Government response to the Workload Advisory Group report 'Making Data Work'

Theme	Recommendation	Government response
Overarching principles for data use in schools	**Recommendation to DfE:** • The DfE should find out how school and trust leaders currently evaluate their use of data. By Spring 2019 the DfE should test with school staff whether there is a need for further support for schools to do this (such as an audit tool or checklist). Following this testing the DfE should commission experts to develop the final product if needed. **Recommendations for all:** • The DfE, Ofsted, unions and professional associations should reflect these principles in their guidance, in training for schools, officials and members, and through their networks. • The DfE should evaluate to what extent schools are aligned to the principles set out in this report, including through existing quantitative surveys with a representative sample of schools. If this evaluation reveals significant levels of non-adoption, the DfE should work with stakeholders to ensure that more schools incorporate the outcomes of the report into their policy and practice.	**The Department for Education accepts all of the recommendations in this report in full.** We have acknowledged that data management is a cause of unnecessary workload in schools, which is why we commissioned the [independent review group on data management](#) and the Workload Advisory Group to look at this issue. We have also published a [section on data management in the workload reduction toolkit](#) and [accompanying guidance](#), and clarified in our [principles for a clear and simple accountability system](#) that additional requests for data and visits to schools will stop. We will now: • Carry out user research with school and trust leaders and staff by Spring 2019 to confirm if there is a need for a tool or checklist on effective data use. If there is a need for this, we will commission experts to produce this tool and publish it in the workload reduction toolkit in 2019. • Use this report to inform our guidance, messages and ways of working with schools. We will also update the content in the workload reduction toolkit to reflect the principles of this report. • Continue to evaluate the burden of data in schools, without creating additional burdens on schools.

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	• Ofsted should monitor the consistency of inspection practice relating to the principles of this report. • Unions and professional associations should disseminate the principles of this report, and collect and share case studies of where schools have made changes to their data practices. • School and trust leaders, and governors should review their data processes according to these principles.	In addition, we support all of the recommendations for Ofsted, school and trust leaders, governors and professional associations in the advisory group report, and we will work with them to enact these, and the principles set out in the report.
Pastoral data management	**Recommendation to DfE:** • The DfE should add a new section on behaviour management to the workload reduction toolkit, with amended guidance to reflect this, and they should test this content with schools in early 2019. **Recommendation to Ofsted:** • Ofsted should provide further clarity to schools to assure them that inspectors will not expect to see detailed logging of every single incident and detention, and that schools should use their own judgement of what constitutes a 'minor' incident.	**Accept this recommendation.** We will: • Produce additional content for the workload reduction toolkit on behaviour management, building on the principles from Creating a Culture, Tom Bennett's report on effective behaviour management, and test this with users in early 2019.

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Supporting the creation of higher quality pupil attainment information	**Recommendations to DfE:** • DfE should work with the Chartered College of Teaching, unions, Teaching Schools, professional and subject associations, National Governance Association and sector bodies to promote the development of teachers' understanding of assessment as a key feature of teacher expertise. • School leader unions and sector bodies should support this by organising events and training for their members. • The DfE's work in ensuring schools have suitably robust infrastructure for cloud working should be expanded to support other technologies that reduce workload, including the wider use of online testing in schools.	**Accept these recommendations.** We have announced a period of stability for the curriculum, qualifications and assessment in this parliament. We will now: • Work with stakeholders to improve teachers' understanding of the principles of good formative assessment. • Not proceed with the introduction of optional resits in year 7 for those students who did not reach the expected standard in English reading and mathematics. • Continue our work under the DCMS local full fibre network programme to support schools who do not have basic internet connectivity. • Provide direction to schools on the opportunities for cloud based working.
Compiling student attainment information	**Recommendations to DfE:** • Beyond statutory data collections (such as the results of key stage 1 assessment), the DfE should not request regular attainment data from schools unless they meet a trigger for intervention. When this is required, this should be in the school's existing format where possible, and should not add to the number of data collections. The Department should communicate to local authorities, multi-academy	**Accept these recommendations.** We have clarified in our principles for a clear and simple accountability system that additional requests for data and visits to schools will stop. We are already working on a new Send data to DfE service (formerly Data Exchange), which will automate the flow of data from a school management information system (MIS) to DfE, reducing the amount people need to do themselves.

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	trusts and others that they should not ask for this information either. • The DfE should also continue to promote effective use of education technology to improve the efficiency of attainment data collection, monitoring and analysis. **Recommendation to Ofsted:** • Ofsted inspectors should ask questions about whether schools' attainment data collections are proportionate, represent an efficient use of school resources, and are sustainable for staff. They should draw on the responses from teachers to the staff questionnaire regarding SLTs' consideration of workload when implementing policies. If a school's system for attainment data collection is disproportionate, inefficient or unsustainable for staff, inspectors should reflect this in their reporting on the school.	We will be testing this service with schools, local authorities and MIS suppliers before it is launched. We will now: • Beyond statutory data collections, we will not request regular attainment data from schools, unless they meet a trigger for intervention, which could be better managed temporarily by more frequent collections. Where possible, we will only ask schools for data in the school's existing format. We will also communicate this expectation to local authorities. We accept the principle that increasing assessment frequency is not inherently likely to improve outcomes for schools. • Continue to promote effective uses of education technology. We have already produced advice on using technology effectively and we have now announced that we will be focusing on five key opportunities of technology in education, including how to innovate assessment and administration processes to reduce teacher workload. We will work with schools and EdTech providers in the autumn term to identify the challenges they face in realising these opportunities.
Generating predictions or targets for individual students	**Recommendations to DfE:** • The DfE should commission research to describe current target setting practice in schools, with a view to testing alternative models of motivating pupils through a	**Accept this recommendation.** We will: • Commission research into the use and impact of target setting in schools across England.

