduced within and by the school/service

- We should help teachers work more effectively and efficiently, and ensure that planning takes place within a reasonable expectation of workload.
- If we evaluate planning without seeing it being delivered, we may be looking for a comprehensiveness which amounts to a counsel of perfection. We all need to be very careful about what we say to teachers about planning. We need to be very sure about why we might ever advocate layers of planning which involve re-writing the same information.
- All teachers need to be completely clear why they plan – to support the progress of pupils (individuals and groups) in the classroom. Teachers' time should be used for aspects of planning that are going to be useful for their own purposes and which have a direct impact upon the quality of teaching and learning.
- There is no prescribed format or length. For example, OFSTED specifies only that 'teachers plan effectively, using clear objectives that children understand'. OFSTED inspectors will be more interested in the impact of planning on the teaching and learning.

## Implications for consideration as a result of adopting a possible solution

- Whenever possible, teachers should work with others when planning. Share specialist knowledge, involve teaching assistants.
- Teachers should identify what they are going to assess and highlight this on their plans, use simple systems for recording children's progress and link curricular targets to their plans for individuals and groups.
- There is no need to re-write medium term plans if schools are using the QCA or equivalent school created schemes of work for those subjects where they exist. Capitalise on what is already available by way of published material.
- Ensure that, where teachers have invested time and energy in writing detailed, long – and medium term plans, these are used again with a minimum of change.
- Make good use of ICT
- Headteachers and subject leaders need to monitor in various ways, including looking closely at planning. However the focus of their monitoring must be the progress of pupils in the classroom. This requires monitoring teaching and learning.
- Build ICT capacity in the school.
- Differentiate expectations: a standard form of presentation is not a necessity. However, it is important to ensure that key elements of planning are consistent across all classes. Some teachers may need to have more detail in their planning in some subjects than others.
- Encourage teachers to use and adapt existing plans, for example the National Numeracy Strategy Unit Plans and the National Literacy Strategy medium term plans and planning exemplification.

# Meetings

## Main issues as perceived by staff

- Why is the meeting relevant or necessary or could the outcome be achieved more efficiently through some other mechanism?
- Has an agreed agenda been produced outlining key questions which need to be addressed?
- Are meeting useful for sharing ideas or seen merely as a means of communicating decisions taken elsewhere?
- Has the duration of the meeting established ie. fixed maximum time or meeting ends when business complete?
- How does the school manage time-tabling of meetings to ensure a reasonable balance throughout the year?
- Is there a mechanism for individuals to contribute to the preparation of the agenda?
- Has the principle of equality been applied to the timing of the meeting in relation to single parents/part time staff?
- What steps have been put in place to ensure that all contributions are valued?

## Possible solutions that can be introduced within and by the school/service

- Production of an agenda with key issues to address.
- Mechanism for individuals to share ideas.
- Fixed times.
- Whole school planning.
- Draft calendar.
- A meetings-free week per half term.
- Maximum number of meetings per week.
- Paying staff to attend in some circumstances.
- Information to staff prior to meeting.
- Possible rotating chair.
- Commitment to ensuring transparent and democratic decision making.

## Implications for consideration as a result of adopting a possible solution

- Consultation with and feedback from all staff on the usefulness of meetings.
- Preparation of materials in advance, including administrative support.
- Early draft calendar.
- Budget planning to support arrangements whenever needed.
- Efficient and effective communication of decisions taken to all staff.

# Marking

## Main issues as perceived by staff

- Often the perception of teachers is that they find marking a boring task, which is full of drudgery coupled with (very often) a fruitless outcome. Teachers know they are required to mark work and some take this to mean that student's work should be covered in red ink, peppered with the word "good" every now and again.
- Managers expect teachers to mark students' work with regularity and there is usually a marking policy to be followed specifying the frequency of marking, together with some sort of grading system and targets.

## Possible solutions that can be introduced within and by the school/service

- Marking should be seen within the wider context of assessment for learning and, as such, it should be used to inform progress alongside other methods of providing pupils with feedback.

Within assessment as a whole, the questions we are asking learners are:

- Do you know where you are?
- Do you know what you do well?
- Do you know what you need to do to improve?
- Do you know what you need to do next?
- Marking will, in part, help to inform the learner about the answers to these questions.
- The following workload friendly methods provide an efficient and effective alternative to the traditional pattern of marking and are fit for the purpose of informing progress -
  - Self-evaluation (which promotes independent learning).
  - Oral feedback during the course of a lesson.
  - Peer evaluation.
  - Carrying out targeted and selected marking.

## Implications for consideration as a result of adopting a possible solution

- Lack of written comments should not necessarily mean that teachers are not assessing pupils' work, as discussion with students is often more effective than something in writing.
- Schools will need to review their marking policy in order to consider whether the expectations of teachers is in line with the requirements of the national agreement on raising standards and tackling workload.
- In particular consideration needs to be given to work/life balance. This is especially true for some teachers in particular circumstances such as part-time workers and those working in more than one area (SENCO's, HOD's and those responsible for more than one subject area, for example).

# The Management of Behaviour

## Main issues as perceived by staff

- Some teachers feel that current demands on them have a negative effect and can lead to teachers becoming increasingly isolated from each other.
- This sometimes shows up in a more reactive attitude towards pupil behaviour and a developing perception that teachers are spending more time on managing difficult behaviour at the expense of other areas of their work.

## Possible solutions that can be introduced within and by the school/service

Prevention is better than cure. Always start with thinking about rewards. Let consequence follow, not punishment. With behaviour management you will have to spend time to gain time. But it's about thinking smarter not working harder.

- Is there an agreed Whole School Behaviour Policy and Practice document in place which clearly specifies and explains structures, systems and everyone's contribution and responsibilities?
- Is there a strong and active school culture of promoting, rewarding and celebrating positive, pro-social behaviour?
- Is there regular time given to sharing behaviour management skills at a team or departmental level? Is good practice publicly acknowledged and shared?
- Are staff good role models in terms of interpersonal interactions and positive relationships?
- Does the school strive to have effective partnerships with parents to promote and celebrate appropriate behaviour?
- Are senior managers available quickly when required to support staff with key pupils?
- Do all staff really understand that pupils with challenging behaviours create pressures at both a management and classroom level?

## Implications for consideration as a result of adopting a possible solution

- Do staff share early low key de-escalation and intervention skills to support classroom management?
- Are teamwork and consistency promoted as the key to sound practice? Do the team consider solutions for resolving practice around complex pupils?
- Does the staff give clear and predictable expectations, routines and responses to give pupils a secure structure?
- Is behaviour perceived as a way of communicating a problem, not as the problem?
- Are Individual Behaviour Plans only used where there needs to be an additional or different input, response or provision from that which is available for all pupils? Are they clearly time-limited with realistic success criteria?
- Are there systems in place to teach pupils positive behaviour; (can staff, e.g. teaching assistants, be supported to develop knowledge in anger management, conflict resolution and social skills training)?

- Is the curriculum (content) used to teach and support positive behaviour? (PSHE and Citizenship are obvious but look for other areas in other subjects.)
- Has the school considered the impact of teaching and learning styles on behaviour?
- Is the full range of ability being taken into account in curriculum planning?
- Does self-esteem building for both staff and pupils pervade everything in the school?
- What additional systems are in place to support individual staff who are in difficulty?
- What additional systems are in place to support individual pupils who are in difficulty?