Marking and Planning

Guidance for Jersey Teachers 2018

JERSEY NASUWT The Teachers' Union

national education union

NAHT

States of Jersey

Children, Young People, Education and Skills

Contents

'Two things are particularly apparent when reading this guidance: First, nobody intentionally sets out to create unnecessary workload. Second, everybody involved in education has a role to play in reducing bureaucracy.'

Seán O'Regan

Introduction

If Jersey is to continue to offer a first-rate education system, then its teachers need to be able to teach with passion, energy and hope.

We know that one of the factors affecting this is concern about teachers' workload, particularly in relation to marking and planning. Inconsistencies in approach and unnecessary tasks are having an impact on teachers' work-life balance in Jersey – just as they have in the UK. So, in the interests of our students and our staff, I am determined that this guidance leads to change.

As a first step we have conducted the Island's first teacher surveys to assess the level of the problem. A Teachers' Workload Group was subsequently convened to begin to address these issues. It included representatives from the Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills, the National Education Union, National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers and the Jersey Association of Head Teachers.

The workload group considered current policy and practice in schools, listened to the views of all unions, and considered the research available in the specific areas of marking and planning. This enabled the group to identify manageable and appropriate ways to address the concerns of all class teachers.

Whilst many opinions were expressed during the meetings, one message was agreed by all: marking and planning practices that do not have a positive impact on pupil outcomes should be recognised by schools and stopped. Teachers should not be investing valuable teaching time in bureaucratic systems that do not add value. Teachers' time should be protected and used to make a difference in the classroom.

This guidance document has been developed to help schools tackle the problem. It draws on the reports of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group in England, which produced papers titled 'Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking' (2016) and 'Eliminating unnecessary workload around planning and teaching resources' (2016).

A variety of factors contribute to excessive teacher workload. This document should be used by professionals to evaluate their current marking and planning policies and consider what effect they are having on pupils' progress.

School leaders must have the confidence to reject decisions that increase workload for their staff if there is little evidence of gain or impact. Teachers must be more active in using evidence to determine what works in the classroom.

I am confident that this work will signify a turning point, leading to evidence-based policy and practice that is modelled on academic research about what constitutes effective marking and planning. This report offers a way to make a positive difference and I wholeheartedly support its recommendations.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those who produced this guidance document.

Seán O'Regan

Seán O'Regan

Group Director, Education

1: Marking (Feedback)

Feedback aims to reduce the gap between where the student 'is' and where he or she is 'meant to be'.

John Hattie

Summary

1. Feedback is among the most powerful influences on pupil progress; however, it is also highly variable in its effect on learning. Whatever form it takes, feedback has to relate to learning intentions, knowledge of previous learning, transparent and understood success criteria, and absolute commitment by pupil and teacher in achieving their goals.
2. Effective feedback is integral to the education process. At its heart it is an interaction between teacher and pupil; a way of acknowledging pupils' work, checking the outcomes and making decisions about what teachers and pupils need to do next, with the primary aim of driving pupil progress. This can often be achieved without extensive written dialogue or comments.
3. We recommend that written feedback (marking), when undertaken, should be manageable and meaningful, and should clearly identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Moreover, 'marking' needs to be subsumed in the broader and more important category, namely, 'feedback'.
4. In some cases, written feedback on pupils' work has become disproportionately valued by schools. There may have been a number of reasons for this, including the application of guidance materials sourced from the Department for Education (DfE) in England, the possible myths surrounding the introduction of the Jersey Review Framework, and decisions taken by school leaders and teachers. This is not to say that all written feedback should be eliminated, but that it should be proportionate.
5. The quantity of feedback should not be confused with the quality. The quality of the feedback, in whatever form, will be seen in how a pupil is able to undertake subsequent work.
6. This report encourages schools to review their practice with the aim of reducing the importance written feedback has gained over other forms of feedback.
7. Written feedback is a vital element of teaching, but when it is ineffective it can be demoralising and a waste of time for teachers and pupils alike. An extreme example of this practice is where every piece of work produced by a pupil is deemed to require extensive written comments, when there is plenty of research available that highlights such practice as having little impact on pupil outcomes.
8. All stakeholders, including parents, need to fully understand that the effectiveness of a teacher is not based on the length and regularity of written comments in a child's books.

9. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. A balance needs to be struck between a core and consistent approach and trusting teachers to focus on what is best for their pupils and circumstances. With this in mind, the Teachers' Workload Group has developed specific recommendations for the Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills, governors, school leaders and teachers, which can be found at the end of this section.

About this guidance

10. It is recommended that for future reference, 'marking' is referred to as 'written feedback', which is included within the wider category of 'feedback'. This incorporates all formative assessment practices, and does not give particular focus to one over the others.
11. Written feedback (marking) should be part of a schools' assessment policy alongside other practices that help to inform teachers, create positive pupil outcomes and drive future planning.
12. Key research on this subject, such as Clarke's *Outstanding Formative Assessment (2014)*[1], makes clear that some marking has evolved into an unhelpful burden on teachers, when the time it takes is not repaid positively on the impact of pupils' progress. The purpose of such marking is unclear and often leads to it being a tool for some senior leaders to monitor teacher effectiveness rather than considering pupil progress as a result of effective feedback.
13. As a result of this practice, teachers may have less time to focus on other important aspects of their role.
14. There are many loose terms to describe written feedback that raises concerns among teachers, namely, 'deep' marking (also called 'triple', 'dialogic' and 'quality' marking). For the sake of consistency, the term used in this guidance will be 'deep' marking.
15. The growth of deep marking seems to have arisen for several reasons: adopting what is held up as 'best' practice from England; the Jersey Review Framework; internal and external guidance from professionals.
16. Deep marking is not a proxy for 'good' teaching simply because it provides 'evidence' that a teacher has engaged with a piece of work. It is a false assumption to equate a teacher's professionalism and effectiveness to the level and depth of the marking. The worst extremes of such marking are highlighted by the fact some children struggle to comprehend and, therefore, act upon these comments.
17. Examples of possible unproductive written feedback practices may include:
    - Extensive comments written underneath a pupil's piece of work that make no reference to the learning intention and show no evidence that the pupil was afforded the time to act upon these comments
    - A lack of focus on trying to bridge the gap between the learning intention and a pupil's knowledge and understanding
    - Extensive comments in different colour pens; the indication of when verbal feedback has been given by adding 'VF' on a pupil's work; using various printed stamps; using stickers, etc.
    - Feedback that is unrelated to the learning process and shows little connection with helping the pupil improve their understanding
    - Mechanistic marking, that may meet the expectations of the school's policy, but has little to no impact on the pupil's actual learning

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[1] Clarke, S. (2014) Outstanding Formative Assessment, Hodder Education

- Too much focus on what a pupil has done wrong, which can be dispiriting for both the teacher and pupil.
18. There is a variety of research available on the issue of extensive written comments, such as the report: *A marked improvement?* (2016) commissioned by the Education Endowment Fund[2]. Schools should use all information available to engage in a professional discussion about 'effective practice', reaching an approach that suits their needs, based on professional judgement.

How to change practice

19. To change practice in schools and classrooms, we think there are two challenges:

- Embedding the principles of effective feedback in all schools
- Challenging the 'false comfort' of 'deep' marking.

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[2] Elliott, V. , et al, (2016) A marked improvement? A review of the evidence of written marking. Education Endowment Fund

Embedding the principles of effective feedback

Principle 1: Feedback should be meaningful

20. In order to make feedback meaningful, it will need to vary by age group, subject, and what works best for the pupil and teacher in relation to any particular piece of work. Teachers are encouraged to adjust their approach as necessary, and trusted to incorporate the outcomes into subsequent planning and teaching.
21. All forms of feedback should be used with the intention of advancing pupil progress and outcomes. Teachers should be clear about what they are trying to achieve and the best way of achieving it. Crucially, the teacher is the most important person in making this decision. Oral feedback, working with pupils in class, reading their work – all help teachers understand what pupils can do and understand. This formative process of gathering information will enable teachers to know if pupils are progressing.

