



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr John Quinn: Professional conduct panel hearing outcome

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

February 2025

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

Teacher: Mr John Quinn

TRA reference: 18671

Date of determination: 6 February 2025

Former employer: Watchfield Primary School, Swindon

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 4- 6 February 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr John Quinn.

The panel members were Mrs Pam Thompson (Lay Panellist) – in the chair, Mr Paul Hawkins (Lay Panellist) and Ms Jo Palmer-Tweed (Former Teacher Panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Lucy Mosley of Blake Morgan Solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Jessica Bass of Capsticks Solicitors.

Mr Quinn was present and was represented by Mr Jonathan Storey, Cornwall Street Chambers (observed by Pupil Barrister Ms Imogen Smalley).

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the Notice of Hearing dated 7 November 2024.

It was alleged that Mr Quinn was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that:

Whilst a Teacher at Watchfield Primary School (“the School”):

- 1. In or around June 2019, in relation to Year 1 phonics scores, he caused or allowed the submission of an inaccurate Head teacher’s electronic declaration.**
- 2. On or around 26 June 2019, he caused or allowed the submission of inaccurate Year 1 phonics scores.**
- 3. On or around 10 July 2019, he inaccurately told one or more Colleagues words to the effect that the pass rate of 68%, set out in the Governor Visit Record Report July 2019, reflected the combined pass rate for Year 1 and Year 2.**
- 4. On 10 July 2019, he inaccurately told the School’s Governing Board words to the effect that the pass rate of 68%, set out in the Governor Visit Record Report July 2019, reflected the pass rate for Year 1.**
- 5. His conduct at paragraphs 1 and/ or 2 and/ or 3 and/ or 4 was:**
 - a. Misleading**
 - b. Lacking integrity**
 - c. Dishonest in that he sought to create a false impression**

Preliminary applications

Application to admit additional evidence

The panel considered an application made by Mr Storey to admit five additional character references:

- Individual A – dated 7 January 2025
- Individual B – dated 10 January 2025
- Individual C– dated 12 January 2025

- Individual D – dated 31 January 2025; and
- Individual E – dated 16 January 2025.

Mr Storey submitted that no prejudice would be caused to the TRA by the admission of the additional evidence, some of which had been submitted only a couple of days after the deadline in any event.

Ms Bass did not object to the admission of this evidence. The panel was satisfied that the evidence was relevant to the issues before it and no prejudice or unfairness would be caused by its admission.

The documents were accordingly added to the case papers (the references from Individual A, Individual B and Individual C had already been included within the hearing bundle in any event).

Application to discontinue

An application was made by Ms Bass to discontinue particular 1 on the basis that there was insufficient evidence presented by the TRA to support the allegation that the declaration submitted by Mr Quinn was inaccurate. She did not seek to adjourn the case for further evidence to be obtained.

The application was supported by Mr Storey.

The panel considered whether particular 1 should be discontinued. The panel concluded that there was no practical alternative but to discontinue the allegation. In the absence of sufficient evidence, it would not be possible for Mr Quinn to receive a fair hearing, and it would offend the panel's sense of justice and propriety to continue to hear the proceedings against him in relation to particular 1 in the circumstances.

The panel accordingly directed that particular 1 should be discontinued.

Application to amend the allegation

In conjunction with the application to discontinue particular 1, an application was made by Ms Bass to amend particular 5 to remove reference to paragraph 1, as follows:

5. His conduct at paragraphs 2 and/ or 3 and/ or 4 was:

- a. Misleading**
- b. Lacking integrity**
- c. Dishonest in that he sought to create a false impression**

Mr Storey had no objection to the application.

The panel acceded to the application. The proposed amendment to particular 5 did not alter the substance of the allegation or result in new factual particulars being alleged. There was no prejudice to Mr Quinn, as a result of the proposed amendment, and indeed it was to his benefit that the allegations were correctly drafted. The panel had regard to the wider public interest in ensuring that allegations are properly put and do not contain technical deficiencies. In the circumstances of this case, it concluded that the public interest and interest of justice required the allegation to be amended.

Once the allegations had been finalised, they were put to Mr Quinn. He made full admissions to particulars 2-5.

