



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Stephen Bovey: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

March 2025

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

Teacher: Mr Stephen Bovey
TRA reference: 22429
Date of determination: 6 March 2025
Former employer: The Globe Primary School, West Sussex

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 6 March 2025 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Stephen Bovey.

The panel members were Ms Olivia Kong (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Melissa West (teacher panellist) and Mrs Julie Wells (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Luisa Gibbons of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP solicitors.

In advance of the meeting, after taking into consideration the public interest and the interests of justice, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Bovey that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Bovey provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer, Ms Louise Murphy-King of Kingsley Napley LLP or Mr Bovey.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 29 January 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Bovey was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as a year 1 classroom teacher at the Globe (“the School”):

1. On or around 1 March 2023:
 - a. He used excessive and/or unreasonable force on Pupil A in that he grabbed Pupil A’s wrist and dragged Pupil A across the classroom;
 - b. The force used in allegation 1a. meant that Pupil A fell over;
 - c. He used excessive and/or unreasonable force on Pupil A in that he grabbed Pupil A’s arm and dragged Pupil A along a corridor back into the classroom;
 - d. The force used in allegation 1c. above meant that Pupil A fell over.

Mr Bovey admitted the alleged facts and that he is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Preliminary applications

There were no preliminary applications.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and list of key people – pages 5 to 6

Section 2: Notice of referral and response to notice of referral - pages 7 to 16

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 17 to 21

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 22 to 323

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 324 to 327

Section 6: Notice of meeting – pages 328 to 329

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

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession 2020, (the “Procedures”).

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Bovey on 7 April 2024.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

In advance of the meeting, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Bovey for the allegation to be considered without a hearing. The panel had the ability to direct that the case be considered at a hearing if required in the interests of justice or in the public interest. The panel did not determine that such a direction was necessary or appropriate in this case.

Mr Bovey attained Qualified Teacher Status on 11 January 2006. Mr Bovey was employed at the School from 27 July 2010. He held various roles at the School, including that of Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENDCo), intervention and classroom teacher. On 1 March 2023, the headteacher was made aware of an alleged incident. Mr Bovey held the role of classroom teacher at the time of the alleged incidents. Mr Bovey was suspended the following day and an investigation was undertaken. A disciplinary hearing was held on 14 July 2023. Mr Bovey ceased to be employed at the School on 17 July 2023.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel found the following particulars of the allegation against you proved, for these reasons:

Whilst working as a year 1 classroom teacher at the Globe (“the School”):

1. On or around 1 March 2023:

- a. You used excessive and/or unreasonable force on Pupil A in that you grabbed Pupil A’s wrist and dragged Pupil A across the classroom;**

Mr Bovey admitted this allegation.

In the statement of agreed facts, Mr Bovey admitted that Pupil A was a year 1 pupil with significant speech and communication issues and was a vulnerable child. Mr Bovey admitted that [REDACTED], the contents of which Mr Bovey was aware of.

Mr Bovey also admitted that Pupil A was present at a group assembly on 1 March 2023, sat separately on a table with Mr Bovey. He admitted that during the assembly Pupil A got up from the table and ran across the classroom to the back of the room. Mr Bovey admitted that he got up from the table and followed Pupil A, that he approached [REDACTED] and grabbed [REDACTED] wrist. Mr Bovey admitted that he held Pupil A by the wrist and dragged [REDACTED] back across the classroom. He admitted that he did not let go of Pupil A's wrist when [REDACTED] fell over. He also admitted that after Pupil A fell over and got back up, he grabbed [REDACTED] wrist and pulled [REDACTED] back to a chair/table.

The panel was provided with the notes of Mr Bovey's interview during the School's investigation. The panel noted that the interview did not take place until 18 May 2023, over two months after the alleged incidents. In that interview, Mr Bovey initially spoke of the incident referred to in allegation 1.c and 1.d. He then stated that there had been another incident beforehand, but he did not think that it had taken place on the same day. He stated that there had been a year group assembly and Pupil A was walking off and around the room. He stated that he went to lead [REDACTED] back, and as the room was full, he tripped over a table while holding [REDACTED] hand, so that Pupil A bumped into the table as well. He stated that Pupil A had not been attempting to leave the classroom, but [REDACTED] was moving around making a lot of noise. He stated that he had been frustrated and embarrassed and would have used a stern voice.

