

[News story: Pubs Code Adjudicator \(PCA\) Bulletin June 2018](#)

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[Speech: Nick Gibb: Teachers are taking control of their profession](#)

Thank you.

It is a pleasure to be attending the Festival of Education again, particularly given the opportunity to celebrate the life of Jo Cox and reflect on what unites us on her principle that "we have more in common than that which divides us."

Something we all have in common is a memory of a teacher who inspired us and changed the course of our life. But it is defining what teachers share in common that is a question being considered by the Department for Education – working closely with the profession.

Professions are defined by their shared bodies of knowledge and expert practice. The formative years of careers in accountancy and actuarial practice are punctuated for example by exams, ensuring all prospective members of those esteemed professions share in the accumulated knowledge of the profession.

Similarly, whatever their eventual specialisation, all prospective solicitors must demonstrate proficiency in a range of legal areas and undertake the professional skills course.

As with these other top professions, teaching has a shared body of knowledge and professional skills that define what it is to be a teacher.

In recent years, teachers have taken much greater control of their profession and have begun to define what it is to be an expert teacher.

Teachers have allowed themselves into what has been called the secret garden of pedagogy and curriculum. Some free schools and leading multi-academy trusts have radically raised expectations.

For example, Dixons Trinity Academy – a free school based in Bradford – achieved extraordinary results in 2017 with its first set of GCSEs, placing it amongst the top schools in England for the progress achieved by its pupils. Strikingly, the progress score for disadvantaged pupils was higher than for that of their more affluent peers. This school – and many others – shows that socio-economic background need not be a barrier to academic excellence.

And leading multi-academy trusts – often led by inspirational head teachers – demonstrate that excellence need not be restricted to isolated schools. Thanks to a forensic approach to curriculum design and the implementation of evidence-based approaches to managing behaviour, the Inspiration Trust and the Harris Federation – two of the best performing multi-academy trusts – have conclusively demonstrated that all pupils can achieve – whether they live in coastal Norfolk or inner-city London.

In doing so, these teachers – and countless others around the country – are taking back control of their profession. They are helping to define excellence and raise standards. But, unlike other professions, this shared body of knowledge remains largely uncoded.

Perhaps because each and every one of us is familiar with teaching – unlike law or accountancy – what it takes to become an expert teacher is too often taken for granted. As with so many complex skills when performed by a true expert, teaching appears effortless.

Close to a decade and a half of benefitting as pupils from expert teaching can desensitise us to fully appreciating the knowledge and expertise on show, as well as the range of techniques and behaviours being employed; a phenomenon well known to trainee teachers observing their experienced colleagues dealing expertly with a tricky group of year 8s.

When observing an expert teacher, it is easy to take for granted the innumerable decisions that have contributed to the sense of purposeful calm in their classroom:

- Where to stand, so as to see all the pupils;
- How to use and vary tone of voice throughout the lesson;
- Who to question, what to ask, and how to ask it;
- How to sequence examples and explanations;
- How to use humour;
- Where to sit particular pupils;
- How to build on prior knowledge; and
- How to build a class culture over the course of an academic year.

All of these decisions – and innumerable more – are critical to teaching expertise. Yet, these decisions remain invisible to lay-observers. And perhaps because this expertise is invisible, it is too often taken for

granted.

But this list of decisions doesn't touch on questions of curriculum planning and other important roles that teachers take on around school.

Furthermore, it doesn't even touch on how expert teachers use their understanding of evidence from education, cognitive science and other relevant domains to inform their decisions in class.

All of this lies beneath the surface of decisions made by expert teachers, and yet it remains invisible to the lay-observer, and – critically – to new teachers.

And – as research has shown – even experienced head teachers struggle to identify expert teaching over a short period of time. As Becky Allen and Sam Sims highlight in their new book 'The Teacher Gap', head teachers are able to identify their strongest teachers on their staff – with whom they are familiar – with good reliability, but they are much less reliably able to discern good and bad teaching during interview lessons.

