Workload Challenge: Analysis of teacher consultation responses

Research report

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Executive Summary

The Department for Education's online Workload Challenge consultation ran between 22 October and 21 November 2014. It asked three key open-ended questions:

1. Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time. Where do these come from?
2. Send us your solutions and strategies for tackling workload – what works well in your school?
3. What do you think should be done to tackle unnecessary workload – by government, by schools or by others?

Below is a summary of the analysis methodology and key findings based on a sample of 10% of the Workload Challenge consultation responses.

Analysis methodology

Of the 43,832 responses received to the Workload Challenge consultation, 20,533 respondents answered one of the three open-ended questions about workload. 16,820 respondents made a full response by answering all three open-ended questions about workload[1]. A sample of 10% of the full responses was systematically selected for detailed analysis, equating to 1,685 survey respondents.

The sample was broadly representative of the type of institution and type of job role of the whole survey cohort. Classroom teachers (56%) and middle leaders (30%) were the most common types of respondent to the survey. Over one-third (38%) of the sample were from an academy, 36% were from primary schools and 25% from secondary schools (note however that not all respondents indicated if their academy was primary or secondary phase). The majority of the sample respondents were female (79%) and many were aged between 25 and 34 (39%) and 35 and 44 (29%). Just over one-fifth (23%) of the sample stated that they had been qualified as a teacher for 6 to 10 years. Responses were received from participants with a broad range of teaching experience – from those still in, or just a few months out of, their Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) year, to individuals who had taught for several decades.

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[1] This excludes respondents from sixth-form colleges: these will be considered separately.

Key findings

Defining 'unnecessary and unproductive' tasks

The consultation requested respondents to provide their feedback on what they perceived to be the 'unnecessary and unproductive' tasks that they were required to carry out. It is important to clarify that many respondents noted that the tasks they undertook were not 'unnecessary' or 'unproductive' – indeed, they were essential parts of working within a school, but the volume was such that they were unable to complete them even when working much longer than their contracted hours. In addition, the level of **detail**, **duplication** or **bureaucracy** that occurred during these tasks were seen as 'unnecessary' or 'unproductive':

- 63% of respondents stated that the excessive level of detail required made the tasks burdensome

- 45% stated that duplication added to the burden of their workload

- 41% stated that the over-bureaucratic nature of the work made it burdensome

Other factors noted by respondents included:

- the volume of work that they needed to get through in the time available (particularly in relation to marking books)

- unrealistic/very short deadlines

- long meetings, or meetings not thought to be relevant to their role/Key Stage

- too many sources of information to manage (e.g. email, virtual learning environment, bulletin)

- poor/unreliable Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment and lack of software training

- lack of clarity with observation requirements

The most frequently mentioned tasks contributing to unnecessary and unproductive workload fitted within the category of **lesson planning and policies, assessment and reporting administration** (82% of respondents mentioned tasks which fitted into this category).

There were two specific tasks that were reported as being burdensome for the majority of sample respondents:

- recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data (56%)

- excessive/depth of marking – detail and frequency required (53%)

Six other tasks were reported as adding unnecessary burden to the general workload by at least 20% of respondents:

- lesson/weekly planning – detail and frequency required (38%)

- basic administrative and support tasks (37%)

- staff meetings (26%)

- reporting on pupil progress (24%)

- pupil targets (setting and continual review – including target culture) (21%)

- implementing new initiatives/curriculum/qualification change (20%)

Drivers of workload

Respondents most commonly said that the burden of their workload was created by:

- accountability/perceived pressures of Ofsted (53%)

- tasks set by senior/middle leaders (51%)

Working to policies set at local/school level (35%) and policy change at national level (34%) were also significant drivers for teacher workload.

Variation by job role

Tasks such as working with data, maintaining records, keeping up with curriculum change and new initiatives were reported to affect all types of job role.

According to the different role types:

- headteachers and senior leaders reported unnecessary/unproductive work coming from the paper work related to reports and maintaining records to evidence school progress (24%); updating policies and action plans (11%); working within policy remits (9%) and liaising with governors (6%)

- headteachers and senior leaders also reported a heavy workload involved in making referrals/liaising with external agencies for special educational needs (SEN) pupils (9%), as well as SEN evidencing and reporting requirements (9%)

- nearly a third of classroom teachers, middle and senior leaders reported a significant burden in workload resulting from having their teaching monitored

- classroom teachers and middle leaders were more likely than other role types to report unproductive workload arising from behaviour issues, detentions and the paperwork and administration that is involved.

Variation by school type

The majority (51%) of respondents from primary schools - in comparison to 27% in secondary schools, found the workload for **weekly lesson planning** a burden. There was also a notable difference in workload for respondents from primary schools related to arranging and ordering materials and resources and in relation to the reporting and evidencing requirements necessary for SEN support.

Strategies and solutions

Of all respondents (1,630) answering the two questions around solutions and ways forward, **changes in accountability** (40%) and **support** offered (34%) were the most common type of responses.

In line with what respondents thought were the most overly burdensome tasks, the most common solutions they suggested were:

- modify marking arrangements (32%)

- reduce the need for data inputting and analysis (25%)

- increase time for planning, preparation and assessment (25%)

- trust teachers as professionals (24%)

- reduce frequency of curriculum/qualification/examination changes (22%)

- review/change Ofsted processes (21%)

In relation to the latter point, 12% of respondents requested **clearer guidance on Ofsted requirements** for evidencing, to help ease this aspect of their workload.

Much of the additional day-to-day support that was requested from respondents was to enable more delegation of administrative and non-teaching tasks (19%). Respondents called for more administrative staff (13%) and teaching assistants (10%) who could take

on, for example, data inputting and monitoring work, updating displays, registers and chasing absent pupils or missing homework.

Classroom teachers and middle leaders were more likely to suggest changes to practical teaching and learning activities or data-related work whereas senior leaders and headteachers focused more on wider policy change and external drivers.

Respondents from primary schools were twice as likely to suggest modifying planning requirements compared with those from secondary schools (50% and 25% respectively) and more likely to suggest modifying marking requirements (50% compared to 36%). Respondents from secondary schools were more likely to suggest increasing the amount of PPA time (32% compared to 17%), reducing class size/having more teachers in classrooms (15% compared to 5%) and limiting the number of classes per teacher (11% compared to 1%).

Good practice

Respondents offered examples of good practice from their schools, to highlight ways in which the teacher workload has been managed in their settings. These have been included throughout the report to illustrate ideas of **'what works well'** for different members of the schools workforce in their own schools. They include examples of:

- sharing resources, learning materials, PPA/planning time

- schools with staff members specialising in reprographics

- use of specialist software for marking, tracking and data requirements

- code sheets, templates and comment banks for marking, reporting and planning

The positive impact of school leadership which prioritised workload according to its effect on teaching and learning was also mentioned.

1. Introduction

The Workload Challenge consultation ran between 22 October and 21 November 2014. It used an online self-completion survey which was placed on the Times Educational Supplement (TES) website and was disseminated via the Department for Education and union websites, newsletters and social media.

CooperGibson Research were commissioned by the Department for Education to conduct qualitative coding and descriptive analysis of a sample of responses. This report presents the findings from this analysis.

1.1 Methodology

The Workload Challenge survey asked three key open-ended consultation questions:

1. Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time. Where do these come from?
2. Send us your solutions and strategies for tackling workload – what works well in your school?
3. What do you think should be done to tackle unnecessary workload - by government, by schools or by others?

When reading and interpreting the results please note that respondents were self-selecting so the results should not be read as being representative of the overall school workforce.

The sample

In total, 43,832 people submitted a response to the consultation. A sample of 10% of full responses was selected for coding and analysis of the qualitative questions. The sample included only cases where all three open questions had responses (thereby omitting any non-responses). In addition, respondents from sixth form colleges were taken out of the sample because they will be considered separately.

This left a total of 16,820 cases, of which a 10% sample was coded and analysed – 1,685 cases. To reduce bias, a systematic sampling technique was used where every 10th response was selected for analysis. A data checking process explored representation across key contextual variables such as school type and job role in order to ascertain that there was a good match between the sample and larger database and therefore, that analysis of the sample allows conclusions to be drawn about key themes, findings and the frequency with which they arise.

Table 1: Sampling from the survey responses

	Full dataset – total number of survey respondents	Number of sixth form colleges removed	Number of non-responses removed*	Final dataset for analysis	Final sample (10%)
Number of cases	43,832	1,455	Q1 = 22,673 + Q2 = 2,128 + Q3 = 756 Total = 25,557	16,820	1,685

*Incremental removal of non-response cases for each question. Includes submissions with errors.

The analysis in this report is therefore based on a sample of 1,685 cases.

Respondent characteristics

Survey respondents were asked to select options that best described their main job role, and the type of school in which they worked. Classroom teachers and middle leaders were the most common types of respondent to the survey and the survey sample reflected this.

Table 2: "Please select the answer below which best describes your role." Workload Challenge survey, 2014

	Number of respondents in sample	Percentage of sample (base 1680)	Percentage of all survey respondents
Classroom teacher	948	56%	57%
Middle leader	503	30%	28%
Senior Leader	168	10%	10%
Headteacher / Principal	39	2%	2%
Support staff	17	1%	2%
Governor*	5	0%	0%
Employer*	0	0%	0%
Total	1,680	99%	99%

*Note that Governors represent 0.3% of the sample. Employers represent 0.09% of the sample. Those not responding are not included. Percentages are rounded.

It should be noted that for the school type, respondents were able to select more than one option, but they did not always do so. Therefore it was not always possible for example, to identify the type of academy that they worked in (e.g. primary or secondary).

Table 3: "What type of school do you currently work in?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014.