Mr Bovey was asked whether on either occasion he felt that he needed to "use more" to get Pupil A to come back. He stated that he was not conscious of it. He stated that when dealing with children, he is aware of his size and when they are trying to pull away from you don't want to let go as they would go running around. He stated that he "felt what [he] used was OK – stronger than I would ideally like". He also stated that "with [Pupil A] there has been times I thought it was getting too much so I release. That can be quite subjective."

[REDACTED] Mr Bovey stated that he had never had restraint training but had had discussions regarding de-escalation conversations.

Mr Bovey stated that he could not recall holding Pupil A's arm, so he wanted to say that he was holding [REDACTED] hand, but that he had a shadow of doubt based on the allegations against him, so he was questioning that aspect.

In the School's disciplinary hearing, Mr Bovey stated that he had tried to encourage Pupil A back, that he had a fidget toy that he presented to [REDACTED]. He stated that he tried other strategies first "without disturbing the other 90 children, but it was unsuccessful and regrettable".

A witness to this incident emailed her concerns to the headteacher on the afternoon of the incident at 3:42pm, the incident having happened at 12:50pm. She was subsequently interviewed as part of the School's investigation. In her interview, she stated that they had been sat in her classroom as a year group to discuss behaviour and to have an assembly. She stated that the children had been sat on the carpet facing her, and that Mr Bovey had been to her left with Pupil A by an internal classroom door, which was open. She stated that Pupil A had got up and ran across the back of the classroom to the external door which was closed. She stated that Mr Bovey had run after [REDACTED] and grabbed [REDACTED] by [REDACTED] wrist and dragged [REDACTED] across the classroom. She described the distance he dragged [REDACTED] as being approximately 15 metres, but about halfway there, [REDACTED] tripped and fell to the floor. She stated that Mr Bovey did not let go of Pupil A's wrist when [REDACTED] fell, he got down to [REDACTED] level and shouted at [REDACTED] to "get up off the floor." She stated that there had been no reaction from the other children in the class. She stated that she could not remember which wrist Mr Bovey had grabbed, and that it had all been very quick. She stated that Pupil A had not been "fazed at all by what happened" and when they returned to the table "[REDACTED] just sat and listened."

She stated that Pupil [REDACTED] but there had been nowhere for [REDACTED] to go since the external door was a fire door so would have been locked. She stated that Pupil A would not have been able to open the door. She stated that there were no other risks to Pupil A as the other children had been sat on the carpet so Pupil A could not have run into them.

This witness stated that in the weeks leading up to the incident, Mr Bovey had been raising his voice a lot, and that she had asked the senior leadership team to check on him for his own wellbeing. She stated that she was not concerned for the children. She stated that she could see that he was not himself and had been struggling to keep on top of his workload and that the behaviour in his class added to that.

The witness was asked if Mr Bovey seemed angry. She answered "yes, he didn't walk he ran across the back – you could see he just saw red."

The witness stated that the incident shocked her, as "that's not like him at all". She stated that she felt that there "could have been more support for him [REDACTED] before this."

A second witness was also interviewed regarding this incident. She had sent an email with her concerns to the headteacher at 3:43pm on the day of the incident, which she described as having happened at 12:45pm. In her interview, she stated that "Pupil A ran

from [REDACTED] seat with Mr Bovey, from the internal door, to the external door which is the whole width across the classroom, he followed [REDACTED] and grabbed [REDACTED] arm and pulled [REDACTED], in my opinion, quite forcefully across the class. I say with force as [REDACTED] stumbled, and he shouted at [REDACTED] to get up and dragged [REDACTED] back to the chair he wished for [REDACTED] to sit in. I felt it was forceful and that he was angry in his demeanour. In my opinion, I don't think [REDACTED] was any harm to [REDACTED] or others – just being disruptive and I don't think [REDACTED] was going to leave the room [REDACTED] just ran to the external door." She stated that the door was heavy so a child would struggle to open it. She stated that when Mr Bovey shouted, it would have been loud enough for the other pupils to hear, but she did not recall their reaction. She stated that Mr Bovey grabbed Pupil A between the wrist and [REDACTED] elbow although could not remember which arm. She described that he dragged [REDACTED] "a couple of child steps". She stated that Pupil A did not react, and [REDACTED] "wouldn't have thought to intervene thinking [REDACTED] was hurt so it wasn't that forceful".

