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# ‘MAKING A DIFFERENCE’ REDUCING RED TAPE AND BUREAUCRACY IN SCHOOLS – SECOND REPORT

PUBLIC SECTOR TEAM  
REGULATORY IMPACT UNIT

## **Acknowledgements**

The Cabinet Office Public Sector Team and the Department for Education and Skills School Workforce Unit would like to thank all the many education professionals and stakeholders that contributed to delivering the achievements set out in this report. Without their time and support, none of this work would have been possible. The individuals and organisations involved are set out in Annex 2.



## FOREWORD BY:



**Secretary of State for Education, Rt. Hon. Charles Clarke MP**

**Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt. Hon. Lord Macdonald of Tradeston CBE**

Education is a top priority for the Government. We are committed to a major programme of investment and reform, to improve standards and to give all our children the best possible start in life.

We recognise that to achieve a step change in standards a new phase of reform is needed and we are seeking to build a new relationship with schools, head teachers and governors. We want schools to have more freedom and flexibility in the way they use their resources, in the way they design the curriculum and in the teaching methods they use, whilst recognising that they work within a framework where they are accountable for their standards and performance. Too often, people in the frontline feel they are being held back by red tape and bureaucracy – anything preventing standards in education rising, particularly bureaucratic burdens, needs to be removed.

In January this year, Government, employers and school workforce unions signed a national agreement to pave the way for major reforms of the school workforce, enabling teachers to focus on teaching by freeing them from the burdens of day-to-day administrative and unskilled tasks. Alongside the additional resources to enable schools to recruit at least 10,000 more teachers and 50,000 more support staff during this Parliament, the Government has committed itself to a concerted attack on unnecessary paperwork and bureaucratic processes for teachers and head teachers.

This report is one of the first steps. Visits made to secondary schools and local education authorities last year resulted in a wide range of issues being identified where cumbersome procedures were getting in the way of providing high quality teaching and learning.

The Cabinet Office's Regulatory Impact Unit and the Department for Education and Skills have worked together with teachers, other school staff, local education authorities, professional bodies and other government departments and agencies to establish ways that burdens can be removed or reduced. This report outlines a programme of specific actions and commitments, some of which have already been put into effect. It marks the start of a determined campaign.



An independent Implementation Review Unit is also now being established with a panel of practitioners made up predominantly of serving head teachers. The Unit will scrutinise how new policies are developed, challenge bureaucracy associated with existing policies, commission reviews, and be able to call in departmental officials and external agencies. It will have direct access to Ministers and publish its own annual report. In addition, the Unit will oversee the implementation of the actions outlined in this report and will regularly communicate changes to the teaching profession.

We believe that both the changes agreed in this report, and the continuing work of the Department in ensuring that new burdens are not created, will have a lasting and valuable impact on schools and teachers. We will continue to work to ensure that the changes deliver real and useful benefits for schools, allowing teachers to spend more time in doing what they do best – teaching.

**Charles Clarke**

**Lord Macdonald**

March 2003



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this latest schools project is to deliver practical measures to further reduce levels of red tape, bureaucracy and paperwork with which schools, and in particular teachers, have to contend with. The report continues work set out in our first ‘Making a Difference’ report on Reducing School Paperwork (published in December 2000) and builds upon the *PricewaterhouseCoopers* ‘Teacher Workload Study’ (December 2001).

The Regulatory Impact Unit’s Public Sector Team in the Cabinet Office together with the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) have worked in partnership with stakeholders, including schools and Local Education Authorities (LEAs), to identify the areas where immediate action could be taken. There are also areas within the report where progress may take longer to achieve and we will continue to work with our partners to facilitate improvements and ensure that reductions in bureaucracy are achieved.

The outcomes outlined in this second report relate to eight main areas:

- Pupil Management Issues
- Special Education Needs (SEN)
- Assessments and Examinations
- Raising Standards
- Communicating with Schools
- Statistics and Information Management
- Interface with other Departments and Agencies
- Staffing Issues

125 significant new outcomes around the above areas are outlined in this report as summarised below.



Outcome	Target date for action
<b>Pupil Management Issues</b>	
<b>School Admissions Procedures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAs will act as a 'clearing house' for all admissions applications and adopt a standard application form within each LEA area</li> </ul>	September 2005
<b>Schools Admissions – guidance and information:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tailored information on the admissions process, including key dates will be developed for schools</li> </ul>	March 2003
<b>Schools Admissions – electronic system:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A pilot project to improve electronic admissions procedures including a standard on-line application form will be developed</li> <li>A standard on-line admissions system will be extended nation-wide depending on the success of the pilot scheme</li> </ul>	September 2003 (onwards)  September 2005
<b>Common Transfer Forms – information capture:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAs will be able to download archived pupil data from a secure School-to-School data transfer web-site</li> <li>LEAs will be able to securely retrieve information about pupils who move schools through the 'lost pupil database' web-site, ensuring that relevant information is available for managing pupil learning</li> </ul>	October 2002 (completed)  October 2002 (completed)
<b>Common Transfer Forms – timely data transfer:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QCA and DfES will provide unvalidated Key Stage 2 data to LEAs to use as a rough guide to academic levels of new pupils joining secondary schools</li> <li>A feasibility study will consider a number of IT solutions to determine whether QCA is able to supply validated Key stage 2 data earlier than August</li> <li>Schools will receive Key Stage 2 data in an electronic format from QCA by July each year, subject to the success of the feasibility study</li> </ul>	June/July 2003  Autumn 2003  July 2004
<b>Common Transfer Forms – electronic transfer:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The common transfer file will be upgraded to allow more effective and secure transfer of pupil data electronically between schools</li> <li>Improvements to the LEA and Schools Information Service (LEASIS) and launch of Edubase will provide schools with faster access to information when pupils transfer schools</li> </ul>	June 2002 (completed)  September 2002 (completed)
<b>Common Transfer Forms – training:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A standard training and information package about the common transfer system and the School-to-School secure data transfer web-site will be provided for LEAs and schools</li> <li>The DfES will work jointly with the LGA to promote information about the common transfer system to schools</li> </ul>	June 2002 (completed)  October 2002 (ongoing)



<p><b>Recording attendance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional attendance advisors will provide a proactive and comprehensive support service to LEAs to share good practice and raise attendance levels</li> <li>• Schools will be supported by the wider Behaviour and Attendance Strategy, including an improved web-site, guidance, and training for all secondary schools</li> <li>• Changes to the teachers' contract, backed by additional financial resources, will enable the recruitment of more support staff to undertake administrative and clerical tasks, including chasing absences</li> </ul>	<p>March 2003</p> <p>January 2003 (onwards)</p> <p>September 2003 (onwards)</p>
<p><b>Electronic recording of attendance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A two-year e-registration project will assess the benefits of e-registration within secondary schools with high levels of truancy</li> <li>• The above e-registration project will be evaluated to determine whether funding will be made available to support more schools to purchase systems</li> </ul>	<p>March 2004</p> <p>April 2004 (onwards)</p>
<p><b>LEA monitoring of attendance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEAs will consider each school's individual circumstances to avoid a 'blanket' approach to monitoring</li> <li>• A joint DfES/LEA awareness campaign will be run to highlight key messages on attendance monitoring to LEAs</li> </ul>	<p>April 2003</p> <p>April 2003 (onwards)</p>

<p><b>Exclusions – managing the exclusion process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary schools will receive training for all staff on managing behaviour (including exclusions)</li> <li>• Schools will be provided with clear guidance on the whole exclusions process including model documentation to use</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003 (onwards)</p> <p>January 2003 (completed)</p>
<p><b>Process involved in exclusions – the Discipline Committee:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative changes will ease the administrative burden on discipline meetings for governors, head teachers and teaching staff</li> </ul>	<p>January 2003 (completed)</p>
<p><b>Process involved in exclusions – appeals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulations governing independent appeals panels will require panels to balance the rights of the excluded pupils against the rights of the school community</li> </ul>	<p>January 2003 (completed)</p>

<p><b>Annual reporting to parents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic exemplar forms on teacher assessment levels, school results and national results will be developed in Word format allowing schools to transfer data from their management systems more easily</li> <li>• Electronic sample reports and adaptable proformas will be made available to schools across all key stages</li> </ul>	<p>March 2003</p> <p>March 2003</p>
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<p><b>Special Education Needs (SEN)</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will be given greater support in dealing with special educational needs, through the introduction of a SEN Action programme</li> </ul>	<p>October 2003</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wide variation between LEAs and the proportion of pupils with statements will be investigated to highlight where partnerships have been successful</li> </ul>	<p>October 2003</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENCOs will be provided with further training opportunities from within the SEN Standards Fund 2003-2004</li> </ul>	<p>April 2003</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for SEN Partnerships will be extended to 2006 – these partnerships will play a leading role in promoting inter-LEA and multi-agency collaboration and will hold a series of conferences for SENCOs</li> </ul>	<p>November 2002 (onwards)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofsted will complete a review looking at the impact on schools of the new SEN Code of Practice and highlight any problem areas for action</li> </ul>	<p>March 2004</p>





<b>Assessments and Examinations</b>	
<p><b>National Curriculum tests – Key Stage 2 and 3 paperwork</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will be able to send pupil registration details electronically, directly from their own information management systems</li> <li>Schools will benefit from reduced paperwork following a new feasibility study on the electronic delivery of Key Stage 2 data</li> <li>A QCA pilot will investigate whether information requested in the pupil registration forms and test orders can be gathered directly from PLASC</li> <li>LEAs will no longer be required to request pupil level data from schools separately for QCA dependent on the success of the pilot</li> </ul>	<p>September 2002 (ongoing)</p> <p>December 2003</p> <p>September 2002 (ongoing)</p> <p>September 2003</p>
<p><b>Accuracy of Marking – Key Stage 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Stage 3 English markers will be subject to more rigorous monitoring which will result in more accurate marking</li> <li>Schools subject to inconsistent and poor marking will be identified by QCA's analysis of school performance data. All scripts will be re-checked to ensure consistency</li> </ul>	<p>May 2003</p> <p>June 2003</p>
<p><b>Examination Awarding Bodies – quality assurance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QCA will monitor Examination Awarding Bodies against performance indicators to ensure schools receive a high quality service</li> <li>Where under-performance is identified from the performance indicators, QCA will work with Examination Awarding Bodies to develop action programmes to ensure that improvements are made</li> <li>The delivery of examinations will be further improved through the establishment of a QCA Examinations Task Force which will consider the strategic elements of the examinations process</li> <li>QCA will establish a new Examinations Process Group – their remit will be to monitor the operational performance of Examination Awarding Bodies on an ongoing basis to enable QCA and the Examination Awarding Bodies to act on problems as they arise</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003 (ongoing)</p> <p>September 2003 (ongoing)</p> <p>October 2002 (ongoing)</p> <p>January 2003 (ongoing)</p>
<p><b>Examination Awarding Bodies – customer service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will benefit from a number of initiatives being undertaken within individual Examination Awarding Bodies to improve customer service</li> <li>QCA will additionally consider extending the current performance indicators to cover specific aspects of customer service to ensure school receive a high quality service</li> </ul>	<p>June 2002 (onwards)</p> <p>December 2003</p>
<p><b>Examination Awarding Bodies – lack of consistency of procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School examination officers will be able to enter and retrieve candidate data from one central point through the development of a standardised entries and results system, subject to the results of a feasibility study</li> <li>A list of standardised exam documentation will be made available to help raise teacher awareness and encourage use</li> <li>Further work will be done to align procedures and documentation including common stationery and training programmes across the Examination Awarding Bodies</li> <li>Further streamlining will be considered in 2004 and beyond, including the co-ordination of programmes of visits by Examination Awarding Bodies to schools to inspect the arrangements for the administration of examinations</li> </ul>	<p>December 2004</p> <p>September 2003</p> <p>December 2003</p> <p>January 2004</p>



<p><b>Examination Awarding Bodies – paperwork</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination Awarding Bodies will adopt the Information Classification System making it easier for schools to access and process information</li> <li>• A pilot project will be undertaken to explore the expansion of electronic communications and dispatch of exam materials</li> <li>• Examination Awarding Bodies will adopt the use of potted summaries for all specifications and specification guides</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003</p> <p>August 2003 (onwards)</p> <p>September 2003</p>
<p><b>Annotation of Coursework Marksheets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers will be provided with sample annotated coursework mark sheets to prevent unnecessary time in producing excessive annotation</li> <li>• A review will be undertaken to decide whether current annotation specifications can be briefer and more targeted without jeopardising the integrity of assessment</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003</p> <p>September 2003</p>
<p><b>Statements of Entry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will have the option to receive statements of entry in electronic format from all Examination Awarding Bodies and have a choice about receiving paper copies</li> <li>• A training event will be held to provide examination officers with further support and advice on statements of entry</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003</p> <p>September – December 2003</p>
<p><b>Examination Clashes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To simplify the process of identifying possible exam clashes, a composite alphabetical list of all examinations will be produced, including dates from individual and common timetables</li> <li>• The provisional timetable will be sent to schools in plenty of time – the provisional summer timetable will be sent by September the preceding year with a final one in November</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003</p> <p>From September 2003</p>
<p><b>Delays in receiving examination papers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination Awarding Bodies will be required to demonstrate that suitable systems and processes are in place to deliver papers to schools no later than one week before the examination date</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003</p>
<p><b>Special consideration and arrangements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will only be required to complete one form for special consideration for candidates with all Examination Awarding Bodies, following a pilot</li> <li>• In addition, the same will apply for special arrangements</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003</p> <p>January 2004</p>
<p><b>AS/A2 reported grades</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will be consulted on the format in which they would prefer to receive information on unit marks and grades</li> <li>• Any actions arising from the consultation to lessen the burden on teachers will be agreed and implemented</li> </ul>	<p>July 2003</p> <p>September 2003 (onwards)</p>
<p><b>AS/A2 declining of grades</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will be able to decline grades electronically, reducing the time spent completing paper copies</li> </ul>	<p>January 2004</p>



<b>Raising standards</b>	
<p><b>Excellence in Cities – monitoring requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will no longer be required to submit data that has already been provided as part of the Pupil Level Annual Census (PLASC) – Pupil Level Forms will be pre-populated</li> <li>Schools will be able to access and send Pupil Data forms in either hard copy (paper) or electronic (disc) format</li> <li>School Surveys will be re-structured to make them more user-friendly for schools to complete</li> <li>The adoption of on-line questionnaires and electronic transmission of data will be used for future programmes</li> </ul>	<p>November 2002 (completed)</p> <p>November 2002 (completed)</p> <p>November 2002 (completed)</p> <p>November 2002 (completed)</p>
<p><b>Excellence in Cities – extending status of schools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will no longer be required to submit a detailed delivery plan for continued funding of EIC status</li> </ul>	<p>September 2002 (onwards)</p>
<p><b>Specialist Schools application procedure – guidance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will be provided with a flowchart of the application process, making it easier for schools to complete</li> <li>Schools will be provided with a summary version of all future guidance to ensure ease of reference</li> </ul>	<p>May 2003</p> <p>May 2003 (onwards)</p>
<p><b>Specialist Schools – application form:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments will be sought from head teachers and other stakeholders to discuss how the application form could be re-structured to make its completion easier</li> <li>A pilot will explore a number of options to reduce the length of the application form</li> </ul>	<p>January 2003 (onwards)</p> <p>May 2003</p>
<p><b>Specialist Schools – documentation accompanying the application form:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will no longer be required to submit information already available in the public domain or held centrally</li> <li>Schools will no longer be required to submit duplicate copies of documentation with their specialist school application form</li> </ul>	<p>April 2003</p> <p>October 2003 competition onwards</p>
<p><b>Specialist Schools – private sector sponsorship:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will be able to access a partnership fund where efforts to secure the required sponsorship have not proved successful</li> </ul>	<p>October 2003 (onwards)</p>
<p><b>Specialist Schools – re-application procedure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eligible schools will no longer be required to complete the full application form or to submit a school development plan if reapplying for a second or third time</li> <li>A simplified procedure for schools reapplying for the first time will be evaluated through a pilot scheme</li> </ul>	<p>September 2002 (completed)</p> <p>From 2003 re-designations</p>
<p><b>Specialist Schools – transparency of process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will also be able to access information and examples of good and poor application forms to provide transparency into the selection of specialist school status</li> </ul>	<p>May 2003</p>