	Number of responses	Percentage of sample (base 1,682)	Percentage of survey respondents (base 42,378)
Academy	631	38%	33%
Primary	602	36%	39%
Secondary	412	25%	26%
Maintained	167	10%	9%
Special schools	29	2%	2%
Alternative provision	10	1%	1%
Free school*	6	0%	1%
Early Years*	6	0%	1%
Total	1,682		

*Note that free schools and early years represent 0.4% each of the sample. Those not responding are not included. Percentages are rounded and sum over 100 due to multiple response.

Of the 1,654 sample respondents who indicated their gender, 79% were female and 21% were male. Of the 1,665 respondents who indicated their age, 39% were aged between 25 and 34.

Figure 1: "How old are you?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014 (sample base = 1,665 respondents).
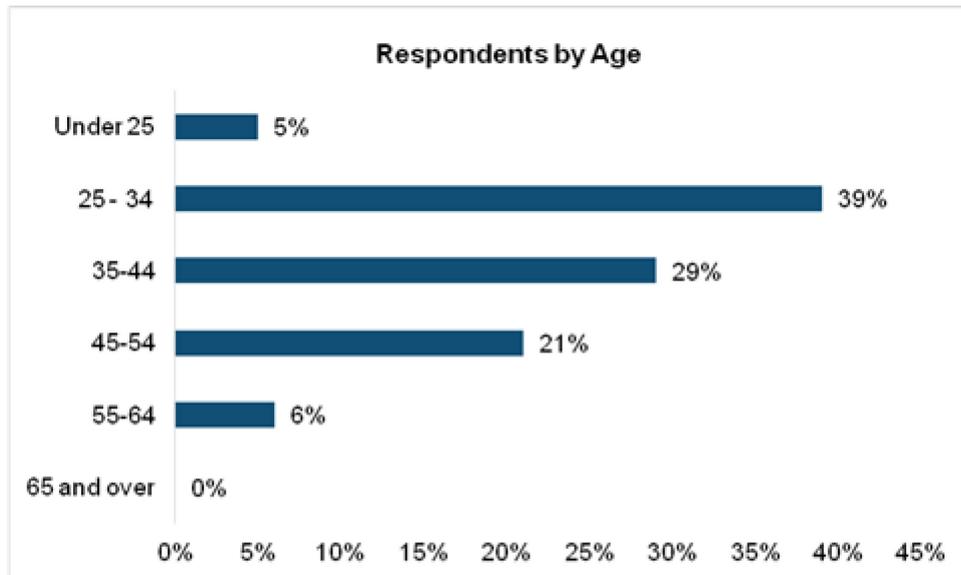
*Note that age 65 and over represented 0.2% of the sample. Those not responding are not included. Percentages are rounded.

Responses were received from participants with a broad range of teaching experience – from those still in, or just a few months out of, their Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) year, to individuals who had taught for several decades. This question was coded post completion of the survey since the question was originally designed as an open question. Whilst in many cases, respondents had included the amount of time they had been qualified as a teacher, others had submitted more complex responses, including when they qualified abroad for example. It was not entirely clear in some cases how they defined 'qualifying'.

Figure 2: "When did you qualify as a teacher?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014 (sample base = 1,636 respondents).

Respondent by Time Qualified as a Teacher

Category	Percentage
Less than a year/NQT	6%
1 - 2 years	11%
3 - 5 years	18%
6 - 10 years	23%
11 - 15 years	16%
16 - 20 years	11%
20 + years	15%
Not qualified	1%
N/A	1%
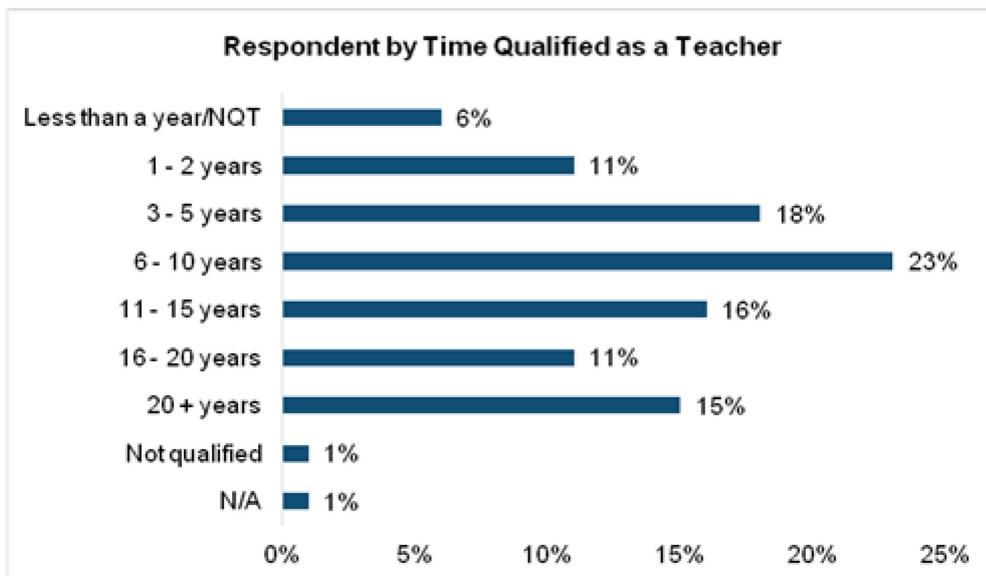
*Note that those not responding are not included.

Coding framework

CooperGibson Research developed a coding framework by selecting 100 responses (25 per quartile) to manually code by 'task', 'good practice' and 'solution'. Drawing broadly from a grounded theory approach, each response was analysed to develop a series of categories and themes based on common responses. The resulting coding framework was agreed by Department for Education before being used to analyse the sample of responses. The coding framework can be found in Appendix 1.

Analysis and reporting

The open responses of selected cases were coded into data analysis software to allow quantitative and qualitative analysis to take place. Coded responses have been analysed quantitatively[2] to explore proportion of representation and qualitatively to explore the range of responses and contexts. The analysis is presented in the report along with direct quotes which illustrate or exemplify the findings. Where respondents have noted what they thought to be useful or good practice, this is highlighted using shaded boxes.

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[2] For ease of interpretation, analysis is conducted using the number of respondents answering the questions as the base, including where questions allowed multiple response. The patterns that emerge are similar when compared to analysis by number of responses although using number of respondents can inflate the percentages in some cases.

2. Unnecessary and Unproductive Tasks

This section provides the findings of the analysis of the qualitative responses to the first open question of Workload Challenge survey which asked what tasks respondents felt took up too much of their time. Respondents were asked to describe the tasks that they were required to carry out during their working day which they considered unnecessary and/or unproductive. The analysis was also able to explore what it was that made these tasks burdensome, where these tasks come from, and any examples of good practice.

Throughout this section, examples of good practice are highlighted where survey respondents offered them as solutions or ideas of what worked well in their school in dealing with workload challenges.

2.1 Defining 'unnecessary and unproductive'

> *Most tasks are not unnecessary but with so many students and so many classes it all aggregates into an unmanageable workload. Marking, tracking, recording poor behaviour, reporting, planning - all of it becomes difficult to achieve when classes are so large and we have so many classes.*
> (Classroom teacher, secondary)

It is important to clarify that many respondents noted that the tasks they undertook were not 'unnecessary' or 'unproductive' as the survey question asked – indeed, they recognised that they were essential parts of working within a school. However, it was the level of **detail (63%)**, **duplication (45%) and bureaucracy (41%)** that occurred during these tasks that they felt were the 'unnecessary' or 'unproductive' aspects of them.[3]

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[3] The analysis of responses to the first question in the online consultation included identification of comments relating to 'what makes the tasks burdensome?' Many respondents gave an indication of the burdensome nature of different tasks which were coded against the framework; for example, they might directly refer to the level of detail required in marking. In some cases the burdensome nature of tasks were inferred from the explanations and descriptions of tasks provided by respondents, such as descriptions of the ways in which marking is conducted. In other cases, inferences could not be made as the responses did not refer in any way to what could make a task burdensome, they might for example, just list 'marking or 'excessive marking' as an unnecessary/unproductive task.