Principle 2: Feedback should be manageable

22. Written feedback should be manageable and proportionate. Schools need to agree the frequency, complexity and relevance of written feedback, as well as the cost and time-effectiveness in relation to overall workload to teachers. It is recommended that this view of written feedback is written into every assessment policy. In addition, it is recommended that all 'marking' policies are renamed 'feedback' so that schools can engage in a full discussion about the different types of feedback and how, if used effectively, this can have a positive impact on pupil outcomes.[3]
23. The time taken to mark does not always correlate with successful pupil outcomes and can lead to wasted teacher time.
24. Senior leaders are responsible for the effective deployment of all resources in their schools. They should take into account the hours teachers spend on written feedback and have regard for the work-life balance of their staff.
25. It is crucial for schools to consider the latest research about feedback, challenge and review their written feedback practices, and ensure they are considering the impact on teacher workload when setting expectations.
26. Feedback can take various forms, such as oral or written feedback, peer marking and self-assessment. If the hours spent do not have the commensurate impact on pupil progress in terms of helping the pupil to understand the gap in their knowledge and understanding, and how to close it, our advice is to discontinue what you are doing and look for more effective ways of approaching formative assessment, and feedback in particular.
27. The Jersey Review Framework places at the heart of its process schools having an accurate understanding of themselves so that they can plan accordingly. The Framework makes perfectly clear that visitors do not expect to see any specific frequency, type or volume of written feedback – they are only interested in whatever the school chooses to do, and whether this is having an impact on the outcomes for pupils.
28. It is important that schools take notice of the Jersey Review Framework, and that the guidance and criteria are fully understood by all professionals engaged in working within schools. Steps will be taken by the Department for Children, Young People, Education

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[3] Hattie, J. and Timperley, H. (2007) The power of feedback. Review of Educational Research, 77(1), p.81-112

and Skills to ensure that all professionals who work with the Review Framework have absolute clarity about the guidance it provides.

Principle 3: Feedback should be motivating

29. Feedback should help to motivate pupils to progress. This does not mean always writing in-depth comments or being overwhelmingly positive: the professional judgement of the teacher could be short, challenging comments, or oral feedback. The aim is not for the teacher to work harder than the pupil. The pupil has to accept the challenges of learning and take responsibility for improving their work.
30. Accepting work that pupils have not checked sufficiently and then providing extensive written feedback detracts from pupils' responsibility for their own learning, particularly editing and drafting skills. Pupils need to become 'assessment capable'[4] learners, checking their own work, regulating their learning, understanding the success criteria - presented in an age appropriate way, so that they can ultimately complete their work to the highest standard.

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[4] Hattie, J. (2012) Visible Learning for Teachers, Routledge

Recommendations

Students   • The pupil has to accept the challenges of learning and take responsibility for improving their work.
Teachers   • Seek to engage with the research currently available that explores a range of assessment techniques to support their pedagogy.   • Actively review current practice to ensure that feedback is meaningful, manageable and motivating.
School Leaders and Governors   • Assessment policies need to be written by senior leaders, in partnership with teachers and governors.   • Evaluate the time implications on any whole school assessment policy for all teachers to ensure that the school policy does not make unreasonable demands on any particular member of staff.   • Consult with staff within school and ensure that written feedback is monitored and evaluated against the impact it is having on pupil progress.   • Challenge emerging fads that indirectly impose excessive written feedback practices on schools.
The Jersey Review Framework   • The Jersey Review Framework is clear that no particular methods of written feedback are praised as exemplars.   • Future updates of the Jersey Review Framework will reference this guidance.
Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills   • The Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills should commit to using its influence to share good practice through its senior advisers and advisers.