Mr Quinn further admitted that his conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 5 to 8

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 9 to 30

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 31 to 62

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 63 to 302

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 303 to 366

In addition, the panel was provided with a statement of agreed facts which was signed by both parties and the five additional character references it decided to admit.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all the documents within the bundle in advance of the hearing, as well as the additional documents.

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document Teacher Misconduct: Disciplinary Procedures for the Teaching Profession 2018, (the “Procedures”).

Witnesses

In light of the full admissions made the panel did not receive oral evidence from any live witnesses on behalf of the TRA.

The panel heard oral evidence from Mr Quinn. It also heard evidence Witness A, [REDACTED] and Witness B [REDACTED] on his behalf.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel carefully considered the case before it and reached a decision.

The School is a primary school for pupils aged between pre-school and year six located in Swindon. It has approximately 400 pupils. It is part of the Farringdon Academy of Schools ("The Academy") and the Cambrian Learning Trust ("The Trust"). Given its proximity to the local military college, the School has a large number of children from military families, many of whom are international and English is not their first language. Those children were referred to by the School as children with English as an Additional Language ("EALs").

The Government's school league tables on phonics do not differentiate between children for whom English is/is not a first language. Children who do not speak English or for whom English is a second language would have to sit the same phonics examinations as children for whom English is a first language.

All Year One children at the School were required to take a Phonics test. If a child did not pass Phonics in Year One, they would be required to retake the test in Year Two. The Phonics test consisted of 40 words presented on cards which children are asked to sound out and read. The required pass mark was usually between 30 and 32. In 2019 it was 32.

Mr Quinn started working at the School as the Headteacher on 1 September 2014. In September 2016 the School had an Ofsted inspection. It was graded as 'good' but was advised that it could be graded as 'outstanding' if it improved phonics outcomes. Over the next few years the School focussed on developing its teaching of phonics.

In September 2018, Mr Quinn joined the Executive Leadership Team of the Academy. On 26 June 2019, Mr Quinn submitted figures showing that the phonics pass rate was 68% when in fact it was 46%.

On 10 July 2019, Mr Quinn informed colleagues that the pass rate of 68% set out in the Governor Visit Record Report July 2019 reflected the combined pass rate for Year One and Year Two.

On 10 July 2019, at a meeting of the School's Governing Board, Mr Quinn informed colleagues that the pass rate of 68% set out in the Governor Visit Record Report July 2019 reflected the pass rate for Year One.

On 11 July 2019, Individual F[REDACTED] and Individual G[REDACTED].reported concerns about the pass rate presented at the meeting of the School's Governing Board to the School under the Whistleblowing Policy.

On 15 July 2019, Mr Quinn met with Individual H [REDACTED] Individual I [REDACTED] and Individual [REDACTED] . Mr Quinn made a full admission to submitting false data in relation to the School's Year One Phonics screening scores.

An investigation was commenced by the School, and Mr Quinn was interviewed on 25 July 2019. At the conclusion of that investigation, an Investigation Report was produced dated 30 July 2019. That report concluded that Mr Quinn's actions constituted gross misconduct, and it was recommended that the matter proceed to a disciplinary hearing.

Mr Quinn resigned from the School on 13 August 2019. The resignation took effect from 31 August 2019.

A referral was made to the TRA on 2 September 2019.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

Whilst a Teacher at Watchfield Primary School ("the School"):

- 1. In or around June 2019, in relation to Year 1 phonics scores, he caused or allowed the submission of an inaccurate Head teacher's electronic declaration.**

Discontinued.

2. On or around 26 June 2019, he caused or allowed the submission of inaccurate Year 1 phonics scores.

Pursuant to the Agreed Statement, Mr Quinn admitted particular 2.

Individual K [REDACTED] said in her statement that on 17 June 2019 she gave the phonics data to Mr Quinn in paper form. On 26 June 2019 she and Mr Quinn were due to have a meeting to input the phonics results. Before the meeting, Mr Quinn asked her for the phonics data and told her that he had some free time that morning and would put it onto the system. Individual K [REDACTED] confirmed that in hindsight this was unusual as they had previously always submitted the results together.