<b>Communicating with Schools</b>	
<p><b>Volume of documentation received by schools from LEAs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEAs will have access to case studies of ways to communicate more effectively with schools</li> <li>• The Local Government Association will run workshops and seminars to promote effective communication with schools</li> </ul>	<p>September 2002 (completed)</p> <p>September 2003</p>
<p><b>Length of guidance and documentation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will receive more streamlined documentation from DfES, with reduced number of mailings, fewer lengthy documents and more use of summary versions</li> <li>• The DfES will develop plans for an enhanced e-mail alternative to paper-based mailings to schools/on-line ordering facility</li> <li>• The DfES will use the results from surveys of parents, head teachers, governors, teachers and support staff to further improve its communications to schools</li> </ul>	<p>January 2003 (onwards)</p> <p>May 2003 (onwards)</p> <p>February 2003 (onwards)</p>
<p><b>Electronic communication:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools and LEAs will be able to find information quickly and easily through improvements made on the DfES sponsored web-sites including development of a new site map, quality assurance of new material and enhanced search facility</li> </ul>	<p>March 2003 (onwards)</p>
<p><b>Electronic communication – schemes of work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers will find it easier to locate schemes of work through the re-designed Standards web-site</li> <li>• The content of the Standards web-site will also be enhanced to provide adaptable 'ready made' schemes of work</li> <li>• Teachers will be able to access material to use in their schemes of work from newly-created Curriculum On-line web-site</li> </ul>	<p>March 2003</p> <p>July 2003</p> <p>January 2003 (completed)</p>
<b>Statistics and Information Management</b>	
<p><b>Volume and duplication of requests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DfES Star Chamber will drive forward a strategic data rationalisation programme across all relevant agencies and organisations, providing regular reports to the new Implementation Review Unit</li> <li>• A protocol on data management will be agreed with key agencies to ensure that school surveys and their timings are rationalised following a systematic mapping exercise</li> <li>• Key agencies (e.g. Ofsted / QCA) will be provided with appropriate access to other databases or data sets to further reduce the demands on schools to provide the data directly</li> </ul>	<p>January 2003 (completed)</p> <p>May 2003</p> <p>October 2002 (onwards)</p>
<p><b>Information and Communication Technology – software compatibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DfES will review the effectiveness of the existing agreement on software compatibility with commercial suppliers, with a view to improving the transfer of data within and between schools</li> <li>• Schools will be able to contact the DfES Information Management Team for direct advice on resolving software problems</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003</p> <p>January 2003 (ongoing)</p>



<b>Information and Communications Technology – software support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools' concerns about software support will be addressed through a review of helpdesk standards provided by LEA support teams and software suppliers and subsequent improvements made</li> <li>Schools will benefit from the development of standards for ICT training and accreditation for support staff</li> <li>DfES and LGA will work jointly to improve information available and regional workshops will be held for LEAs to enable them to provide schools with the latest ICT advice</li> </ul>	March 2004
	September 2003
	October 2002 (ongoing)

<b>Interface with other Departments and Agencies</b>	
<b>Learning &amp; Skills Council – communication and consultation with schools:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reduce the amount of paperwork and guidance received by schools, summary versions will be used wherever possible</li> <li>To avoid duplicated material being sent to schools, DfES and LSC will issue joint (not separate) guidance wherever possible (e.g. September Pupil Count)</li> <li>A review of the methods of consultation will be conducted to ensure that unnecessary burdens are not placed on schools</li> </ul>	September 2002 (onwards)
	September 2003
	September 2002 (onwards)
<b>Learning &amp; Skills Council – data collection:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A pilot will be conducted to determine whether data required by the LSC can be collected through existing data sources such as PLASC</li> <li>A 'Memorandum of Understanding' between the LSC and LGA will further reduce bureaucracy and minimise data requests to schools</li> </ul>	December 2003
	January 2003 (completed)

<b>New Opportunities Fund – funded training:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review of the ICT training provided to teachers will identify how future training initiatives can be improved including the consideration of revised accreditation procedures for contracted training providers</li> </ul>	April 2004
<b>New Opportunities Fund – application forms and monitoring:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The type of data requested on application and monitoring forms will be reviewed every three months to ensure that unnecessary information is not being requested from schools</li> <li>Schools will experience a reduced input to application and monitoring forms following pre-population of data held centrally</li> <li>The use of sampling as an alternative to the annual monitoring exercise will be piloted for the Out Of School Hours Learning Programme and if successful, will be used for all NOF-funded programmes</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	October 2002 (onwards)
	April 2003 (onwards)
<b>New Opportunities Fund – guidance:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future guidance will be tested in advance by a sample of teachers to ensure it is simple and accessible</li> <li>A 'reader box' highlighting key information such as target audience and deadlines, will make it easier for schools to sift and process paperwork quickly</li> </ul>	October 2002 (onwards)
	October 2002 (completed)



<p><b>Ofsted – over preparation for inspection by schools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will not be asked for any additional information or particular type of lesson planning by inspectors. This will be clearly stated in the new framework document sent to schools</li> <li>Inspection teams will comment in their report where schools demonstrate onerous lesson planning resulting in a barrier to effective management and school improvement</li> </ul>	<p>September 2003</p> <p>September 2003</p>
<p><b>Ofsted – monitoring and training of inspectors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will better understand how to express an opinion on the performance of inspectors through the wider publication of Ofsted's quality assurance procedures</li> </ul>	<p>August 2003</p>
<p><b>Ofsted – inspection reports:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The timescale for uploading final inspection reports on the web-site will be reviewed, drawing on the opinions of the key stakeholders, including schools</li> </ul>	<p>April 2003</p>
<p><b>Ofsted – Enforcement Concordat:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Enforcement Concordat will be adopted to ensure that the inspection service remains effective and responsive to schools</li> </ul>	<p>December 2002 (completed)</p>

<p><b>Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All contractors who manage the national data collection process will be provided with training to ensure that they meet the QCA's customer service standards to provide a consistent service to schools</li> <li>To ensure a quick and efficient response to enquiries, all QCA staff will receive customer service training specifically related to enquiries received via the telephone</li> <li>A communications policy will be implemented across QCA to improve navigation through the QCA web-site thus enabling schools to identify particular information more easily</li> </ul>	<p>September 2002 (completed)</p> <p>March 2003</p> <p>April 2003</p>
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<b>Staffing issues</b>	
<p><b>Security vetting procedures for school staff – guidance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation surrounding disclosure applications have been changed to ensure that the system is clearer and more concise for schools</li> <li>To ensure a more coherent 'joined-up' approach, the CRB web-site will include hyperlinks to the relevant DfES web-sites to assist them in completing application forms for new teachers</li> <li>Schools will be given more support through the checking process, through guidance highlighting a 'risk assessment' approach to checking volunteers</li> </ul>	<p>December 2002 (completed)</p> <p>February 2003 (ongoing)</p> <p>December 2002 (completed)</p>
<p><b>Security vetting procedures for school staff – application procedure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The need for paper copies of identify documentation will, in most cases, reduce through the establishment of links with the United Kingdom Passport Service and will considerably speed up the process.</li> <li>The CRB will consider extending links with Agencies and Government Departments, further easing the burden on school staff</li> <li>A review of the current application form will be undertaken to make it easier and simpler for school staff to complete</li> <li>All Registered Bodies (including LEAs) will receive a video outlining the application process in a bid to make it more transparent</li> <li>Registered Bodies will be able to contact a designated Registered Body Support Team to help with individual problems</li> </ul>	<p>May 2003</p> <p>2004/05</p> <p>September 2003</p> <p>January 2003 (completed)</p> <p>October 2002 (completed)</p>



<p><b>Security vetting procedures for school staff – methods of application for <i>Disclosure</i>:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A series of campaigns will be run to promote effective completion of application forms and the different methods for applying</li> <li>• School staff will be able to use a web-based application channel for those wishing to apply over the Internet for security clearance</li> </ul>	<p>November 2002 (on-going)</p> <p>September 2003</p>
<p><b>Performance Threshold – application procedures and verification of performance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers will benefit from a number of improvements to the third (and current) round of Performance Threshold</li> <li>• Threshold Round 4 will be streamlined and simplified following a review of the process</li> </ul>	<p>September 2002 (completed)</p> <p>July 2003</p>



# INTRODUCTION

## School Paperwork and Teacher Workload

The Government is committed to an ambitious programme of investment and reform to raise standards of achievement for pupils. Releasing the energy and talent of the school workforce is central to this agenda and any burdens holding them back should be removed. This report aims to go some way to achieve this and is the second of its type in the schools sector.

The Regulatory Impact Unit's Public Sector Team in the Cabinet Office undertook its first study in 2000 with the then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and with front-line members of school staff, aimed at reducing unnecessary paperwork. This focussed mainly on primary schools although some issues subsequently impacted on the secondary school system. The report outlined 19 agreed changes to be made to lighten the paperwork placed on schools.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) subsequently commissioned *PricewaterhouseCoopers* to conduct a wider, independent review aimed at identifying the main factors in determining teacher workload and to develop an action programme to eliminate excessive burdens. Its recommendations fed into a report by the School Teachers' Review Body and informed recent discussions leading to the national agreement signed by Government, employers and the school workforce unions on raising standards and tackling workload.

The RIU's Public Sector Team were asked to conduct a further study in collaboration with the DfES, investigating in more detail particular areas of red tape and bureaucracy as identified in the *PricewaterhouseCoopers* report and identifying further areas that required consideration. The remainder of the report outlines burdens as identified by front-line staff as being onerous. The removal and reduction of 125 burdens will go some way towards ensuring that teacher workload is reduced and clearing the way for raising educational standards within schools.





## Analysing the Burdens – Methodology

The key objectives were to:

- **Investigate the burdens placed on schools in the examination and assessment arena particularly by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and Examination Awarding Bodies**

Section 3 of the *PricewaterhouseCoopers* report found that secondary school teachers spend 6.4 hours each week marking pupil work, including examinations and tests. The project looked at the bureaucracy associated with the requirements imposed on schools by QCA and the examination awarding boards and sought to reduce them.

- **Improve the role of government, agencies and governing bodies**

Schools are exposed to a number of Government departments and agencies all of which place demands and burdens on staff. The project sought to highlight additional work placed on schools, to remove duplicative demands imposed by internal and external bodies and to ensure that departmental/agency cross working was effective.

- **Evaluate the implementation of changes outlined in the initial schools paperwork report**

The measures outlined in the first *'Making a Difference'* report were re-visited to inform the progress made.<sup>1</sup>

A series of face-to-face interviews with approximately 500 front-line members of staff were undertaken including head teachers, teachers, other school staff and Local Education Authorities. The schools and LEAs chosen were representative in terms of geography, size and type of the education system in England. From this initial research, over 100 issues were identified as being burdensome and creating a burden on staff. These were then prioritised according to the impact of removing or simplifying that particular burden. The remaining issues not covered by this report will be taken forward separately by ongoing work within the DfES.

To ensure that the Team had specialist advice a Schools Advisory Panel was set up to provide ongoing advice and support. This consisted of the main stakeholders where change to procedures and processes was mainly negotiated. In addition, links with schools and LEAs were maintained along with those schools who contacted the Team separately via correspondence.

For further information on the Advisory Panel and its participants, refer to Annex 2<sup>2</sup>. A comprehensive list of all schools and Local Education Authorities visited and stakeholders consulted can also be found at Annex 2. The Public Sector Team's role is outlined in more detail in Annex 4<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Annex 1: pages 67 – 70 provide a summary of the implementation progress from the first report.

<sup>2</sup> Annex 2: pages 71 – 73

<sup>3</sup> Annex 4: pages 77 – 79



## REDUCING RED TAPE AND BUREAUCRACY

The Public Sector Team's (PST) second report seeks to deliver 125 specific outcomes, each described in this chapter. Although some of the burdens identified by schools have been simplified or removed, it will take longer for a significant change in the way that authorities, organisations and teachers themselves view school management processes. The new Implementation Review Unit will have a major role to play in promoting that wider change.

The outcomes and achievements recorded in this report fall into three categories:

- The removal of a restrictive rule, revision of guidance or simplification of a process.

*E.g. Pre-populating New Opportunities Fund application and monitoring forms to lessen the burden on school staff.*

- An agreement with, or commitment from, the relevant stakeholders or 'process owners' to remove a restriction, change guidance, or simplify a process.

*E.g. Removing the need for schools to send duplicate copies of the required documentation to accompany the specialist school application form.*

- An agreement or commitment to conduct a review of a process or pilot a new way of working prior to implementing an improved solution nation-wide.

*E.g. A commitment to evaluating the pilot e-registration project with a view to extending funding to further schools.*

Steps have been taken to both reduce the instances schools are approached to provide information and to minimise bureaucratic procedures and red tape that school encounter during their working day. The Team has worked directly with stakeholders to deliver changes through obtaining a series of firm commitments with relevant Government Departments and Agencies. All the changes identified should result in tangible differences to schools.

The remainder of this section outlines the various issues highlighted as an unnecessary burden on schools and teachers and the associated outcomes and agreements negotiated to reduce or remove involvement of schools. The report focuses on 125 outcomes around the following subject areas:

- Pupil Management Issues
- Special Education Needs (SEN)
- Assessments and Examinations
- Raising Standards
- Communicating with Schools
- Statistics and Information Management
- Interface with other Departments and Agencies
- Staffing Issues



## Pupil Management Issues

### Admissions

The admission of pupils to secondary schools in England is decided at a local level. The admission authority for each school deals with applications – normally this will be the Local Education Authority (LEA), but in the case of Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools, the school governing body has responsibility for admissions.

Parents have the right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel against an Admission Authority's decision to refuse admission of their child to a preferred school. Governing bodies of voluntary controlled and community schools also have the right to appeal against LEA decisions where children permanently excluded from two or more previous schools are allocated to their school, but this is infrequently used.

#### *Admissions Procedures*

Schools voiced concerns that current admissions and appeals procedures are both time-consuming and confusing, placing burdens on school staff. Particular concerns were expressed about poor communication between schools and LEAs about admissions procedures.

#### **Action: Schools will benefit from new co-ordinated admission and appeals arrangements**

LEAs will act as a 'clearing house' for all applications, including those for voluntary aided and foundation schools, through the adoption of a co-ordinated admissions scheme. Admission authorities, including governing bodies of foundation and voluntary aided schools, will still be able to apply their own criteria to decide which child is eligible for a place. However, the LEA will be responsible for applying the agreed scheme and issuing a single offer of a place to parents. This means that parents will only need to complete one 'common' application form for any school they wish to apply to before sending it to the LEA – **September 2005**.

#### *Guidance and information*

Statutory guidance on school admissions is set out in the School Admissions Code of Practice and the School Admission Appeals Code of Practice. Admission authorities (LEAs and governing bodies of Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools) and independent admission appeal panels must have regard to the guidance in the Codes. Some schools access these documents for reference purposes – this is often time-consuming as the Codes are lengthy and guidance can be complicated to understand. Whilst the main source of information on local admissions arrangements should be the LEA, schools have expressed the wish for a simple guide to understanding the admissions process and how the system works. This will also indirectly benefit parents, as schools will have sufficient knowledge to advise them of who to contact should they mistakenly phone the schools about admissions.



**Action: Schools will benefit from tailored guidance on the admissions and appeals process**

A simple timetable of the key dates around admissions and flowcharts of the relevant processes will be made available electronically to schools. This will help head teachers and other school staff to understand the processes involved in the context of a national framework without having to access the lengthy Codes of Practice. This simple 'guidance' will be publicised widely through mediums such as the A-Z of School Leadership, Spectrum and Teacher magazines and through the appropriate representative bodies – **March 2003**.

*On-line Admissions*

Current admissions systems mean that schools and LEAs spend a considerable amount of time entering data on computer systems, or collating data manually. The administrative burden would be considerably reduced by an electronic admissions system, which allows parents to input applications on-line and transmit them directly to the LEA. Online admissions will also allow parents to download information from schools' web-sites, saving them and schools time.

At the moment less than 20 LEAs offer some form of online admissions. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has identified admissions as one of its national projects to share £29 million e-enabling funding over the next two years as part of the national strategy for local e-government.

**Action: ODPM will work with DfES to support Local Education Authorities develop a national electronic admissions system**

ODPM is currently supporting a pilot project to improve electronic admissions procedures including a standard on-line application form and a facility to transmit on-line application forms directly to Admissions Authorities. The project will be piloted by a number of LEAs led by Hertfordshire and the London Borough of Wandsworth in partnership with DfES, Office of the e-Envoy and the private sector. Following the start of the pilots in September 2003, an expanded programme will be implemented in other LEAs **from September 2004 onwards**. A nation-wide rollout of an on-line admissions system will be implemented for admissions in **September 2005**.

**Common Transfer Forms and Files**

When pupils transfer from one school to another, it is important that all relevant information about the pupil is passed onto the new school. For example, when pupils transfer from primary school to secondary school at the age of 11, the secondary school will require basic pupil data such as a pupil's Unique Pupil Number (UPN), surname, date of birth, and Special Educational Needs together with teacher assessment and test information. This data enables schools to allocate resources, place pupils in the most appropriate classes and meet any specific needs.



Prior to June 2002, schools were required to manually complete a common transfer form for each pupil within 15 days of a pupil leaving school. An electronic Common Transfer File has subsequently replaced this paper form under revised regulations. This new system allows information to be transferred electronically between different schools, and between schools and Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Exchanging pupil records electronically is more efficient and focuses teachers on maintaining progression when pupils move between schools, especially from primary to secondary. When children move between these stages the initial transfer of data is undertaken in February, followed by the Key Stage 2 data when it becomes available in the summer. Electronic data handling also helps save time and effort, streamlining activities such as record keeping and report writing by teachers.

#### *Common Transfer Files – Information Capture*

Efforts to retrieve pupil information not passed on by a former school can be very time consuming for schools and Local Education Authorities (LEAs). This may involve numerous telephone calls to the previous school often ending in failure with the information 'lost' within the education system.