Figure 3: What makes the tasks burdensome? "Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time. Where do these come from?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014 (sample base = 1,685 respondents)
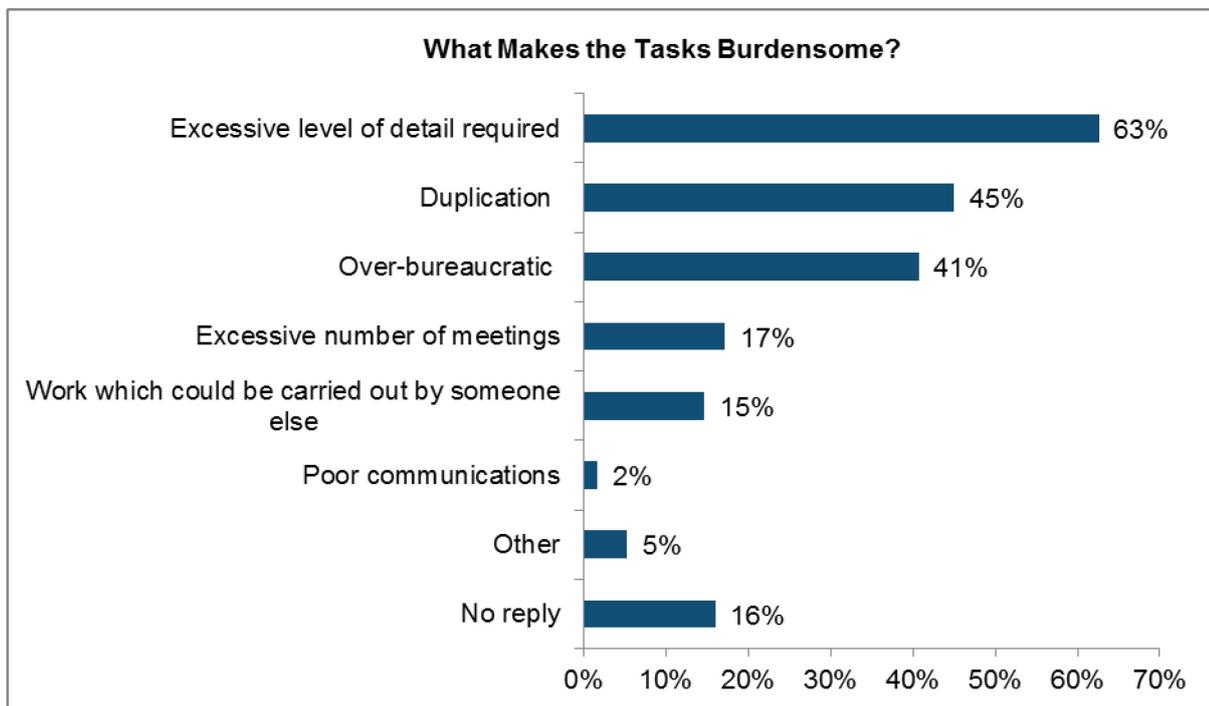
Some respondents also noted that the tasks were all necessary but it was that there were so many of them to complete that made their workload excessive.

Other reasons given for tasks being burdensome were:

- the volume of work that respondents needed to get through in the time available (particularly in relation to marking – examples given ranged between 90 and 120 books per day, to 120 – 300 books per fortnight)

- unrealistic/very short deadlines

- meetings that were very long in duration, or not relevant to their Key Stage/subject area/role

- too many sources of information to manage: email, bulletins, virtual learning environments (VLEs), meetings/briefings

- poor/unreliable Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment and lack of software training

- lack of clarity with observation requirements

Respondents most commonly said that the burden of this unnecessary workload was created by **accountability/perceived pressures of Ofsted** (53%), and **tasks set by senior/middle leaders** (51%).

Working to policies set at local/school level (35%) and policy change at national level (34%) were also significant drivers for teacher workload.

2.2 Overall findings

The most frequently mentioned source of unnecessary and unproductive workload, according to 82% of respondents, was within the category of **lesson planning and policies, assessment and reporting administration**.

Other common broad themes that responses corresponded to were school administration and management, and accountability. These themes give overarching indications of the nature of tasks that school staff fulfil and perceive to be unnecessary or unproductive. They represent broad headings relating to range of tasks. These headings/themes and related tasks form the coding framework (see Appendix 1).

Table 4: Most common unproductive work areas. "Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time. Where do these come from?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014 (sample base = 1645 respondents).

	Percentage of respondents
Lesson planning and policies, assessment and reporting administration	82%
School administration and management	76%
Accountability	73%
Behaviour management	13%
Administrative planning and policies	12%
Pupil support	10%

*Note that those not responding are not included. Base is number of respondents who gave at least one response across all categories.

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Figure 4: Unnecessary and unproductive tasks. "Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time. Where do these come from?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014 (sample base = 1,645 respondents).[4]
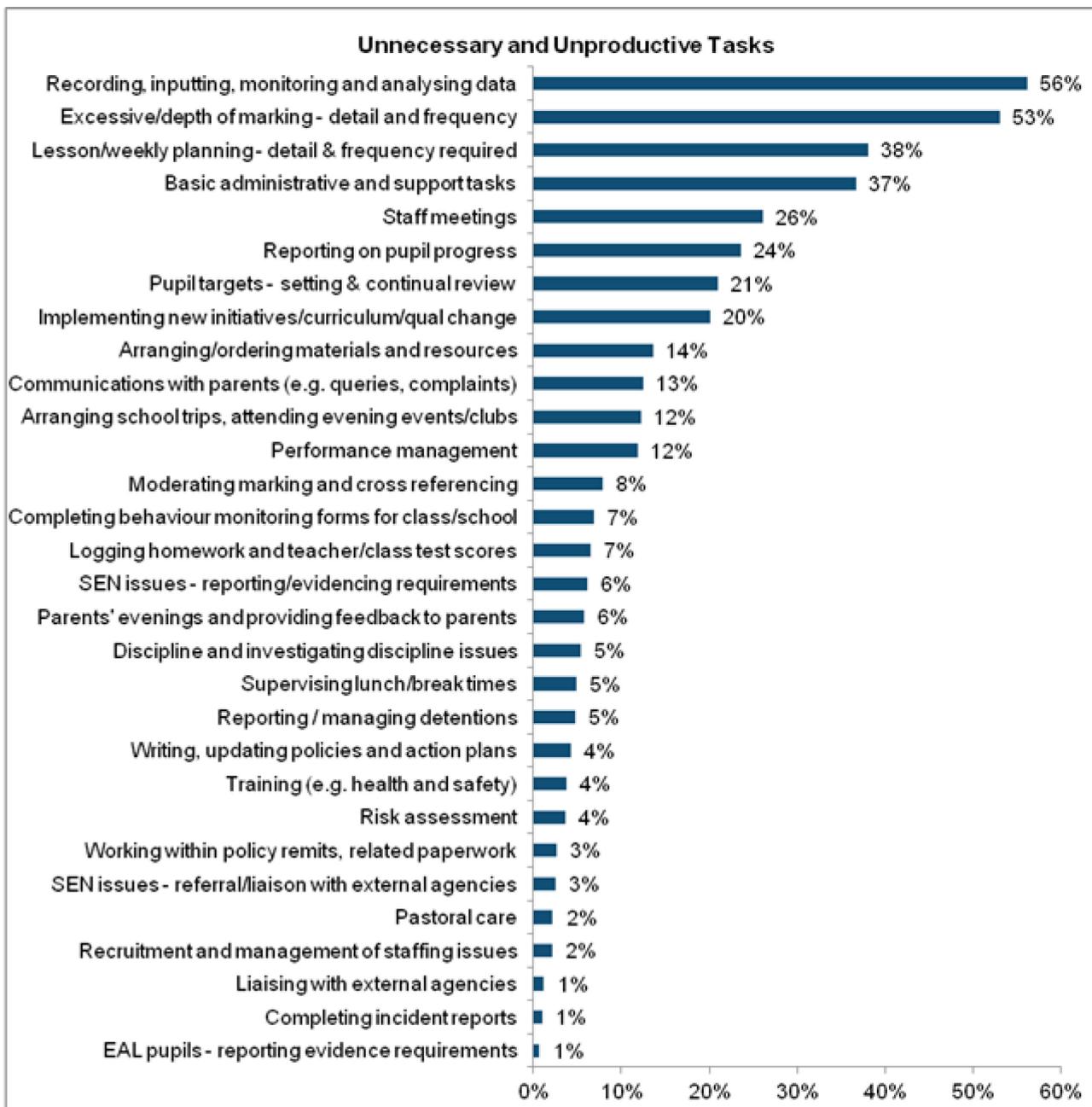
*Note that those not responding are not included.

As the above figure shows, there were two specific tasks that were reported as being particularly burdensome for survey respondents. These were each mentioned by over half of respondents as being unnecessary and unproductive:

- recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data (56%)

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[4] Some descriptions have been shortened. Full descriptions can be found in the coding framework under question 1a in Appendix 1.

- excessive/depth of marking – detail and frequency required (53%)

Respondents reported an excessive level of detail required for both of these tasks, as well as short timescales in which to complete a large volume of work. Where respondents were having to **input, record** and **analyse data** they predominantly noted having to produce the same information in different formats. For example, where they inputted data onto the school information management systems (SIMS), they were then having to reproduce the same data in hard copy format on other in-house forms for use by school leadership teams. This includes tracking grades, targets, assessments and predicted outcomes as well as approaches for each student – several times per year.

> *We are expected to input data for data collections 7 times a year for Y11, 5 times a year for Y10, Y12 and Y13 and 3 times a year for Y7 and Y8. This includes an effort score, predicted grade, controlled assessment grade and a comment on general approach/targets for each student in our class. We are also expected to input data for our class work in terms of recording controlled assessment scores and mock exams scores. (*Middle leader, academy)

Data also needed to be analysed and tracked and reported – tasks that many respondents felt were not within their areas of expertise.

> *We purchased an online data tracker two years ago which we have to input all assessment data. Yet we still have to reproduce the information manually in her specified tables which can be in 4 or 5 different formats, such as for pupil premium children including all previous data and personal details, lists of children not meeting their targets or underachieving. All of which is readily available on the tracker but we are required to reproduce the data in different charts and tables which the online programme could do in minutes but takes us hours. We do this termly*. (Classroom teacher, primary)

Sometimes these tasks necessitated the use of outdated computer equipment and software (creating technical issues and slowing down the process), or conversely, software that respondents felt that they – or leadership teams – were not proficient in and therefore not able to use to its full potential in terms of streamlining data collection and analysis/reporting.

Example of what works well

Individual tracking sheets that can calculate an average level/grade which can then be sent in a csv file to data manager who copies and pastes into MIS. (Middle leader, secondary)

Requirements for **in-depth marking** created heavy workloads for many survey respondents, with it being commonly reported that teachers would be required to provide written feedback on all homework, and then ensure that students were offered the opportunity to offer their response to the feedback, which then needed to also be reviewed by the teacher.

