



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Ms Jacquelyn Morris: Professional conduct panel outcome

**Panel decision and reasons on behalf of the
Secretary of State for Education**

22 May 2015

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Professional conduct panel decision and recommendations, and decision on behalf of the Secretary of State

Teacher:	Ms Jacquelyn Morris
Teacher ref no:	9856914
Teacher date of birth:	22 August 1973
NCTL case ref no:	12977
Date of determination:	22 May 2015
Former employer:	St James' & Ebrington C. of E. Primary School, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire

A. Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the National College for Teaching and Leadership (“the National College”) convened in a private meeting on 22 May 2015 at 53-55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry CV1 3BH to consider the case of Ms Jacquelyn Morris.

The panel members were Councillor Gail Goodman (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Tony James (teacher panellist) and Mr Martin Pilkington (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Paddy Roche of Blake Morgan LLP Solicitors, Oxford.

The meeting took place in private and the announced decision was recorded.

B. Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 15 May 2015.

It was alleged that Ms Morris was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that, whilst employed at St James' & Ebrington C. of E. Primary School ("the School"):

1. On one or more occasions, between November 2013 and November 2014, whilst at the School she:
 - a. Smelt of alcohol including on:
 - i. 11 and/or 22 and/or 25 and/or 29 November 2013,
 - ii. 6 and/or 7 and/or 13 and/or 16 December 2013,
 - iii. 26 and/or 27 February 2014,
 - iv. 18 September 2014,
 - v. 28 November 2014;
 - b. Appeared to be under the influence of alcohol including on:
 - i. 22 November 2013,
 - ii. 26 and/or 27 February 2014,
 - iii. 18 September 2014,
 - iv. 28 November 2014;
2. On 1 December 2014 she:
 - a. Brought alcohol into the School;
 - b. Consumed alcohol whilst at the School;
3. By her actions set out at 1 and/or 2 above she created a situation whereby pupils could be at risk.

The teacher admitted the facts and admitted that this was a case of unacceptable professional conduct/conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

She requested that the allegations be considered without a hearing.

C. Summary of evidence

Documents

In advance of the hearing, the panel received a bundle of documents which included:-

Section 1	Chronology	Page 1.
Section 2	Notice of Referral, Response and Notice of Meeting	Pages 4 – 8c.
Section 3	Statement of Agreed Facts and Presenting Officer	Pages 10 – 16.
Section 4	NCTL Documents	Pages 18 – 49.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents in advance of the meeting.

D. Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

We have now carefully considered the case before us and have reached a decision.

The case concerns an allegation that on numerous occasions as specified in the particulars between 11 November 2013 and 1 December 2014 Ms Morris undertook teaching duties when she either smelt of alcohol or appeared to be under the influence of alcohol. On many of these occasions her condition and demeanour caused other members of staff to be concerned about her fitness and the case papers contain a number of emails and other reports from her colleagues describing her demeanour. On 1 December 2014 she was observed in the classroom, in the morning, to drink out of a bottle in her bag which, on investigation, was found to contain alcohol. That incident led to her suspension from her teaching duties and, ultimately, her resignation from the school. Ms Morris has admitted the allegation and the particulars and accepts that this is a case of unacceptable professional conduct/conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Findings of fact

Our findings of fact are as follows:

We have found the following particulars of the allegation against Ms Morris proven, for these reasons:

1. On one or more occasions, between November 2013 and November 2014, whilst at the School she:
 - a. Smelt of alcohol including on:
 - i. 11 and/or 22 and/or 25 and/or 29 November 2013,
 - ii. 6 and/or 7 and/or 13 and/or 16 December 2013,
 - iii. 26 and/or 27 February 2014,
 - iv. 18 September 2014,
 - v. 28 November 2014;
 - b. Appeared to be under the influence of alcohol including on:
 - i. 22 November 2013,
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 - iii. 18 September 2014,
 - iv. 28 November 2014;
2. On 1 December 2014 she:
 - a. Brought alcohol into the School;
 - b. Consumed alcohol whilst at the School;
3. By her actions set out at 1 and/or 2 above she created a situation whereby pupils could be at risk.

Our reasons are that the allegation and each particular is admitted by Ms Morris and we have seen the Statement of Agreed Facts which is consistent with the other evidence in the case papers particularly notes kept by the headteacher.

Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute

Unacceptable professional conduct is defined as 'misconduct of a serious nature falling significantly short of the standard of behaviour expected of a teacher' and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute is to be judged in a similar way. This case concerns behaviour by the teacher which was repeated over many months despite efforts by the headteacher to help her with what appeared to others to be an alcohol problem. On numerous occasions over the period of approximately one year she attended school when she was not fit to do so as a consequence of having consumed alcohol. Her

condition caused her colleagues to be concerned about her and she now accepts that she created a situation where her young pupils could have been put at risk.