2: Planning

Summary

1. Planning is critical and underpins effective teaching, playing an important role in shaping students' understanding and progression. It is the area of work where teachers can bring their passion for a subject and their desire to make a difference together; however, teachers should not need to spend an undue amount of time planning and resourcing lessons.
2. There is a key distinction between daily lesson plans and lesson planning. 'Planning' refers to the production of detailed daily written lesson plans. This can function as proxy evidence for an accountability 'paper trail', rather than the process of effective planning for pupil achievement. Creating detailed plans should not be a 'box-ticking' exercise, nor act as proxy evidence for accountability.
3. School leaders should evaluate how they regard planning in their schools. All leaders have a key role in ensuring the availability of fully-resourced collaboratively developed schemes of learning (previously referred to as 'schemes of work'). Once these are in place, and individual teachers fully understand the curriculum, they can teach in a way that best suits their professional judgement and experience. Access to good quality schemes of learning should reduce workload rather than create it.
4. High quality resources, including textbooks, must be available to support teaching and reduce workload so that teachers do not have to 'reinvent the wheel'. This will ensure high expectations of the content of lessons and conceptual knowledge.
5. Time can be spent searching for 'silver bullet' resources, which can be seen as a replacement for the development of an effective sequence of lessons. Teachers should be encouraged to plan collaboratively, where possible, engaging with a professional body of knowledge and quality-assured resources that can be shaped to specific classroom contexts. This should be seen by all as fundamental to the learning process within the classroom. The importance of teacher planning and collaboration has also been recognised in the Department's Business Plan, with an intention to review the number of training days and opportunities for teachers in order to improve professional development.

About this guidance

6. Overly-detailed lesson plans have been identified by some teachers in the teacher workload surveys as adding unnecessary burden to general workload.
7. At the heart of this practice has to be the cost-benefit of teacher time and the potential for positive impact on pupil progress.

Principles for planning

8. Five principles are set out below that could be used to test practice and expectations in schools. These are motivated by a desire to ensure that planning is productive and that teacher workloads are manageable.

Principle 1: Planning a sequence of lessons is more important than writing individual lesson plans

9. Planning is a thinking process at the heart of good teaching. Highly detailed daily or weekly plans should, therefore, not be a routine expectation for all teachers. Such planning can often bear little relationship to the quality of learning in the classroom.

10. An end to this expectation does not mean an end to planning for all teachers, but that less emphasis should be given to plans at the expense of a well thought out curriculum underpinned by clearly produced schemes of learning. The weight given to individual lesson plans, to evidence both planning and teaching, should be reviewed.

11. The fundamental purpose of planning is to support effective teaching in the classroom. Plans cannot show what actually happens in the classroom, nor the progress achieved by pupils. Highly detailed weekly plans leave little room for teachers to respond to the actual learning that takes place on a daily basis. Potentially, skilled teachers are 'straightjacketed' by a planning process that is ignoring what is actually happening on daily basis in every lesson.

12. There should be greater flexibility to accommodate different subject demands and needs, as well as the specific demands of age phases. Subject and phase leaders should decide and use the best planning tools to suit the particular demands of the subject or age group, rather than necessarily following a whole-school generic tool. Leaders and teachers should reach a consensus of the best format for their working plans to suit their level of confidence, experience and preference, agreeing the rationale for this choice with the subject or phase lead. In this way, planning can be tailored to the needs of each individual subject, and the strengths of individual teachers.

13. Senior leaders should consider the cost-benefit of creating larger blocks of time for this practice to make the planning activity as productive as possible, and reduce the amount of time spent by individual teachers on individual planning.

Principle 2: Fully resourced schemes of learning need to be in place for all teachers to use each term

14. Pupils make progress by building content and conceptual knowledge over time. Planning should, therefore, identify what needs to be taught across a sequence of lessons. Planning also needs to be flexible and adaptable so that teachers can respond to pupils' learning rather than a series of highly detailed plans that bear little relationship to what the children actually understand. This approach is underpinned by the current curriculum, which identifies the complexities of learning and its non-linearity.

15. Schools should ensure that a fully resourced scheme of learning is in place for all teachers at the start of each term.

16. Once in place, and individual teachers fully understand the curriculum, they can teach it in a way that best suits their professional judgement and experience.