Mr Quinn admitted that the 2019 Year One phonics pass rate was 46% and that he amended the raw data test scores for at least 10 pupils which resulted in a higher overall percentage pass rate of 68%. He also admitted that he saved and submitted this data, knowing it was false.

Mr Quinn told the panel that since the Ofsted inspection in 2016 there had been a significant amount of scrutiny of the School in relation to phonics and he felt pressure to improve results. He said that he put in the accurate data and it came out at 46%. He changed 10 of the EAL pupil's figures (as they would not be present in the next academic year) and the figure changed to 68%.

Mr Quinn said that he regretted his actions, which were completely out of character. The School was rated 'good' by Ofsted and was doing well by all other metrics except phonics. He accepted that, in hindsight, the only pressure he was being put under was self-imposed internal pressure as he felt responsible for the low phonics scores as the Headteacher.

In light of Mr Quinn's admission, which was unequivocal and consistent with the other evidence before the panel, it found particular 2 proven.

3. On or around 10 July 2019, he inaccurately told one or more Colleagues words to the effect that the pass rate of 68%, set out in the Governor Visit Record Report July 2019, reflected the combined pass rate for Year 1 and Year 2.

Pursuant to the Agreed Statement, Mr Quinn admitted particular 3.

The panel had sight of the Governor Visit Record Report dated July 2019 which recorded a phonics pass rate of 68%.

Mr Quinn admitted that when questioned about the pass rate, he told one or more colleagues (Individual G and Individual F) words to the effect that the pass rate of 68% reflected the combined pass rate for Year One and Year Two when he knew this to be

false and that it neither represented the combined pass rate nor the accurate pass rate for Year One.

This panel considered that this was the first of several opportunities for Mr Quinn to admit to the submission of false phonics scores, but he chose not to do so.

Mr Quinn told the panel that when confronted by colleagues who had discovered the pass rate was false, he panicked and tried to cover up his actions by telling them that the result was different to what they might expect because it represented a combined Year One and Year Two score.

In light of Mr Quinn's admission, which was unequivocal and consistent with the other evidence before the panel, it found particular 3 proven.

4. On 10 July 2019, he inaccurately told the School's Governing Board words to the effect that the pass rate of 68%, set out in the Governor Visit Record Report July 2019, reflected the pass rate for Year 1.

Pursuant to the Agreed Statement, Mr Quinn admitted particular 4.

Mr Quinn admitted that during a Local Governing Board Meeting on 10 July 2019, he told the School's Governing Board words to the effect that the pass rate of 68% was the pass rate for Year One, despite knowing this to be false. He accepted that the 2019 Year One phonics pass rate was 46% and not 68% (which was based on his false test score submission on 26 June 2019).

Mr Quinn stated that when asked a question Individual L[REDACTED] at the School, about whether the phonics pass rate was for the Year One students only or for the Year One and Two students combined, he panicked and tried to cover up his actions by saying that it was for the Year One students only. Individual L commented in her statement that Mr Quinn *"did not look very happy"* when she asked him this question.

The panel considered that the Local Governing Board Meeting presented a second opportunity for Mr Quinn to admit to the submission of false phonics scores, but he chose not to do so.

In light of Mr Quinn's admission, which was unequivocal and consistent with the other evidence before the panel, it found particular 4 proven.

5. His conduct at paragraphs 2 and/ or 3 and/ or 4 was:

a. Misleading

b. Lacking integrity

c. Dishonest in that he sought to create a false impression

Having found the facts of particulars 2, 3 and 4 proven, the panel went on to consider whether Mr Quinn's conduct was misleading/ lacked integrity and/ or was dishonest.

In determining whether his conduct was dishonest, the panel considered Mr Quinn's state of knowledge or belief as to the facts before determining whether his conduct was dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people.

As regards a lack of integrity, the panel took account the decision of the Court of Appeal in *Wingate v SRA; SRA v Mallins* [2018] EWCA Civ 366. It recognised that integrity denotes adherence to the standards of the profession and the panel therefore considered whether, by his actions, Mr Quinn failed to adhere to those standards.

Mr Quinn admitted that his conduct was misleading, lacking in integrity and dishonest.