> *Marking every last shred of work with developmental and next step marking, checking that the children have responded to the marking and getting them to respond to yesterday's marking as well as today's marking, and marking that they have read my marking and so on ad infinitum (*Middle leader, primary)

Providing written 'next steps' and 'wishes' against pieces of work was not always felt to be a valuable way to encourage young people to engage with their learning, where verbal interaction and encouragement may be more timely, more effective and also more efficient. It was also noted that the requirement for written feedback for Early Years and Key Stage 1 children was not appropriate when literacy levels were not at a stage where young people were able to read through a teacher's feedback.

Examples of what works well

Peer marking is an effective policy for reducing excessive marking, and reinforcing the skills developed through homework. It also gives students the ability to measure themselves against peers, rather than just teacher models. (Classroom teacher, secondary)

Having printable marking stickers for 'what went well' and 'even better if' comments. I realised that I was writing the same (or very similar) comments on pupils' marking stickers, so started to type my comments on my laptop and print them off. It was criticised for 'not being personal' to each pupil, but the comments are still selected to suit each pupils targets and it saves me about an hour on each set of books when marking. (Classroom teacher, secondary/academy)

As mentioned, the **volume** of marking was an issue for many respondents – this was commonly reported to be hundreds of books per week/fortnight. With very little time available within lessons, or school hours for marking, it was very common to read respondents saying that they worked late into the evenings and at weekends to ensure that all marking was completed on time.

> *Current expectations on marking is once every 6 lessons however there is no consideration on the number of classes taught or class sizes. I currently*

teach 14 groups with an average class size of 30. Rushing through a book takes approximately 5 minutes so a class set can take anywhere between 2 to 3 hours and after that our school policy insists upon a 10 minute mend which students have to respond to and then this needs to be remarked before the next lesson. Taking all this into account a single set can take 4 to 5 hours and when multiplied by 14 groups over a 4 week period to mark all the sets I usually spend between 15 to 20 hours a week marking books. (Classroom teacher, academy)

There were six other tasks that were reported as adding unnecessary burden to the general workload by at least 20% of respondents. Examples of the tasks that were given within these categories are given below:

- **Lesson/weekly planning (38%)**. Respondents tended to focus on the level of detail required in plans to be submitted, including annotated seating plans for each class and justifying their decisions made for these; having to change and revisit plans during the course of a week as lessons have developed; teachers having to spend a lot of time preparing to teach lessons in subject areas that they are not trained to teach in, or lessons that require cover at short notice; tight deadlines to submit weekly lesson plans – including deadlines over the weekend, and the requirement to make amendments to their plans.

Weekly planning … with learning objectives and success criteria for every area of submission to head of year, due in Saturday 5 p.m. Feedback given on Sunday evening with suggestions for even better if. This takes all day on a Saturday- so I have no weekend... I find it demoralizing and soul destroying that my class is outstanding and yet this gives the impression of lack of trust. (Classroom teacher, primary)

> **Example of what works well**
>
> *Planning together as a phase helps as we can divide up the workload. One of us will take science and PE [physical education] for the half term, while another may take part of the English and history etc. We all plan our own maths.* (Classroom teacher, primary)

Furthermore, respondents commonly felt that much of their planning time or planning resources/templates could be better managed if they were shared across the school within teams and departments.

We are not allowed to share plans in our school. So each teacher writes their own plans even though there are 3 or 4 other classes of the same age children. If we shared our plans with each other it would cut hours off our working week. Our

planning templates are over complicated and detailed. At least one sheet of A4 per hour taught. (Classroom teacher, primary)

- **Basic administration and support tasks (37%)**. Respondents listed tasks including hanging classroom and communal area wall displays; photocopying materials and paperwork; sticking worksheets into exercise books; cleaning classrooms, materials and equipment; washing PE kits. Although these tasks were necessary it was felt that these tasks could be delegated to administrative or technical staff so as to free up time for student-centred work.

  A common response was the need to read and respond to a large volume of emails.

  Keeping on top of school notices especially emails. I rarely receive less than 500 emails a week. (Classroom teacher, maintained secondary)

  Example of what works well

  In our school we have a team dedicated to reprographics and resources meaning that we do not have to photocopy/cut out resources for lessons ourselves. This is a huge timesaver. We also have a team of non-teaching pastoral staff to deal with pastoral issues while teaching members of the team are taking lessons. This helps the school run smoothly. (Middle teacher, academy)

  Many suggested a cap on the number of emails that are sent, time allowed for reading emails and responding and more streamlined approaches (including using Twitter-type approaches to ensure that notes are shorter).

- **Staff meetings (26%)** tended to be an issue for respondents due to an excessive number of meetings they were required to attend; overly long duration of meetings; meeting content not being relevant to them (e.g. to the specific Key Stage, role/department); and the content of meetings duplicating information already distributed in bulletins and emails.

  Example of what works well

  After us voicing our concern about a morning 'business' meeting cutting too much into our prep time before the children come in, the meeting was cancelled and replaced with a weekly business memo - this is emailed to teachers and a paper copy is stuck onto a board in the staffroom. (Classroom teacher, primary academy)

- **Reporting on pupil progress (21%) and pupil targets – setting and continual review (incl. target culture) (21%).** Many respondents found the frequency of written reports to parents, and the level of detail required, to be very burdensome.

School reports have become termly, as a secondary teacher that is 450 reports as opposed to 150. This generates huge amounts of paper and becomes a box ticking exercise. (Classroom teacher, maintained)

Other tasks in these categories include maintaining written internal reports on whole class and individual learner progress (on top of separate data collection exercises); compiling reports on interventions made for those pupils who have not made progress as expected; holding 'intervention meetings'; reviewing targets, setting new targets, assessing and re-assessing work until a learner has met the target that has been set for them. This includes the work created by setting pupils' targets based on inappropriate data to predict progress (e.g. previous achievements/outcomes rather than current teacher assessment and knowledge of pupil circumstances) and the resulting number of pupils who are then classified as not meeting their targets and needing intervention.

We are not allowed to put in a result which is lower than the previous half term's result, as this is a sign that the student has not made 'progress'. This is nonsense because each assessment evaluates different subject skills and therefore there will inevitably be a fluctuation in results. (Classroom teacher, secondary)

> **Examples of what works well**
>
> *Previously the children's learning journeys were a major paperwork issue but since switching to an online leaning journey (SPTO) this has become more bearable. (Classroom teacher, maintained)*
>
> *In our school the report writing is made easier by using a comment bank so you just have to type a number into SIMs rather than having to type a comment for each individual student. (Middle leader, academy)*

There was particular concern for teachers that these targets were based on academic achievement and outcomes and did not take into account the specific circumstances of the individual child outside of school.

Another issue for the necessity to meet pupil targets was the requirement for teachers to collect evidence against their own performance management plans, e.g., '*Pushing children to make 4+ points progress in a year at KS2 [key stage 2] and 6 points at KS1 [key stage 1] when we know that children do not make progress in regimented jumps (linked to performance management and pay)* (Middle leader, primary).

A concern was consistently raised by survey respondents that learner outcomes were used as a benchmark for teacher remuneration packages and performance measures rather than practical educational tools.

- **Implementing new initiatives/curriculum/qualification change (20%)** posed problems such as having to rewrite schemes of work; administer changes to the syllabus; and create new classroom/learning resources and redevelop all new lesson plans; as old teaching approaches or plans cannot be retained because they are no longer relevant. Concerns were also raised that no additional time was allocated to the substantial volume of work required when curriculum or qualification changes are introduced.

Repeated changes to syllabuses and curriculum reform. In the past 8 years of teaching Maths we've had to cope with change from 3 tiers to 2, coursework to no coursework, modular to units, units to linear and another new curriculum coming on stream currently as well as an introduction of QWC [quality of written communication] *marks, functional skills at GCSE alone. In addition to this there have been changes at KS3 and A level. All this change requires changes to schemes of work, assessments and approaches to teaching and learning.* (Classroom teacher, academy)

Examples of what works well

Only implementing changes which I feel will have a significant positive impact on pupil progress and the well-being of children. Staff working together in teams. Collaboration and partnerships with specialists, other local schools, universities and local community. Time to embed changes and timescale to monitor real impact. (Headteacher, primary)

As a small school we have created research teams that lead on school improvement - one looks at curriculum, another assessment and a third pupil voice/ pastoral care. This removes the pressure on individuals to lead curriculum areas. (Headteacher, primary)

2.3 Variation across job role

The responses to the themes across the coding framework can be separated into two groups.

1. Those that broadly affect the school workforce – lesson planning and policies, assessment and reporting; school administration and management; and accountability.
2. Those that are a specific issue for specialist school staff/job roles – behaviour management, pupil support and administrative planning/policies.

The roles in the first group have been broadly covered by the previous section: tasks such as working with data, maintaining records, keeping up with curriculum change and new initiatives were reported to affect all types of job role.

However, for particular job roles there are specific tasks that create more of a burden:

- **Headteachers and senior leaders** reported unnecessary/unproductive work coming from the paperwork related to collating reports and records to evidence school progress (24%); updating policies and action plans which also included updating school websites (including statutory information that is required to be on websites, and this can change throughout the academic year) (11%); working within policy remits (9%) and liaising with governors (6%).

- **Headteachers and senior leaders also report a heavy workload involved in** making referrals/liaising with external agencies for special educational needs (SEN) pupils (9%), as well as SEN evidencing and reporting requirements (9%). It was noted that the time spent on referrals is very necessary, but these requirements can be burdensome upon the member of staff concerned with a lack of specialist staff available for SEN learners, budgetary restraints and referrals not being a quick process, and also the learner does not receive the best level of support that they require whilst this is taking place.