Expertise in teaching is difficult to discern except over an extended period of time. That is why it is pleasing to see the practice of grading individual lessons slowly being driven out of the system. And it is also why the government has urged Initial Teacher Training providers to ensure they are making offers to applicants who are ready to train to teach.

It is my view that in previous years too many universities rejected candidates who were ready to be trained to become highly effective and inspirational teachers. The government has worked with universities and Ofsted to ensure that they are incentivised to take on applicants who are ready to train to teach.

Whilst many people grow up aspiring to be a teacher, teaching expertise still needs to be taught. As with all walks of life, some natural dispositions give a head start to some prospective teachers, but the craft of expert teaching like all expertise needs to be taught. And teaching expertise – as with the expertise required of other top professions – cannot be mastered in just one year.

That is why the government has been working closely with the profession, with experts and teacher representative groups to develop proposals to strengthen career progression for teachers. This spring, the government – after extensive consultation – announced the development of an Early Career Framework.

In the future, newly qualified teachers will have two years of structured training to support them through an extended induction period. These two years of training will help ensure that all newly qualified teachers can share in the professional knowledge that defines what it is to be a teacher.

The Early Career Framework will seek to codify the core knowledge and skills required to develop into an expert teacher, so that all teachers – wherever they train – are taught this shared body of knowledge.

Already, many new teachers are fortunate enough to have mentors who help them to develop expertise in the classroom, but we want this to be the norm for all new teachers. So we are strengthening the mentoring provision for early career teachers to ensure that all schools have excellent mentors with access to high-quality training. We know that good mentoring is not generic, but is highly specific. It should draw high-quality evidence and the mentor's own expertise, providing relevant feedback to new teachers and opportunity to practise and hone new skills.

But the government wants to ensure that support exists throughout a teacher's career, as it does for other top professionals.

Following 5 years of training, medical students progress to full employment, completing two years as foundation stage doctors. These two years of full-time, post-qualification employment support doctors – with structured mentoring from senior colleagues – to implement and build upon what they have learnt in their training.

But a doctor's development doesn't stop there. Whichever of the many areas a doctor wishes to specialise in, there are recognised training routes with defined bodies of specialist knowledge that doctors must acquire in order to be considered expert.

The government intends to consider how the Early Career Framework can be built upon, so that teachers acquire particular expertise – and recognised qualifications – in an area of teaching, such as curriculum development or teacher development.

Because teachers deserve a framework of qualifications and support that recognises the core body of professional knowledge and skill that defines what it is to be a teacher.

Importantly, this must not be – and will not be – a decision taken and implemented by government. These reforms cannot be 'done to' teachers.

Leading academy chains, such as Outwood Grange and Ark, have developed distinct career paths for teachers to choose from, including curriculum experts working across trusts, teacher-development mentors and traditional leadership routes.

We want these opportunities to be open to all teachers, regardless of where they work. And we want teachers to be at the heart of designing these proposals because it is for teachers to define the common body of professional knowledge and skills that defines their profession.

Because it is important that teachers continue to take control of their profession. The last 8 years has seen a necessary, but radical series of reforms.

Teachers have responded well to the government's promotion of evidence-based approaches to teaching reading, and the government's drive to ensure that pupils have access to core academic subjects at GCSE.

In the face of opposition from some unions and academics, the teaching profession has embraced systematic synthetic phonics. In 2012, just 58% of 6-year-olds passed the phonics screening check. Thanks to the commitment of teachers to pursuing the evidence, 81% of 6-year-olds passed the phonics screening check last year, rising to 92% by the end of year 2.

And this commitment to evidence-based approaches has translated into a rise in the international league tables. In the latest PIRLS results, England saw a statistically significant improvement in the reading ability of 9-year-olds. This cohort of pupils were the first to sit the phonics screening check, so I hope that improvements in phonics screening check results will translate into further rises in our international league table position in years to come.