The panel agreed. It was satisfied that Mr Quinn knew that what he was doing was wrong and that the effect of his actions was to misrepresent the phonics results to make them look more favourable than they in fact were. It followed that his actions were deliberate and intended to mislead.

The panel noted that there were 11 working days between when Mr Quinn submitted the inaccurate data and his meeting on 15 July 2019 with Individual H, Individual I and Individual J when he first admitted his actions. There were at least two opportunities on 10 July 2019 for him to inform colleagues of his deception, but he chose not to do so. Instead, Mr Quinn only finally admitted his actions on 15 July 2019 when confronted with whistleblowing allegations made by two colleagues. This was, in the panel's view, dishonest conduct by the standards of ordinary decent people.

For the same reasons, the panel concluded that Mr Quinn's actions, in relation to each of these particulars, also amounted to a lack of integrity. He had shown a disregard for the duties and responsibilities placed upon him as a trusted employee and Headteacher.

The panel was also of the view that Mr Quinn's actions were, to some extent, premeditated for the following reasons:

- Mr Quinn had cancelled the meeting planned for 26 June 2019 with Individual K to input the phonics data, providing an opportunity to input the data on his own;
- Mr Quinn had chosen to alter the data of specific pupils (those that wouldn't be at the School in Year Two), rather than acting to change the data at random;
- Mr Quinn had speculative discussions with Individual F about altering the data or arranging for the children to re-sit the phonics test;

- Mr Quinn admitted to manipulating the phonics data to see whether he could change the parameters to make it look more favourable to the School; and
- Mr Quinn asked Individual G not to share the phonics data with other members of staff.

The panel therefore found allegation 5 proven in relation to particulars 2-4.

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

Having found particulars 2-5 proven, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proven allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher Misconduct: The Prohibition of Teachers dated February 2022, which is referred to as “the Advice”.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Quinn in relation to the facts found proven involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards Guidance for School Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies (“the Teachers’ Standards”). The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2 of the Teachers’ Standards, Mr Quinn was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel also considered that Mr Quinn's actions engaged the following provision of Part 1 of the Teachers' Standards, namely that a teacher must:

- Make accurate and productive use of assessment, including by making use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils’ progress.

The panel also considered whether Mr Quinn’s conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual’s conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

One of the offences listed is fraud or serious dishonesty. The panel considered that Mr Quinn's actions, as found proven, could be appropriately described as serious dishonesty.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Quinn in relation to all of the allegations found proven amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

In making this judgment, the panel drew upon its knowledge and experience of the teaching profession.

The phonics results were submitted in circumstances where Mr Quinn knew that they were false, and his actions were deliberate. This was, clearly, a breach of the Standards and Testing Agency's Assessment and Reporting Arrangements in relation to Phonics. It also had the potential to detrimentally impact those pupils involved. This was conduct that was dishonest and lacking integrity, which was a serious matter. The panel would have expected Mr Quinn, as a professional person in a position of leadership and responsibility, to understand the importance of honesty.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Quinn was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In considering whether Mr Quinn's actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave. Mr Quinn's colleagues were clearly sufficiently concerned about his actions to have raised their concerns as whistleblowers. For the reasons set out above, the findings of misconduct are serious and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on Mr Quinn's status as a teacher, and damaging to the public perception of the teaching profession. Very clearly, members of the public expect practitioners to behave with honesty and integrity in the conduct of assessment processes.

The panel therefore found that Mr Quinn's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In summary, the panel found that Mr Quinn's conduct in relation to all the proven allegations amounted to both unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, it was necessary for it to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so. Prohibition orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have punitive effect.

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found two of them to be relevant in this case, namely, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and the declaring and upholding of proper standards of conduct.

The panel's findings involved serious misconduct within the educational setting by someone who was in a leadership position. Mr Quinn's actions had the potential to detrimentally impact those pupils involved. Whilst the panel bore in mind that no pupils were directly impacted by his conduct, the panel concluded there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Quinn was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession. Mr Quinn deliberately submitted false phonics results in an attempt to mislead the School's Governing Board by making them look more favourable than they were. He was an experienced teacher in a position of responsibility and should have recognised the importance of honesty. He fell seriously short of the standards expected of him in that regard.