**Action: Schools will have access to the key information about transferring pupils even when this is not passed on by their former school**

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) will introduce alternative sources of information should the common transfer file not arrive in the new school:

- (i) A secure School-to-School data transfer web-site (S2S) will allow Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to access archived pupil data or information on academic statistics (as part of the National Pupil Database) and enable them to download it in a form that the school can then enter directly onto its management information system. Many LEAs will adopt it as the normal way to send common transfer files. A particular advantage of this system for LEAs is the production of automatic file copies and statistics on pupil movements – **October 2002 (completed)**.
- (ii) The 'lost pupil database' web-site will allow LEAs to securely retrieve information about pupils who move into a school without any previous information being provided by parents/carers, and help schools ensure that relevant information is available for managing pupil learning effectively. The LEA of the receiving school will be able to search this site for a common transfer file matching the name, date of birth and gender of the pupil – **October 2002 (completed)**.

#### *Common Transfer Files – Timely Data Transfer*

Information on pupils moving schools is needed by the recipient school before the end of each summer term (i.e. July) in order to give sufficient time to prepare fully for the new academic year. In many regions, this happens most frequently when pupils move from primary to secondary school at the end of year 6 after they have completed Key Stage 2 assessments and tests. Basic pupil data can be transferred from primary to secondary schools from the beginning of February each year but this does not include Key Stage 2 data.



The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is currently unable to release this data in electronic format before August. The delay is often due to the process of validating data to 100%. The only way secondary schools can currently obtain KS2 data by July therefore, is through paper copies of the mark sheets used by primary schools or if primary schools key in the data themselves. The late arrival of this information creates burdens and stress within the receiving school. Schools need the data before July so they can make appropriate plans according to the learning needs of the new intake of pupils in the autumn.

**Action: Schools and Local Education Authorities will receive electronic Key Stage 2 (KS2) data in July each year**

- (i) The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and DfES will provide unvalidated Key Stage 2 data to LEAs for schools to use as a rough guide of academic levels of the new pupils joining secondary schools (Year 7 intake) – **June/July 2003**.
- (ii) In addition, QCA is committed to ensuring that Key Stage 2 data is made available to LEAs (and schools) in an electronic format by each July. They will work with their new contractors to undertake a feasibility study to consider a number of potential IT solutions in **Autumn 2003** with a view to implementing a preferred solution by **July 2004**.

*Common Transfer Files – Electronic Transfer*

The ability of a school to transfer data electronically depends upon the availability of suitable software. In the past, some schools have completed Common Transfer Forms manually because their software was incompatible with that of other schools, creating additional work.

**Action: Schools will be able to transfer data more easily and quickly in an electronic format**

Electronic transfer of information will benefit teachers, as information will be transferred quicker, allowing teachers to manage the learning of their new pupils more effectively.

- (i) The common transfer file has been upgraded to allow secure transferral of pupil data electronically between all schools. These file formats have been tested to establish that they are compatible with school management information systems provided by different software suppliers. The updated version holds 63 data items including SEN stage, medical information, assessment information and previous schools and contact information, reducing the separate paperwork needed on these issues – **June 2002 (completed)**.
- (ii) Improvements to the LEA and Schools Information Service (LEASIS) and the launch of Edubase (the register of educational establishments) now allow schools faster access to information needed when pupils transfer schools and enable data to be checked and amended using the S2S web-site – **September 2002 (completed)**.



### *Common Transfer Files – Guidance and training*

With the introduction of the new electronic Common Transfer system, it is important that school staff are provided with appropriate guidance notes on the process and how to use the systems provided. It is also critical to provide appropriate training for staff when needed.

#### **Action: School staff will be given comprehensive guidance and training, before using the electronic Common Transfer File system**

(i) To help schools adapt to the new electronic system, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has produced a standard training package and associated information pack for all Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools on:

- how to create a common transfer file;
- how to transfer the file using the School to School Secure Data Transfer web-site;
- how to import the file.

These training notes were sent to LEAs, and backed up with a number of presentations for LEAs to explain the new system. They are also accessible on the TeacherNet web-site at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/ctf](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/ctf) – **June 2002 (completed)**.

(ii) The DfES and Local Government Association will jointly promote information to schools through a number of mediums including conferences – **from October 2002 (ongoing)**.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Under the Education Act 1996, schools and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) are required to ensure that pupil attendance is monitored regularly and that parents/guardians are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised. In addition, schools and LEAs are working towards the Public Service Agreement target of reducing truancy by 10% by 2004 (compared to 2002), sustaining the new lower level and improving overall attendance levels thereafter. Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for ensuring their children receive a suitable education and it is the duty of the LEA to make certain that parents meet those responsibilities. They provide an important link between the schools and families. Schools are therefore required to inform the LEA if a pupil consistently fails to attend regularly and must ensure that school attendance statistics are reported regularly to the LEA.

Whilst schools recognise the importance of monitoring attendance, especially in the wider context of reducing truancy levels and ensuring pupils' safety, some have expressed concern over the time-consuming process involved in monitoring, recording and chasing unauthorised absences.

### *Recording attendance*

Schools are required to take a register of pupil attendance twice a day – once in the morning and once in the afternoon. This is often done through the use of paper-based registers that need to be retained for three years. Absences are recorded as authorised or unauthorised.



Some schools have found procedures for monitoring attendance to be onerous and time-consuming, particularly where such manual recording systems are used. Additional time is also taken to identify which pupils are absent and to determine the reason for this or the pupils' whereabouts. Whilst the use of an e-registration system will minimise the impact of monitoring, checking and analysing data, this is a long-term solution and the current administrative burden on those schools without such systems should not be ignored.

**Action: Schools will be provided with additional support and information to allow more effective chasing and monitoring of unauthorised absences**

(i) Additional attendance advisors will provide a more comprehensive support service to LEAs to share good practice and to raise attendance levels. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is enhancing its advisory capacity by recruiting 8 additional advisors to work with individual LEAs and schools – **March 2003**.

(ii) DfES will also introduce a number of additional measures as part of the wider Behaviour and Attendance Strategy. These include:

- An 'Improving Behaviour and Attendance' web-site to disseminate information and good practice – **January 2003 (completed)**;
- A revised guidance package on behaviour and attendance setting out clear responsibilities of schools and LEAs in monitoring attendance and detailing clear systems for dealing with non attendance – **April 2003**.
- Behaviour and attendance management training for all secondary schools (see pg. 24 for more details) – **from September 2003**.

By reducing truancy the Strategy will also reduce the work associated with dealing with it.

(iii) As part of the national agreement on school workforce reform signed in January 2003, changes will be made to the School Teacher's Pay and Conditions Document to make clear that teachers should not be required to undertake administrative and clerical tasks, including specifically chasing absences. Significant additional resources back this agreement to enable schools to recruit at least 50,000 extra support staff over the lifetime of this Parliament<sup>4</sup>. Contractual changes will take effect from the beginning of the new academic year – **September 2003**.

*Recording attendance – electronic registration*

In an attempt to reduce the amount of paperwork and time spent chasing unauthorised absences, electronic registration systems are being introduced into schools. However, these systems are often expensive for schools to invest in and more traditional paper-based systems are used instead (see previous section). In a drive to tackle truancy, 527 secondary schools experiencing unauthorised

<sup>4</sup> By summer 2006





absences rates of 1% or more above the national average, have been allocated £11.25 million Capital Modernisation funding through DfES until 2004 for the purchase of systems and associated training. In addition, further funding is being made available from this year for new or enhanced electronic registration systems in schools as an element of the Behaviour Improvement Programme involving 34 LEAs and police forces.

#### **Action: Schools will benefit from continued developments in e-registration**

DfES is considering the extension of electronic registration systems to secondary schools. The two-year e-registration project, due for completion in March 2004, will be evaluated to determine the success of individual e-registration systems and associated processes in schools. Should this evaluation find that a significant improvement has been made, consideration will be given to continuing the project through further funding to assist more schools to purchase such systems – **March 2004 onwards.**

#### *Local Education Authority Monitoring*

Schools are required to monitor absences and truancy regularly and record details as part of their information management systems. LEAs additionally have a responsibility to enforce attendance and therefore request regular attendance returns, sometimes on a weekly basis. Submitting attendance data to LEAs may require more time and effort on the part of schools that do not have e-registration, and is particularly burdensome for those schools who do not have high levels of truancy.

#### **Action: LEAs will be provided with clearer guidance on the regularity of attendance data required from schools with an emphasis on earned autonomy for those schools who have low truancy rates**

(i) Building on the notion of earned autonomy, LEAs role in collecting attendance data will be clarified emphasising the need to take account of individual school's circumstances. This will avoid the previous 'blanket approach' to data monitoring and will subsequently reduce the collection of such data from some schools – **April 2003.**

(ii) The DfES will also begin work with the Local Government Association on a joint awareness campaign that will highlight the key messages of the revised guidance on recording and monitoring of attendance. This will help to ensure that the implementation of attendance monitoring is effective at the same as minimising burdens on schools – **from April 2003.**

### **Exclusions**

Exclusions are used in response to one or more serious breaches of school discipline and/or where effective teaching and learning in school is jeopardised. Under the Education Act 2002, only the head teacher has the power to exclude a pupil for a fixed period or permanently. Fixed period and permanent exclusions of pupils from school have important social implications for the school and surrounding community. Truancy and school exclusion have been linked to a rise in street crime and other anti-social behaviour.



During the current (2002/03) school year, £50 million is being distributed to 34 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) with the highest levels of street crime and truancy to fund Behaviour Improvement Projects (BIPs) providing intensive support for targeted schools and their pupils. BIPs comprise a package of measures, including support for individual pupils at risk of exclusion from key workers such as Learning Mentors and Connexions Personal Advisers and from multi-agency Behaviour and Education Support Teams (including social and health care professionals). Funding for BIPs will be extended to many more areas over the next three years, covering 61 LEAs (including all Excellence in Cities LEAs) and 89 Excellence Clusters by 2005. Reducing the number of exclusions will be a key objective of every BIP.

#### *Managing the exclusions process*

The procedure for excluding a pupil can be time-consuming and burdensome and schools have raised concerns over the management of the procedure. For example, staff are required to record all relevant facts relating to incidents, generating a time-consuming paper exercise. There has also been some confusion over the latest state of the legislation and the accompanying Government guidance, which in turn has placed added burdens on schools and their internal management systems.

#### **Action: Schools will receive training for all staff on managing behaviour (including exclusions) which will reinforce core messages in revised guidance**

- (i) The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is currently developing a programme of training for all secondary school staff on managing behaviour, including the exclusion process. This will focus on the implementation of effective policies for behaviour and attendance management and will enhance the confidence and ability of school staff to deal with issues as and when they do arise. The training will be delivered through an enhanced Key Stage 3 Strategy with funding available for three years thereafter – **September 2003 onwards**.
- (ii) DfES published new guidance on exclusions in January 2003. As well as covering changes in the law, it provides clear guidance on the whole exclusion process and roles and responsibilities as well as model documentation for schools. The Department is also developing more general guidance on whole-school approaches to managing behaviour and attendance. Its core messages will be reinforced by the behaviour management training outlined in (i) above – **April 2003**.

#### *Process involved in exclusions – the Discipline Committee*

A discipline committee (made up of 3 or 5 members) must review all permanent (and some fixed period) exclusions and decide whether reinstatement is appropriate. Previously, committees were required to automatically review all fixed period exclusions of pupils totalling more than 5 school days in any one term. This requirement led to a large amount of administration, which was time and resource consuming.



**Action: Legislation governing the Discipline Committee will be changed thus easing the administrative burden of discipline meetings for governors, head teachers and teaching staff**

Under regulations made under the Education Act 2002, the requirement for discipline committees to review all fixed period exclusions of more than 5 school days in total in any one term has been removed. Instead, committees will only be required to review fixed period exclusions of more than 15 school days in total in any one term. This will result in fewer meetings and subsequently less bureaucratic burdens on governing bodies and head teachers – **January 2003 (completed)**.

*Process involved in excluding a pupil from school – appeals*

Appeals against permanent exclusions can be made by parents/guardians of the excluded pupil. They are made to an independent appeal panel established by, but independent of, the LEA. Statistics show that for the school year 2000/01 32% of appeals were decided in the parent's favour, some of which were overturned on a technicality.

**Action: Regulations governing independent appeal panels will require panels to balance the rights of the excluded pupil against the rights of all the other members of the school community**

Under the Education Act 2002, regulations governing independent appeals panel have been made including the requirements that the Panel:

- Does not reinstate an excluded pupil on technicalities
- Includes a head teacher and an experienced school governor
- Is always chaired by the lay member
- Considers the needs of the whole school community when reaching a decision on reinstatement.

As a result of the above, it is expected that there will be better quality decision making by panels. – **January 2003 (completed)**.

### **Annual reporting to parents**

Under The Education (Pupil) (Information) (England) Regulations 2000, a head teacher is required to send a written report to parents on their child's performance once during the school year. All pupil reports must provide information on:

- The pupil's general progress;
- The pupil's progress in all subjects and activities studied;
- The pupil's attendance record;
- Arrangements for parents to discuss the report with a teacher at school.



Although the regulations stipulate the minimum content and frequency of reporting requirements, the format and layout are at the discretion of the school. Many schools produce an A4 side per subject and often an additional side by the form tutor/Head of Year. As there is no standard electronic proforma or forms for pre-population, reports are often hand-written or typed, a time-consuming and burdensome process for teachers.

**Action: Schools will be provided with easier means to produce annual pupil reports at all Key Stages**

The process for assessment and reporting arrangements will be made simpler for schools and teachers and will lessen the time consuming burden of completing paper-based reports including:

- (i) Electronic exemplar forms on recording teacher assessment levels, school results and national results will be developed in Word format. This will allow schools to transfer information more easily from school information management systems – **March 2003**.
- (ii) Schools will have access to electronic sample reports and adaptable proformas across all the Key Stages from TeacherNet ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/reports](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/reports)) with links to the QCA web-site ([www.qca.org.uk/ca/tests/?fp\\_clk](http://www.qca.org.uk/ca/tests/?fp_clk)). Teachers will be able to download the appropriate report style for use within their own schools – **March 2003 (ongoing)**.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) Assessment and Reporting Arrangements booklets across Key Stages 1 – 3 and guidance on Key Stage 4 will be altered to reflect these changes.



## Special Education Needs (SEN)

Local Education Authorities (LEAs) hold the ultimate responsibility for the education of students in their region and are responsible for identifying, assessing and arranging provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The SEN Code of Practice provides LEAs with a statutory framework that allows a reasonable degree of flexibility. This results in a variety of working practices across the country and consequently varying levels of efficiency. Perhaps the best example of this is the statutory assessment process leading to a statement of special educational needs.

Pupils are statemented by the LEA where they are judged to have needs that require support in addition to that which mainstream schools in their area can ordinarily provide. A Statement of SEN sets out the pupil's special educational needs and the provision required to meet the needs. Such a decision is based on specialist advice obtained from schools, parents, educational psychologists, health and social services professionals as part of the statutory assessment. For most pupils, and in consultation with parents and the pupil, an individual education plan is devised setting out the teaching and learning strategies for the pupil. Statements are reviewed annually and new targets are set.

In a mainstream school, organisation of all the necessary meetings and associated paperwork falls mainly to the school-based Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). The SENCO has the day-to day co-ordinating role to ensure that school's SEN policy is delivered. Different schools and LEAs operate different systems and although all SENCOs have a heavy workload, the element of burden can differ considerably between them.

SENCOs organise liaison with outside professionals in a variety of ways dependent on the needs of the pupils and the particular organisation of the school. Some have regular meetings throughout the year with educational psychologists and health professionals. Other schools organise annual review meetings in blocks, where outside professionals consider several students at the same time. Similarly, individual education plans for pupils with statements can be devised directly from the same sheet of paper on which specialists' comments are written, whilst in other schools, the individual education plan is a second or third generation document from the minutes of the specialists' visits.

Special Education Needs (SEN) software is available to schools and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) from a range of specialist software companies and is intended to save SENCOs' time. However, schools have indicated that there can be difficulties when trying to transfer data electronically; schools are then required to produce manual reports for LEAs removing any time advantage the software offers – see page 52 for information on software compatibility.



**Action: Schools will be better supported for dealing with Special Education Needs issues**

- (i) The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is developing a new SEN Action Programme that will set out the Government's vision for supporting special educational needs and the action that will be taken centrally to help achieve it. The Action Programme will cover six broad strands: early intervention, raising attainment, inclusion access and the role of special schools, multi-agency working, monitoring and accountability and transition – **October 2003**.
- (ii) As part of the SEN Action Programme, DfES will undertake an investigation of the reasons behind the wide variation between LEAs in the proportion of pupils with statements. This exercise will aim to reveal how effective partnerships between schools, LEAs, parents and children have been successful in reducing their reliance on statements and thereby reducing the associated paper and workload – **October 2003**.
- (iii) Training opportunities for SENCOs will be clearly identified as a major theme within the SEN Standards Fund category for 2003-2004. Through this, grant support will be made available to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools, providing SENCOs with opportunities to build on their skills and working practices – **April 2003**.
- (iv) Funding for SEN Regional Partnerships will be extended to 2006. In addition a National Advisor was appointed in April 2002 to facilitate the sharing of ideas and support. The Partnerships play a leading role in promoting inter-LEA and multi-agency collaboration on a range of SEN and, increasingly, wider inclusion issues whilst promoting best practice. A series of conferences will be held to discuss issues of common interest and to improve the working practices between SENCOs and representatives from other sectors with whom they most frequently and closely liaise – **November 2002 onwards**.
- (v) Ofsted will undertake a wider review of the impact of the new Codes of Practice on schools taking into consideration the findings of the DfES investigation (above), and will highlight any problem areas for improvement – **March 2004**.