This witness stated that it was "the fact he was angry that I was concerned about and his wellbeing as the red mist had descended." She stated that this was not his usual behaviour and had been out of character, but that she had raised concerns about [REDACTED] in the weeks leading up to the incident as he was "not handling Pupil A and the behaviour in the class." The witness stated that the reason she had "raised things is as I felt he needed supporting."

Given that there did not appear to be any risks to Pupil A at the time of this incident, and the anger that the witnesses observed, the panel considered that Mr Bovey had grabbed Pupil A's wrist and dragged Pupil A across the classroom, and that this was excessive and unreasonable force.

b. The force used in allegation 1a. meant that Pupil A fell over;

Mr Bovey admitted this allegation. He admitted that whilst he held Pupil A by the wrist and as he was dragging [REDACTED] back across the classroom, Pupil A tripped up and fell on the floor.

One of the witnesses to this incident stated in her interview that "the way [Mr Bovey] was walking [REDACTED] was dragging behind so either too forceful or he has stopped, and [REDACTED] stumbled." The other witness was asked if there had been any obstacles in their way that could have caused Pupil A to trip, and she stated that she felt that it was the force he had used, there were no obstacles.

The panel found it more probable than not that the force used in allegation 1a. meant that Pupil A fell over.

The panel found the following particulars of the allegation against you not proved, for these reasons:

c. You used excessive and/or unreasonable force on Pupil A in that you grabbed Pupil A's arm and dragged Pupil A along a corridor back into the classroom;

Mr Bovey admitted this allegation.

In the statement of agreed facts, Mr Bovey admitted that on 1 March 2023, Pupil A walked out of the classroom and that he shouted after [REDACTED] to come back, but Pupil A ignored him. Mr Bovey admitted that he left the classroom to follow [REDACTED]. After leaving the classroom he admitted that he approached Pupil A in the corridor outside the classroom and grabbed Pupil A's wrist. He admitted that whilst holding Pupil A by the wrist, he dragged Pupil A back towards the classroom. Mr Bovey also admitted that he did not let go of Pupil A's wrist when [REDACTED] fell over.

The panel was provided with the notes of Mr Bovey's interview during the School's investigation.

In that interview Mr Bovey stated that Pupil A walked out of the classroom, and that he "went through the behaviour policy" to encourage [REDACTED] to return. He stated that there were no other adults in the room with him at the time. He stated that he used the usual distraction techniques and the behaviour chart and then called the office for support from the senior leadership team, but everyone was otherwise engaged. He stated that he then took the decision to leave Pupil A and try to teach the class from the doorway so that he could keep an eye on [REDACTED]. He stated that after 5 minutes [REDACTED] remained calm so he went through the process again "with policy and chart" but there was no change. He stated that he called for the senior leadership team to support him again, but no one was available.

Mr Bovey then told the interviewer that he took the decision to try to engage [REDACTED] to get [REDACTED] back in the classroom and that he walked up the corridor to [REDACTED]. He stated that [REDACTED] was arguing and refusing but [REDACTED] did get up and took his hand. He stated that [REDACTED] dawdled behind him as he led [REDACTED] back to the other children.

Mr Bovey stated that he was usually the only adult with Pupil A in the afternoons, although there were times when [REDACTED] would go into other classes. He was asked if he had felt comfortable with Pupil A's behaviour and how to manage it. He stated that he had not got to the point where he said that he needed extra help, that "budgets are tight so [he] tried to deal with it but in hindsight it might not have been the best idea."

Mr Bovey stated that Pupil A could wander off around the school, and to ensure [REDACTED] was safe, the best place for [REDACTED] to be was in the classroom. [REDACTED]

Mr Bovey stated that he could not recall holding Pupil A's arm, so he wanted to say that he was holding [REDACTED] hand, but that he had a shadow of doubt based on the allegations against him, so he was questioning that aspect.