The panel was of the view that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present. The conduct found against Mr Quinn was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

However, the panel also considered that there was a strong public interest consideration in retaining Mr Quinn in the teaching profession. No doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator and indeed the contrary was true. The panel was presented with persuasive and powerful evidence that he was highly regarded by colleagues, both in terms of his classroom performance and as Deputy Headteacher. It was clear that since Mr Quinn started working at Seven Fields Primary School in 2019, he had made an extremely positive contribution in challenging circumstances and he deserved credit for that.

In view of the clear public interest considerations that were present, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order, taking into account the effect that this would have on Mr Quinn.

In carrying out the balancing exercise, the panel had regard to the public interest considerations both in favour of, and against, prohibition as well as the interests of Mr Quinn.

The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours have been proven. In the list of such behaviours, those that were relevant in this case were:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- abuse of position or trust;
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions...especially where these behaviours have been repeated;
- collusion or concealment including:
 - concealing inappropriate actions;
 - lying to prevent the identification of wrongdoing;
- deliberate action in serious contravention of requirements for the conduct of an examination or assessment leading to an externally awarded qualification or national assessment particularly where the action had, or realistically had the potential to have, a significant impact on the outcome of the examination assessment;
- knowingly manipulating a school's data to benefit and/or enhance a school's exam results.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, the panel went on to consider the mitigating factors. Mitigating factors may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

The panel considered that the following mitigating factors were present in this case:

- Mr Quinn had a previous good history. He had an otherwise unblemished record in that there was no evidence that he had been subject to any previous regulatory or disciplinary proceedings.

- Mr Quinn provided a number of character references and testimonials, which depicted him in positive terms. The referees spoke very highly in terms of his teaching practice. He was described as someone who was very supportive to pupils, and who was able to engage with them positively. The panel took particular note of the character reference from Witness A [REDACTED] which said:

“John is a talented teacher and school leader. The work he has carried out at Seven Fields has been of the highest quality and has had great impact on the lives of children who attend the school. In my opinion, John would be a great loss to the profession if he were prohibited from teaching.”

The panel also bore in mind the character reference from Individual C [REDACTED] , which said:

“John’s teaching skills are extraordinary. He has a rare ability to connect with students, engaging them in ways that made learning both enjoyable and meaningful. I have seen him bring out the best in even the most reluctant learners through his creativity, patience and dedication... If John were prohibited from teaching, it would be an immense loss to the education system. Teachers like him- who combine skill, passion, and integrity- are rare.”

- The panel heard live character evidence from Witness A and Individual B Witness A described Mr Quinn as *“one of the best teachers”* and said it would be a huge loss to the profession if he were prohibited from teaching. Ms Young stated that Mr Quinn *“has had a huge impact on the school. He is a big part of the progress the school has made and continues to make.”* She told the panel that he is a role model for other staff and those training to be teachers, and that if Mr Quinn was prohibited from teaching, this would impact negatively on the children, their families and the school.
- It followed that, excluding the matters now found proven, Mr Quinn had demonstrated high standards in both personal and professional conduct prior to these events. The view of multiple, credible, senior teachers was clearly and consistently that he was an extremely good teacher, who made a significant contribution to the school in which he currently works.
- There has been no repetition of the same or similar conduct in the period since Mr Quinn left the School. He told the panel that he had taken active steps to ensure that his behaviour was not repeated, including that he had *“learnt to seek out support rather than run from support.”* The panel considered that this demonstrated insight on his behalf.

- These proceedings have been ongoing for some time. There has been a significant delay in this case reaching a final hearing. This would undoubtedly have had a personal impact on him and his family.
- There was no evidence that Mr Quinn's conduct directly impacted learners.
- Mr Quinn engaged fully in these proceedings. He gave oral evidence to the panel and subjected himself to questions.
- Mr Quinn has shown some insight, regret and remorse.