## Assessments and Examinations

### National Curriculum Tests

All school pupils in maintained schools and in many independent schools undergo National Curriculum Tests and Assessments. The tests are administered by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and are taken by pupils at age 7 (Key Stage 1), 11 (Key Stage 2) and 14 (Key Stage 3). The associated procedures and processes are in need of streamlining - they are often paper based and time consuming for schools. Secondary schools have highlighted some specific issues creating unnecessary burdens relating to Key Stage 3, though some of these apply to also to Key Stage 2.

#### *Key Stages 2 and 3 tests and paperwork*

The administrative procedures related to National Curriculum tests need to be improved. Currently this process is paper-based and entering this information, or extracting it once it has been entered, is a predominantly manual process resulting in considerable amounts of time being spent by teachers and markers in completing forms. For example, the mark sheets list the pupils alphabetically regardless of their tier group, whereas for ease of administration the examinations are sat in tier groups. This means that school staff need to collate the collected examination papers in alphabetical order prior to returning them to the QCA agency to be marked. This process is onerous for teachers and school administration staff alike.

#### **Action: Schools will be able to send and receive more test-related information electronically**

- (i) The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) will refine its methods of data collection for pupil registration and test orders to enable the use of web-based rather than paper returns. Schools will be able to send pupil registration details directly from their school information management systems to a secure QCA web-site – **September 2002 (ongoing)**.
- (ii) The design and extent of paperwork and paper procedures in National Curriculum Assessments will be reviewed with a view to reduce significantly the paperwork involved. This will be considered as part of a feasibility study on improvements to the delivery of Key Stage 2 data – **December 2003**.
- (iii) In addition, research has begun to develop a full electronic system running from the point of pupil registration to the delivery of results. Initially, this system will incorporate data from the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) and will negate the need to request pupil level data from schools separately. A pilot involving 30% of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) will investigate whether information in the DC2 (pupil registrations and test orders) can be gathered from PLASC, negating the need to request pupil level data from schools separately – **September 2002 ongoing**. If successful, the system will be extended to all LEAs from **September 2003**.



### *Accuracy of marking – Key Stage 3*

The accuracy of the marking of National Curriculum tests has sometimes been inconsistent, leading to the need for teachers to check papers. This problem is mainly associated with Key Stage 3 English marking. Schools are able to make a request for scripts to be reviewed, a process that has at times resulted in the return of papers for remarking with whole year groups being affected. When this occurs teachers spend additional time and effort double-checking test papers.

#### **Action: Markers will be subject to a more comprehensive checking procedure resulting in more accurate marking**

- (i) The marking of KS3 English papers will be subject to more rigorous monitoring. All markers will be required to submit two samples of their marking to supervisors for checking and up to 60% of markers will be required to submit three samples of their work. Supervisors are being trained to provide clear instructions on corrective action to be taken where marking is not accurate. In addition those working in marking centres will have their work monitored on a daily basis and QCA will increase the number of these marking centres – **May 2003**.
- (ii) Through the analysis of school performance data, QCA will identify areas of inconsistencies from the norm which may be a result of poor marking. Such schools will be identified at the sampling stage and all their scripts re-checked to ensure consistency – **June 2003**.





## Key Stage 4 and post compulsory education

Pupils at Key Stage 4 (between the ages of 14-16) follow the National Curriculum and generally take GCSEs. Some take other national qualifications particularly in vocational subjects. At the end of compulsory education, students may continue in full-time education, move into work-based training or otherwise into employment. Many of those in full-time education will take A levels (comprising AS and A2). The remainder of this section focuses on GCSEs and A-levels. These are administered by five individual Examination Awarding Bodies in England, (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), Oxford and Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) and Edexcel Foundation) in Wales (Welsh Joint Education Committee) and Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment). Together they form the Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCGQ).

Following last summer's events, the former Chief Inspector of Schools, Mike Tomlinson, conducted an independent Inquiry into A-level standards publishing a final report in December 2002. Action to address his recommendations is underway. The findings of his Inquiry and the issues summarised in this report are consistent and many of the outcomes outlined over the next couple of pages are in line with his recommendations.

**NB: It should be noted that whilst the focus of this report is on schools, colleges will have similar experiences and will therefore benefit from all the actions outlined in this section.**

### *Quality Assurance*

Schools all have different experiences of dealing with Examination Awarding Bodies – some of these are good, some are not. In order to provide some level of consistency and to ensure that the service provided to schools is continuously improved, part of the QCA's role is to monitor, check and assess the service provided (by the English Examination Awarding Bodies), a point strongly made in Mike Tomlinson's report into A-level standards. As part of this process, Examination Awarding Bodies will now be subject to the scrutiny of performance indicators (PIs) through the QCA. This year, for the first time, Examination Awarding Bodies' customer service, in its broadest sense, will be monitored and assessed through seven PIs as outlined below:

**Issue of results:** the percentage of results against entries issued to centres on the agreed publication date.

**Enquiries about results:** the percentage of priority enquiries where the outcome is notified to centres within 30 days of receipt

**Despatch of question papers:** the percentage of examination papers despatched in time to be received by centres at least one week before the timetabled date of the examination.

**Errata:** where examination question papers are found to be incorrect, the percentage where an erratum was issued before the day of the timetabled examination date will be considered.



**Access to scripts:** for General Certificate of Education and Vocational Certificate of Education, the percentage of photocopies of scripts despatched in time to reach schools or private candidates no later than 10 days before the closing date for enquiries about results.

**Appeals:** the percentage of cases where appellants are informed of the outcomes of formal appeals hearings within 10 weeks of the lodging of the initial request, and, the percentage of appeals on summer examinations completed by 14 February the following year.

**Responding to queries:** the percentage of queries and complaints from centres answered within 10 working days. ('Answered' is a full response or where a time-scale for the reply is given together with a reference number and named contact).

These PIs are designed to measure the Examination Awarding Bodies' performance in all aspects of customer service and to highlight areas that need further improvement. The new Code of Practice in 2002/3 for GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE and General National Vocational Qualifications affords QCA a greater authority over Examination Awarding Bodies in England to ensure that such improvements are implemented.

**Action: Examination Awarding Bodies will be subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures resulting in schools receiving a consistent and high quality service**

- (i) QCA will monitor Examination Awarding Bodies through the use of performance indicator (PI) data on a yearly basis. This data will be made available to the public on the QCA web-site ([www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)) in September each year – **September 2003 (ongoing)**.
- (ii) Where PI data shows an under-performance, QCA will further work with Examination Awarding Bodies to develop an action programme to ensure that improvements are made. This will be monitored and scrutinised. Typically, initial action programmes will be developed in September and then completed in November – **September 2003 (ongoing)**.
- (iii) QCA will establish an Examinations Task Force to improve the delivery of examinations in 2003 and beyond. The programme of work will consider the more strategic elements of an examination process including the use of marking centres, the potential benefits of proposals like a system of chartered examiners and the use of competent post-graduates as markers. Their work will be supported by an Examinations team that will receive independent advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers consultants – **October 2002 (ongoing)**.
- (iv) In addition, QCA will establish an Examinations Process Group to monitor the performance of Examination Awarding Bodies at an operational level, including examiner recruitment, the processing of examinations scripts and the delivery of results. The group will meet regularly to consider data submitted by Examination Awarding Bodies, which will enable QCA to act on any problems as they arise. This work will be co-ordinated with QCA's other quality assurance and examination standards monitoring – **January 2003 (ongoing)**.



### *Examination Awarding Bodies – customer service*

Teachers and schools examination officers regularly contact the Examination Awarding Bodies with queries. The standard of customer service received has been variable and, at times, sub-standard – calls are not always returned; the correct official can be hard to locate; and enquiries are not always processed quickly. Teachers and examination officers often need a query resolved quickly and any delay adds to their workload unnecessarily.

#### **Action: Schools will be able to contact relevant Examination Awarding Body staff more easily**

Schools will benefit from a number of initiatives being undertaken within individual Examination Awarding Bodies to improve the customer service offered to schools. These include:

#### **AQA**

- (i) A new “Who’s Who” contacts database listing all staff and their responsibilities will be available through its internal intranet. This will enable AQA staff to quickly identify the correct person to deal with an individual enquiry allowing schools to access the right information quickly – **June 2002 (completed)**.
- (ii) New software will be introduced to allow telephone enquiries to be logged and monitored. This will make AQA’s service more responsive as staff dealing with queries will be able to find out about other recent communications with the school and with which member(s) of AQA staff. The new system will also provide better management information to heads of departments about the volume and nature of calls so that appropriate measures, such as amending the responses to FAQs on the web-site, can be made – **May 2003**.

#### **Edexcel**

- (iii) A new telephone call centre has recently been introduced to improve the efficiency and resolve enquiries. The aim is for the majority of queries to be resolved by trained staff at the call centre with the remainder being resolved within five working days with a log number being assigned to the school. The number of call centre staff will be varied according to anticipated demand – **November 2002 (completed)**.
- (iv) A new web-site will enable teachers to better locate and use information. The site has been completely restructured and new features added such as a home-page for each qualification and notice-board area for each subject and service. In addition, an Extranet for schools will allow interactive transactions for online registrations, entries amendments, marks capture, results and post results services – **April 2003 (ongoing)**.
- (v) In addition, an advanced Customer Relations Management System will be piloted, including the use of e-mail and SMS text messaging to respond to enquiries as well as the use of Portable Data technology to keep in touch with home and regionally based staff. This would enhance the response speed and accuracy of enquiries and would keep schools updated with the latest information – **September 2003 (ongoing)**.



## OCR

- (vi) A new web-site will be launched to improve school access to information. This will also include the opportunity for teachers to discuss subject curriculum issues and to share good practice on-line – **November 2002 (completed)**.

## Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

- (vii) In addition to initiatives being undertaken by Examination Awarding Bodies, QCA will review the performance indicator (PI) data collected from them, with the view of extending these to cover specific aspects of customer service. Examination Awarding Bodies will be monitored and assessed against these and where improvements are necessary, an action programme will be drawn up – **December 2003**.

### *Lack of consistency or standardisation of administrative procedures across Examination Awarding Bodies*

Examination Awarding Bodies all follow different procedures for aspects of the same qualification process. For example, coursework moderation arrangements, coursework forms and examination entry documentation are different for each Examination Awarding Body. Teachers and school examination officers must therefore prepare and deliver paperwork in two or three different ways for the same process. This is both inefficient and frustrating. The Tomlinson Independent Inquiry into A-level Standards in December 2002 highlighted this issue. It recommended that action should be taken to eliminate unjustified differences in administrative practices.

Some uniform procedures and documentation do already exist across the Examination Awarding Bodies – for example, *Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations and the Regulations* (available on [www.jcgq.org.uk](http://www.jcgq.org.uk) under Publications and Common Documentation) relating to candidates requiring special arrangements and special consideration. More could be done to widen knowledge of the extent of standardisation that exists.

### **Action: Schools will have one point of reference for common documentation**

- (i) QCA will propose to Examination Awarding Bodies that they develop a standardised entries and results system. This will enable school examination officers to input and retrieve candidate data from one point rather than several for each different Examination Awarding Body, making the administration of entries and results less burdensome and time consuming – QCA will propose that this new system be implemented by **December 2004**, depending on the outcomes of feasibility studies and full analysis of the risks associated with such a change across all three countries in the common qualifications system. Feasibility studies will begin by **Autumn 2003**.
- (ii) In order to raise teacher awareness, a list of common documentation will be posted on the JCGQ and individual Examination Awarding Body web-sites and will be sent to schools every September. This will increase the awareness of the range of standardised documentation available and will encourage schools to use it – **September 2003 onwards**.



(iii) To supplement the existing common documentation, JCGQ and the QCA Examinations Task Force will work with Examination Awarding Bodies to align procedures and documentation further such as:

- the design and use of common stationery;
- encouraging centres to nominate a contact during school/college closure;
- common training programme for examination officers.

The above issues will be considered and implemented by **December 2003**.

(iv) Further streamlining will be considered in 2004 and beyond. This may include common software across Examination Awarding Bodies and the co-ordination of their programmes of visits to schools to inspect the arrangements for the administration of examinations **January 2004**.

#### *Paperwork from Examination Awarding Bodies*

Examination Awarding Bodies contribute to the large volume of paperwork schools receive through, for example, syllabi, guidance and instructions. Additionally, information is sometimes sent that bears no relevance to courses being offered by the school – for example, paperwork relating to languages not being taught. It is time consuming for teachers to sift through paperwork and schools have requested that only relevant information is sent to them to reduce this burden.

#### **Action: Schools will only receive documentation in user friendly formats**

- (i) Schools will be able to access and process information from Examination Awarding Bodies more easily through the adoption of the Information Classification System (ICS). This tool consists of a 'Readerbox' which highlights key information for the reader, like the target audience, main actions and deadlines. Information about ICS can be found at the following web-site:  
[www.e-envoy.gov.uk/oeo/oeo.nsf/sections/guidelines-ics/\\$file/ics-principles.htm](http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/oeo/oeo.nsf/sections/guidelines-ics/$file/ics-principles.htm)  
– **September 2003**.
- (ii) The use of electronic communications will be explored further through consultation with schools as part of a pilot run by the JCGQ with the view to extending this nation-wide  
– **August 2003 onwards**.
- (iii) Examination Awarding Bodies will additionally adopt the use of potted summaries for all specifications and specification guides. These summaries, analogous to detailed contents pages, should enable teachers to pin point information within documents more quickly and easily – **September 2003**.



### *Annotation of coursework*

An increasing number of qualification awards include a coursework component. These are often marked by candidates' teachers. The large quantity of coursework makes this a lengthy process and it is increased by the requirements to make annotations on the covering mark sheets relating to candidates' work to support their marking decisions. Teachers have reported it hard to determine the level of annotation required by the Examination Awarding Bodies and many do too much unnecessarily. The Tomlinson report on A-level standards also acknowledged problems associated with marking and coursework.

#### **Action: Schools will be provided with sample annotated coursework mark sheets**

- (i) Examination Awarding Bodies will provide sample annotated coursework mark sheets for teachers. These should help to clarify annotation requirements for teachers and prevent them from wasting time through excessive and unnecessary annotation – **September 2003**.
- (ii) The Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCGQ) will co-ordinate a review on a specification by specification basis during the academic year 2002/03 to decide whether the annotations required for particular specifications can be briefer or more targeted to save teacher time. Where these do not jeopardise the integrity of the assessment, the changes will be made in time for the 2004 examinations – **September 2003**.

### *Statements of entry*

Examination Awarding Bodies send schools statements of entry to confirm that candidates have been entered for particular examinations. The statements are sent in hard copy and also sometimes in electronic forms. Each candidate can receive multiple statements covering all their subjects, and sometimes, duplicate copies are also sent to the teachers. In addition, school examination officers receive a summary sheet comprising the information from all the statements of entry.

Some schools welcome paper statements of entry and use them to check that the entries are correct. Others feel more confident to rely on their own electronic entry records and would prefer to receive just the summary sheet. For them, the unwanted paper statements of entry are a nuisance and add to the general paperwork burden. Currently, only one Examination Awarding Body offers schools the option to receive or decline paper statements of entry.

#### **Action: Schools will be able to opt out of receiving any paper statements of entry**

- (i) Schools will receive statements of entry in electronic form only, if they prefer. School examination officers will be given the choice to opt into receiving paper copies at the point of entry registration – **September 2003**.
- (ii) School examination officers will be provided with further support and advice regarding statements of entry through a joint training event held by the Examination Awarding Bodies – **September – December 2003**.



### *Examination clashes*

The Examination Awarding Bodies produce common timetables for the January and summer examinations. These are informed by entry patterns, data on candidates' combinations of subjects and examination clashes from the previous year, as well as by comments from Teachers' Associations and individual schools and colleges. Both the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCGQ) are involved in timetabling of examinations and set aside days for particular subject areas – for example, all GCSE Geography Examinations are set on the same days. In addition, Examination Awarding Bodies develop their own timetables for specifications that are not included on the common timetable, highlighting those examinations that are Examination Awarding Body specific for example, Classical Greek and Bengali.

The incidences of clashes between GCSE and GNVQ examinations in particular have increased in recent years. Those candidates experiencing clashes require extra supervision, as they sit examinations before or after their fellow candidates do so. This is often provided by teachers. Some candidates have to be supervised at teachers' houses overnight which impacts on time and resources. Whilst improvements have been made since 2001, such as reduction in the incidence of clashes of AS examinations, schools have expressed the wish to have additional time to comment on the examination timetable to avoid wherever possible, the clashes that may exist.

#### **Action: Schools will have a longer opportunity to comment on the draft examination timetable**

- (i) The Joint Council of General Qualifications (JCGQ) will produce a composite alphabetical list of all Examination Awarding Body examinations. The list will comprise of all examinations from both the common timetable and individual Examination Awarding Body timetables with a list of corresponding times and dates in alphabetical order per Examination Awarding Body. This will simplify the process of pinpointing a particular examination and identifying possible clashes – **September 2003.**
- (ii) Schools will receive the composite timetable in sufficient time. QCA and Examination Awarding Bodies will ensure that the provisional timetable for the summer series of examinations will be sent to schools for comment in the preceding September each year, with the final one arriving in November. Similar periods of notice will be observed for the January examinations. This will allow sufficient time for schools to comment and make any necessary arrangements – **from September 2003.**



#### *Delays in receiving examination papers*

Each year some schools experience delays in receiving examination question and answer papers. This is partly due to the high number of late examination entries made. However, Examination Awarding Bodies are not always able to ensure that papers are sent in good time resulting in school examination officers chasing Examination Awarding Bodies at the last minute to establish the whereabouts of missing papers.