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	randomised controlled trial. This research should also consider the effect of these models on the mental health of pupils. • The DfE should not request data on pupil targets and predictions to hold schools to account. When this is required to allocate support to schools, this should be in the school's existing format, and should not add to the number of data collections. **Recommendation to local authorities and multi-academy trusts:** • Local authorities and multi-academy trusts should not request data on targets and predictions to hold schools to account. Where this is required to enable, for example, providing additional support to schools, this should not be in a different format to the format the school uses, and should not add to the number of data collections.	• Ensure that we do not request data on pupil targets and predictions to hold schools to account. • Communicate to local authorities and multi-academy trusts that they should not request data on targets and predictions to hold schools to account.
Reporting on different groups of pupils and spending	**Recommendation to DfE:** • The DfE should speak to a broad and diverse group of schools, to understand the impact and burden of the current reporting requirements for pupil premium and primary PE and sport premium spend (including online reporting, and	**Accept this recommendation.** It is critical that there are appropriate accountability measures in place to ensure that investment in the pupil premium and primary PE and sport premium (£2.4bn and £320m per year respectively) deliver real benefits to pupils. We recognise the need to ensure reporting is proportionate and does not involve unnecessary burdens on schools.

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	to Ofsted inspectors) and publish actions to address any issues that arise by Spring 2019.	We will: • Conduct user research in the autumn term, and will assess both the benefits and the burdens of current reporting. This will take account of the time commitment for schools, and wider impacts such as on the work of Ofsted. We will publish actions to address any issues that arise by Spring 2019.
Teacher performance management	**Recommendation to DfE:** • The DfE should amend performance management guidance to clarify that objectives and performance management discussions should not be based on teacher generated data and predictions, or solely on the assessment data for a single group of pupils. **Recommendation to Ofsted:** • Ofsted should continue to ensure that inspectors do not ask to see performance management targets based on assessment data during inspections.	**Accept this recommendation.** We believe that strengthening the link between performance and pay is fundamental, so that high-performing teachers are rewarded properly for the impact that they are having on their pupils' achievements. We support the finding that objectives and performance management should not solely be based on assessment data for a single group of pupils. We also agree that objectives should not be based on teacher generated attainment or progress data, or automatically generated predictions. We will: • update guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions in the 'Implementing Your School's Approach to Pay: Advice for maintained schools and local authorities' to reflect this.

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Reporting to governing boards	**Recommendations to DfE:** • The DfE should revise the governance handbook, competency framework and other guidance to reflect the principles of this report, and speak to governors to test what guidance and training they need. • The DfE should also incorporate myth busting for governors into the teacher workload toolkit or other guidance, to address misconceptions of what is required by the DfE or Ofsted and where policy has changed. • The DfE should also continue to improve the content and usability of Analyse School Performance based on feedback from schools and governors, and place emphasis on supporting governor needs. The DfE should ensure schools are able to access comparative performance information as soon as possible.	**Accept these recommendations.** We have published a blog on workload and governance and run a series of regional events focused on school leaders and governors to promote workload reduction in schools. We continue to revise our current governance training offer to ensure it focuses where appropriate on the importance of governors reducing teacher workload. We recently announced new funding for further governance training, which gives us the opportunity to develop programmes which focus specifically on improving the use of data by governing boards. We will now: • Continue to revise the governance handbook and competency framework to ensure they are fit for purpose and take teacher workload into account. • Design the new governance training offer to include a focus on reducing teacher workload and ensure that all governors get the training they need to discharge their role effectively. • Produce additional content for the workload toolkit for governors, and test this with users by early 2019. • Continue our programme to improve Analyse School Performance, including the experience for governors. Several improvements will be ready for the 2018 data release cycle.

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		• Ensure the DfE's data strategy will include a focus on making comparative performance available more quickly; options could be tested from Summer 2019.
Reporting to and communicating with parents and carers	**Recommendations to DfE:** • The DfE should commission research that describes the range of current practices in parental engagement, alongside their time demands, with a view to designing a randomised controlled trial to test the impact of low-time investment models of parental engagement. • The DfE should review its guidance on reporting to parents and carers to clarify the expectations of schools, and to permit the use of technology to engage parents to meet these expectations. • The DfE should also publish templates for manageable reporting procedures, and case studies of how these have been adopted by schools.	**Accept these recommendations.** We will: • Commission research on approaches to reporting to parents and other forms of parental engagement. • Following the outcomes of this research, review existing guidance, taking into account the views of parents and carers, and consider producing additional content for the workload toolkit on reporting to and communicating with parents and carers, and test this with users.