



Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP
Secretary of State for Education
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Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP
Deputy Prime Minister
The Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
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9 February 2015

Dear Secretary of State and Deputy Prime Minister

Re: Government response to the Workload Challenge

We are writing to you in response to the publication of your response to the Workload Challenge.

All of us continue to have serious concerns about teacher workload and its impact on teacher recruitment and retention - we believe that this must remain a central focus for ministers and politicians.

We have engaged with you and with ministers and civil servants in the Department for Education for many months seeking real change for teachers and school leaders.

We have shared with you both our individual union and joint union responses and suggestions.

There are positive points in your response including the recognition that workload is a real problem and the commitment to plan greater lead in times and consider workload issues more seriously before further changes are introduced. Unfortunately though, many of the suggestions our unions jointly made to you have not been taken forward.

The central point we have made in our talks is that the high stakes system of accountability in general and Ofsted in particular is driving unnecessary workload at unacceptable levels for teachers and for school leaders.

Your own research has also confirmed this:

- 53% of Workload Challenge respondents cited accountability/perceived pressures of Ofsted as the creator of the burden of their workload
- Inspection identified as a main external driver of workload in the Accountability Deep Dive

But the Government's response to the Workload Challenge contains little new with regard to inspection and we therefore do not believe your proposals will get close to the root cause of the workload problem.

The failure of the response to the Workload Challenge to robustly address these problems is certainly a missed opportunity which will disappoint teachers and school leaders and will hugely undermine the other work that is planned.

You should be clear that it is not just 'fear' of Ofsted that is leading to unnecessary workload; the operation of the inspection system itself is a material factor. This is not just about perception but the lived experience of our colleagues. During the talks we provided you with a joint paper on the principles that should underlie accountability in the education system including the notion that the system should be based on trust. However we do not see those principles yet given effect in your response.

We pressed in the talks that the time is right to conduct an external review of the validity and reliability of Ofsted's inspections, and more recently Ofsted's Chief Inspector has told the Education Select Committee he would welcome such independent scrutiny.

There are many other points that we jointly made to you that you have not taken action on. Amongst them for example we suggested that:

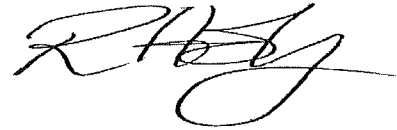
- The DFE should permit schools to take additional non-teaching days during the summer term. Having some notice would allow school leaders to plan to make the best use of such days.
- There should be a communication from HMCI around the need for teacher workload to be managed - which would be a useful signal to the whole system.
- We also sought clear statements from the Secretary of State that teacher time is a precious resource, that average working hours are too high and that she wants them to decrease. Preferably she should indicate a target for that reduction.

We continue to jointly urge you to conduct this review of Ofsted, to take forward the other points we have suggested and to discuss seriously with us how a reform of accountability can be given effect. A better system of accountability can lead to better outcomes for students and remove excessive workload for teachers and school leaders. Other countries have solved this problem - it should not be beyond us to do so as well.

We think it is important you join this week's meeting of the Programme of Talks to discuss these concerns and how we can move forward in addressing them during the remainder of the talks process.

Yours sincerely,

Mary W. Boustead . Brian Lightman .



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