  *Lack of support from agencies to support SEND [special educational needs and disability] children due to budget cuts and cuts to services this makes it harder to access services and support which means we need to keep increasingly detailed evidence. (*Senior leader, primary)

- Nearly a third of **classroom teachers (31%), middle (29%) and senior leaders** (31%) reported a significant burden in workload resulting from having their **teaching monitored**. This included lesson observations, learning walks, peer assessments; controlled assessments; mock exams and tests every term; collecting evidence and preparing for Ofsted inspections and the pressures of doing so. The fear of inspection and the culture this had created in many schools was the cause of much concern for respondents, as well as the lack of clarity in terms of what Ofsted inspectors would be looking for and what headteachers and senior leadership teams were requesting from members of staff in terms of the evidence provided.

  We are always under the 'threat' of Ofsted…we are told that Ofsted do not judge individual lessons and grade them - so why are we always judged in this way in our internal observations? (Classroom teacher, academy)

- **Classroom teachers, middle and senior leaders** were more likely than other role types to report having to manage difficulties with behaviour and discipline, detentions and the paperwork and administration that is involved in terms of

contacting parents, giving up break times and lunchtimes, chasing learners who do not attend detentions, and logging behavioural issues via the completion of monitoring forms. The proportions of respondents reporting these tasks as part of their workload were between 5% and 8%.

2.4 Variation across school type

Analysis by school type is less detailed as respondents from academies, for example, did not identify the type of academy (e.g. primary, secondary) in which they worked; and only a small number of special schools (28) free schools (5) and early years settings (6) were included in the sample of 10%. The chart below compares responses from staff in primary and secondary schools.

It shows that staff in secondary schools were more likely to find data-driven exercises more burdensome, as well as those related to behaviour management, where this was reported to be an issue by respondents.

Figure 5: "Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time." "What type of school do you currently work in?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014 (sample base = 1,642 respondents)

Unnecessary and unproductive tasks by school type

Task	Primary school	Secondary school
Recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data	47%	62%
Lesson/weekly planning – detail % frequency required	51%	27%
Behaviour management	8%	20%
Arranging/ordering materials and resources	19%	7%
SEN issues – reporting/evidencing requirements	10%	4%
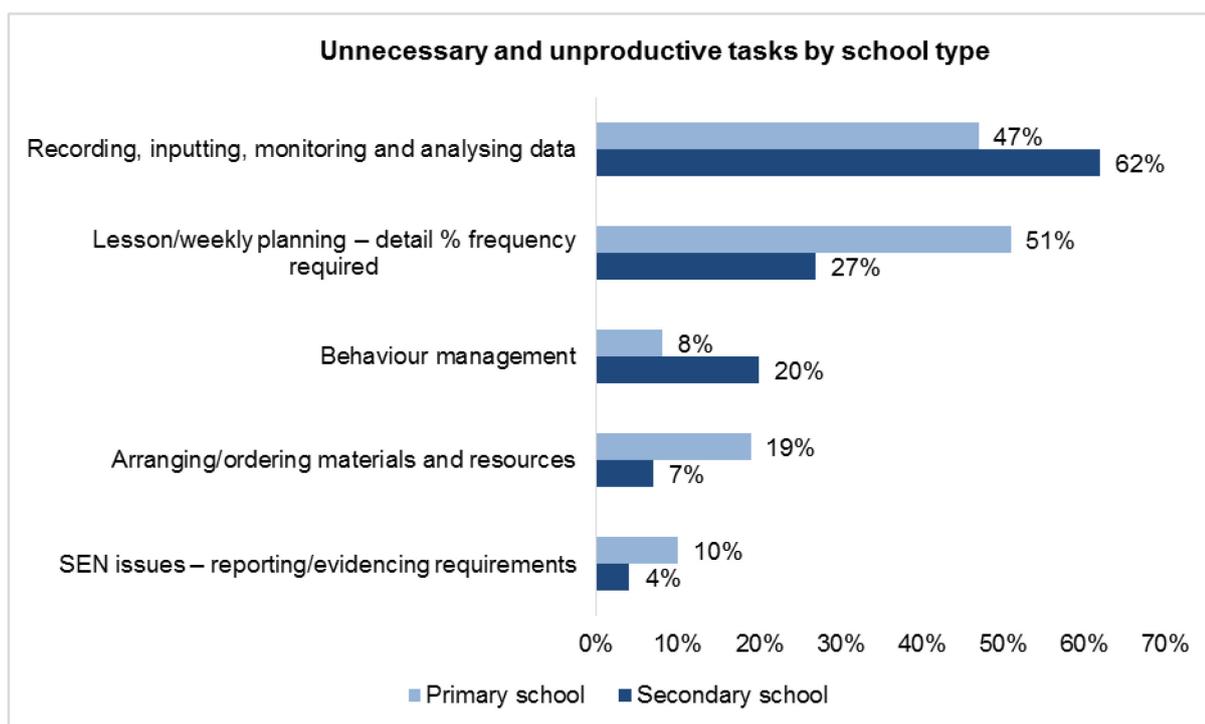
* Note that those not responding are not included. Behaviour management' tasks have been combined for this analysis due to the different nature of these tasks between primary and secondary schools and include completing behaviour monitoring forms (4% primary; 8% secondary), discipline and investigating discipline issues (3% primary; 6% secondary), and reporting and managing detentions (1% primary; 6% secondary).

The majority (51%) of respondents from primary schools - in comparison to 27% in secondary schools – found the workload for **weekly lesson planning** a burden. There is also a notable difference in workload for respondents from primary schools related to

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arranging and ordering materials and resources. These tasks were related to ordering new text books, carrying out stock counts and placing orders with suppliers and creating learning resources for use in the classroom.

Respondents from primary schools were also more likely to note the workload burden in relation to the reporting and evidencing requirements necessary for SEN support.

2.5 Variation by time qualified

The longer a teacher had been qualified, the more likely they were to find tasks related to data gathering, reporting, evidencing and monitoring requirements unnecessary and unproductive (see the table below).

Table 5: "Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time." "When did you qualify as a teacher?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014. (sample base = 1, 596 respondents)

	Base	Less than 1 year/NQT	1–2 years	3–5 years	6–10 years	11–15 years	16–20 years	Over 20 years	Not qualified
Recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data	899	53%	54%	56%	59%	54%	56%	61%	31%
Providing written evidence	237	8%	10%	12%	15%	18%	21%	18%	0%
Monitoring teaching & learning	473	20%	32%	28%	29%	29%	38%	31%	36%
Maintaining records	495	20%	27%	32%	33%	32%	34%	32%	18%
Discipline and investigating discipline issues	85	11%	5%	5%	6%	5%	6%	3%	0%
Completing behaviour monitoring forms	108	12%	10%	8%	7%	6%	6%	1%	18%
Excessive depth of marking	853	64%	63%	58%	53%	54%	53%	42%	46%
Base	1596	89	168	281	368	246	175	245	11

*Note that those not responding are not included.

This tallies with other findings in the survey that teachers wished to be trusted and professionals, not be monitored so much and not be required to evidence every task that they carry out (see strategies and solutions). Conversely, teachers who had been qualified for five years or less were more likely to mention the depth of marking and dealing with discipline and behavioural issues as sources of unnecessary or unproductive workload.

3. Solutions and Strategies for Tackling Workload Issues

Respondents to the Workload Challenge survey were asked to make suggestions of:

- any solutions and strategies for tackling workload: examples of what works in their school

- what should be done to tackle unnecessary workload by the government, schools and others.

The questions were again designed as open text response and have been coded to allow quantitative and comparative analysis. Since the questions allowed open response, the coding was designed to allow multiple selection of potential solutions. The responses to these two questions were often very similar in the nature and as such, the coding framework was designed to encompass all responses under a broad theme of 'solutions' and including seven broad categories:

- communications

- support

- effective use of time and resources

- ICT

- professionalism

- curriculum and qualifications

- accountability

The following analysis will explore the detail under these broad categories as well as the prevalence of responses against the categories themselves. Any examples of what respondents highlighted as good practice were also drawn out and are included in the previous section and below.

3.1 Key overarching solutions

The key solutions are grouped under the following themes (identified in the coding framework). Out of the sample respondents (1,630) answering the two questions questions around solutions and ways forward, **changes in accountability and support** offered were most common.

Table 6: Most common themes for solutions. "Send us your solutions and strategies for tackling workload – what works well in your school?", "What do you think should be done to tackle unnecessary workload – by government, schools or others?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014 (sample base = 1,630 respondents).

	Percentage of respondents
Accountability	40%
Support	34%
Effective use of time and resources	25%
Professionalism	24%
Communications	19%
Curriculum and qualifications	14%
ICT	6%

*Note: percentages are rounded. Those not responding are not included.

