

Beyond Expectations - Planning

In March 2016, the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group published a report entitled 'Eliminating unnecessary workload around planning and teaching resources'. This short document summarises that report and provides a response for academies within DSAT.

Clarification regarding inspection has been useful in beginning to address this issue. We have learned that inspectors do not require schools to provide individual lesson plans to inspectors and neither do they require schools to provide previous lesson plans.

We are agreeable to the use of quality assured resources, including textbooks, which often include digital supplementary resources, student books or teacher guides, reducing the time teachers spend on searching for ad hoc resources, allowing them to focus on the intellectual exercise of planning sequences of lessons. We do not believe that published resources are a substitute for high quality teaching, neither should they be used all the time as a matter of course.

The report quotes John Hattie: 'Planning can be done in many ways, but the most powerful is when teachers work together to develop plans, develop common understandings of what is worth teaching, collaborate on understanding their beliefs of challenge and progress, and work together to evaluate the impact of their planning on student outcomes'.

- We expect our senior leaders to ensure there is ongoing work being undertaken to develop a shared understanding of effective teaching to inform planning, underpinned by effective continuous professional development.
- Leaders should not automatically require the same planning format across the school, although we understand that there may be a general agreement that this is helpful. Teachers should not be expected to reproduce published materials on a common planning format. Access to good quality schemes of work should reduce workload rather than create it.
- Leaders should review demands made on teachers in relation to planning to ensure that minimum requirements to be effective are made. Where more intensive plans are needed to improve teaching, a review date is set.
- Leaders should ensure, as a default expectation that a fully resourced, collaboratively produced, scheme of work is in place for all teachers for the start of each term.
- Leaders should make clear who will be planning new schemes of work and associated resources, what time they will have available to do so, and how this will be made available to all staff in a timely fashion.
- Leaders should ensure that the highest quality resources are available, valuing professionally produced resources as much as those created in-house.
- Leaders should ensure that PPA is delivered in units of time which allow for substantial planning.
- Senior leaders should work with middle and subject leaders to identify alternative ways to evidence 'effective teaching and planning', emphasising teacher development.
- Subject and phase leaders should lead discussions on quality assurance with senior leaders and governors to help them understand where a subject- or phase-specific approach may be most appropriate – and why the volume of paper plans may be an inadequate proxy.
- Teachers should engage in collaborative planning to develop their skills and knowledge, to share their expertise, and to benefit from the expertise of their peers.
- Senior leaders should consider the use of externally produced and quality assured resources, such as textbooks or teacher guides.

We can make a difference if all parties work together to go beyond expectations in delivering effective teaching, supported by appropriate planning and resources such that children are inspired!