



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Joanna Walker- Maxey: Professional conduct panel hearing outcome

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

September 2025

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

Teacher: Ms Joanna Walker-Maxey

TRA reference: 21525

Date of determination: 25 September 2025

Former employer: Norham High School, North Shields

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 22 September 2025 until 25 September 2025 at Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT, to consider the case of Ms Joanna Walker-Maxey

The panel members were Mr Gamel Byles (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Russell Bond (teacher panellist) and Ms Olivia Kong (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Miss Davina Kahlon of Eversheds Sutherland International LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mrs Zahra Evans of Capsticks LLP solicitors.

Ms Joanna Walker-Maxey was present and was represented by Mr Collin Henderson of the Reflective Practice.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 6 June 2025.

It was alleged that Ms Walker-Maxey was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that, while employed as a deputy head teacher at Norham High School:

1. Between April and May 2022, she altered one or more pupils' coursework after it was presented for assessment, as set out in Schedule A below.

2. Her conduct at 1 above was dishonest.

Schedule A

Pupil A

- 29 April at 14:53

- Deleted 'pram'
- Inserted 'pushchair'
- Deleted 'it's mom' and inserted 'the person that is pushing it'
- Deleted 'I wouldn't choose this one because it's quite expensive compared to the other car seats.'

- 5 May at 14:09

- Deleted 'another safety' and inserted 'design'
- Deleted 'and durability is a bad part because the pushchair is £299.99 and the nursery probably won't be able to afford 3 of them for the newborns'
- Inserted 'is reasonable as similar items can be much more expensive'

- 10 May at 17:44

- Inserted 'it folds flat for newborns and can be adjusted for older children also'

Pupil B

- 5 May at 12:58 – see Document 1 (purple font)

- 6 May at 13:56 – see Document 2 (purple font)

- 10 May at 11:43 – see Document 3 (purple font)

- 6 May at 13:56 – see Document 4 (purple font)

Pupil C

- After 21 April, 100 alterations were made between 11-12 May – see Document 5 (green font)

Pupil D

- 7 graphic alterations were made between 10-11 May - see Document 6 (green boxes)

Pupil E

- 15 alterations were made on 11 May at 05:16 and 08.23 see Document 7 (purple font)

Ms Walker-Maxey has partially admitted the allegations at paragraph 1 and 2 above. As per Schedule A, this includes:

- Pupil A - on 10 May 2022 at 17:44 Ms Walker-Maxey inserted 'it folds flat for newborns and can be adjusted for older children also'
- Pupil B - on 10 May 2022 at 11:43
- Pupil C - after 21 April, 100 alterations were made between 11-12 May 2022– see Document 5 (green font)
- Pupil D - 7 graphic alterations were made between 10-11 May 2022 - see Document 6 (green boxes)
- Pupil E - 15 alterations were made on 11 May 2022 at 05:16 and 08.23 see Document 7 (purple font)

Ms Walker-Maxey admitted that her conduct in respect of these alterations was dishonest. Ms Walker-Maxey admitted that, in respect of the admitted allegations 1 and 2, she was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Ms Walker-Maxey denied all other alterations set out in allegation 1 pursuant to Schedule A, namely the alterations made on 29 April 2022 at 15:43 and 5 May 2022 at 14:09 in respect of Pupil A; the alterations made on 5 May 2022 at 12:58 and the two alterations on 6 May 2022 at 13:56 in respect of Pupil B. She also denied allegation 2 in respect of these alterations.

During the course of the hearing, allegation 1 was amended as set out below.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 4 to 6

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 7 to 26

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 27 to 40

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 41 to 387

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 388 to 596

In addition, the panel noted that the bundle submitted should have include a redaction in part of Ms Walker-Maxey's witness statement. This was subsequently amended on 19 September 2025 and a new bundle was shared with the panel.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing and the additional document that the panel decided to admit.

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

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence from the following witnesses called by the presenting officer:

Witness A

Witness B

Ms Walker-Maxey also gave oral evidence and called the following witnesses:

Witness E

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Ms Walker-Maxey had been employed at the School since 20 June 2019 as a deputy headteacher. She was responsible for administering the non-examination assessments, as part of OCR Cambridge Nationals Child Development course taught at the School. Between April and May 2022, it was alleged that Ms Walker-Maxey had altered one or more pupils' coursework after it was presented for assessment. The allegations were initially reported to the OCR Examinations Board on 11 May 2022. Ms Walker-Maxey subsequently resigned on 31 May 2022. Ms Walker-Maxey was thereafter referred to the TRA on 15 February 2023 by OCR.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

1. **Between April and May 2022, you altered one or more pupils' centre-assessed units after it was presented for assessment, as set out in Schedule A.**

Schedule A:

Pupil A

29 April at 14:53:

Deleted 'pram'

Inserted 'pushchair'

Deleted 'it's mom' and inserted 'the person that is pushing it'

Deleted 'I wouldn't choose this one because it's quite expensive compared to the other car seats.'