#### **Action: There will be fewer delays in the delivery of examination papers**

QCA will require Examination Awarding Bodies to demonstrate that they have suitable systems and processes in place to deliver examination papers to schools no later than one week before the timetabled date of the examination. This complements the performance indicator on despatch of question papers, which can be seen on page 31. QCA will monitor each Examination Awarding Body's system, and will indicate where corrective action is necessary – **September 2003**.

#### *Special consideration and special arrangements*

Candidate's sitting examinations or other assessments are eligible for special consideration if they have a temporary illness, or if an injury or indisposition affects them. They are compensated for the resulting difficulties and circumstances through an extension of time within the examination or through other appropriate means.

To apply for temporary special consideration, teachers must complete a form on the candidate's behalf explaining the problem and naming the examination affected. Currently, one form has to be used for each examination/assessment affected. This means that teachers can be required to complete several, almost identical, forms where many examination/assessments are affected. This process is duplicative and unnecessarily time-consuming.

Candidates with special needs or a long-term illness can also apply for special arrangements if standard assessment arrangements present an unnecessary barrier to their performance. They will be eligible for special arrangements if these barriers can be removed without affecting the validity of assessment pupils. For example, a visually impaired pupil may be able to use Braille versions of question papers. The main application form for special arrangements allows teachers to list all the affected examinations/assessments for each Examination Awarding Body rather than just for each assessment but this is still duplicative and time consuming if more than one Examination Awarding Body is involved.





**Action: Schools will be required to complete only one form for special consideration or special arrangements of pupils for all the Examination Awarding Bodies**

- (i) Examination Awarding Bodies will undertake a pilot through the JCGQ whereby teachers will only be required to complete a single Special Consideration form listing all the affected examinations/assessments for short-term or temporary conditions. Schools will need to make photocopies of this to send to each individual Examination Awarding Body, who in turn will make arrangements for the examinations they administer. The pilot will run in conjunction with examinations in **June 2003**. If successful, full roll-out of the system will follow in the next academic year – **September 2003**.
- (ii) Examination Awarding Bodies will undertake a similar pilot for special arrangement forms for long-term conditions whereby teachers will be able to list all the affected examinations/assessments for all Examination Awarding Bodies. Schools will make photocopies of the one form and send them to the Examination Awarding Bodies to make appropriate arrangements. The JCGQ will undertake the pilot on behalf of Examination Awarding Bodies – **September 2003**. If successful, full roll-out of the system will follow from – **January 2004**.

*AS/A2 reported grades*

The AS and A2 parts of the A level comprise three units each. These are completed over an advanced course of study, which is typically two years. Unit marks count towards final award grades. Currently, not every Examination Awarding Body issues a grade and a mark for individual units taken; some only provide a mark making it difficult for candidates to ascertain their level of achievement in terms of a grade structure. This ultimately means that schools have to convert marks manually into a grade with the help of a printed conversion table which is a lengthy process, especially when whole year groups are considered.

This process may be affected by the outcomes of an ongoing review on the rules for cashing in AS units. Currently, candidates must 'cash-in' their units in order to make them count towards their AS or A-level grade. The rules governing this process are complicated and following the Tomlinson Report recommendations, a review is considering whether they can be simplified.

**Action: Schools will be consulted on the format in which they would prefer to receive information on unit marks and grades**

The Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCGQ) will consult school examination officers who will have the opportunity to express their concerns and needs **by July 2003**. Decisions on action to be taken will be informed by this exercise and also by information provided to the QCA and Examination Awarding Bodies through the Examinations Officers Association – **September 2003**.



### *AS/A2 declining of grades*

Candidates are able to decline AS or A2 grades and retake one or more of the composite units in order to try and improve their overall grade. Up until this current academic year (2002/03) this involved the completion of one form per decline per candidate.

A new common form has subsequently been introduced providing the opportunity to enter declines for more than one candidate, and for more than one decline per candidate. However, this form only allows for up to 10 declines in total per form and is available only in paper copy. The number of candidates declining grades, particularly at AS level is rising – for example, last year there were instances where whole year groups declined grades for the same specification. This created an onerous form-filling exercise for teachers and cumulatively took up a lot of teacher time.

**Action: Schools will no longer be required to complete the declining grades in paper copy**

The form JCGQ/DECL used to decline grades, will be available electronically allowing as many decline entries as necessary to be made provided they are all for the same Examination Awarding Body. This will reduce the time teachers spend form filling and will reduce significantly the amount of paperwork involved in the process – **January 2004.**



## Raising Standards

### Excellence in Cities

The Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative was introduced by the Government in 1999 to tackle a unique set of problems that hold back pupil's educational achievements in urban schools. Through a package of seven key policy strands, the initiative tackles truancy, behaviour and social exclusion at the same time as supporting curriculum development. EiC provides new resources to help pupils overcome barriers to learning and tackle disruption, thus allowing teachers to focus on teaching and helping pupils learn

#### *Monitoring Requirements*

The Excellence in Cities Evaluation Consortium won a competitive bid in 2000 to carry out a national evaluation of EiC on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Schools are invited to take part in the evaluation, and those that agree, receive survey forms to complete. Although this information is only requested from one pupil year group, participating schools spend a considerable amount of time collecting data for the completion of Pupil Data Forms and Evaluation of Excellence Initiatives Surveys. These are submitted to the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to evaluate. In addition, schools are also asked to distribute and collect 'You and Your School' questionnaires from every pupil in a year group.

#### **Action: Monitoring exercises will be simplified to make it easier for schools to complete**

NFER and DfES will further reduce the burden on schools, through simplifying the monitoring procedure.

- (i) Data provided by schools as part of the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) will no longer be requested on Pupil Data Forms – **from November 2002 (completed)**.
- (ii) Pupil Level Forms will be pre-populated with biographical information such as name, date of birth and Unique Pupil Number, and English fluency data for schools which completed Pupil Data Forms last year – **for Spring 2003 evaluation onwards (ongoing)**.
- (iii) Schools will be able to access and send the Pupil Data Forms and information in either hard copy (paper) or electronic (disc) formats – **from November 2002 (completed)**.
- (iv) School Surveys will be restructured to make them more user-friendly. For example, finance related questions will be grouped together since they are likely to be answered by the same person – **November 2002 (completed)**.
- (v) The use of on-line questionnaires and electronic transmission of data for future evaluation programmes will be considered by the DfES and NFER for adoption – **from November 2002 (completed)**.



### *Extending Excellence in Cities status of schools*

EiC partnerships were required to produce substantial delivery plans at the onset of the three year programme in 1999. Schools, as constituent members of the partnerships, became involved in detailed discussions and planning. Although partnerships and schools are keen to remain within the programme, they have expressed concern about the potential burdens that this might involve.

#### **Action: Partnerships will not be required to provide a full scale delivery plan for continued funding of their Excellence in Cities (EiC) status**

A procedure for the continuation of EiC partnerships, following the initial three-year funding period, has been recently simplified. Partnerships will no longer be required to submit a delivery plan as before – a brief summary assessing the impact of EiC and setting out the ways in which the programme will be progressed over the following two or three years will now be sufficient. It is expected that each policy strand is no more than 250 words making this process shorter than previously. Under this ‘light-touch’ approach, the planning burden on schools will be reduced – **September 2002 onwards (ongoing)**.

### **Specialist Schools**

Since 1994, the Specialist Schools Programme has been a part of the Government’s strategy to raise educational standards and broaden diversity in secondary schools. Although Specialist Schools are still required to deliver the National Curriculum, extra resources enable them to have a special focus on one or two subject areas. They also have the responsibility of sharing good practice and expertise with other local secondary schools within a named ‘family of schools’, in the interest of better quality teaching for pupils across the board. Schools designated as specialist schools will over four years typically receive an additional £600,000. The Specialist Schools Trust (SST), a registered educational charity, supports the Government in delivery of the Programme whilst the Youth Sport Trust (YST) has a parallel role in relation to Sports Colleges.

The Government recently announced a major expansion of Specialist Schools in “A New Specialist School System: Transforming Secondary Education”<sup>5</sup>. The number is expected to increase to at least 2,000 by 2006, compared with the current total of 992. Streamlining procedures is therefore all the more important.

#### *Application Procedure – Guidance*

Currently, the guidance explaining how schools can apply for Specialist School status is 42 pages long (excluding annexes). Available in hardcopy and electronic versions, this guide is accompanied by further guides for specific types of Specialist School, for example, Sports Colleges and Language Colleges. Schools have voiced concerns over the difficulty and time taken to identify the relevant guidance to their specific school, and find it hard to identify the most important parts.

<sup>5</sup> This document can be accessed at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/makingadiff/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/makingadiff/)



**Action: Schools will be able to access simple reference guidance quickly**

- (i) To aid schools in accessing data quickly and easily, a flowchart of the application process will be produced. This will outline the stages from application to award and will be available electronically at [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools) and incorporated into revised guidance – **May 2003**.
- (ii) In addition, a short (4-5 pages) summary version of future Specialist School guidance will be made available to schools – **May 2003 onwards**.

*Application Form*

Schools are required to complete a 52 page application form to apply for Specialist status including a School and Community Development Plan (see below for further information). Concern has been expressed that too much time is spent locating relevant information and completing the application form.

**Action: Specialist School application forms will be reduced in size**

- (i) The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is currently reviewing information requested on the Specialist School application form. A pilot, which started in September 2002, is exploring a number of options to reduce the form length including pre-populating parts of the application and removing questions which will be made redundant by the National Pupil Database. Following this, a final decision on streamlining application forms will be taken – **May 2003**.
- (ii) As part of this review the department will consult widely to ensure that the application form is re-structured in a more user-friendly manner for schools to complete. This will include seeking views from both SST and YST, in the light of their close contact with schools, and through a series of focus groups of head teachers – **from January 2003 (ongoing)**.

*Documentation accompanying the application form*

Schools applying to become Specialist Schools are required to submit the following paperwork to the DfES:

- 5 copies of the application form;
- 2 copies of letters from other schools and partners involved;
- 2 copies of the current school prospectus;
- 2 copies of the latest Governors report to parents;
- 2 copies of the latest Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) Report;
- 2 copies of a plan of the school and location map;
- 2 copies of letters of support from LEA;
- 3 copies of their capital project plans.

Such duplication places an unacceptable burden on schools and much of the information requested is already available within the public sphere.



**Action: Schools will no longer be required to send duplicate copies of information**

- (i) Schools will only be asked to send one paper copy and one e-mailed copy (or on disc) of the required paperwork with their application form for Specialist School status and revised guidance will reflect this. The Specialist School application form will also be revised with a view to making it easier to complete electronically – May 2003 guidance **effective from October 2003 competition.**
- (ii) Where information is held centrally, schools will only be asked for this where it is not easily accessible. For example, paper copies of the Ofsted report will only be requested if this is unavailable on the public web-site. To ensure that schools are burdened as little as possible, Ofsted will review the time-scale required for uploading final inspection reports on their web-site drawing on the opinions of the key stakeholders including schools – **April 2003.**

*Private Sector Sponsorship*

In order to secure Specialist School status, schools with more than 500 pupils are requested to raise unconditional private sector sponsorship. Currently this figure stands at a minimum of £50,000. Many schools see this as a considerable barrier to achieving Specialist School status, as sponsorship is hard to secure.

**Action: Schools will be given more assistance to raise private sector sponsorship necessary to apply for Specialist School Status**

In order to assist schools, which, in spite of real efforts, have not been able to raise the required sponsorship, DfES has launched a partnership fund of £3 million with SST. The fund will be administered by SST and will be available to schools applying for specialist designation from **October 2003 onwards.**

*Specialist School Re-Application Procedure*

Specialist School status is awarded for an initial period of four years, after which schools must submit a further application. Some schools have expressed concern that the re-application procedure is almost as onerous as the original application itself.

**Action: A simplified procedure will be introduced for schools reapplying for Specialist School status**

- (i) DfES has recently introduced a simplified procedure for schools reapplying for Specialist Status for the second or third time, having demonstrated a sustained improvement in standards. The revised application form for renewals is 50% shorter than the initial application form, and no longer requires schools to submit a school development plan – **September 2002 (completed).**
- (ii) DfES will also investigate introducing a simplified application procedure for schools reapplying for the first time. A pilot scheme will be established to ascertain whether this would provide the information required by the DfES – **2003 applications for re-designation.**



### *Transparency of the Specialist School process*

Some schools applying for Specialist Schools Status perceive there to be a lack of transparency in the initial application process and in securing the award. Schools have expressed the wish to know what constitutes a good application, why previous applications have been turned down and what practices should be avoided.

Examples of best practice are already available in guidance located on the SST web-site. This also provides information about SST's Bidding Support Centre that helps schools with their applications.

#### **Action: Schools will receive clearer advice through examples of best practice to make the process more transparent and clear**

In order to make the process more open and transparent to schools, examples of previous good and bad application forms will be made available. This will include

- What constitutes a good or bad application form;
- A brief on-line summary, giving examples of bad practice in previous applications;
- What schools should avoid when preparing application forms.

These will supplement existing advice for schools wishing to apply for specialist school status, available at the following address: [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools) – **May 2003 onwards.**



## Communicating with Schools

Schools receive communication from a variety of different sources; for example, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA), Examination Awarding Bodies, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Local Education Authorities (LEAs). It is essential that schools receive effective and targeted information in a form that is easy to use and understand.

### **Volume of documentation received by schools**

The volume of documentation received by schools weekly is large and important documents can get misplaced and actions 'lost'. Head teachers in particular find the volume of documentation received onerous and time is often lost in determining what needs to be done or who the document needs to be passed to for information.

The Department has recognised that the volume of documentation schools receive is a problem and it has put a number of safeguards in place to reduce the volumes of paper it sends. In Autumn 1999, a 'Gateway' was established to centrally register and monitor the volume of documentation sent to schools from DfES, and to ensure that documentation is timely, relevant and not duplicated.

The DfES has also looked to improve the effectiveness of both electronic and paper-based communications. Documents have been more clearly formatted and signposted. The framework of document classification developed by the DfES helped inform the Information Classification System (ICS) which was agreed as part of the previous *'Making a Difference: Reducing School Paperwork'* report published in December 2000.

To tackle the volume of documentation originating from LEAs, DfES has produced a LEA/School Communications Code of Practice that gives statutory guidance to LEAs on maintaining effective relationships with schools. This includes, for example, the requirements to:

- Control and monitor the volume, length and quality of documentation sent to schools;
- Ensure that material sent to schools by DfES and other external organisations is not duplicated;
- Adopt the information classification system that the Department operates (as outlined above).





**Action: Methods of communication between LEAs and schools will be improved to facilitate the smooth transfer of documentation**

- (i) DfES in conjunction with the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA), has extended the 'Education and Young People' toolkit to include a section on LEA/Schools communication. This was launched on the I&DeA web-site in early September 2002, and contains case studies from selected local education authorities and highlights different ways to communicate effectively with schools. The toolkit includes key literature such as the Code of Practice on LEA-School relations and information on the Information Classification System, the latter of which will be adopted during **September 2002 (completed)**.
- (ii) Workshops/seminars, designed to compliment the I&DEA toolkit will also be held by the Local Government Association (LGA) as part of their educational policy meetings with LEAs in Autumn 2003. Effective communication will continue to be an on-going theme in LGA educational bulletins – **September 2003**.

### Length of guidance and documentation

Guidance and documentation distributed to schools is often lengthy in size and onerous to read. Head teachers and their staff have little time to read lengthy documents, which impinge on both teacher time and administrative capacity. In the past guidance has often been produced in isolation without adequate consultation resulting in documentation not being tailored for a school audience. In an attempt to improve this some LEAs provide a 'potted' version of the guidance or information, often duplicating information that has already been distributed to schools from central agencies. This sometimes creates confusion within schools and adds to the volume of documentation received.

**Action: Schools will receive more streamlined and tailored documentation and guidance**

- (i) In the short term, DfES will aim to cut mailings to schools by 50% in 2002-2003, building on significant reductions achieved last year. Fewer lengthy documents (i.e. over 16 pages) will be sent and more use made of summary versions or articles in regular DfES publications such as Spectrum or Teachers magazine. The full document will still be accessible to those schools which require further information through several mediums including the TeacherNet website and from DfES publications phone line – **January 2003 (ongoing)**.
- (ii) Additionally, DfES will develop appropriate channels to provide information, support and best practice in the most accessible and user-friendly format. For example, plans for an enhanced e-mail alternative to paper mailings will be developed, with a view to being able to end all paper-based mailings to schools. This will include the development of an on-line ordering facility enabling schools to choose what documents they wish to receive and in what multiples. Clear plans will be developed by **May 2003** and launched as appropriate.
- (iii) DfES will publish the results of an opinion survey that measures the perception of parents, head teachers, teachers, governors and LEA staff. The results of these surveys will be used to help inform policy development and to shape future communications – **February 2002 (ongoing)**.



