

Planning Guidance for Primary Teachers



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Supporting teachers

Dear Colleagues

This leaflet has been produced with teachers and headteachers to help reduce the time teachers spend on lesson planning. It is designed for your own reference and to promote discussion, leading, where necessary, to changes in practice.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers study of Teacher Workload (2001) found that most teachers would like to spend less time on planning. It also suggests that teachers produce more documentation than is necessary in the belief that it is required by Ofsted or LEA inspectors. This leaflet sets the record straight about what is expected by national authorities.

Planning is an essential aspect of teachers' work. All teachers need to plan what they will teach and how they will teach it, but spending excessive amounts of time on long, detailed plans does not necessarily lead to better teaching and learning. There is no prescribed format or length. For example, all that is specified in the Ofsted framework is that "teachers plan effectively, using clear objectives that children understand".

Teachers' time should be used for aspects of planning that are going to be useful **for their own purposes**, and which have a direct impact upon the **quality of teaching and learning**. Teachers should not spend time producing documentation that does not meet these two purposes. Nor should any teacher feel they have to start with a blank sheet when planning for the week ahead. As in other professions, experience can and should be shared. Collaborative planning can be liberating, supportive and effective. There are also many resources available that provide useful starting points and greatly reduce planning time.

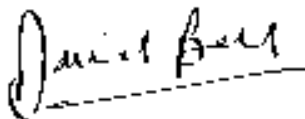
It is hoped that where practice is already in line with this advice, schools will be reassured. Where it is not, schools should be encouraged to review their practice and this will hopefully lead to a consequent reduction in workload.

In summary, the effectiveness of teachers' planning should be judged by the quality of teaching and learning in lessons and the progress pupils make over time.

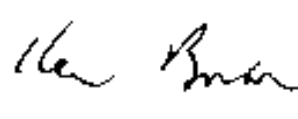
Signed



Estelle Morris



David Bell



Ken Boston

Teachers – Effective planning, less paperwork!

HOW TO CUT UNNECESSARY WORK IN PLANNING...

- **Your plans are for you and other professionals working with you.** Occasionally, others will need to see your planning. When Ofsted inspectors arrive they will look for clear objectives that show your intentions for what children will learn and how these objectives will be achieved. Inspectors will not expect to find a particular model or format for planning; they will be much more interested in the impact of planning on your teaching and the children's learning.
- **You do not need to work alone when you are doing your planning.** Work with other colleagues, draw on their specialist knowledge and involve teaching assistants where possible. Share out the planning between you if this is practicable. It will save time and stimulate discussions.
- **The use of ICT can reduce planning time substantially in the long term.** It makes it much easier to share plans with colleagues, and also to re-use, copy or adapt plans.
- **You don't need to start from scratch with a blank sheet of paper.** Good quality plans are already available, such as National Numeracy Strategy Unit Plans and National Literacy Strategy medium term plans and planning exemplification, plans written by colleagues and plans on the web. For medium-term planning, the QCA schemes of work contain the detail you need for each subject. It is not necessary to write things out again; QCA schemes, for example, can easily be converted into lesson plans if accompanied by post-its, notes and annotations to add detail of your own. Planning in this way will meet with Ofsted's approval providing it has a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- **As you write your plans, think about what you are going to assess.** Be selective, focus on the key aspects of learning that you wish to assess, and highlight these on your plan. Then use a simple system for recording children's progress. Link curricular targets to your plans for groups of pupils and some individuals.

Headteachers – How to help make planning more efficient...

- **It is important to monitor the quality and impact of teachers' planning.** This does not mean that you need to see everyone's plans each week. Looking at plans is one part of a strategy for improving teaching and learning. You might sample plans with a focus on particular year groups or subjects, linking this sampling with lesson observations and discussion with teachers. This will also help you to identify particular teachers who need extra support.
- **Build ICT capacity in the school.** Although some teachers may be reluctant initially to use a computer for planning, the long-term benefits for workload and classroom practice are beyond doubt.
- **A standard form of presentation is not a necessity and can cause unnecessary work for teachers!** It is more important to ensure that key elements of planning are consistent across all classes. As teachers become familiar with these, they can concentrate on the content of the plans rather than their presentation. Common key elements make it easier to share and monitor plans.
- **Encourage teachers to use and adapt existing plans.** Plans that have been used effectively in the past or high-quality materials available from different sources, such as the National Numeracy Strategy Unit Plans and National Literacy Strategy medium term plans and planning exemplification, can be adapted to meet the needs of the class. Less time is then spent on duplicating plans.

For further information visit

www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling

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