5 May at 14:09:

Deleted 'another safety' and inserted 'design'

Deleted 'and durability is a bad part because the pushchair is £299.99 and the nursery probably won't be able to afford 3 of them for the newborns'

Inserted 'is reasonable as similar items can be much more expensive'

10 May at 17:44:

Inserted 'it folds flat for newborns and can be adjusted for older children also'.

Pupil B

5 May at 12:58: see Document 1 (purple font).

6 May at 13:56: see Document 2 (purple font).

10 May at 11:43: see Document 3 (purple font).

6 May at 13:56: see Document 4 (purple font).

Pupil C

After 21 April, 100 alterations were made between 11-12 May: see Document 5 (green font).

Pupil D

7 graphic alterations were made between 10-11 May: see Document 6 (green boxes).

Pupil E

15 alterations were made on 11 May at 05:16 and 08:23: see Document 7 (purple font).

The panel considered it important to clarify the meaning of “presented for assessment” as set out in allegation 1. Based on their professional experience, the panel understood this to refer to the point at which a pupil’s raw assessment marks were submitted to the relevant examination body. In her witness statement, Ms Walker-Maxey stated that she submitted the raw assessment marks on or around 5/6 May 2022. At the start of her oral evidence, she clarified that this was in fact 6 May 2022 at the end of the school day, when she submitted the marks to the school’s exams officer, who was then responsible for forwarding them to OCR. The panel therefore concluded that the centre-assessed units were presented for assessment on 6 May 2022 at the end of the school day.

Schedule A, which forms part of allegation 1, outlines the following alterations that occurred prior to 6 May 2022:

Pupil A

29 April at 14:53:

Deleted ‘pram’

Inserted ‘pushchair’

Deleted ‘it’s mom’ and inserted ‘the person that is pushing it’

Deleted ‘I wouldn’t choose this one because it’s quite expensive compared to the other car seats.’

5 May at 14:09:

Deleted ‘another safety’ and inserted ‘design’

Deleted ‘and durability is a bad part because the pushchair is £299.99 and the nursery probably won’t be able to afford 3 of them for the newborns’

Inserted ‘is reasonable as similar items can be much more expensive’

Pupil B

5 May at 12:58: see Document 1 (purple font).

6 May at 13:56: see Document 2 (purple font).

6 May at 13:56: see Document 4 (purple font).

These alterations occurred prior to the centre-assessed units being presented for assessment, which the panel was satisfied took place at the end of the school day on 6 May 2022. Accordingly, the panel concluded that these parts of Schedule A were not proven in relation to allegation 1.

The following alterations, however, were made after 6 May 2022, when the pupils' centre-assessed units had already been presented for assessment:

Pupil A

10 May at 17:44: Inserted 'it folds flat for newborns and can be adjusted for older children also'.

The panel considered audit logs exhibited to Witness B's statement. This audit log was created as part of an internal investigation conducted by the School. During his oral evidence, Witness B explained that, in his capacity as data manager at the School, he had been asked to review and compile a chronological record of activities carried out by both the pupil and the teacher within their respective Google accounts. Upon reviewing the audit log relating to Pupil A, the panel was satisfied that the screenshot provided clearly showed purple text insertions. Witness B had explained when giving oral evidence that the purple colour coding indicated alterations made directly by Ms Walker-Maxey.

The panel considered the witness statement of Ms Walker-Maxey and noted that Ms Walker-Maxey admitted the alteration made on 10 May 2022 at 17:44. The panel referred to paragraph 64 of Ms Walker-Maxey's witness statement: *"The change made on 10 May 2022 at 17:44 I accept were my changes I made. This is where I understood all pupil coursework had been requested for moderation and where in a panic, I altered the text to try and justify the mark I had awarded Pupil A. I added in wording 'it folds flat for newborns and can be adjusted for older children also.' I fully accept this was wrong and I accept it was dishonest and shows a lack of integrity."*

The panel was provided with copies of Joint Qualification Guidance for conducting coursework. The panel noted that paragraph 2.6 of the guidance states: *"Where coursework is submitted in digital format there may be instances where the construction of the e-coursework does not attract any marks, in which case this construction may be done by the teacher instead of the candidate."* The panel considered that the insertion of text goes beyond the remit of construction permitted within the guidance.