## Electronic communications

Communicating through the use of electronic means such as web sites is becoming increasingly important. The education field is no different and both schools and LEAs have increasingly been able to take advantage of new on-line education resources that have been developed over the past few years. Since March 2001 for example, 30 teacher web sites, have been incorporated into TeacherNet, a single web site for teachers and other school staff.

Whilst schools welcome up-to-date information being readily available, there has been apprehension amongst some teachers about using such resources. Some of this concern stems from a lack of familiarity but in some cases is founded on bad experiences of being unable to find the right information quickly. School staff find information hard to track down and spend unnecessary time trying to navigate web-sites to access essential data. Due to the time constraints that teachers face within a school environment, paper copies are often favoured over electronic sources as they are deemed to be quicker to access.

### Action: Schools and LEAs will be able to obtain information quickly and easily through improvements made to DfES sponsored web-sites

In order to make DfES sponsored web-sites easier to use, a series of further improvements will be made, including;

- Adopting common editorial standards and enhanced quality assurance arrangements across the DfES, Standards Site and TeacherNet web-sites – **March 2003.**
- Upgrading the main DfES web-site through providing:
  - a new site map;
  - an improved site navigation system;
  - enhanced ‘gateways’ providing tailored information for particular users, including LEAs;
  - a ‘new user’ area; including tutorials on how to use the site, a ‘jargon buster’ glossary and ‘key question’ headings;
  - an improved electronic consultation service to enable users to access and respond to consultations online – **March 2003.**
- Launch of a more contemporary and user-friendly TeacherNet web-site and upgrading the Standards Site Schemes of Work in conjunction with QCA (see case study below) – **April 2003.**



### *Electronic Communications Case Study: Schemes of work*

Teachers are required to cover the national curriculum programmes of study. Typically, teachers produce schemes of work for each teaching subject outlining how the national curriculum will be covered over each of the school terms. Teachers must keep these schemes of work updated to ensure that new national curriculum initiatives (for example 'Citizenship') are incorporated into their teaching. This is also applicable for Key Stage 4.

Changing or updating schemes of work can be a lengthy process. 'Ready-made' versions produced by QCA are available to teachers via the Standards web-site ([www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/seu](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/seu)). There are links to this web-site from the National Curriculum Online web-site ([www.nc.uk.net](http://www.nc.uk.net)). Teachers can download and adapt content into their own schemes of work. For example, in Year 7, pupils are required to learn about the patterns and processes associated with earthquakes and volcanic activity—a full scheme of work covering this topic for 12 to 20 hours of teaching is available. Teachers however, find it difficult to locate these schemes of work due to the complicated structures of the five web-sites used by DfES and QCA to disseminate this information, resulting in a considerable amount of time being lost.

#### **Action: Teachers will find it easier to locate schemes of work resulting in time-savings**

- (i) Teachers will find it easier to locate the schemes of work through the re-designed Standards web-site ([www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes/)) saving considerable time and effort. Links will additionally be provided to this web-site from QCA and DfES's other web-sites – **March 2003**.
- (ii) The content of the Standards web-site will also be enhanced. In addition to 'ready-made' schemes of work, the site will include 32 examples of how these have been adapted to meet changes in the education agenda and to reflect the individual needs of pupils. These will provide teachers with ideas and tools to enhance their own schemes of work to provide an effective teaching programme to meet the needs of their own pupils – **July 2003**.
- (iii) The newly created Curriculum Online web-site ([www.curriculumonline.gov.uk](http://www.curriculumonline.gov.uk)) will additionally provide material for teachers to use in their schemes of work and will be linked to the Standards web-site – **January 2003 (completed)**.



## Statistics and Information Management

Schools need to be able to hold and transfer significant volumes of data. It is widely recognised that the analysis and use of this data at both local and national level can play an important role in supporting the drive to raise standards. However, schools often report that data collection and transfer is insufficiently co-ordinated and places unnecessary burdens on them.

A number of important initiatives have already been developed and progressed to ensure that problems experienced by schools are minimised. An overarching Information Management Strategy (IMS) was developed by the DfES in 2000 to improve school management and minimise burdens. Key partners include Ofsted, the Learning and Skills Council, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Teacher Training Agency. This has led to the progressive introduction of a Common Basic Dataset and the successful collection of electronically based pupil level data for the first time in the January 2002 Annual School Census. However, feedback from schools indicated there were continuing issues and still much to be done to rationalise data collection and make more effective use of information and communications technology. Issues about the transfer of data when pupils move schools are addressed in the earlier section about Common Transfer Files (pages 18 – 21).

### **Volume and duplication of requests**

Every January, an annual survey is conducted by the Department for Education and Skills (Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)). It collects information about the pupil and school under categories such as: Pupil, Post 16 Study, Class and Teachers, and is referenced using Unique Pupil Numbers (UPNs). The latter are allocated to each pupil when they first enter school and are used to track progress through school. The Common Basic Data Set (CBDS) defines sets of essential information, which can be transferred electronically between schools, education authorities and central agencies, and is the basis for collecting pupil level data as part of PLASC. This information is collected once and held centrally by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in order to give different users access to it e.g. the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and Local Education Authorities (LEAs).

In addition to PLASC data submitted to Local Education Authorities every January, schools are required to provide additional data throughout the year, either to their LEAs or to other external organisations, agencies or departments. These returns require an array of information ranging from teacher assessments to traveller attendance. Across the year a substantial amount of returns are requested, and the cumulative time spent by schools responding to them is considerable.

Schools also often receive duplicated requests for data that they have already provided as part of PLASC or another central data return. In theory, this duplication should not now occur – as the progressive implementation of the Common Basic Dataset allows information in the public domain to be transferred between different organisations to avoid schools providing the same information more than once. The Department for Education and Skills has recognised that the volume and duplication of data requests can place unnecessary burdens on schools and LEAs. In 1999 the Department introduced a vetting mechanism known as ‘Star Chamber’, that aims to minimise information and data collection demands made on schools and LEAs, by ensuring that only essential data, not already in the public sphere, is collected. The Star Chamber also assesses and monitors the impact of such data collection surveys on schools. Star Chamber includes representatives of the key agencies, which require data and information to be provided by schools and LEAs as well as a secondary school head teacher and a LEA representative.



**Action: Schools will no longer receive duplicated data requests through improved controls and enhanced data sharing**

- (i) Following a review of Star Chamber, its operations will be streamlined to strengthen its strategic role. The Star Chamber's remit will include:
- Monitoring of data requests from the Department for Education and Skills and external agencies. DfES will work more closely with external agencies and have a more strategic oversight of data collection to ease burdens on schools and LEAs.
  - Promoting joint data collections. DfES will encourage external agencies such as Ofsted, QCA, and LSC to participate in joint collections, therefore removing the burden of unnecessary duplication.
  - Driving forward a systematic and on-going review of the scope for further data rationalisation, making use of electronic data sharing. This will explore the possible use of a 'quality mark' system for schools to have the confidence to discard unnecessary or inappropriate requests for data.
- In addition to the above functional changes, the Star Chamber membership will be expanded to include a primary school head teacher, and a representative of the Audit Commission – **January 2003 (completed)**.
- (ii) The DfES is currently working with other key agencies and organisations to agree a strategy for improved data management across the schools sector including the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and LEAs. This systematic data mapping exercise will rationalise the number of school surveys and their timing. A protocol for data management will be agreed by **May 2003**.
- (iii) The DfES has already established, based on PLASC data, a new National Pupil Database providing a core of information consistent across all education authorities and schools, on pupil performance and factors affecting it. Other agencies, such as QCA and Ofsted will be provided with appropriate access to the database or data sets to reduce the demands on schools to provide data directly. This will substantially reduce the number of times that agencies and departments contact schools directly for data information – **from October 2002**.
- (iv) In terms of other data requests, LEAs will be encouraged to become the primary source of information, wherever possible, for authorised surveys by DfES or agencies. The DfES will also work with QCA, Ofsted, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and Connexions to agree ways of collecting data from LEAs rather than schools. To assist LEAs in undertaking this role, an additional £2 million has been allocated between them to support the development and improvement of their central management information systems in **2002/2003**. An early example of this working is the QCA pilot (pg. 20) whereby LEAs have registered for KS2 and KS3 tests using the PLASC data collected in January 2003, in place of individual registration by schools.
- (v) The School-to-School site (see pg. 19) will also be extended to incorporate data transfers with other central agencies, unitary bodies and the National Assembly for Wales – **June 2003**.



### **Information and Communication Technology – software compatibility**

Effective management information systems (MIS) make it easier for schools to collect, process, analyse and use information and to provide this to other organisations such as the DfES and Local Education Authorities. Advances in software require equivalent upgrades in hardware if schools are to take full advantage of the latest versions and initiatives. The Department made £30m available last year to ensure that all schools meet common standards, with a further £5m being allocated this year. Many schools however, still feel hampered by outdated and incompatible software making data entry and collection a burdensome process. For example, some schools report that they are unable to transfer information from software such as SIMS to more standard software such as Microsoft Excel.<sup>6</sup> Other schools have also experienced problems in producing data in the requested format for Local Education Authorities (LEAs), the Department and other agencies.

#### **Action: Schools will find it easier to transfer data electronically through a commitment to enhance software compatibility**

- (i) In December 2000, DfES established an Interoperability Agreement with software suppliers based on compatibility with the Common Basic Dataset and an agreed timetable for implementation. 32 software suppliers – including all the main companies providing schools MIS systems – have signed up and are listed on the IMS web-site ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/ims](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/ims)). This will facilitate smoother transfer of data between schools, LEAs and external agencies. DfES will keep under review the effectiveness of the agreement and whether more action is necessary to formally certify software compatibility – **September 2003**.
- (ii) Schools or LEAs experiencing problems will be able to contact the DfES Information Management Strategy Team via telephone on 020 7273 5202 or to email to [ims.mailbox@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ims.mailbox@dfes.gsi.gov.uk). The Department will liaise with suppliers on behalf of schools and LEAs to establish the route of the problem and work on appropriate action – **January 2003 (on-going)**.

### **Information and Communications Technology – software support**

Most schools use specialist information management software licensed through the Local Education Authority (LEA). It is a requirement of the licence that schools should have support through a recognised provider. In general this support is provided through the LEA team or directly from the software company. The size and scope of expertise of these teams varies considerably across LEAs from a two-person unit to fifty-plus. This is due to the structure of support provision within local authorities and whether it is all centralised as a central help-line for schools which spans all IT related matters or provided on an individualised basis for either curriculum, MIS and/or technical issues. It is also influenced by funding mechanisms, with some LEAs operating the services on a traded basis and others funding it directly themselves.

<sup>6</sup> SIMS software is mentioned solely as an example to aid understanding of the term 'management information systems' since it is the most commonly used management software in schools. No implication should be drawn from this report about the technical capacity and compatibility of any particular make of commercially available software.



Nevertheless, some sort of efficient support hotline is essential for schools when they experience difficulties with such specialised software. Some schools experience problems in rectifying the issues using both the local support team and the software house. In these cases, there is a tendency for the customer (in this case, the school), to be passed backwards and forwards between supplier and LEA. This wastes valuable time, not only in terms of staff time in resolving the problems experienced but also in the wider consequences of not being able to access information held electronically.

**Action: Schools will have access to a more efficient software support service through introduction of national accreditation standards and will be provided with information to encourage effective use of management systems.**

- (i) Schools' concerns about software support will be addressed through a review of helpdesk policies of Local Education Authority Support teams by **March 2004**. Subsequent initiatives arising from the review to improve the quality of support will be published by **November 2004**.
- (ii) Standards for ICT training and accreditation are being developed as part of the wider strategy to develop the role of the support staff. The aim is to identify the competencies needed to undertake the extensive range of tasks in a school – these levels will be determined by utilising the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) and linked to appropriate accreditation qualifications – **September 2003**.
- (iii) DfES and the LGA will work jointly to provide schools with latest ICT advice and support. Regional workshops, awareness campaigns and meetings with LEAs will provide information on latest software updates and ICT training – **from October 2002 (ongoing)**.



## Interface with other Departments and Agencies

### The Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was established in April 2001 following the ‘Learning to Succeed’ White Paper (1999) which recommended that all post-16 education should be co-ordinated by one single agency. The aim was to simplify the organisation, planning and funding of post-16 education and in turn, to reduce bureaucracy and duplication to provide a more co-ordinated focus on pupil’s learning and skills needs. Under the Learning and Skills Act 2000, LSC became responsible for a radical reorganisation of post-16 education, including further education, work based training, adult learning and, from 2002, school sixth forms.

The LSC funding formula focuses on the individual learner and the associated collection of qualification data so that the government’s and LSC’s long term aim of increasing participation and raising the achievement of the 16 – 19 year olds can be achieved. The impact of this change on sixth form schools however, has meant that the funding allocation system has become more complex and some schools have found it more difficult to understand. Schools with sixth forms are now funded by two separate organisations, each operating a different funding formula: the Local Education Authority for pupils up until the age of 16 and the LSC from 16 – 18 years.

#### *Communication and consultation with schools*

Schools receive documentation from a variety of sources such as LSC, including guidance, consultation documents and other information. Such paperwork cumulates and schools find it hard to read and absorb. Ultimately, some information is duplicated – for example, schools received guidance from both LSC and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) about the September Pupil Count (data collection arrangements) for 2002/03. An instance such as this causes unnecessary work and paper and generates confusion amongst staff.

#### **Action: Future LSC communication and consultation with schools will be simplified**

- (i) In order to reduce the amount of paperwork and guidance received by schools, LSC will provide summary versions of documentation wherever possible. This is in line with ongoing work to reduce paperwork sent to schools. Where appropriate, the complete document will be made available for schools in paper copy on request or electronically via the web site, rather than automatically sent to all schools – **September 2002 onwards**.
- (ii) Guidance issued on the September Pupil Count will be halved. To avoid duplication, the LSC and DfES will issue joint guidance on the September Pupil Count in the future and will continue to work closely on the development of sixth form school allocations/funding guidance – **September 2003**.
- (iii) The LSC will review the way in which it consults schools. This will include the consideration of alternatives to ‘blanket’ consultation exercises, such as the use of focus groups for example, which has proved effective in the past – **September 2002 (ongoing)**.





### *Data collection*

The LSC requires certain data from schools in order to underpin its' work on strategic management and performance assessment and to make funding allocations. The data collected should ideally be comparable to that collected from Further Education Colleges to ensure students' progress and performance can be tracked in the same manner. This is to allow learners, parents, LSC and DfES to make comparisons between the same provision in schools and colleges in a way that is not currently possible. In the past, only limited data has been collected from schools compared to other sixth form institutions, but this may need to be increased in order to ensure that schools are receiving the correct level of funding.

The level of data collected from Further Education Colleges is very detailed and includes the exhaustive categorisation of qualifications that are available in colleges in addition to a series of other specific data. Such data is collected on a frequent basis – for example, individualised learner record information for each student is requested three times a year. This includes details such as learning aims/outcomes (in terms of qualifications/subjects), and learner's achievements at the end of each academic year.

The LSC is not intending to introduce such a detailed system for schools. The same levels of required data will be too onerous for schools to provide given that the qualifications offered, and the administrative resources available, are limited compared to those within the Further Education field. Much but not all of the required data is already collected from schools through other routes.

To avoid additional data requests from schools, the LSC is currently using existing school data- the September Pupil Count, the Pupil Level Annual Census (PLASC) and the National Pupil Database with exam achievement for its student information. LSC has also already included basic data requirements on 'learning aims' (defined in terms of qualifications), as part of the September Pupil Count for the first time in 2001, with a clearer and more concise format being introduced in 2002. However, schools are still concerned by the level of additional information that may be required by the LSC and the methods by which this will be collected. The LSC is currently considering alternative means for data to be obtained as opposed to conducting separate collection exercises. This may include for example obtaining centrally held data from other sources.

**Action: Data required by LSC will be collected through other mediums wherever possible, thus limiting separate data collection exercises within schools**

- (i) LSC will consider whether additional data can be collected through existing data sources such as PLASC. A pilot will determine whether schools' internal management systems will provide the level of required data to meet LSC's needs and will identify where additional data will need to be sought. This pilot will involve a small number of schools starting in **Autumn 2003 – December 2003**.
- (ii) The LSC has also identified that separate requests to schools may come from the National Office and local LSCs creating an unnecessary imposition on schools. The LSC is looking at internal methods to avoid this and as part of this a Memorandum of Understanding with the Local Government Association will be published, laying down agreed plans with the LSC and LEAs to further reduce bureaucracy and minimise requests to schools for data – **January 2003 (completed)**.



## **New Opportunities Fund (NOF)**

The New Opportunities Fund (NOF)<sup>7</sup> is responsible for distributing lottery grants for education, health and the environment. It aims to improve the quality of life not only for individuals and families, but also for whole communities. Most of NOF's education programmes involve applications by consortia (led for example by Local Education Authorities) but individual schools can also apply for certain programmes such as the Out of School Hours Learning programme.

### *NOF-funded training*

Some schools expressed concern about certain aspects of the most recently funded training courses on ICT. Teachers were particularly worried about the poor quality of training provided by certain accredited training providers. The generic nature of the training courses also meant that teachers, all with diverse ICT experience, were not always provided with suitably tailored courses. An area of concern also singled out by teachers was the large volume and quality of course-materials provided by some training providers. It is important that training funded by NOF meets the requirements of the teachers and other school staff utilising it for future programmes to ensure that valuable time is spent constructively.