Weighed against these matters, the panel considered that there were some aggravating factors present, including:

- Mr Quinn's actions amounted to a breach of the Teachers' Standards.
- His conduct raised serious concerns and was, to some extent, premeditated.
- Mr Quinn's actions were deliberate and intended to mislead. He created false phonics results, which he submitted, and then repeated those false results to colleagues and the School's Governing Board, perpetuating the dishonesty.
- Mr Quinn had several opportunities to confess his actions but failed to do so.
- Mr Quinn was an experienced senior leader who ought to have known what was required of him and to have conducted himself accordingly.
- Whilst the panel was satisfied that there was no financial motivation to his conduct, Mr Quinn's actions in misrepresenting the phonics results made them look more favourable than they were. This would have served to boost his professional reputation.
- His actions took place within the educational setting and had the potential to impact on pupils.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response.

The nature of the proven conduct in this case was serious for the reasons outlined. However, given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present,

the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case for the following reasons:

Firstly, the panel accepted that Mr Quinn was a highly capable teacher who was likely to make a positive impact in education in the future.

Secondly, the panel concluded that the risk of repetition was low. There had been no repetition of the same or similar conduct in the period since Mr Quinn left the School. Having gone through this process, the panel considered it was very unlikely that he would put himself in the same situation again.

That conclusion was further supported by the steps taken by Mr Quinn in the period since these events to ensure that his behaviour was not repeated. In short, the panel was satisfied that he had taken significant steps towards remediating the behaviours that contributed to his conduct.

In light of all these matters, and the other mitigating factors identified above, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case.

Having very carefully taken account of the public interest considerations in this case, the panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it has made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message as to the standards of behaviour that were not acceptable.

The panel considered this is a proportionate outcome, which strikes a fair balance between the public interest and the interests of Mr Quinn. The panel was satisfied that its recommendation maintains public confidence in the profession and upholds proper professional standards.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

I have given very careful consideration to this case and to the recommendation of the panel in respect of sanction.

In considering this case, I have also given very careful attention to the Advice that the Secretary of State has published concerning the prohibition of teachers.

In this case, the panel has found some of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In this case, the panel has directed that allegation 1 should be discontinued. I have therefore put that matter entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr John Quinn should not be the subject of a prohibition order. The panel has recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Quinn is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel finds that the conduct of Mr Quinn fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Quinn, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "Mr Quinn's actions had the potential to detrimentally impact those pupils involved. Whilst the panel bore in mind that no pupils were directly impacted by his conduct, the panel concluded there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct." A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse. The panel has said that "Mr Quinn has shown some insight, regret and remorse." It has also found that "There has been no repetition of the same or similar conduct in the period since Mr Quinn left the School. He told the panel that he had taken active steps to ensure that his

behaviour was not repeated, including that he had *“learnt to seek out support rather than run from support.”* The panel considered that this demonstrated insight on his behalf.” I have therefore given this element some weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel has observed that “public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Quinn was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.” I am particularly mindful of the finding that Mr Quinn deliberately submitted false phonics results, which was a breach of the Standards and Testing Agency’s Assessment and Reporting Arrangements, and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of unacceptable professional conduct or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Quinn himself. The panel has commented, “No doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator and indeed the contrary was true. The panel was presented with persuasive and powerful evidence that he was highly regarded by colleagues, both in terms of his classroom performance and as Deputy Headteacher. It was clear that since Mr Quinn started working at Seven Fields Primary School in 2019, he had made an extremely positive contribution in challenging circumstances and he deserved credit for that.” The panel also noted that it had seen a number of character references and testimonials which referred to Mr Quinn very highly in terms of his teaching practice.

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Quinn from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of his contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s finding that “the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum”. I have also noted the panel’s comments that a prohibition order would not be appropriate for the following reasons:

“Firstly, the panel accepted that Mr Quinn was a highly capable teacher who was likely to make a positive impact in education in the future.

“Secondly, the panel concluded that the risk of repetition was low. There had been no repetition of the same or similar conduct in the period since Mr Quinn left the School. Having gone through this process, the panel considered it was very unlikely that he would put himself in the same situation again.”

“That conclusion was further supported by the steps taken by Mr Quinn in the period since these events to ensure that his behaviour was not repeated. In short, the panel was satisfied that he had taken significant steps towards remediating the behaviours that contributed to his conduct.”

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. I consider that the publication of the findings made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that were not acceptable and that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Oatley', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 13 February 2025

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