Principle 3: Planning should not be done simply to satisfy the requirements of others

17. The Jersey Review Framework is very clear that outside visitors to the school will not request to see teachers' planning. The evaluation of teaching is far more complicated than reading plans produced by teachers. Equally, how a school decides to plan is very much to be decided by the professionals who work within the school. The Jersey Review Framework fully respects that the ownership and responsibility of school systems, such as planning, rests with the school.
18. Teachers' planning can become the end product, to be scrutinised and assessed, rather than reviewing the progress and outcomes of pupils that effective planning should enhance. Planning can become a poor indicator of effective teaching and, like inefficient forms of marking, provide physical evidence which offers 'false comfort'. The most important question is largely ignored by undertaking this type of monitoring: Is the teaching having an impact on pupils' progress?
19. Discussions between school leaders and members of staff about the choices they make in planning lessons can instigate useful professional conversations; however, there is a risk that this can become an end in itself.
20. The arguments to continue with highly detailed lesson plans cannot be apportioned to accountability. The previous points make clear that there is no recommendation or requirement in the Jersey Review Framework for schools to follow any particular approach or direction for planning.
21. The onus is on school leaders and teachers to agree an approach that is fair and reasonable.

Principle 4: Planning should take place in purposeful and well defined blocks of time

22. Rather than requiring teachers to routinely produce detailed written lesson plans, school leadership teams should be reviewing the effectiveness of how time set aside for planning is allocated.

Principle 5: Effective planning makes use of high quality resources

23. High quality resources support good teaching, but some teachers can spend too much time trawling the internet for resources. Planning should start from the curriculum to be taught, not the activities. The impact on both teachers and pupils in using valuable time searching the internet for resources needs to be a critical consideration.
24. If the benefits are not apparent in pupil outcomes then this amounts to unnecessary workload. As John Hattie remarks, 'there are a million resources available on the internet

and creating more seems among the successful wastes of time in which teachers love to engage'.[5]

25. There is an argument for schools to place emphasis on quality assured resources, including textbooks, which often include digital supplementary resources, student books or teacher guides. This would reduce the time teachers spend on searching for ad hoc resources, allowing them to focus on the intellectual exercise of planning sequences of lessons.

26. Resources should be supported by high quality training and professional development, as this is when they are most effectively understood and applied. Having a shared and secure understanding of what effective teaching and pupil learning looks like to inform planning is essential, as are collaborative planning approaches. Access to clear plans and materials for new entrants to the profession will support their development and allow them to concentrate on teaching.

27. Planning together needs to be accompanied by regular and professional discussion which focuses on the outcomes for pupils, thinking through the teaching of a subject, and the resources to support this. Such approaches will also help develop a culture of effective professional development.

28. The sources chosen by teachers and schools are at their discretion; however, there is a growing acceptance that textbooks provide a more trusted resource than materials downloaded from the internet. Internet resources can be located after possibly several hours of searching and lack the rigour provided by a carefully curated, fully researched textbook.

29. Schools should treat resources (including textbooks) as the tools they are and adopt a 'mixed methods' approach. The key point is how these resources are used by the teacher and the impact they have on pupils' learning.

The Challenge

1. If the curriculum is the central driving force of teaching, then time spent planning should not be wasted time.

2. As John Hattie observes, 'planning can be done in many ways, but the most powerful is when teachers work together to develop plans, develop common understandings of what is worth teaching, collaborate on understanding their beliefs of challenge and progress, and work together to evaluate the impact of their planning on student outcome'.[6]

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[5] Hattie, J. (2012) 'Visible Learning for Teachers, Maximising Impact on Learning', Routledge, (p.64)
[6] Hattie, J. (2012) 'Visible Learning for Teachers, Maximising Impact on Learning', Routledge, (p. 67-74)

Recommendations

Teachers
• Seek to engage with the research currently available that explores a range of assessment techniques to support their pedagogy.
• Review current practice with school leaders to ensure that planning supports student outcomes.
School Leaders and Governors
• Begin with 'what works' so that there is an ongoing effort to develop a shared understanding of effective teaching to inform planning, underpinned by effective continuous professional development.
• Curriculum policies need to be written in partnership with teachers and governors.
• Evaluate the time implications on any whole school curriculum policy for all teachers to ensure that the school policy does not make unreasonable demands on any particular member of staff.
• Consult within school: teachers' planning should be monitored and evaluated against the impact it is having on pupil progress.
• Ensure sufficient planning opportunities are provided to teachers.
• Build schemes of learning that are well-resourced, and encourage the use of textbooks to support the schemes of learning.
• Leaders should consider aggregating PPA into units of time which allow for substantial planning.
• Consider that standardised lesson planning formats may not work for every subject across an entire school.
• Consider that overly-detailed written lesson plans are an inadequate substitute for effective teaching.
The Jersey Review Framework
• The Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills will continue to communicate the clarification paragraphs in the Jersey Review Framework through updates provided and other relevant channels.
• The Review Framework clearly states that visitors to the school do not request to see planning.
Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills
• The Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills should commit to using its influence to disseminate the principles and messages of this report through its senior advisers and advisers.