A witness to the incident reported the incident to the headteacher on 2 March at 9:48am. She referred to having seen Mr Bovey at one point dragging Pupil A along the corridor by [REDACTED] arm and that he had seemed very frustrated with [REDACTED].

Similarly, in a police statement believed to be of the same witness (although the panel noted that the statement bore a different surname to that used in the email), the witness stated that Mr Bovey "grabbed Pupil A by [REDACTED] right arm, it wasn't aggressive, it was more out of frustration ... and then pulled Pupil A along the corridor towards his classroom." The panel noted that the witness described Mr Bovey having said "I've had enough of your behaviour", which the panel considered to be a controlled remark.

In the witness's interview as part of the School's investigation, the witness stated that she was sat in [REDACTED] room opposite to Mr Bovey's classroom. She stated that she could hear Pupil A running out of the classroom up and down the corridor. She stated that Mr Bovey called Pupil A a couple of times to come back but she did not and instead ran up the corridor. She stated that Mr Bovey walked up the corridor to go after [REDACTED], that he said that he had had enough, grabbed [REDACTED] arm and pulled [REDACTED] down the corridor. She stated that he grabbed [REDACTED] "on the wrist – not 100% but I believe [REDACTED] right arm". She stated that "it wasn't hard, he just grabbed [REDACTED] by the arm and pulled [REDACTED] down a little bit" and that Pupil A had not reacted, [REDACTED] just went with him. She stated that the incident had lasted seconds. The witness was asked if Pupil A had been at risk when [REDACTED] was out of the class and described that Pupil A had been climbing on the metal railings which was not safe, and he also had a whole class to look after "who were misbehaving."

The witness stated that she walked up the corridor and said to Mr Bovey to let [REDACTED] take Pupil A for a bit. She stated that Mr Bovey had said "no" at first, but that [REDACTED] had been insistent to support both of them.

This witness stated that Mr Bovey had an "extremely hard class with no support" and [REDACTED] She stated that in the morning, Mr Bovey had a teaching assistant to support him, but this incident occurred in the afternoon, and at that time, there would not have been any support. [REDACTED] She also stated that Mr Bovey had been "quite low – it's the hardest class I've been in in my 16 years [at the School]". She stated that Mr Bovey should have been given more support both for the class and his wellbeing. She

stated that it had been a tough year with a teacher off sick and that “he was expected to do everything.” This witness stated that she had raised the incident as “he needed support and he grabbed a child’s arm.” She stated that she had not been worried about Pupil A’s wellbeing, she had more of a concern for Mr Bovey.

[REDACTED]

The panel noted that the witness observing the incident had identified that a risk was posed by Pupil A climbing on the metal railings, [REDACTED]. The panel noted that Mr Bovey was alone in the classroom with the children, and that he had called for assistance on two occasions but that no one had been available to assist. The panel noted that he had attempted working through the behaviour policy, and tried distraction techniques. At that point, he was in a difficult position of looking after a classroom of children, whilst at the same time being responsible for Pupil A, a child who was in the corridor and for whom there were risks when [REDACTED] left the classroom.

The panel noted that the witness who observed the incident was not concerned about Pupil A’s wellbeing, but rather that of Mr Bovey. The panel noted that there is a subtle distinction between leading a child by the arm and dragging a child and that it may not be readily apparent to a witness as to the level of force being used, particularly when there was a considerable size differential between teacher and pupil. The panel noted that the witness observed no aggression. There was no indication that Pupil A had suffered any physical harm during the incident. Pupil A’s parents were spoken with by the police and were supportive of Mr Bovey’s approach with Pupil A on occasions when [REDACTED] misbehaved. In the circumstances, whilst the panel accepted that there had been physical contact between Mr Bovey and Pupil A as [REDACTED] moved down the corridor, the panel did not consider that it was more probable than not that Mr Bovey used excessive or unreasonable force, particularly given the quandary posed by being responsible for both a classroom of pupils and Pupil A in the corridor.

The panel found this allegation not proven.

d. The force used in allegation 1c above meant that Pupil A fell over.

Mr Bovey admitted this allegation. He admitted that whilst holding Pupil A by the wrist and dragging [REDACTED] back towards the classroom, Pupil A tripped up and fell on the floor.