3.2 Specific solutions

The range of suggested solutions and proportion of respondents suggesting these solutions are set out below. In line with what respondents thought were the most overly burdensome tasks, the most common solutions they suggested were:

- modify marking arrangements (32%)

- reduce the need for data inputting and analysis (25%)

- increase time for planning, preparation and assessment (25%)

- trust teachers as professionals (24%)

- reduce frequency of curriculum/qualification/examination changes (22%)

- review/change Ofsted processes (21%)

- delegate administrative duties (19%)

- modify planning requirements (18%)

- reduce frequency of written reporting (15%)

Figure 6: "Send us your solutions and strategies for tackling workload – what works well in your school?", "What do you think should be done to tackle unnecessary workload – by government, schools or others?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014 (sample base = 1,680 respondents).[5]

Solutions and Strategies for Tackling Workload Pressures

Strategy	%
Modify marking requirements	32%
Reduce data inputting and analysis requirements	25%
Increase amount of PPA time allocated to each teacher	25%
Trust teachers as professionals	24%
Reduce frequency of curriculum/qual/exam change	22%
Review/change Ofsted processes	21%
Delegate administrative duties	19%
Modify planning requirements	18%
Reduce frequency of written reporting	15%
Reduce number of meetings	13%
Hire additional administrative staff (provide funding)	13%
Provide clear guidance (Ofsted, policy changes)	12%
Reduce number of assessments	12%
Reduce internal monitoring processes, observations	11%
Cap on working hours	11%
Reduce class size / more teachers in classrooms	10%
Reduce target setting culture	10%
Encourage staff to share good practice/resources	10%
Hire additional teaching assistants (provide funding)	10%
Improve teamwork across staff/departments/schools	9%
Culture change - reduce fear of inspection processes	8%
Clear information on policy changes/new initiatives	7%
Review remuneration packages for teachers	7%
Limit number of classes per teacher	6%
Encourage use of electronic platforms	6%
More high quality CPD/training	6%
Encourage parental responsibility and engagement	5%
Provide generic policies for schools to use	4%
Improve existing IT systems	4%
Introduce new IT systems - specialist software	4%
Limit moderation of experienced staff	3%
Ensure staff breaks/lunchtime are not lost to other tasks	3%
Publicise good practice of teacher achievements	3%
More efficient pupil referral/assessment (SEN)	2%
Policy makers to spend time in schools shadowing staff	2%

*Note that those not responding are not included.

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[5] Some descriptions have been shortened. Full descriptions can be found in the coding framework under questions 2 and 3 in Appendix 1.

3.3 Exploring the range of solutions

Accountability

Accountability and providing evidence of performance (both of teachers and pupils) was one of the most significant concerns across the board. This in itself accounts for many of those most common responses in terms of the unproductive tasks and relative solutions (as shown in the previous section).

Respondents were concerned about the frequency of assessments which created additional preparation time, marking, logging outcomes and pressure on teachers and pupils. 11% stated that the number of assessments should be reduced.

In relation to accountability, respondents tended to refer to the need to reduce paperwork, the amount of evidence required and records of work completed. Streamlining the 'paper trail' was a significant response. They referred to the excessive planning and marking (as seen in previous sections) and the need to reduce the frequency and depth of marking and depth of planning that was taking place. Suggestions included:

> *Quick mark once a week, deep marking fortnightly in Key Stage 3 English.* (Classroom teacher, maintained)

> *School should allow departments to adapt marking procedures to suit their subject. How can a method of marking history essays be suitable for marking a food practical lesson or piece of artwork ?!* (Classroom teacher, academy)

> *Removing lesson planning and replacing it with simply an overview for the term of all subjects in one place. This should not be the case for NQTs as they would need a plan.* (Senior leader, primary)

Examples of what works well

Assessment strategies:

Still assessing children, but no levels or sub levels. I give each of them short feedback with greater emphasis on self-assessment. Every teacher setting suitable targets for each student and marking as necessary. (Middle leader, secondary)

We also don't do 'evidence gathering' to assess maths. Loads of schools have huge teacher assessment files where they highlight evidence of all sorts of things to get assessment info for children. For maths this is fraught with difficulties and hugely time consuming. We assess by summative tests - quick to mark and give lots of useful formative information which feeds into planning. We encourage teachers to spend their time on planning rather than marking. (Senior leader, maintained)

Marking and feedback strategies:

Our school has just introduced a new marking system, using codes which the children understand, to reduce the time it takes to comment on work. (Classroom teacher, secondary)

Marking - we have a clear set of marking symbols and use a range of teacher/peer/self/reflective marking. Some schools (not mine thankfully!) require teachers to in-depth mark every piece of work. When it takes 2 hours to mark books for one class for one lesson it is not possible to do it for every piece of work. (Senior leader, primary)

Senior leadership in my school try to ensure that we keep paper work for staff at a minimum. Marking is very focussed uses highlighters for work that needs editing. Clear symbols for younger age groups in marking stars and wishes - e.g. top hat for capital letters. Year groups are given one group PPA time a week for joint planning. Clear and easy end of year reports that give precise information and do not require long narratives. (No job role, maintained primary)

Using marking code sheets in English book marking has been a lifesaver. We stole the marking codes from the MFL [modern foreign languages] department and adapted them to suit English marking. It's cut down the time it takes me to mark a set of class books by about 2 hours because I write the code, and the students respond by writing out the target. (Senior leader, academy secondary)

In our school the report writing is made easier by using a comment bank so you just have to type a number into SIMs rather than having to type a comment for each individual student. (Middle leader, academy)

Planning strategies:

I have slimmed down what I plan and now plan a whole unit of maths or literacy in one go. I also no longer do interactive whiteboard slides as they ended up confusing children anyway and they were hard to write on. I felt I was planning 3 times: writing the plans, making the resources and then doing the slides. I also now have working wall displays so I can do them as and when we do things. (Classroom teacher, primary)

Obviously I plan lessons, but what is actually useful to me in the classroom is, say, a bullet-pointed list, not two A4 sheets of well written and all-inclusive plans so that anybody walking through the door at any time knows the background of all the children. (Classroom teacher, primary)

We have gone from giving a four page lesson plan required for an observation to not having to give a lesson plan just a seating plan with information on all the pupils. (Middle leader, secondary)

Respondents sometimes suggested contradictory solutions, for example whereas many found that producing detailed seating plans was unnecessarily time consuming, sometimes these were suggested as an improvement on having to provide even more detailed information (as seen in the final quote above). A similar contradiction is seen in the quote below where use of Assessment for Learning grids are suggested as a helpful solution, whereas other teachers found them burdensome.

Reducing the amount of paperwork involved in marking and planning was an important theme. There were several suggestions for how to do this, many calling for more standardised ways to record marks and feedback.

> *Assessment for Learning grids. A simple grid that we can use to record children who are succeeding at a task or those who are needing extra support.* (Classroom teacher, primary)

> *Compulsory templates filled out rather than lots of different ways to show progress and attainment.* (Classroom teacher, primary)

> *Marking codes/shorthand, universal across the school, stuck in the front of every exercise book to avoid repetition of same comments when marking (e.g. "underline with a ruler", "spelling error", etc.)* (Middle leader, academy)

Just over one-fifth (21%) also called for changes to the Ofsted process and requirements for evidence.

> *Ofsted to not place so much emphasis on pupil books, it is not appropriate to record work in every single lesson and it only provides a sample/snapshot of pupil progress.* (Classroom teacher, primary)

> *Make it compulsory for school leaders to reduce the unnecessary tasks and make this part of the OFSTED remit that schools are not adding unnecessary tasks.* (Middle leader, secondary)

The requirement for evidence was seen as overly burdensome and it appears that some felt that they were being required to produce evidence which might not be in line with Ofsted requirements. To this end, 12% of respondents requested more guidance on what Ofsted are required to look at and for this to be made clear to senior leadership teams with the aim of reducing the need for so much evidence gathering. They also called for inspectors to be better informed:

I read the document highlighting myths about Ofsted[6], just a fortnight after being Ofsted inspected. The inspectors [did several things that the document said they would not, e.g.] commented on feedback in books. They also graded lessons - either the 'support and guidance' in this document needs reviewing or the inspectors need to be reminded about these things themselves. (Classroom teacher, primary)

Another request was for Ofsted to be more integrated with the process of improvement, taking some responsibility for supporting the school to improve. This links with changes that others suggested, such as moving to a more regional system where local inspectors are known and familiar with schools and work more closely with schools on improvement targets.

I believe the problem comes with the way a school is measured. To measure school on figures and past results with no idea of social and regional pros and cons does not work. The system needs to change, I believe a regional system where teams visit schools regularly and get involved with the communities would understand what an individual school is achieving. (Classroom teacher, secondary)

Observations and monitoring of teaching seems to cause great anxiety and additional workload for teachers in planning and providing the necessary evidence. Suggestions were to reduce the frequency of observations and learning walks, to change the culture of observation to be more developmental rather judgemental and reduce the culture of scrutiny and monitoring.

Instead of observations more team teaching with management. (Middle leader, primary)

Example of what works well

I feel my current school does not have a successful system, but my last school did and they would only do one performance management observation per term and during that a quick check of books and planning. (Classroom teacher, academy)

Support

Much of the support that was requested was to allow delegation of administrative and non-teaching tasks (mentioned by 19% of respondents). Respondents also called for more teaching assistants (10%) and administrators (13%) who could take on, for

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[6] Ofsted Inspections – clarification for schools (Ofsted Ref 140169, 2014)
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/ofsted-inspections-clarification-for-schools

example, data inputting and monitoring work, updating displays, registers and chasing absent pupils or missing homework.

<div style="background-color:#dce6f1;">

Example of what works well

Parent helpers who I can get to do my laminating or photocopying for me. (Classroom teacher, primary)

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Whilst some do have support from staff with data management responsibilities, another suggested:

> *Employ a data analyst/database manager (part time) in each school or in the LA to produce the necessary reports/diagrams so that teachers don't have to spend precious planning and assessment time fiddling around with data.* (Classroom teacher, maintained)

> *Government*   *Set out data management standards that schools must achieve and test this in the same way that schools are inspected by OFSTED. This could be extended to ensure teachers' time is used effectively in other ways.*

> *Schools*   *1. Recognise that a database of student performance is a powerful tool that can enhance staff and managers understanding of pupil achievement and progress.*
>
> *2. Invest time to re-engineer the data collection, analysis and reporting processes so that teacher time can be better focused on teaching not administration.*
>
> *3.Employ competent data management professionals who can add value to the teaching process.*

> *Governors*   *Respond and take action when advised by teachers that issues such as this are important.* (Classroom teacher, secondary)

They also would like a reduction in workload around extra-curricular activities and after school clubs.