We judge that this repeated conduct constitutes unacceptable professional conduct. It occurred principally within the school and classroom environment when Ms Morris would have been in direct contact with the children for whom she was responsible as their class teacher. It, thus, constitutes a serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teacher's Standards. Ms Morris breached her position of trust towards her pupils and we consider that she showed no regard for the ethos and practices of a Church of England school.

We are also satisfied that attending school in the state described by many of her colleagues and some parents, when her demeanour was very evidently affected by drink and Ms Morris was slurring her words, damages the collective reputation of the profession and thus is also conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In summary we consider that Ms Morris' behaviour is fundamentally incompatible with being a teacher.

We note that Ms Morris acknowledges that she is guilty of both unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

During the period covered by the allegation and particulars Ms Morris has attended school and been observed by many members of staff in a state which suggested that she has not been fit to do so as a consequence of the consumption of alcohol. Her condition has given rise to concern among many colleagues over many months

The evidence in the case papers suggests that, when confronted about an alcohol problem, she had denied that she had any issue which needed to be addressed. The school appears to have attempted to help the teacher and she was referred to Occupational Health. However at the time Ms Morris seems to have been in denial until confronted with clear evidence of her consumption of alcohol in the classroom on 1 December 2014 which is the subject of particular 2.

We consider that Ms Morris' behaviour fell so seriously short of the behaviour expected of a teacher that a Prohibition Order should be imposed in the public interest. Ms Morris has not submitted any papers at all for the Panel's consideration and we cannot identify any mitigation that we can properly take into account. We are especially concerned at the indications in the case papers that Ms Morris continued to deny that she had any problem with alcohol. During the period covered by the allegation there is no evidence in the information available to the panel that she has shown any insight into the seriousness of her behaviour and its impact on the very young children at the school and her colleagues.

We have considered carefully whether there should be a review period in this case. We have been hindered in this consideration by the absence of any information from the teacher herself. However we believe it would be disproportionate to deny Ms Morris any opportunity to make a set aside application at some time in the future.

We have noted that Ms Morris has apparently been a successful teacher. According to the head-teacher Ms Morris commenced her employment at the school in 2001 as a class teacher. Through 2009 – 2011 she held positions as acting deputy head-teacher, assistant head- teacher and then deputy head- teacher. In 2013 she resigned as deputy head- teacher and took up the lesser role of class teacher again. There are suggestions in the case papers that Ms Morris was suffering from a serious illness.

We therefore recommend that Ms Morris be given the opportunity to recover her teaching career if she can resolve the issues that beset her especially during 2013-14. We would expect any panel hearing a set aside application to be concerned principally with the measures she had taken to ensure there is no repetition of the sort of conduct that this case has exposed. It may well be that she would be expected to provide to the reviewing panel independent evidence and verification of the steps she had taken in the intervening period to resolve the issues that have led to these proceedings being brought against her.

While we recognise that part of the rationale for making this recommendation may be, of necessity, speculative we have given some weight to the fact that in December 2014 following the incident which is the subject of particular 2, Ms Morris seems to have finally recognised that she had a real problem that needed to be addressed and that she tendered her written resignation to the school. We believe an appropriate period before a set aside application can be made by the teacher should be three years.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

I have carefully considered the findings and recommendations of the panel in this case.

The panel have found all the allegations proven and have judged that the facts amount to both unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The facts in this case relate to Ms Morris bringing alcohol onto school premises, consuming alcohol on school premises, being under the influence of alcohol on school premises and in so doing creating a situation where pupils could be at risk.

The panel have recommended that a prohibition order would be an appropriate and proportionate sanction in the public interest. I agree with their recommendation.

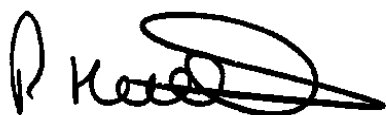
The panel have seen evidence to suggest that Ms Morris may have been suffering from a serious illness at the time of the incidents. They have also noted that she was apparently

a successful teacher. The panel recommend a review period of 3 years during which time Ms Morris should address the issues that have led to these proceedings. I agree with their recommendation.

This means that Ms Jacquelyn Morris is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 2 June 2018, 3 years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If she does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Ms Jacquelyn Morris remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

This order takes effect from the date on which it is served on the teacher.

Ms Jacquelyn Morris has a right of appeal to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date she is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Heathcote', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

NAME OF DECISION MAKER: Paul Heathcote

Date: 27 May 2015

This decision is taken by the decision maker named above on behalf of the Secretary of State.