Teachers are pursuing the evidence and taking control of their profession. Teachers and head teachers are making use of the Education Endowment Foundation's RCT findings to help guide what they do.

And teachers are ensuring that more pupils than ever before have the best opportunities at GCSE. Since 2010, the proportion of pupils taking at least two science GCSEs has risen from 63% to 91%, as teachers encouraged much greater numbers of pupils to take science GCSEs over equivalents, spreading opportunity more widely.

These opportunities exist across the curriculum. I have been delighted with the progress made by teachers working on the Mandarin Excellence programme, which aims to have 5000 fluent Mandarin speakers by 2020. I recall China's Education Secretary remarking at the proficiency of pupils after just one year of the programme.

And teachers continue to promote the importance of a high-quality arts education, inspiring generations of pupils. Between 2016 and 2020, the government will spend almost £500 million on music and cultural education programmes, enabling more disadvantaged pupils to reach their potential and giving the most talented pupils the opportunity to attend prestigious music, dance and drama schools.

Throughout the system, teachers are at the forefront of raising standards for pupils and taking a lead on defining and furthering what it means to be an expert teacher.

Teaching is – and will continue to be – a career that attracts the very best applicants. It is, therefore, essential that government continues to raise the status of the profession by spreading the best opportunities right across the system – for both pupils and teachers.

It is fitting – on a day for reflecting and celebrating on what we all share in common – to also consider how we can support teachers who do so much to form who we are, and to bring us together.

Thank you.

[News story: Pilot launched to boost early language skills and cut teacher workload](#)

Schools are set to pilot improved measures to support children's early development in language and vocabulary in the Reception year, making sure they have the skills needed to thrive at school.

From September, 25 schools across the country are set to trial revised Early Learning Goals, the key measures teachers use to decide how prepared children are to begin Year 1 at the end of Reception year. The changes are aimed at reducing teachers' workload to free up more time to support children's early skills and produce engaging lessons.

The pilot will help to address the problem of children arriving at school struggling with language and social skills, helping to close the so-called 'word gap' – the gap between disadvantaged children's communication and that of their peers when they start school.

They mark the first step of a full consultation process working closely with the early years sector, following the Government's commitment to improve the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile in response to the Primary Assessment consultation last September.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

We want to improve education for every child and the early years in a child's life are critical in laying strong foundations for future success. That is why we want to free up more time for Reception teachers to interact with their pupils, and make sure they are developing the rich vocabulary, skills and behaviours they need to thrive at school and in later life.

The schools taking part in this pilot will help test these proposals, designed to cut down the burden of paperwork that exists with the current system. Teachers have the best understanding of their pupils, so it's absolutely right that we empower them to use and trust their own professional judgment based on what they see.

The proposals will help reduce teacher workload, in response to feedback from teachers during the consultation that they feel pressured to collect multiple pieces of evidence that justify their own observations of how a child is progressing.

Ed Vainker, Principal at Reach Academy Feltham, said the following:

The Early Years are a critical time, especially for the most vulnerable children, where teachers have an opportunity to avoid an achievement gap developing. These proposals provide a welcome focus on speech, language and communication and confirm that teacher judgment, rather than onerous evidence collection, is expected.

Jan Dubiel, National Director of Early Excellence, said:

I am pleased that the Department is engaging in such a thorough and robust consultative process in developing these reforms. I applaud the fact that they are ensuring that the proposals are tested and shaped by the actual reception teachers who will use the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This will ensure the reforms are informed by best practice and the expertise of practitioners – especially Reception teachers – themselves.

The new Early Learning Goals remain in the spirit of the original, internationally renowned Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), focusing on the core skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviours that children need in order to thrive and develop successfully – and I am confident this has the potential to result in positive changes and ensure that practitioners continue to deliver in a holistic approach to children's learning and development.