> *After school clubs run by outside agencies.* (Classroom teacher, primary)

> *Government directive that class teachers should not be expected to run after school clubs, some heads expect every teacher to run a club every term.* (Senior leader, primary)

Support from teaching assistants was highly valued and it was suggested that with training and additional paid hours, they could become more involved in marking and providing feedback, planning and preparing resources.

Issues related to dealing with behaviour management and pastoral issues were concerns for 6% of respondents and some solutions related to having more support in this area.

> *More behaviour support from SLT [senior leadership team].* (Classroom teacher, academy)

> *Specific, paid pastoral staff and greater collaboration with outside agencies to deal with significant pastoral issues.* (Classroom teacher, academy)

> *Involve local youth workers to pick up some of the pastoral stress. Space for youth workers to work in schools, take assemblies and promote their clubs. This is where students can find positive peer groups and supportive adults outside families and school. Funding for our youth workers, they are light relief; please help them help us more!* (Classroom teacher, secondary)

The need for support also came through with requests to increase PPA time (25%), reduce class sizes and employ more teachers (10%) and place a cap on working hours (11%). The respondents were suggesting these solutions in order to ensure a manageable workload - fewer pupils in classes would mean less planning time (including for differentiation), marking and paperwork per teacher.

Effective use of time and resources

Whilst reducing the number of meetings was one of the most common responses under this theme (mentioned by 13%), respondents also requested fewer evening commitments such as after school clubs, parents' evenings and intervention sessions to allow them time to catch up with marking and planning. One of the key themes to emerge was that teachers wanted to be trusted and given more autonomy. However, a number of respondents could also see the benefit in having some tasks centralised or shared between groups of schools in order to save time and resources.

Sharing tasks and working with colleagues was mentioned as a strong solution:

> *PPA time with your year group teacher so that you can plan together and moderate work together.* (Middle leader, primary)

> *Sharing resources in department meetings, having a departmental workbook for our subject.* (Classroom teacher, secondary)

Examples of what works well

We work together as a team in my department so we divide up the lesson planning and pool our lesson plans and resources. (Classroom teacher, secondary)

Class sharing. We are looking at class sharing to allow teachers to deliver a single lesson multiple times to different classes. (Classroom teacher, maintained secondary)

Improving teamwork and sharing resources was reported as a solution by 9% of the sample:

> *If departments had time to produce full schemes of work, this would save individual teachers time, as these lessons need tweaking for one's particular students rather than creating from scratch. Collaborative planning needs time but it also saves time, especially for less experienced teachers, whom it supports.* (Classroom teacher, academy)

> *Planning - we are all in family groups with other schools. We share a VLE [virtual learning environment] website but only have access to our own individual school's VLE. Why don't we share access to each other's school VLEs. We could look at each other's planning and adapt it for our own school - that would save hours. Why don't schools that get excellent results in one area e.g. literacy do all the planning for that area for all the schools in exchange for a different school doing all the planning for a different area of learning? I have put all my flip charts, worksheets on TES [Times Education Supplement] website and these have been downloaded 104,000 times. Why don't all teachers share their resources? It will take a good hour to produce a good quality flip chart to be used to teach one lesson - get them shared!!!* (Classroom teacher, academy primary)

> *Team planning opportunities. Time factored into the timetable weekly for this purpose. Reviewing and planning time every half term for the whole dept together. Statutory maximum of 65% teaching timetable rather than the current 90%.* (Middle leader, academy free school)

The above quote also suggests a reduction in teaching contact time. Others also made this suggestion, recognising that the amount of teaching time increases the amount of planning (and that is now required to be more detailed) and reduces the time available for planning and marking.

Data inputting, monitoring and analysis was reported to be one of the most burdensome activities. As such, there was a strong feeling that the need for data should be reduced (25%), along with the duplication that this can cause. Some suggested central databases or systems and the use of ICT/technology to minimise the need to collate and record data.

Professionalism

The overarching concerns about the level of evidence required and the need for constant accountability measures to be in place has led to many respondents suggesting that Government, Ofsted and senior leadership teams should place trust in their professional abilities. The earlier section on *specific solutions* highlighted how nearly one-quarter of respondents noted trusting teachers to be a solution.

Trust in teachers. Does everything need to be evidenced, can a teacher's knowledge of what a child can/cannot do be enough rather than something in books every day to prove it? E.g. I know a child can count in 2s because we count in 2s in class-do I need a worksheet to evidence this? What a waste of time! (Classroom teacher, primary)

Less emphasis on what the school THINKS Ofsted wants and more emphasis given to the professional judgement of teachers - they are the ones with PEOPLE (not data) in front of them every day. (Middle leader, academy)

We need to be left alone more if we are good or outstanding and there should be some real value IN those words. Not you're outstanding this week, but we'd better check up on you again next week by looking at your books/planning/room/ data sheets/ etc. etc. etc. (Classroom teacher, academy)

Example of what works well

I trust my teachers and do not ask to see their planning unless I have serious concerns. (Headteacher/principal, primary)

Am lucky to work in an amazing school with a head who puts very little pressure on us to tick boxes. He encourages us to think about 'how will this improve the learning of the children' for any task we do. Our literacy team recently wanted to introduce a school wide approach to planning and monitoring guided reading. Our head challenged them feeling they we're not clear enough about how the extra work would benefit children's learning. Having a head driving this message is amazing. (Senior leader, maintained primary)

Some also suggested removing performance related pay, improving pay scales or paying for additional hours worked.

Performance related pay was thought to add to the range of evidence that teachers needed to gather, some noting how they had performance management folders for their evidence and they had to provide additional copies of detailed planning to senior leaders as evidence of their work.

Have data analysis and graphs / tables be produced centrally in a school instead of each individual teacher doing this for all of their classes for performance management. (Middle leader, secondary)

Examples of what works well

Performance management: Rather than completing this on top of your normal workload - I had 14 meetings with staff and then had to type up all forms, a previous school I worked in gave over a training day [to performance management] so that we could do this over the course of the day and spend time on it. (Middle leader, academy)

CPD

Improved CPD was called for by some. This included better use of INSET (in-service training) days and more tailored training sessions where learning was not duplicated and was relevant. They also saw this as an opportunity to monitor and reduce the unnecessary tasks taking place.

Example of what works well

We have a well-structured CPD programme with weekly sessions in which monitoring and other such yearly activities are scheduled in. A CPD recently recommended we have a yearly "binning" discussion in which counter-productive practices are abandoned. (Classroom teacher, primary)

The above quote relates well to suggestions around monitoring the amount of unproductive or overly burdensome work. Others suggested supervision of staff to ensure *'workloads are survivable'* (Classroom teacher, special school). Some requested more guidance to headteachers regarding the administration tasks that teachers should be expected/not expected to undertake; and incorporating some form of assessment of the workload and unnecessary paperwork being undertaken into Ofsted inspections.

Example of what works well

As someone who leads CPD in a school, I make sure that if I ask staff to adopt a new method, I consider the workload implications. This might mean saying that they need not do something else instead. (Middle leader, secondary)

Communications

It is clear that respondents felt that there is a need for improved communications about changes in policy, examination, curriculum and qualifications and the requirements of Ofsted – for their own understanding and that of the senior leadership teams. A fair proportion of the sample also called for more sharing of resources and good practice (10%) – this was particularly noted for planning where it felt that sharing previous planning rounds could reduce unnecessary workload.

In the previous sections, it was noted how many felt that reproducing and updating policies as the system changes, created substantial additional extra work. In response, it was suggested that policies could be shared across schools and sample policies provided for schools to use and adapt as they wish, would save time.

> *Create government website which contains model policies - on the whole schools generally 'borrow' policies from other schools either directly or via [a forum].* (Headteacher/principal, primary)

Generate some sort of legal backing for staff taking students out on trips with government approved forms that reduce the time necessary to plan to take students out. Industrial visits would be great if they did not mean a day's paperwork each time! (Classroom teacher, academy)

Councils/schools generate generic risk assessments for common trips. (Classroom teacher, maintained)

Another concern was the sense of responsibility that young people and parents have for children's education. Many called for this responsibility to be shared more equally across the teaching profession, parents and young people themselves and for young people particularly to take more responsibility.

Change the environment that teachers work in by splitting responsibility equally between students, staff and parents in the achievement of students. (Middle leader, academy secondary)

Curriculum and qualifications

This theme related to the changes taking place in the education system as a whole. The Workload Challenge survey has taken place at a time of great change and it has been noted how this has caused some concern for many in the profession.

SLT [senior leadership team] *should remember what it's like to teach a full timetable and all new policy MUST be workload impact assessed - I've taught for almost ten years and never seen this happen.* (Middle leader, academy)

Overall, just under-one quarter of the survey sample called for a reduction in the frequency of curriculum, qualification and examination changes.

Have one National Curriculum that we all follow. Introduce it over a period of time, so that it feeds and flows from Primary School to Secondary School. The current system is going to leave gaps in knowledge for the next 10 years. Only the current reception pupils are starting from the beginning of the new curriculum. Leave the GCSE alone. (Middle leader, school type not stated)

Don't remove levels without replacing them with another national assessment system - schools are now having to spend a vast amount of time producing their own assessment system. (Headteacher/principal, primary)

Suggestions were also made around curriculum and qualification content and structure to allow time to cover all of the required content.