In the notes of Mr Bovey’s interview as part of the School’s investigation, as he lead Pupil A back to the other children, “the next thing I know [REDACTED] is on the floor, whether [REDACTED] has tripped or thrown [REDACTED] down I don’t know”. He stated that Pupil A was still holding his hand, so they were still connected, he helped [REDACTED] up and continued to lead [REDACTED] back to the classroom. He stated that they went into class, [REDACTED] sat down next to him and they carried on with the lesson. He

stated that he asked [REDACTED] questions that he knew [REDACTED] could answer to keep [REDACTED] engaged and there were “no further complaints to [REDACTED] being uncomfortable”.

The witness who observed this incident was asked if Pupil A tripped over. The witness said she did not think so, that Mr Bovey had pulled [REDACTED], although she did not think it was too hard. She stated that Pupil A did not react, and just went with him.

There was no evidence that the force used in respect of allegation 1c meant that Pupil A fell over. No one else observed this and Mr Bovey did not know whether Pupil A had tripped or thrown [REDACTED] on the floor.

The panel found this allegation not proven.

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

Having found allegation 1a and 1b proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved 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, which is referred to as “the Advice”.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Bovey, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Bovey was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Bovey, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education (“KCSIE”). The panel

considered that Mr Bovey was in breach of his obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to consider what was in the best interests of the child.

The panel also considered whether Mr Bovey's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 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.

The panel found that the offence of violence was relevant, in the sense that violence covers a wide variety of offences and this was at the very lowest end of the scale, there being no injury or wounding.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Bovey amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

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

In relation to whether Mr Bovey's actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account 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.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Bovey's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice.

As set out above, the panel found that the offence of violence was relevant albeit Mr Bovey's behaviours were the very lowest end of the scale, there being no injury or wounding.

Nevertheless, the panel noted that 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 conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The findings of misconduct are serious, but the panel did not consider that the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher, in the circumstances of the case. The panel noted that the parent's view when consulted by the police was that the potential dismissal of Mr Bovey from his position would not benefit Pupil A, given that he was normally calm, and helped with

[REDACTED] behaviour. The panel considered that this was an indication of what the public might think, if it was appraised of the full circumstances of the case.

The panel did not consider that Mr Bovey's conduct could potentially damage the public perception of a teacher.

For these reasons, the panel did not find that Mr Bovey's actions constituted 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, it was necessary for the panel 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 a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely, the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

There was a public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the finding of having used excessive force, albeit the panel noted that this was on one occasion only, and that the evidence suggested it was out of character.

Although the panel did not consider that Mr Bovey was guilty of conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel did consider that public confidence in the profession could be weakened if his conduct was not treated seriously when regulating the conduct of the profession.

The panel was of the view that a public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mr Bovey fell short of the standards expected of him.

Given that this was a one off incident in the context of a teacher with considerable experience, having held teaching posts since 2006, the panel considered that Mr Bovey is able to make a valuable contribution to the profession.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times.

In view of the 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 Bovey.

The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved. 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;

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.

Mr Bovey's actions were deliberate, albeit he appeared to have been reacting in a sense of frustration, in the spur of the moment. The panel accepted that Mr Bovey had no intention to harm Pupil A.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Bovey was acting under extreme duress, eg a physical threat or significant intimidation.

Nevertheless, there appeared to be some significant pressure upon Mr Bovey at the time. The headteacher was interviewed as part of the School's investigation and stated that Mr Bovey had been on a support plan at the time of the incident which he had found upsetting and stressful. She commented that after a few weeks on the support plan, he had calmed down, but that "you could see he was struggling, [REDACTED]." The headteacher acknowledged that the support plan covered almost every teaching standard. The panel acknowledged that such an extensive support plan would have been extremely onerous for Mr Bovey.

The support plan had been put in place for Mr Bovey following concerns regarding the quality of his teaching, the progress children were making, and his behaviour management. Whilst on the support plan, there remained concerns about his ability to sustain improvements in pupils' behaviour.

Mr Bovey confirmed in his interview as part of the School's investigation that he found the support plan overwhelming, and felt like there were additional tasks to do on top of his usual role such that he was often working until midnight. He stated that he was under stress but that he wanted to say that it was not impacting the way he was in the

classroom. He stated that he was finding the support plan tricky but he had only a few weeks left so he focussed “on the light at the end of the tunnel.” At the disciplinary hearing, Mr Bovey clarified that his perception at the time was that the support plan was not impacting him, but with hindsight he knew that it was, and that his suspension felt as if a “huge weight was lifted.”