Lauren Costello, National Director of Primary and SEND at The Academies Enterprise Trust, said:

Today's proposals represent a really positive move forward to build on the already great practice that exists in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As someone who works in the EYFS and primary sector on a national scale and across a wide range of socio and economic settings, I can clearly see a real commitment in these new Early Learning Goals to focus on key things that every child should know, master and have confidence in during their vital early years education.

The new Early Learning Goals will be especially helpful for EYFS teachers working with those who may have gaps in their very early life experiences and will allow these very talented practitioners to quickly identify and addresses these gaps and fix them. I am particularly pleased to see that the relentless focus on providing solid foundations for children's reading is a prominent feature within the new Early Learning Goals.

The pilots build on two schemes [announced](#) by the Education Secretary in April that will improve children's early language and literacy skills at home before they start school. These include £5 million with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to trial projects that offer parents practical tools and advice on learning new words with their children, and an £8.5 million programme open for councils to fund projects that help disadvantaged children's language and literacy.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is carried out in the final term of Reception year, and is a summary of a child's development that year against 17 Early Learning Goals. These look at each child's development across a broad range of skills including language and communication, reading and writing, numbers, art and design, physical development, self-confidence and ability to build relationships, and understanding of the world.

The reforms to the Profile will cut down the administrative burden required of teachers, freeing them up to spend more time teaching, interacting with and supporting their pupils so that they are prepared to move on to Year 1.

The Department for Education has worked extensively with teachers, unions and experts from across early years, schools and child development to ensure proposals are based on the latest evidence and reflect feedback from practitioners.

James Bowen, Director of NAHT Edge, the union for middle leaders, said:

We are pleased to see that the government has prioritised reducing teacher workload as part of these reforms. Excessive evidence gathering, especially for moderation purposes, has for too long been a major burden for many reception class teachers. We hope that these reforms mean that reception teachers are freed up to focus more on the core business of teaching and learning.

We also welcome the message that this is a genuine pilot. We are pleased that schools themselves will be able to directly shape the development of this policy and ensure that government have clear feedback before any decisions are taken on a potential national roll-out.

The pilot will be evaluated by the Education Endowment Foundation and Action for Children, and proposals will be refined ahead of a full public consultation based on feedback from the schools involved in the pilot and from experts and practitioners.

Today's announcement is part of wider plans to improve education at every level of the system and will build on the progress already being made in schools across England, with 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrowing.

Edward Melhuish, research professor at the University of Oxford, said:

Children need to have good language development in the pre-school years. Our research shows that where that happens we see children do better in school, socially and emotionally, and these benefits last through to adulthood.

The new Early Learning Goals rightly prioritise good language development but also cover the full range of children's development, and they provide a basis for all preschool settings to provide the experiences children need for good development that will show long-term benefits. The new Early Learning Goals will be helpful to all concerned with children's well-being.

Schools were invited to be part of September's pilot based on a range of criteria including location, size, Ofsted rating and free school meal eligibility. Those who expressed interest were chosen to ensure a good balance in the pilot. Those taking part in the pilot will be exempt from elements of the existing profile while they test a revised version.

This is backed by a wider package of reform, set out in the Government's response to the Primary Assessment consultation, which includes the introduction of a [Reception Baseline Assessment](#).

The revised Early Learning Goals being piloted are available on the [Foundation Years](#) website.

Government response: Russian briefing on Syria chemical weapons use, 21 June 2018: UK response

The Russian MFA's briefing today on chemical weapons in Syria included unfounded criticisms of the OPCW's independent and objective investigations in Syria.

It is well known that the Syrian regime has a long history of using chemical weapons against its own people. The OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism was set up by the UN Security Council in 2015 to attribute responsibility for chemical attacks in Syria. Russia agreed to the working and investigative methods of the JIM.

The JIM has confirmed the use of chemical weapons in Syria by the Syrian regime on four separate occasions. Despite this clear evidence, the international community has been unable to respond due to repeated Russian vetoes at the UNSC.

A significant amount of information indicates that the Syrian regime was also responsible for the chemical weapons attack in Douma. An independent OPCW report is due to be published soon.