Put creative subjects into the baccalaureate selection so we get adequate timetable allocation to deliver the curriculum would be my most crucial improvement! (Classroom teacher, secondary)

ICT

Some could see the potential to use ICT as a means of reducing workload (6% suggested using electronic platforms for monitoring, marking and assessment; 8% suggested using improved or new IT systems). A few suggested using the internet as a communication tool, including a system like Twitter or using the VLE so that messages are shorter and therefore quicker to get through than emails. Using ICT was particularly important for reducing unnecessary paperwork and duplication of tasks due to needing to record data and evidence in different systems or places.

Electronic means to provide feedback	*All docs should be e-docs. Each student could receive feedback as verbal recordings held on a student database that remained with them (cloud based) throughout their education. It will save the teacher time.* (Middle leader, secondary)
	Give parents/carers access to pupil class and homework marks online, this is a meaningful and constant supply of feedback which is already logged and does not require writing yet another report. (Classroom teacher, maintained)
Electronic monitoring and reporting mechanisms	*Use a system such as classroom monitor where data can be entered easily and groups of children who have attained the same point (e.g. table groups a teacher has sat and worked with) can be highlighted in bulk.* (Classroom teacher, maintained)
	Writing school reports is my most dreaded job as they take my entire May half term. I think we could produce a computer generated individual report with just a short section for a personal comment which would contain the same info but would be so much quicker. (Senior leader, primary)
	Schools could give back time to teachers by having someone who is not a teacher take the register, or simply get the pupils to 'clock in' to school. Surely the technology must exist. (Middle leader, academy)
	School Pupil Tracker Online (SPTO) for APP, data analysis, parent viewings, parent meeting info (attendance, timer, data at touch of button), targets...everything in one place! (Middle leader, academy)
Centralised data hub	*If there is one thing I don't understand, it is why we have to keep replicating and re-arranging data to our line manager,*

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or anyone carrying out an observation. Any of these people should be able to print off the data they need from one hub/place. Teachers should be able to upload their data, comments, evidence etc. There needs to be an inclusive and comprehensive data system where teachers can easily modify and add evidence data etc. that is not time consuming and involves endless clicking to find the right action. There should be data managers who manage data and respond to our requests, leaving us more time to focus on teaching. (Classroom teacher, maintained secondary)

We need one centralised computerised system for the entire country for provision maps/data to go on to. This should also include education, health and care plans too. It would mean that health professionals and CP could add their information too. It would be password protected with only certain people allowed to look at certain information. By having this system, it would mean less time creating fancy excel spreadsheets and more time could be spent supporting teachers in the classroom. (Senior leader, academy)

Example of what works well

We are totally systematic about saving all lesson resources on our school server - in lots of primaries things get saved on people's memory sticks or my docs. Then when people swap year groups them have to re plan everything from scratch. (Senior leader, maintained primary)

Plan straight onto the smart notebook that you will be using to deliver the lesson. (Middle leader, maintained)

3.4 Variation in solutions across role types

The table below shows the top three solutions suggested by respondents according to their role type. Classroom teachers and middle leaders were more likely to suggest changes to practical teaching and learning activities or data-related work whereas senior leaders and headteachers focused more on wider policy change and external drivers.

Table 7: Top three solutions. "Send us your solutions and strategies for tackling workload – what works well in your school?", "What do you think should be done to tackle unnecessary workload – by government, schools or others?" Workload Challenge survey, 2014

Classroom teacher (base 919)	Middle leader (base 491)	Senior leader (base 162)	Headteacher / Principal (base 36)	Support staff* (base 17)
Modify marking requirements (34%) Reduce data inputting and analysis requirements (26%) Increase amount of PPA time allocated to each teacher (25%)	Modify marking requirements (30%) Increase amount of PPA time allocated to each teacher (29%) Reduce data inputting and analysis requirements (26%)	Modify marking requirements (30%) Reduce frequency of curriculum/ qualification/ examination changes (27%) Review/change Ofsted processes (25%)	Reduce frequency of curriculum/ qualification/ examination changes (53%) Review/change Ofsted processes (39%) Trust teachers as professionals (31%)	Reduce frequency of curriculum/ qualification/ examination changes (30%) Modify marking requirements (24%)

*Note that those not responding are not included. Bases are shown as numbers were low for some role types.

3.5 Variation by school type[7]

Exploring the range of solutions across school/organisation type does not highlight substantial difference in the responses. Comparing primary and secondary schools however, higher proportions of primary schools (15% compared to 9%) suggested providing clear advice/guidance on Ofsted requirements, policy, curriculum and

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[7] Note that the categorisation of type of school was provided by respondents. They were able to select all options that apply. However, many only selected academy and did not give an indication of whether they were in a primary or secondary school. The base for this analysis is was the number of respondents rather than number of responses to allow more meaningful comparison across school type.

qualification changes; hiring additional teaching assistants (13% compared to 8%); modifying planning requirements (50% compared to 25%) and modifying marking arrangements (50% compared to 36%).

Conversely, higher proportions of secondary schools suggested increasing the amount of PPA time (32% compared to 17%), reducing class size/having more teachers in classrooms (15% compared to 5%) and limiting the number of classes per teacher (11% compared to 1%).

Appendix 1: Coding Framework

1a: Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time.

1. **Accountability / providing evidence e.g. for inspection**
   a. Recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data
   b. Providing written evidence and reports (to Governors/LA)
   c. Liaising with Governors
   d. Monitoring teaching and learning (incl. observation)
   e. Pressures on 'Requires Improvement' schools to provide additional evidence
   f. Pressures on newly qualified teachers to provide evidence

2. **School administration and management**
   a. Maintaining records
   b. Absenteeism (including chasing absenteeism and contacting parents)
   c. Communications with parents (e.g. queries, complaints)
   d. Basic administrative and support tasks
   e. Supervising lunch/break times
   f. Arranging school trips, attending/running evening events/clubs
   g. Arranging/ordering materials and resources
   h. Liaising with external agencies
   i. Performance management
   j. Staff meetings
   k. Recruitment and management of staffing issues

3. **Administrative planning and policies**
   a. Writing, updating policies and action plans
   b. Working within policy remits and completing paperwork (incl writing local offer)
   c. Risk assessment
   d. Training (e.g. health and safety)

4. **Lesson planning, assessment and reporting administration**
   a. Lesson/weekly planning – detail & frequency required
   b. Curriculum and qualification change/implementing new initiatives
   c. Pupil targets – setting & continual review (incl target culture)
   d. Excessive/depth of marking – detail and frequency required
   e. Reporting on pupil progress
   f. Parents' evenings and providing feedback to parents
   g. Moderating marking and cross referencing
   h. Logging homework and teacher/class test scores

5. **Behaviour management**
   a. Discipline and investigating discipline issues
   b. Reporting / managing detentions
   c. Completing behaviour monitoring forms for class/school

6. **Pupil support**
   a. Pastoral care
   b. Completing incident reports
   c. SEN issues – referrals/liaison with external agencies/ meetings
   d. SEN issues – reporting/evidencing requirements
   e. EAL pupils – reporting evidence requirements

1b. What makes them burdensome?

1. Excessive level of detail required
2. Over-bureaucratic (e.g. requirement to fill in standard template)
3. Duplication (e.g. same information in different forms)
4. Excessive number of meetings
5. Work which could be carried out by someone else (e.g. non-teaching staff/admin staff)
6. Poor communications
7. Other

1c: Where do these come from?

1. Government - national policy change (e.g. new curriculum)
2. Policies (local, school)
3. Ofqual (new qualifications/examinations)
4. Accountability / pressures of Ofsted
5. Requirement for individualised learning and differentiation
6. Requirement for school improvement
7. Tasks set by leaders/middle leaders
8. Lack of capacity
9. Employer (e.g. local authority / academy trust)
10. Other agencies
11. Funding requirements

2: Send us your solutions and strategies for tackling workload – what works well in your school? 3: What do you think should be done to tackle unnecessary workload - by government, by schools or by others?

These two questions have been combined for the coding since they have very similar responses around solutions. Good practice examples have been noted separately.

1. **Communications**
    a. Provide clear advice/guidance – Ofsted requirements, policy/curriculum/qualification changes
    b. Encourage staff to share good practice/resources (within school)
    c. Publicise good practice/positive examples of teacher achievements
    d. Provide clear information on policy changes/new initiatives
    e. Encourage parental responsibility and engagement
    f. Provide generic policies for schools to use
    g. Policy makers to spend time in schools shadowing staff

2. **Support (including time and resources)**
    a. Hire additional teaching assistants (incl funding for this)
    b. Hire additional administrative staff (incl funding for this)
    c. Delegate administrative duties
    d. Increase amount of PPA time allocated to each teacher
    e. Reduce class size / more teachers in classrooms
    f. Limit number of classes per teacher
    g. Ensure staff breaks/lunchtime are not lost to other tasks
    h. Cap on working hours

3. **Efficiency**
    a. Reduce number of meetings
    b. Reduce data inputting and analysis requirements
    c. Improve teamwork across staff/departments/schools
    d. More efficient pupil referral and assessment processes (SEN)

4. **ICT**
    a. Improve existing IT systems
    b. Introduce new IT systems – e.g. use of specialist software
    c. Encourage more use of electronic platforms for monitoring/marking/assessment

5. **Professionalism**
    a. Trust teachers as professionals
    b. Culture change - reduce fear of Ofsted/inspection processes
    c. More high quality CPD/training (incl workload management, expectations)

    d. Review remuneration packages for teachers

6. Curriculum and qualifications
    a. Reduce frequency of curriculum/qualification/examination changes

7. Accountability
    a. Review/change Ofsted processes
    b. Modify marking requirements
    c. Modify planning requirements
    d. Reduce frequency of written reporting
    e. Reduce number of assessments
    f. Reduce target setting culture
    g. Reduce internal monitoring processes, observations
    h. Limit moderation of experienced staff

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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