There was no evidence that Mr Bovey had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct or of having contributed significantly to the education sector. Nevertheless, he had held teaching posts since 2006, and had been employed at the School since July 2010.

The panel accepted that the incident was out of character. The witness who observed the second incident (which was not proven to have involved excessive force) stated she had had no previous concerns, and that Mr Bovey should have been given more support. One of the witnesses who observed the first incident stated that she was more concerned for Mr Bovey’s wellbeing and that he was usually kind, calm, upbeat and jolly but that he had become stressed and was struggling to keep on top of his workload. She stated that the incident had shocked her, as it was not like him at all. The other witness to the first incident also stated that she had raised the issue as she felt that Mr Bovey needed support.

The panel noted that a reference was provided at the time of Mr Bovey’s application to the School from his previous employer. The panel did not place any weight upon this reference given the age of it.

The panel found the view of Pupil A’s parents to be persuasive. They stated that Mr Bovey normally had a really good approach with Pupil A, that he was normally calm and that he helped with [REDACTED] behaviour. They referred to Mr Bovey being the “best teacher at the school with Pupil A”, and that when she was in Mr Bovey’s lessons Pupil A “has a good day.”

In written representations, Mr Bovey stated that he had spent a lot of time over the 13 months since the incident reflecting on the events for which he was “truly sorry.” He has also stated that he now saw that his lack of intention was no excuse and that his “negligence” had led to the potential harm of a child, and that he was responsible for that behaviour whether he intended it or not.

The panel considered that Mr Bovey had demonstrated insight that he was responsible for his own behaviour, and that he had expressed genuine remorse.

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. 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. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

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. In this case, the panel has found some of the allegations not proven, including allegations 1 c and d, and found that the proven allegations do not amount to conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Stephen Bovey should not be the subject of a prohibition order. The panel has recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

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

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Bovey, involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) and/or involved breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The panel finds that the conduct of Mr Bovey 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, 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 Bovey 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/safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "There was a public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the finding of having used excessive force, albeit the panel noted that this was on one occasion only, and that the evidence suggested it was out of character." 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, which the panel sets out as follows, "The panel considered that Mr Bovey had demonstrated insight that he was responsible for his own behaviour, and that he had expressed genuine remorse." I have therefore given this element considerable 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 observe, "Although the panel did not consider that Mr Bovey was guilty of conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel did consider that public confidence in the profession could be weakened if his conduct was not treated seriously when regulating the conduct of the profession." I am particularly mindful of the finding of using excessive force with a child in this case 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 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 Bovey himself and the panel comment “There was no evidence that Mr Bovey had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct or of having contributed significantly to the education sector. Nevertheless, he had held teaching posts since 2006, and had been employed at the School since July 2010.”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the level of insight. The panel has said, “In written representations, Mr Bovey stated that he had spent a lot of time over the 13 months since the incident reflecting on the events for which he was “truly sorry.” He has also stated that he now saw that his lack of intention was no excuse and that his “negligence” had led to the potential harm of a child, and that he was responsible for that behaviour whether he intended it or not.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding that “The panel accepted that the incident was out of character. The witness who observed the second incident (which was not proven to have involved excessive force) stated she had had no previous concerns, and that Mr Bovey should have been given more support. One of the witnesses who observed the first incident stated that she was more concerned for Mr Bovey’s wellbeing and that he was usually kind, calm, upbeat and jolly but that he had become stressed and was struggling to keep on top of his workload. She stated that the incident had shocked [REDACTED] as it was not like him at all. The other witness to the first incident also stated that she had raised the issue as she felt that Mr Bovey needed support.”

I have given weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Bovey can continue to make to the profession and the panel said “Given that this was a one off incident in the context of a teacher with considerable experience, having held teaching posts since 2006, the panel considered that Mr Bovey is able to make a valuable contribution to the profession.”

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 'SABuxcey', with a stylized, cursive script.

Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey

Date: 11 March 2025

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