On examination of the evidence before it and Ms Walker-Maxey's admission, the panel was satisfied that Ms Walker-Maxey had made alterations to Pupil A's work on 10 May 2022 at 17:44.

Pupil B

10 May at 11:43: see Document 3 (purple font).

The panel considered audit logs exhibited to Witness B's statement. Upon reviewing the audit log relating to Pupil B, the panel was satisfied that the screenshots provided clearly showed purple text insertions made by Ms Walker-Maxey. The panel also noted that various words and paragraphs had been struck out and paragraphs inserted.

The panel considered the witness statement of Ms Walker-Maxey and noted that Ms Walker-Maxey admitted the alteration made on 10 May 2022 at 11:43. The panel noted paragraph 67 of Ms Walker-Maxey's statement: *"Example three on Page 271 and Example Five on Page 272 relates to changes made on Tuesday 10 May at 11:43. I accept this was after finalisation of the coursework and was made solely by myself. I accept this was dishonest and shows a lack of integrity. I do not believe all of the text itself is something I made up, I do believe the majority was taken from the different versions of Pupil B's coursework..... I accept I might have changed the wording from "just chuck on" to "dress a baby in quickly" however, I believe the rest I had taken from their work as described above."*

The panel considered the Joint Qualification Guidance for conducting coursework and were satisfied that inserting text, striking out text and copying and pasting text are beyond the remit of what is permitted in the guidance.

On examination of the evidence before it and Ms Walker-Maxey's admission, the panel was satisfied that Ms Walker-Maxey had made alterations to Pupil B's work on 10 May 2022 at 11:43.

Pupil C

After 21 April, 100 alterations were made between 11-12 May: see Document 5 (green font).

The panel reviewed the audit logs for Pupil C, as exhibited in Witness B's statement. They noted the following timestamps: 11 May 2022 at 17:32 (page 330 of the bundle), 11 May 2022 at 19:54 (page 331), and 12 May 2022 at 07:39 (page 332) all of which were outside of standard school working hours.

The panel considered the witness statement of Ms Walker-Maxey. The panel noted at paragraph 68 of Ms Walker-Maxey's statement she admitted 80 of the alterations made between 11 May 2022 and 12 May 2022: *"Page 274 of the Bundle states over 80 of the 100 edits that happened took place either in the late evening or early morning of the 11th and 12th May 2022. I accept these were my changes I made in my blind panic trying to get the coursework ready for moderation."*

The panel noted that when giving oral evidence Ms Walker-Maxey explained that the alteration made to Pupil C's coursework were in relation to a table which Pupil C had created during class time as part of their theory lesson. Ms Walker-Maxey explained that despite explaining to Pupil C that they needed to cut and paste the tables into their final coursework this was not completed. She therefore located Pupil C's table herself which was stored in another location and she directly copied and pasted it into Pupil C's assessment. Ms Walker-Maxey also explained she deleted some parts of the table as they contained extra details she didn't believe were necessary.

The panel considered the Joint Qualification Guidance for conducting coursework and were satisfied that inserting text, striking out text and copying and pasting text are beyond the remit of what is permitted in the guidance.

On examination of the evidence before it and Ms Walker-Maxey's admission, the panel was satisfied that Ms Walker-Maxey had made alterations to Pupil C's work between 11 May 2022 and 12 May 2022.

Pupil D

7 graphic alterations were made between 10-11 May - see Document 6 (green boxes).

The panel noted that at paragraph 17 of Witness A's evidence, he stated: *"I remember one pupil's piece of work was a PowerPoint, which had never been created by that pupil, it was created and completed entirely by the Teacher, Ms Walker-Maxey."* The panel also noted that during Witness A's oral evidence he confirmed that the PowerPoint he was referring to in his statement was in relation to Pupil D.

The panel considered the witness statement of Ms Walker-Maxey which provided a contrary account. The panel noted at paragraph 70 of Ms Walker-Maxey's statement she admitted the graphic alterations made between 10 May 2022 and 11 May 2022: *"Page 279 shows a PowerPoint presentation for Pupil D. It shows various amendments made by myself on 10 and 11 May 2022. The changes highlighted green they say are my changes. Just to be clear, this was not my own work, this was Pupil D's own PowerPoint. To the best I can recall, they had many separate PowerPoint presentations for the different learning objectives (LO). I believe I copied and pasted from one of Pupil D's PowerPoints into this one."*

The panel was not able to identify any further evidence to suggest that Ms Walker-Maxey created the entire PowerPoint without any input from Pupil D.

