



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mrs Rebecca Horgan: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

December 2025

Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Summary of evidence	4
Documents	4
Witnesses	4
Decision and reasons	5
Findings of fact	5
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	7
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	9

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

Teacher: Mrs Rebecca Horgan

TRA reference: 24177

Date of determination: 3 December 2025

Former employer: Glynne Primary School, Kingswinford

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 3 December 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mrs Rebecca Horgan.

The panel members were Ms Jan Stoddard (lay panellist – in the chair), Mr Ben Greene (teacher panellist) and Mr Steven Boocock (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Graham Miles of Blake Morgan LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Charlotte Watts of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Mrs Horgan was present and was represented by Mr James Halliday of Counsel.

The hearing was recorded and took place in public save that portions of the hearing were heard in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of hearing dated 1 September 2025.

It was alleged that Mrs Horgan was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst employed as a class teacher at Glynne Primary School:

- 1) On or around 17 January 2024, she:
 - a) Brought alcohol onto school premises;
 - b) Consumed alcohol on school premises, during working hours;
 - c) Was inebriated on school premises, during working hours.

Mrs Horgan admitted the facts alleged and admitted that they amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and 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 – pages 6 to 7

Section 2: Notice of hearing – pages 9 to 21

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 23 to 85

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 87 to 152

Section 5: Statement of agreed facts – pages 154 to 156

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

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

No witnesses were called by the TRA.

Mrs Rebecca Horgan gave evidence at the sanction stage.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mrs Horgan was a nursery teacher at Glynne Primary School. On 17 January 2024 at about 12.30pm, she returned to the nursery having been out, and two nursery teaching assistants saw her behaving unusually. She was unsteady on her feet and fell onto the floor, her speech was slurred and unclear, and her eyes were red. A colleague looked into Mrs Horgan's bag, to fetch her water bottle, and saw a bottle of vodka inside the bag. She reported what she had seen to the headteacher, who spoke to Mrs Horgan.

Mrs Horgan admitted having consumed alcohol. She continued to behave unusually and remained unsteady on her feet. [REDATED] The headteacher arranged for [REDACTED] to collect Mrs Horgan. A colleague later found an empty vodka bottle in a school cupboard.

Mrs Horgan admitted the factual allegations against her and signed a statement of agreed facts to that effect.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

1) On or around 17 January 2024, you:

a) Brought alcohol onto school premises;

Mrs Horgan admitted the allegation. In the statement of agreed facts, Mrs Horgan admitted that she left the School during her lunch hour, purchased a bottle of alcohol and brought it with her onto the School premises.

The panel found allegation 1a proved.

b) Consumed alcohol on school premises, during working hours;

Mrs Horgan admitted the allegation. In the statement of agreed facts, Mrs Horgan admitted that she consumed the bottle of alcohol while conducting Planning, Preparation and Assessment time on the School premises during teaching hours.

The panel found allegation 1b proved.

c) Were inebriated on school premises, during working hours.

Mrs Horgan admitted the allegation. In the statement of agreed facts, Mrs Horgan admitted that she became inebriated while on the School premises during teaching hours.

The panel found allegation 1c proved.

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

Having found all of the allegations proved, 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, which is referred to as “the Advice”.

The panel first considered whether the conduct of Mrs Horgan, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mrs Horgan 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 also considered whether Mrs Horgan’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. The panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Horgan amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mrs Horgan was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mrs Horgan'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.

The panel considered that Mrs Horgan's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

For these reasons, the panel found Mrs Horgan'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 safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, the protection of other members of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mrs Horgan were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

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

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mrs Horgan in the profession. The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining Mrs Horgan in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon her abilities as an educator and there was evidence to show that she is able to make a valuable contribution to the profession.

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 Mrs Horgan.

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, the one that was relevant in this case was:

- 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.

There was no evidence that Mrs Horgan was acting under duress. However, the panel was satisfied that her actions occurred during a period of illness.

Mrs Horgan did have a previously good history, having consistently demonstrated high standards in both her personal and professional conduct and having contributed positively to the education sector. The panel accepted that the incident was out of character.

The panel considered a number of highly positive character references and professional testimonials about Mrs Horgan. [REDACTED]

The panel noted that Mrs Horgan returned to work in the education sector as a teaching assistant from September 2024. Testimonials provided by senior leaders of the School refer to Mrs Horgan as being an 'integral part of the school staff team' and state that 'Rebecca has conducted herself to a high professional standard and has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to safeguarding'.

[REDACTED]

The panel found Mrs Horgan's evidence to be credible and realistic; showing both insight and 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 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, or a relevant conviction should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mrs Rebecca Horgan 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 finds that the conduct of Mrs Horgan fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a teacher consuming alcohol on school premises during the school day and being in a state of inebriation on school premises.

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 Mrs Horgan, 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 that "There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils." 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:

"[REDACTED]

The panel found Mrs Horgan's evidence to be credible and realistic; showing both insight and remorse."

I have noted the evidence of insight and remorse cited by the panel and 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 offers these comments:

“In relation to whether Mrs Horgan’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.

The panel considered that Mrs Horgan’s conduct could potentially damage the public’s perception of a teacher.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a teacher being inebriated on school premises in this case and the negative impact that such a finding may 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 order on Mrs Horgan herself. The panel records these observations:

“Mrs Horgan did have a previously good history, having consistently demonstrated high standards in both her personal and professional conduct and having contributed positively to the education sector. The panel accepted that the incident was out of character.

The panel considered a number of highly positive character references and professional testimonials about Mrs Horgan. [REDACTED]

The panel noted that Mrs Horgan returned to work in the education sector as a teaching assistant from September 2024. Testimonials provided by senior leaders of the School refer to Mrs Horgan as being an *‘integral part of the school staff team’* and state that *‘Rebecca has conducted herself to a high professional standard and has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to safeguarding’*.

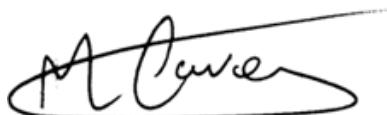
A prohibition order would prevent Mrs Horgan from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of her contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

I have considered 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."

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments concerning Mrs Horgan's insight into and remorse for her behaviour, her good history and the positive character evidence which indicates to me that these events are not generally representative of her conduct, and the mitigating circumstances identified by the panel. I have also noted the panel's judgment that "...the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum".

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 Mrs Horgan 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.



Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 11 December 2025

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