#### **Action: A review of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Training Programme for schools will be undertaken to improve future training programmes**

Following a formal Ofsted evaluation of the ICT programme, NOF will review how improvements can be made to future training programmes with the Teacher Training Agency, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). This may include for example, revised accreditation procedures for contracted training providers – **April 2004**.

### *Application and Monitoring Forms*

Some schools have expressed concern about the volume of data requested by NOF on their current application and monitoring forms. For example: applicants are required to complete a 23-page form for the Out of School Hours Learning Programme. In addition, data requests on application forms are often duplicated on annual monitoring forms.

#### **Action: Application forms and monitoring will be simplified for schools**

- (i) The introduction of pre-populated electronic application forms for any future allocation programmes will reduce applicants' input and wherever possible monitoring forms will also be pre-populated – **from October 2002 (ongoing)**.
- (ii) NOF, DCMS and DfES will review every 3 months the type of data requested on application and monitoring forms for schools. For example, the Out of School Hours Learning Programme monitoring form has been reduced from 23 to 9 pages long. Further streamlining will additionally be explored in conjunction with the Cabinet Office – **October 2002 onwards**.
- (iii) In addition, NOF will explore the use of sampling as an alternative to annual beneficiary monitoring for future programmes. This will be piloted through the current Out of School Hours Learning Programme, with the view to extending this to all NOF-funded programmes – **April 2003 onwards**.



### *New Opportunities Fund (NOF) Guidance*

NOF produces guidance in both paper-copy and electronically for each of its current education programmes. This guidance is often lengthy (an example being a 36-page guide for the Out of School Hours Learning programme) without summary versions being available to schools. This takes a considerable amount of time out of a teacher's day to read and consider the guidance.

**Action: NOF Guidance material will be reviewed and, wherever possible, simplified and reduced, to make it easier for schools to absorb material**

- (i) To ensure that schools are provided with the simplest and most accessible format of guidance for future education programmes, NOF will consult a sample of teachers on the most appropriate presentation. This may include flowcharts of the application process and summary versions of the full guidance – from **October 2002 (ongoing)**.
- (ii) In addition, general mailings being sent to schools from the New Opportunities Fund will include a 'reader box' which highlights key information for, such as the target audience, main actions and deadlines making it easier for staff to sift and process paperwork quickly. This Information Classification System will be implemented by **October 2002 (completed)**.

### **Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)**

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) has the remit to improve standards of achievement and quality of education through regular independent inspections, public reporting and informed independent advice. Its principal task was to manage a system of publicly-funded school inspections in England, but its role has expanded to include inspections of local education authorities, teacher training, nursery schools, independent schools, sixth form colleges, further education colleges and the regulation of early years child care.

The impact of Ofsted on the working lives of all teaching professionals is large. It is most acute in a school around the time of inspections, and although the impact may diminish at other times it remains pervasive. School staff have often developed elaborate procedures to record, monitor, plan and formalise almost every aspect of school life to ensure that a bank of documentary evidence is built up over the years prior to the next Ofsted inspection.

Head teachers and governors also develop local administrative procedures in an attempt to do all they can to avoid receiving a critical inspection report. In some schools, these procedures have become excessive. There is a widely held view that a negative report will damage a school's standing in the community, damage its financial capability and damage individuals' careers.

Ofsted has reviewed its approach to inspections with the objective of ensuring that it is a listening and responsive organisation. It introduced a differentiated school inspection model in January 2000 and has identified several changes designed to reduce the bureaucracy around the inspection process. Some of these changes were identified in the first '*Making a Difference: Reducing School Paperwork*' report (December 2000) and others were announced in a joint DfES/Ofsted report in 2001. Changes to inspection-related burdens that have been made or will be in the near future include:



- The production of a simple electronic version of pre-inspection forms S1 to S4, and a user-friendly internet version with the pre-entering of data already held centrally to reduce the amount of new data to be entered on the forms;
- Streamlining the data on forms S1 and S2 by reducing staffing data and post-16 destinations;
- Piloting a new version of form S4 with clearer guidance on its maximum length;
- Merging the PICS1 and PANDA documents to reduce duplication;
- Ensuring schools are not over-visited;
- Streamlining the list of information required from schools and indicating clearly what is not;
- Explicitly raising in inspection reports where bureaucracy is interfering with efficient management and school improvement.

The extent of reducing the preceding levels of bureaucracy through these measures may take two or three more years to be recognised. Further changes are planned to extend the pre-population of data to include those from the new Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census and, jointly with DfES, to look at more effective ways of collecting and sharing data. There are other measures however that would also ease burdens and help improve schools' experiences of inspections and their confidence in the process.

#### *Over-preparation for inspection by schools*

There remains the perception that Ofsted requires schools to spend a considerable amount of time preparing for their inspection. This is particularly evident with lesson planning, where Ofsted has already made it clear that they do not require specially prepared lesson plans. The new arrangements for inspection, being introduced from September 2003, provide an excellent opportunity for Ofsted to reinforce these messages both to inspectors and schools.

#### **Action: Ofsted will use the preparations for the new inspection arrangements to reinforce key messages on bureaucracy**

- (i) Ofsted will clearly state the small number of documents they *do* require from schools pre-inspection in their new Framework document. In addition a clear statement that inspectors must not request any further information prior to an inspection will also be made. In particular, inspectors should under no account ask for any particular form of lesson planning to be prepared – **September 2003**.
- (ii) Inspection teams will comment on onerous lesson planning, where they see it in schools, as a barrier to efficient management and school improvement. Ofsted will also reinforce these messages in the training they provide to their inspectors prior to the new arrangements being introduced – **September 2003**.

#### *Monitoring and training of inspectors*

School inspection teams are made up of a Registered Inspector, the team leader, and enrolled inspectors – all are subject to Ofsted's training and monitoring procedures. Despite this, there are some concerns amongst teachers over the quality, relevance and objectivity of the work of some inspectors. For example, some schools have expressed concern over the standard of working practices amongst a minority of inspection teams, including individual inspectors being poorly briefed about the school, asking irrelevant questions, or have been out of frontline teaching for too



long. There is also a feeling that some inspectors arrive with very strong perceptions about the school, drawn presumably from reviewing the pre-inspection documentation, which schools regard as remaining unaltered during the course of the inspection visit. Some schools also feel uncomfortable about taking up such issues directly with Ofsted and are unclear as how they can feed their concerns into the system.

**Action: Ofsted will make public its quality assurance procedures, including a clear statement of how schools can express an opinion on its inspection and the performance of inspectors.**

Ofsted will produce a concise public document setting out its quality assurance procedures that include details of how inspectors are trained, monitored and subjected to a reaffirmation procedure every three year enrolment period. It will also include an explanation of how teachers can express an opinion on inspectors' performances. This will be available on the Ofsted web-site or in hard copy if requested, and will enable teachers to gain a better understanding of the background and context in which inspectors carry out their work – **August 2003**.

#### *Inspection report*

Once an inspection has been conducted, schools receive the report, including a summary, no later than six weeks after the end of an inspection (unless Ofsted agrees to an extension).

Schools are obliged to make the final summary document available to parents within 10 working days and to make copies of the report and summary available on request. This can cause a burden with schools having to copy and distribute to parents if the report is not yet available on the Ofsted web-site. This could be eased with an earlier posting of the report on the Ofsted web-site. At present, Ofsted displays inspection reports on their web-site within twelve weeks of the inspection; often it is done in less than twelve weeks but on occasions, it can take even longer. Since the public has a right to see the report and summary soon after a school receives it there would be a benefit to schools and the public by earlier posting of summaries and inspection reports on Ofsted's web site.

**Action: Ofsted will review the time-scales for uploading reports on their web-site**

Ofsted will review the timescale required for uploading final inspection reports on their web-site, drawing on the opinions of key stakeholders, including schools. The resultant findings will be implemented in readiness for the 2003/04 academic year – **April 2003**.

#### *Enforcement Concordat*

Teachers and other school staff have perceived Ofsted as a rather distant and unresponsive organisation. In spite of the broad range of reforms that Ofsted has introduced over the last few years, the perception of a culture of censure, as opposed to one supporting and helping schools, is still largely prevalent.

The Enforcement Concordat, (found at the following web-site, [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/PublicSector/enforcement/Enforcement.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/PublicSector/enforcement/Enforcement.htm)) is a scheme by which all kinds of bodies such as inspectorates and review organisations adopt the 'principles of good enforcement' in their policy and procedures. The term 'enforcement' is interpreted in its widest context as facilitating fair and proportionate practices in any review function and should be seen by Ofsted's stakeholders in this light. Ofsted should be comfortable that it can demonstrate that it achieves all of these principles.



**Action: Ofsted will adopt the Enforcement Concordat to ensure that the inspection service remains effective and responsive to schools**

Ofsted will adopt formally the Enforcement Concordat and its principles of:

- setting clear standards regarding the level of service and performance;
- providing information and advice in plain English and being open about its work procedures;
- providing a helpful, courteous and efficient service;
- providing a timely and effective complaints procedure;
- being proportionate in the compliance sought, taking into account the circumstances of the recipients;
- conducting activities in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.

This Concordat will serve to ensure that the service offered to schools remains effective and responsive and demonstrates Ofsted's continuing commitment to refocusing the way school inspections are conducted to ease the burden on staff – **December 2002.**

### **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)**

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is concerned with guarding standards in education and training. It advises the Secretary of State on the school curriculum, the assessment of learners, and on the qualifications used in education and training below degree level. QCA also:

- Develops and monitors the National Curriculum
- Develops and manages the system for assessing and testing school pupils
- Develops, regulates and monitors the national qualifications system
- Provides national data, information, guidance and support for those involved in education and training
- Supports the development of occupational standards by industry-led bodies.

Some schools have experienced difficulties in trying to communicate with QCA. These include being passed from person to person on the telephone, finding the QCA web-site hard to navigate, and in trying to obtain general information such as submission deadlines. Whilst QCA have established customer service standards, some staff recruited via contractors have not been subject to the same levels of scrutiny and training in the areas of customer service. The Tomlinson report on A-level Standards also highlights the need for improved communications in the qualifications system.



**Action: Schools will find it easier to communicate with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)**

- (i) QCA will ensure that its customer service standards are extended to all contractors who manage the national data collection process through a training programme aimed at ensuring optimum co-ordination between helpdesks – **September 2002 (completed)**.
- (ii) Training specifically related to enquiries received by telephone will be implemented for all QCA staff to help reduce the numbers of unanswered calls. To achieve this, more telephone training will take place and presentations will be given to all teams on customer service – **March 2003**.
- (iii) In addition, a corporate communication strategy will be implemented across QCA. This will improve communications to schools through a programme to re-design the QCA web-site. This will enable schools to navigate the site more easily and identify particular information. The first phase of this programme will take place in **April 2003**.



## Staffing Issues

### Security vetting procedures for teaching staff

Part V of the Police Act 1997 and subsequent Protection of Children Act 1999 increased access to criminal record information for employment related purposes to more organisations than ever before. Organisations that employ staff or volunteers, who work with children or vulnerable adults are required to undergo a comprehensive vetting procedure prior to starting a new job. Teachers fall into the category of staff requiring such a check. As part of this check the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) will search the Police National Computer for all ‘spent and unspent’ convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings. In addition, for teachers, the CRB will search the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) list of “those considered unsuitable to work in the teaching profession” (List 99) and the Department of Health’s Protection of Children Act list 1999.

The CRB now run a more comprehensive check than previously available but it is felt, however, that the tighter application process has become more lengthy, time consuming and complicated. This can result in delays in recruitment, as applicants do not always fill the *Disclosure* form correctly. This has had an impact on recruitment in schools and their ability to functional fully. In the past, this has led to schools being under-staffed; this is especially a risk at the beginning of a new school year when a number of newly qualified teachers or teachers starting a new school may be waiting for the return of their ‘*Disclosure*’ before being able to start teaching.

#### *Guidance for teachers*

Complicated and lengthy guidance is one of the main reasons why application forms are filled out incorrectly, resulting in a backlog of applications. Teachers find the guidance overly onerous, especially those applying for a *Disclosure* for the first time.

#### **Action: Guidance accompanying *Disclosure* applications will be reviewed and revised to ensure it is user-friendly and clear**

- (i) Documentation relating to *Disclosure* applications will be changed to ensure it is clearer and more concise. Changes will be highlighted in shorter guidance and will be available both in paper copy and electronically. An Executive Summary will also accompany the guidance, making it easier for those who are not applying for a *Disclosure* for the first time – **December 2002 (completed)**.
- (ii) In order to ensure a more coherent ‘joined-up’ approach, the guidance and CRB web-sites will also include hyperlinks to relevant Government Departments for applicants to access advice for their specific profession on *Disclosure* vetting. For example, hyperlinks to the relevant DfES guidance will be available for teachers to access easily – **February 2003 (ongoing)**.
- (iii) DfES will issue further guidance to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools aimed at helping head teachers adopt a risk assessment based approach on checking volunteers and including a fact sheet for volunteers explaining the need for checks and the CRB process – **December 2002 (completed)**.





### *Application procedure*

Currently, the *Disclosure* application form is considered overly long by both teachers and other public servants alike. They also consider some sections intrusive – for example, Section E asks for marital status, bank or building society account numbers and the number of financially dependent children. These details are used for verifying the applicant's identification, supported by paper based documentation. This level of identity verification is necessary but is also considered time consuming as some of the required data is already available centrally from other Government Departments and Agencies.

**Action: The *Disclosure* application procedure will be revised to ensure that its completion is less time-consuming for teachers and other school staff**

- (i) CRB have created the opportunity for electronic links to be established with the United Kingdom Passport Service to facilitate increased data sharing (provided the applicant gives his/her consent). This will help to verify an applicant's identity more easily. The need for paper-copies of identity documentation to be sent to the CRB will reduce in some cases thereby speeding the process up considerably – **May 2003**.
- (ii) In the long term, CRB hopes to extend these links with further Agencies and Government Departments such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, Department for Work and Pensions and National Statistics. This will further ease the burden on school staff as some questions currently asked may no longer be required and extensive identity documentation may no longer need to be provided – **2004/05**.
- (iii) In addition, CRB will review the format and style of the current *Disclosure* application form. This will make it simpler for school staff to complete thereby reducing the number of errors. In addition to this, access to UKPS data will reduce the number of returned application forms, which in turn will speed up the application process as a whole – **September 2003**.
- (iv) The application process will also be made more transparent. A video, designed to help organisations with the application process and form, is currently being designed by CRB, and will be distributed to all Registered Bodies (including LEAs) – **January 2003 (completed)**.
- (v) In order to help all Registered Bodies with individual problems, CRB will also set up a Registered Body Support Team – **October 2002 (completed)**.

### *Methods of Application for Disclosure*

There are two *Disclosure* application channels – via the call centre or by completion of an application form held by the Registered Body (usually the LEA for schools). The majority of application forms completed by teachers are of the latter type. This means that the application form needs to be completed by hand, making the process more time consuming for applicants and also increases the likelihood of mistakes. These mistakes result in the application form having to be returned for correction, thereby lengthening the application process and delaying the issue of the *Disclosure* itself. For the telephone application channel, the applicant calls the CRB call centre where a trained member of staff asks a number of questions and pre-populates the application form. The form is then sent to the applicant for checking and signing and subsequently passed to the Registered Body where forms of identification are checked and the form signed.



**Action: Applicants will have a greater degree of choice and flexibility as to the way in which Disclosure applications are made to the CRB**

- (i) A secure web-based application channel for all levels of *Disclosure* application will be available to individuals wishing to apply over the Internet, making *Disclosure* applications more user-friendly, more intuitive and easily available. This web-based form will be interactive and will therefore provide prompts where information is not inserted correctly – this will make the application process more rigorous resulting in fewer mistakes and will ultimately speed the process up – **September 2003**.
- (ii) Different methods of applying for a *Disclosure* will also be promoted through a series of campaigns run in conjunction with the Local Government Association. These campaigns will also highlight the main reasons why application forms are returned, complementing the checklist already provided with all application forms. The campaigns will be concentrated around the main times that teachers apply – namely during the beginning of new school terms with particular reference to the start of a new school year – **November 2002 (on-going)**.

### **Performance Threshold**

As part of the ethos of rewarding and encouraging good teaching within schools, the Government introduced the Performance Threshold assessment for teachers in 2000. This performance related assessment aims to reward effective and experienced teachers with a one-off consolidated pay increase and access to further points on the upper pay scale. The scheme is a voluntary one, and is open to a wide range of teachers who are assessed against a national framework of eight standards of effective teaching. Threshold is currently not however available to those teachers who have returned to the profession after five or more years.

Currently, many schools divorce the Performance Threshold from other statutory performance management systems already in place and schools are duplicating assessment to meet the needs for both systems. This creates burdens and bureaucracy and schools are concerned that two incompatible systems create additional work.

#### *Application procedures*

Whilst this scheme has proved to be popular within the teaching profession, past and future applicants and officials within Local Education Authorities have expressed concern over the lengthy and time consuming procedures involved in obtaining Threshold pay. Areas particularly onerous include the gathering and presentation of evidence to show how the national standards have been met in the form of a comprehensive portfolio of work. Applicants often over-prepare and provide unnecessary information – teachers are now encouraged to provide no more than 250 words for each standard. Tangible evidence however is often hard to obtain for some of the standards, particularly when the standard can only be assessed via classroom observation – for example, evidence for classroom management.