The panel also considered the audit log for Pupil D's PowerPoint, exhibited to Witness B's statement. In his comments within the audit log, Witness B stated: *"We can't irrefutably say there are no previous versions. If there are, we can't find them, they are named differently or have been permanently deleted."*

The panel also considered the screenshot from the audit logs relating to Pupil D, as exhibited in Witness B's statement. The panel observed that the right-hand pane displayed seven different version histories and took account of Witness B's oral evidence that the graphics displayed in green boxes were altered by Ms Walker-Maxey. The most recent entry recorded at 21:11 on 10 May 2022, which falls outside standard school working hours. As the latest version of the PowerPoint occurred outside of standard school working hours, the panel concluded that, on the balance of probabilities, alterations were likely made to Pupil D's PowerPoint by Ms Walker-Maxey.

The panel was provided with copies of Joint Qualification Guidance for conducting coursework. The panel noted that paragraph 2.6 of the guidance states: *"Where coursework is submitted in digital format there may be instances where the construction of the e-coursework does not attract any marks, in which case this construction may be done by the teacher instead of the candidate."*

Based on the panel's professional teaching experience, they were satisfied that the graphical alterations made by Ms Walker-Maxey involved the movement, copying, pasting and arrangement of text boxes which goes beyond construction.

On examination of the evidence before it and Ms Walker-Maxey's admission, the panel was satisfied that Ms Walker-Maxey had made 7 graphic alterations to Pupil D's work.

Pupil E

15 alterations were made on 11 May at 05:16 and 08.23 see Document 7 (purple font).

The panel first considered the screenshot from the audit logs relating to Pupil E, as exhibited in Witness B's statement.

The panel considered the witness statement of Ms Walker-Maxey. The panel noted at paragraph 74 of Ms Walker-Maxey's statement she admitted the 15 alterations made on 11 May: *"The changes made on 11th May in the blue text I added in but I believe this was taken from an alternative document of pupil E, I do not believe it was text I created myself. The text in green was, as witness B suggests, copied and pasted from the 'empty' document and this is consistent with my explanations throughout. The final edit including the text "I would reject this example in favour of the one below as the one below does the same things but is cheaper" I believe is text I created myself when I was in the midst of my panic on the 11th May. I therefore accept copying and pasting anything following finalisation of coursework and making any changes to the final text is not permitted. I accept it was wrong and dishonest of me to do this and shows a lack of integrity."*

The Panel observed that the alterations admitted by Ms Walker-Maxey in her statement corresponded with the entries in the audit log.

The panel considered the Joint Qualification Guidance for conducting coursework and were satisfied that inserting text, striking out text and copying and pasting text are beyond the remit of what is permitted in the guidance.

On examination of the evidence before it and Ms Walker-Maxey's admission, the panel was satisfied that Ms Walker-Maxey had made alterations to Pupil C's work on 11 May at 05:16 and 08:23.

The panel therefore found allegation 1 to be proven in respect of the following alterations:

- Pupil A
10 May at 17:44: Inserted 'it folds flat for newborns and can be adjusted for older children also'.
- Pupil B
10 May at 11:43: see Document 3 (purple font).
- Pupil C
After 21 April, 100 alterations were made between 11-12 May: see Document 5 (green font).
- Pupil D
7 graphic alterations were made between 10-11 May - see Document 6 (green boxes).
- Pupil E
15 alterations were made on 11 May at 05:16 and 08.23 see Document 7 (purple font).

2. Your conduct at 1 above was dishonest.

The panel considered whether Ms Walker-Maxey's conduct, in relation to the alterations found proven under allegation 1, amounted to dishonesty. In reaching their decision, the panel had regard to the legal test for dishonesty as set out in *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockfords*.

The panel firstly sought to ascertain the actual state of Ms Walker-Maxey's knowledge or belief as to the facts. The panel took account of Ms Walker-Maxey's admissions in her witness statement. The panel noted in Ms Walker-Maxey's witness statement she refers to "*panicking my marks weren't accurate*" and "*the changes I made over a few days were done in a blind, stupid panic.*" The panel also noted that Mrs Walker-Maxey made the amendments in private in her own office with the door shut and this conduct continued over two days.