We hope that Russia will constructively cooperate with the OPCW investigation into Douma, rather than disrupt and undermine. Russia has a right to submit any relevant evidence to the OPCW for independent analysis.

It is vital all countries work together constructively to ensure the Chemical Weapons Convention is upheld.

Press release: Government proposal to move claimants on 'legacy' benefits to Universal Credit: consultation announced

The Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) has today launched a public consultation on proposals for moving all existing claimants of a working age income-related benefit to Universal Credit.

From next year DWP will begin the process of moving claimants in receipt of one or more of the following benefits to Universal Credit:

- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Housing Benefit

The wide-ranging draft legislation, which was presented to the committee for scrutiny at its meeting on 20 June 2018, sets out the government's proposals on:

1. requirements for claimants on existing benefits to make a claim for Universal Credit (including the deadlines for doing so) and arrangements for ending their existing benefit
2. the calculation, award and ongoing treatment of transitional protection

The task of safely moving around 3 million claimants (in around 2 million households) from legacy benefits to Universal Credit raises important

questions about the delivery challenge facing the department and the potential impact on claimants.

SSAC has therefore decided to examine this draft legislation, and the impacts that flow from it, in more detail. To help inform this work, the committee would welcome evidence from a broad range of organisations and individuals who have good insight into and/or experience of the following aspects of these proposals:

- the overall migration timetable
- arrangements for contacting claimants and inviting claims from them
- issues associated with making a claim, and ending legacy benefit claims
- the calculation of transitional protection (including the treatment of earnings and capital)
- the impact of proposed transitional protection (including how easily it will be delivered and the degree to which it will be understood by claimants)
- the impact on workers, including the self-employed
- equality impact (whether there will be particular effects for different groups and how these can best be addressed), for example are there any groups that will not be covered by transitional protection?
- monitoring and evaluation

The committee would welcome responses to ensure that its advice to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is informed by a range of perspectives. The committee would welcome real or hypothetical case studies or specific examples as part of that evidence.

Paul Gray, the committee's Chair, said:

The planned rollout of Universal Credit is now reaching its most critical and challenging stage. The government's draft proposals involve major issues on both detailed entitlement rules and delivery logistics, and are due to be debated in Parliament later this year. SSAC is keen to ensure that the scrutiny report it submits to ministers and Parliament is as well informed as possible, and we therefore strongly encourage all organisations and individuals with relevant evidence to take part in this consultation process.

Please note that we are not consulting on the government's overarching Universal Credit policy, which is enshrined in primary legislation following Parliamentary scrutiny during the passage of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Comments on this will not be considered.

Responses should be submitted to the Committee Secretary by no later than 10am on Monday 20 August:

The Committee Secretary
Social Security Advisory Committee

5th Floor
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

Alternatively responses can be emailed to – ssac.consultation@ssac.gsi.gov.uk

SSAC is an independent advisory body of the Department for Work and Pensions. The committee's role is to give advice on social security issues; scrutinise and report on social security regulations (including tax credits) and to consider and advise on any matters referred to it by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions or the Northern Ireland Department for Communities.

The committee's Chair is Paul Gray. Its membership comprises: Bruce Calderwood, David Chrimes, Carl Emmerson, Chris Goulden, Philip Jones, Jim McCormick, Grainne McKeever, Dominic Morris, Seyi Obakin, Judith Paterson, Charlotte Pickles, Liz Sayce and Victoria Todd.

Most social security regulations come before SSAC for scrutiny, the only significant exceptions being regulations which go to other advisory bodies or set benefit rates. When SSAC has considered regulations which it has asked to be formally referred, its response is made in the form of a report to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. That report must be presented to Parliament when the regulations are laid with a statement from the Secretary of State showing what has been done (or is intended to be done) about the SSAC's recommendations (section 174(1) and (2) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992).

Further enquiries should be directed to Denise Whitehead, Committee Secretary, on 020 7829 3354.