### *Verification of Performance*

Head teachers have also experienced problems with the Threshold process. They are asked to assess all application forms and portfolios of evidence which is a time consuming activity, particularly so in the first round when head teachers could potentially have had 60 or 70 applications to process. As part of the application procedure, they are asked to make a written comment on all evidence gathered by applicants for each standard as to their performance. This takes a considerable amount of time and adds a large cumulative burden to the workload of head teachers over a short and intensive time period. In addition, all past Threshold applications have been subject to an independent external assessment by Threshold inspectors resulting time away from the office for Head teachers, many of whom found the process verification onerous.

### **Action: The Threshold Performance Assessment will be reviewed to simplify and streamline the process with the school's statutory performance management system**

- (i) The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) will establish a working group to review and streamline the Threshold process for Round 4. This will include the consideration of other appropriate methods of providing evidence to support recognition of the standard of effective teaching; the five year evidence rule for returning teachers; and the simplification of the head teachers' role in verifying evidence. Consideration will be given to the extension or merging of the current statutory performance management system and the Threshold process and alternative performance mechanisms will also be explored – **July 2003**.
- (ii) In addition, a number of other improvements have been recently implemented for the third and current round of Threshold. These include:
  - Providing the application form in Word format to ensure compatibility with school software and easier downloading;
  - Improved guidance including the explanation of key differences from previous years (available in paper or electronic format);
  - Inclusion of an eligibility and validity check to prevent ineligible teachers completing the applicant form and head teachers assessing it;
  - External assessment for only a selection of schools (20%-25%), reducing the time input required by head teachers to discuss and verify assessments.

These changes, implemented during **September 2002**, have aimed to make the Performance Threshold procedure more user-friendly for both applicants and head teachers.



## CONCLUSION – CHANGING THE CULTURE

This project is an integral step towards a culture change in the way schools work and are viewed by other stakeholders, building on the principle of ‘earned autonomy’. Full and effective implementation of this change will take time, and all stakeholders, including professional bodies and central government, have a part to play in this. The new Implementation Review Unit with its panel of head teachers and other practitioners, will have a critical role to play in ensuring that the changes described in this report are put into effect.

The recent national agreement on school workforce reform ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling)) signed by government, employers, and school workforce unions provides a new and positive context with the commitment to tackle bureaucracy as a core component.



# ANNEX 1

## SCHOOLS I 'MAKING A DIFFERENCE' PROJECT (DECEMBER 2000) – PROGRESS UPDATE

Since the publication of the first Schools 'Making a Difference' report in December 2000, the Team has continued to work with stakeholders, making changes to published agreements and commitments to ensure, where possible, that they are delivered on time and benefit front-line staff. This chapter outlines the progress made to date and identifies those areas still being developed.

Furthermore, detailed information can be found in the Public Sector Team's '*Making a Difference Progress Report 1999-2001*'.

### Achieved outcomes from Schools I

Identified Burden	Responsible Department or Agency to carry forward change	Action Taken
Standards Fund no longer incorporates a lengthy bidding process.	Department for Education & Skills	Bidding has been removed – financial allocations are made by formula – <b>April 2001.</b>
Introduction of single school level reporting form covering all strands of the Standards Fund	Department for Education & Skills	New form in use in schools since <b>April 2001.</b>
Standards Fund – Schools no longer restricted in how individual funds can be spent.	Department for Education & Skills	Schools can transfer money between funds without prior Local Education Authority approval – <b>April 2001.</b>
Standards Fund – Schools no longer need to spend all their funds by the end of the financial year.	Department for Education & Skills	Schools can carry over grants beyond the end of the financial year to the end of the school year to allow expenditure to span the full school year – <b>April 2001.</b>
Monitoring of Standards Fund will be improved.	Department for Education & Skills	Standards Fund is monitored by comparing outcomes against existing targets. More detailed monitoring takes place on a sample basis – <b>April 2001.</b>



Identified Burden	Responsible Department or Agency to carry forward change	Action Taken
Development of a Universal Document Classification System that will apply to all communications to schools.	Department for Education & Skills / Qualifications & Curriculum Authority / Office for Standards in Education	A new tool, the Information Classification System, has been launched which will enable school staff to access and process information sent to them more easily – <b>September 2002.</b>
Schools' responsibilities around completion of Common Transfer Forms (CTFs) has been made clearer.	Department for Education & Skills / Qualifications & Curriculum Authority	Assessment and Reporting Arrangements booklets have been modified to make clear that schools are not required to complete entire CTFs if the information duplicates what has already been provided electronically – <b>September 2001.</b>
Schools will be able to electronically transfer statutory items on the Common Transfer Forms in a standard format.	Department for Education & Skills	Software for Common Transfer Forms made available to schools – <b>April 2001.</b>
Every school will have at least one networked computer with internet access for management and administrative purposes making paper based Common Transfer Forms obsolete.	Department for Education & Skills	Every school has access to a networked computer and to the internet – <b>April 2002.</b>  Electronic CTF became the required method – <b>June 2002.</b>
Less information will be required for Common Transfer Forms.	Department for Education & Skills	CTFs were simplified and have been introduced to schools – <b>September 2001.</b>
Schools no longer need to produce a separate Governors' Annual Report and School Prospectus.	Department for Education & Skills	Schools can merge the Governors' Annual Report and School Prospectus to produce one combined annual document – <b>April 2002.</b>



Identified Burden	Responsible Department or Agency to carry forward change	Action Taken
<p>There will be clearer guidance about the writing assessment record sheet at the end of Key Stage 1.</p>	<p>Department for Education &amp; Skills / Qualifications &amp; Curriculum Authority</p>	<p>The QCA/DfES Teacher's Handbook has been amended to make it clear that completion of the writing assessment sheet is optional.</p> <p>Revised editions of the Handbook have included examples of completed sheets to help teachers decide how much information is required – <b>December 2001.</b></p>
<p>LEAs and schools will have a common approach for the completion of Key Stage 1 record sheets by LEAs and schools.</p>	<p>Qualifications &amp; Curriculum Authority/ Local Education Authorities</p>	<p>Completion of Key Stage 1 record sheets is now optional. However, should schools wish to complete them a standard format has been produced and is available in QCA guidance at the following address: <a href="http://www.qca.org.uk/ca/tests/ks1/2003ara_changes.asp">http://www.qca.org.uk/ca/tests/ks1/2003ara_changes.asp</a>.</p>
<p>Schools will no longer be required to complete three separate assessment forms for Newly Qualified Teachers.</p>	<p>Department for Education &amp; Skills</p>	<p>A single cumulative assessment form for Newly Qualified Teachers has been introduced with an electronic version – <b>May 2001.</b> (Three separate assessment forms are still available for schools wishing to use them).</p>
<p>Ofsted to develop pre-populated S1 to S4 forms.</p>	<p>Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)</p>	<p>New S1-S4 forms have been introduced with some pre-populated data. (September 2002). Complete implementation will be by <b>September 2003.</b></p>
<p>Head teachers will be given better guidance on how much information is needed for Form S4 and parts of Form S1.</p>	<p>Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)</p>	<p>An alternative shortened version of Form S4 is being piloted. New complementary guidance is being developed which includes a suggested maximum length of 10 A4 sheets. <b>September 2003.</b></p>



Identified Burden	Responsible Department or Agency to carry forward change	Action Taken
The Autumn Package will be streamlined.	Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)	The Autumn Package has been streamlined by limiting narrative and improving presentation graphs and tables – <b>October 2000.</b>
A new CD-ROM version of the Autumn Package issued to schools	Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)	Every school has received a CD-ROM version of the Autumn Package which automatically plots school against national progress when loaded with school data. <b>October 2000.</b>

### Outcomes from the Schools I Report that are still in development

Identified Burden	Responsible Department or Agency to carry forward change	Action Taken
Removal of administrative burdens for Free School Meals from schools.	Department for Work & Pensions / Department for Education & Skills / Local Education Authorities	Following a trial whereby administration of Free School Meals was linked with that of welfare benefits, a decision to initiate national roll-out of the simplified process will be taken in <b>March 2003.</b>





# ANNEX 2

## PARTICIPANTS

### Stakeholders consulted

- ACCAC (Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales)
- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)
- Audit Commission
- Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)
- Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)
- Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
- Edexcel Examination Awarding Body
- General and Municipal Boilermakers Union (GMB)
- General Teaching Council
- Joint Council of General Qualifications (JCGQ)
- Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
- Local Government Association (LGA)
- National Assembly for Wales
- National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
- National College for School Leadership (NCSL)
- National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST)
- National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)
- National Union of Teachers (NUT)
- New Opportunities Fund (NOF)
- Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted)
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- Professional Association of Teachers (PAT)
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- Secondary Heads Association (SHA)
- Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU)
- UNISON

### Schools consulted (March 2002 – May 2002)

- Ash Green School, Coventry
- The Ashcombe School, Dorking
- Astor School, Dover
- Aveling Park School, Walthamstow, London
- Barnwell School, Stevenage
- College High School, Birmingham
- Community College, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire
- Community College, Chulmleigh, Devon
- Duston Upper School, Northampton



- Elmhirst School, Barnsley
- Erith School, Eirth
- Furze Platt Senior School, Maidenhead
- George Spencer Foundation School & Technology College, Nottingham
- Hamble School, Southampton
- Harrogate Grammar School, Harrogate
- Hatfield High School, Doncaster
- Heckmondwike Grammar School, Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire
- King Richard Secondary School, Portsmouth
- Latymer School, Edmonton
- Matthew Arnold School, Oxford
- Misbourne School, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire
- Nelson Thomlinson School, Wigton, Cumbria
- Oakwood School, Horley, Surrey
- Oathall Community College, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
- Queen Elizabeth High School, Bromyard, Herefordshire
- Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Faversham, Kent
- Queen Elizabeth's Mercian School, Tamworth
- Queen Katherine School, Kendal, Cumbria
- Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe
- Swanlea School, Whitechapel, London
- St Mark's Catholic School, Hounslow
- St Mary's Catholic Comprehensive School, Menston Ilkley, West Yorkshire
- St Patrick's RC Comprehensive School, Stockton on Tess
- St John Houghton Catholic School, Ilkeston, Derbyshire
- South Dartmoor Community College, Newton Abbot
- St Benedict's Catholic School, Bury St Edmunds
- Shenfield High School, Brentwood
- Thornton Cleveleys Millfield High School, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire
- Varndean School-Brighton
- Valley Comprehensive School, Worksop, Nottinghamshire
- Westwood College, Welling, Kent

### Local Education Authorities consulted (March 2002 – May 2002)

- Brighton Local Education Authority
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Cumbria County Council
- Devon County Council
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
- Hereford District Council
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Portsmouth City Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Suffolk County Council
- Surrey County Council



- West Sussex County Council
- Wiltshire County Council
- Windsor & Maidenhead County Council

## Schools II Advisory Panel

A Schools Advisory panel was constituted to provide specialist advice for the project. Membership:

- Mr Guy Goodwin (Office for Standards in Education)
- Ms Barbara Lee (National Foundation for Educational Research)
- Ms Louise Stern (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority)
- Mr John Milner (Joint Council for General Qualifications)
- Ms Gale Waller (Local Government Association)

## RIU's Public Sector Team's Schools II Project Team

If you require any further information or clarification on the points raised in this report, please contact one of the Project Team:

- Tanya Otley (Project Manager) - [psinfo@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psinfo@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk)
- Grace Kuhepa
- [Mark Williams]
- Michaela Holledge
- Julie Davis

Alternatively please telephone us on: 020 7276 2194

## DfES liaison team (School Workforce Unit):

- Nick Tomlinson
- Sheldon Ferguson
- Barry Joy
- Ian Mears



## ANNEX 3

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Special Educational Needs: A Mainstream Issue (November 2002)

Special Educational Needs: Code of Practice (November 2001)

Specialist Schools Programme 2002/03 Applications – a Guide for Schools (May 2002)



Statutory Instrument 2000 No. 297 – The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (March 2000)

The Common Inspection Framework for Inspecting Post-16 Education and Training (February 2001)

The Role of the Local Education Authority in School Education (2000)

The Use of ICT in subject teaching – Expected Outcomes of the New Opportunities Fund ICT training initiative for teachers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Transforming the Way We Learn – a Vision for the Future of ICT in Schools (2002)



# ANNEX 4

## PUBLIC SECTOR TEAM, REGULATORY IMPACT UNIT (RIU)

The Public Sector Team was established in November 1999 in response to the Government's concern about the increased bureaucratic burden on the public sector. The Team is located within the Cabinet Office's Regulatory Impact Unit.

### Remit and responsibilities

- To identify the major bureaucratic and regulatory burdens on the public sector staff and services;
- To distinguish those burdens imposed by central government from those imposed for other reasons (e.g. as part of internal management systems); and
- To recommend and agree with the relevant department or agency, ways in which the regulatory burden might sensibly be reduced.

### Team Structure

The Team consists of secondees from the private and public sectors and permanent civil servants. Through this mix of backgrounds, knowledge and experience, the Team is able to draw comparisons and contrasts between attitudes and approaches in the private and public sector, allowing lessons to be learnt and best practice disseminated.

The Team's key aim is to achieve practicable results that make a tangible difference to the work of front-line staff and their service delivery. The Team works with front-line staff to identify unnecessary bureaucratic burdens and then with stakeholders to resolve them. The focus is on outcomes and achievements rather than simply gifting recommendations for action by others.

### Methodology Tools

The remit is to devise ways to deliver a demonstrable reduction in bureaucratic burdens and paperwork. Consequently, the approach is one of a catalyst by working to:

- (a) Get frontline staff to identify the changes they would like made, then
- (b) Negotiating with stakeholders (such as central departments and government agencies) to agree to make changes (termed 'outcomes') by a target date, and subsequently,
- (c) Collaborating with stakeholders to ensure the changes promised are implemented and disseminating this news back to the frontline.

The 'Making a Difference' process seeks out front line knowledge, jointly identifies improvements and then empowers those with operational or policy responsibility to make changes. Millions of hours of time previously wasted on unnecessary bureaucracy have been freed up and redirected to the delivery of essential public services.



## Previous Reports

Up to the present time, six 'Making a Difference' projects have been completed and their outcomes have or are being implemented. Estimates of the time saved by frontline staff are noted below:

- **Reducing Police Paperwork (April 2000)** – Identified measures to simplify prisoner custody and traffic accident paperwork, as well as standardisation of criminal case file preparation. The outcomes were estimated to free up 166,000 hours of police time, equivalent to 90 police officers. Approximately 156,000 hours of police time has been saved.
- **Reducing School Paperwork (December 2000)** – Up to 4.5 million hours of time would be saved when all of the outcomes focussing on head teachers burdens, principally primary heads, are implemented. An estimated 2.7 million hours of time has been saved.
- **Reducing General Practitioner [GP] Paperwork (March 2001)** – Thirty-six outcomes, spanning sickness certification to health records and requests for tests, were identified to ease the clinical and other paperwork affecting GPs. An estimated 750,000 hours of time will be saved when all of the changes have been implemented, as well as eliminating 7.2 million GP unnecessary appointments. A summary of the outcomes from the GP project is presented in Annex B.
- **Reducing Local Government Paperwork (February 2002)** – This report includes greater freedoms for local administrations on statutory planning, legal consents from central government, children's services, and wider flexibility in the ways services are provided and paid for.
- **Reducing Burdens on General Practitioners [GP] – second report (June 2002)** – Outlines nineteen new outcomes following the earlier report in March 2001. These outcomes are based around medicine management, primary and secondary health-care interface, children, disability and benefits, interface with other Departments and Agencies, and other burdens. New outcome savings are estimated as being a further 3.2 million GP appointments, an additional 2.7 million hours and the removal of up to 80,000 requests for medical information.
- **Reducing Burdens in Hospitals (July 2002)** – This report identifies a wide range of administrative burdens and red tape in secondary and tertiary level healthcare establishments. Outcomes achieved are based around the patient journey, the flow of information and quality issues within hospitals.

In addition, the Team has produced a Progress Report in January 2002 that reviewed the implementation of outcomes on the first three reports.

All of the above reports can be downloaded free of charge from the Public Sector Team's web-site, at the following web address: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/PublicSector/reports.htm>





## Reports in development

In addition to the reports mentioned above, joint work is also being undertaken on a further four 'Making a Difference' projects to tackle other topics where bureaucratic burdens exist:

- **Health Inspection Project** – aims to reduce or remove unnecessary burdens on the NHS caused by inspection, audit and accreditation and to ensure that this review activity is proportionate, targeted and joined up (final report Spring 2003).
- **Reducing Red –Tape and Bureaucracy in the Criminal Justice System** (progress on implementation due in July 2003) – considers the paperwork within the surrounding criminal prosecutions from detection to judicial disposal and involving the Police Service, Crown Prosecution Service, and Court Service.
- **Public Procurement Project** – work is in partnership with the Office of Government Commerce to reduce the cost and time taken to procure public services from the private sector (final report Summer 2003).
- **Transport** – a joint project with the Department for Transport is being developed on addressing rail-related bureaucracy involving several stakeholders (final report Winter 2003).

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