The panel considered that Ms Walker-Maxey's conduct, was carried out deliberately to ensure that the raw marks she had awarded to pupils appeared justified when submitted for moderation to OCR. The panel was therefore satisfied that Ms Walker-Maxey had acted dishonestly, and that her conduct would be regarded as dishonest by the standards of ordinary, decent people.

The panel therefore found allegation 2 proven in relation to alterations proven under allegation 1.

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

Having found a number of the allegations 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 first considered whether the conduct of Ms Walker-Maxey, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Walker-Maxey 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, 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 also considered whether Ms Walker-Maxey's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

The panel found that the offence of serious dishonesty was relevant. In reaching this conclusion, the panel took into account the volume of changes made across multiple pupils' assessments over a two-day period. This demonstrates that Ms Walker-Maxey misrepresented the pupils' work by making alterations so it was no longer solely the work of the pupils' in order to justify the marks that she presented for assessment.

The panel considered that Ms Walker-Maxey's conduct fundamentally undermined the integrity of the assessment process, which forms a critical part of pupils' education. The panel also recognised the serious potential consequences of Ms Walker-Maxey's actions, noting that they could have impacted the entire assessment, thereby placing the pupils' qualifications at significant risk.

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.

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

In relation to whether Ms Walker-Maxey'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 Ms Walker-Maxey's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 and 13 of the Advice.

As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Ms Walker-Maxey was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that the offence of serious dishonesty was relevant.

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, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher.

The panel considered that Ms Walker-Maxey's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

The panel therefore found that Ms Walker-Maxey'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 and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, 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 maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Ms Walker-Maxey, which involved altering one or more pupils' centre-assessed units after it was presented for assessment, there was a strong public interest consideration in declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct in the profession.

The panel considered the public confidence in the profession could be undermined if conduct such as that found against Ms Walker-Maxey was not treated with the utmost seriousness, when regulating the conduct of the profession.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Ms Walker-Maxey in the profession. The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon her abilities as an educator and she 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. However, the panel felt that Ms Walker-Maxey's behaviour was at the lower end of any possible scale of seriousness.

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 the teacher.

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;

dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions or purposeful destruction of evidence, especially where these behaviours have been repeated or had serious consequences, or involved the coercion of another person to act in a way contrary to their own interests;

deliberate action in serious contravention of requirements for the conduct of an examination or assessment leading to an externally awarded qualification or national assessment (or deliberate collusion in or deliberate concealment of such action) particularly where the action had, or realistically had the potential to have, a significant impact on the outcome of the examination assessment.

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.

There was no evidence that Ms Walker-Maxey's' actions were not deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Ms Walker-Maxey was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation. However, the panel noted that Ms Walker-Maxey confirmed she was under extreme pressure at the time the alterations were made. This was due to a combination of factors, including the staff restructuring and the School's budgeting challenges, as well as her wide range of responsibilities. These responsibilities included teaching her specialist subject as well as teaching her non-specialist subject, senior leadership duties, coordinating education visitors, line managing SENCO and PSHE lead, line managing the designated safeguarding lead, and overseeing behaviour, attitudes, and attendance. She was also managing various personal issues during this period. [REDACTED]

The panel also noted that Ms Walker-Maxey was not provided with any support or training by the School in delivering the Child Development course, a subject in which she had no prior experience. She inherited the course from a teacher who had left the School following the Covid pandemic, and encountered significant challenges in teaching students whose theoretical knowledge had been severely affected by the disruption. Ms Walker-Maxey confirmed in her oral evidence that she felt compelled to teach two years' worth of theory content within a single academic year.

Ms Walker-Maxey did have a previously good history, having demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both her personal and professional conduct and had contributed

significantly to the education sector. The panel accepted that the incident was out of character.

The panel noted that Ms Walker-Maxey has made a considerable contribution to the profession by playing a pivotal role in supporting two schools located in areas of high deprivation to improve their Ofsted ratings. One school progressed from 'Special Measures' to 'Outstanding' during her tenure as assistant head, while another moved from 'Inadequate' to 'Good' while she served as deputy head.

The panel also noted that Ms Walker-Maxey continues to make valuable contributions to the profession in her current role as a Teacher Training Advisor. To date, she has supported several hundred candidates in securing places on teacher training courses.

The panel also noted that Ms Walker-Maxey provided four character testimonials. These were submitted by colleagues in her current role, as well as senior teaching professionals from previous schools, who described her as a highly skilled practitioner with excellent science subject knowledge, and that she had a significant positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and behaviour in her previous teaching roles. Her current employer also gave oral evidence, highlighting her contributions to the profession in her role as Teacher Training Advisor and confirming that she is highly commended in her position.

The panel recognised that Ms Walker-Maxey was remorseful and displayed a good level of insight into her actions. The Panel noted that Ms Walker-Maxey was forthcoming with her admissions, making full and frank admissions of her wrongdoing. The panel noted that in her evidence, Ms Walker-Maxey stated: *"In hindsight, what I should have done is annotated the coursework with my marking justification as I went along as I was marking the coursework"* and *"I appreciate I could be similar situation again, but now I know my own value, I know I internalise things and rather than letting things get too far, I have now got the confidence to say regardless of outcome, I need some help. I also know asking for help is not an admission of not being of value."* The panel therefore considered that the risk of Ms Walker-Maxey repeating this behaviour was very low as she has developed a plan for dealing with pressurised situations in the future.

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 considered that Ms Walker-Maxey had already received a period of sanction from the OCR prohibiting her involvement in any OCR assessments for a period of three years. This is due to expire in November 2025.

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 all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and/or 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 Ms Walker-Maxey 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, 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 finds that the conduct of Ms Walker-Maxey fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of conduct that was dishonest on the part of a deputy headteacher.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In assessing 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 and conduct that may 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 Ms Walker-Maxey, 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. While it does not find that Ms Walker-Maxey's behaviour posed a safeguarding threat, the panel provides this observation:

"The panel considered that Ms Walker-Maxey's conduct fundamentally undermined the integrity of the assessment process, which forms a critical part of pupils' education. The panel also recognised the serious potential consequences of Ms Walker-Maxey's actions, noting that they could have impacted the entire assessment, thereby placing the pupils' qualifications at significant risk."

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 it sets out as follows:

"The panel recognised that Ms Walker-Maxey was remorseful and displayed a good level of insight into her actions. The Panel noted that Ms Walker-Maxey was forthcoming with her admissions, making full and frank admissions of her wrongdoing. The panel noted that in her evidence, Ms Walker-Maxey stated: *"In hindsight, what I should have done is annotated the coursework with my marking justification as I went along as I was marking the coursework"* and *"I appreciate I could be similar situation again, but now I know my own value, I know I internalise things and rather than letting things get too far, I have now got the confidence to say regardless of outcome, I need some help. I also know asking for help is not an admission of not being of value."* The panel therefore considered that the risk of Ms Walker-Maxey repeating this behaviour was very low as she has developed a plan for dealing with pressurised situations in the future."

The significant degree of insight found by the panel means that I agree with it that the risk of repetition is limited. 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 records the following:

"The findings of misconduct are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher.

The panel considered that Ms Walker-Maxey's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

The panel therefore found that Ms Walker-Maxey's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute."

I am particularly mindful of the finding of dishonesty in this case and the negative impact that such a finding is likely to have 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 and 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 on Ms Walker-Maxey herself. The panel provides these remarks:

"The panel noted that Ms Walker-Maxey has made a considerable contribution to the profession by playing a pivotal role in supporting two schools located in areas of high deprivation to improve their Ofsted ratings. One school progressed from 'Special Measures' to 'Outstanding' during her tenure as assistant head, while another moved from 'Inadequate' to 'Good' while she served as deputy head.

The panel also noted that Ms Walker-Maxey continues to make valuable contributions to the profession in her current role as a Teacher Training Advisor. To date, she has supported several hundred candidates in securing places on teacher training courses.

The panel also noted that Ms Walker-Maxey provided four character testimonials. These were submitted by colleagues in her current role, as well as senior teaching professionals from previous schools, who described her as a highly skilled practitioner with excellent science subject knowledge, and that she had a significant positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and behaviour in her previous teaching roles. Her current employer also gave oral evidence, highlighting her contributions to the profession in her role as Teacher Training Advisor and confirming that she is highly commended in her position."

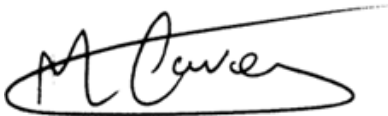
A prohibition order would prevent Ms Walker-Maxey from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of her contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments concerning the degree of remorse and insight demonstrated by Ms Walker-Maxey, which in my judgment reduces the risk of repetition to a tolerable level. In reaching my decision I have also given weight to the panel's concluding comments:

"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."

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. While the misconduct found by the panel was undoubtedly serious, 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 'M. Cavey', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 29 September 2025

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