Appendix 1: Summary for Parents and Carers

What is feedback?

- ❖ Feedback is information pupils receive on their work that is intended to help them to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding. It is one of the most valuable ways to help pupils to progress.
- ❖ There are a variety of ways feedback can be given to pupils. This may include: oral, written (marking), peer and self-feedback.
- ❖ At its heart, feedback is an interaction between teacher and pupil; a focus on individual pupils' work, a way to check how they are progressing, and a way to decide what teachers and pupils need to do next to improve.

Quality vs Quantity

- ❖ Over time, there has been too much emphasis and importance placed on the value of marking.
- ❖ The over-emphasis on writing extensive comments on pupils' work, including homework, has led to an unnecessary increase in teacher workload, but has not improved pupil learning according to educational research. This is not to say that marking should be stopped altogether, but that it should be concise, purposeful and impactful.
- ❖ The quantity of feedback should, therefore, not be confused with the quality. The quality of feedback in whatever form, will be seen in how a pupil is able to undertake subsequent work.

Readdressing the balance

- ❖ Written feedback has been historically viewed as more important than other forms of feedback. This report strongly recommends that this imbalance is addressed by schools.
- ❖ A balance needs to be struck between a core and consistent approach in schools, and trusting individual teachers to focus on what is best for their pupils and circumstances.
- ❖ As parents and carers, we would greatly appreciate your support for this initiative.

Appendix 2: Summary for Pupils and Students

What is feedback?

- ❖ Feedback is information you receive on your work that is intended to help you to improve your skills, knowledge and understanding. It is one of the most valuable ways to help you to make progress in your learning.
- ❖ The different types of feedback you may come across includes:
  - Spoken – i.e. discussions with your teacher about your work, in class or in form meetings
  - Written – i.e. teacher marking of your work
  - Peer – i.e. feedback on your work from other pupils in your class
  - Self – i.e. reviewing and correcting your own work.

The purpose of feedback – to challenge, motivate and improve

- ❖ Feedback should help you to feel motivated and rise to the challenges set in class. This does not mean that your teacher will write in-depth comments or give lots of praise about what you have learned, as this may not be what you need to improve your understanding.
- ❖ Your teacher could offer spoken or written comments that are short and challenging. They could also invite other members of your class to comment, and suggest how you can improve your own learning.

Taking responsibility for your learning

- ❖ An important part of school is for you to learn how to accept challenges and take responsibility for improving your own learning. The aim of feedback is, therefore, not for the teacher to do the work for you, but for you to use their support as a platform to help you to improve further.
- ❖ As learners, you will need to become 'assessment capable' by checking and correcting your own work, as well as understanding the learning intention and success criteria, so that you can complete your work to the highest standard.

Appendix 3: Summary for Schools

Feedback

- ❖ Feedback is one of the most valuable ways that a teacher can influence pupil progress.
- ❖ The different types of feedback may include: oral, written (marking), peer and self-feedback.
- ❖ Feedback, when undertaken, should be manageable and meaningful, and should identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Otherwise, it will have little impact on pupils' learning.
- ❖ Written feedback (marking) has been given disproportionate emphasis in schools (in comparison to other valuable forms of feedback), which has led to an increased workload for teachers.
- ❖ The quantity of feedback should not be confused with the quality. The quality of the feedback, in whatever form, will be seen in how a pupil is able to undertake subsequent work.
- ❖ There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to feedback. A consequence of this report is the recommendation that school assessment policies are reviewed. This will enable schools to incorporate the principles of this report into current policy and practice.

Planning

- ❖ Planning is critical to effective teaching, playing an important role in shaping pupils' understanding and overall progression.
- ❖ Planning should support the process of effective teaching that leads to pupil achievement.
- ❖ There is no expectation that 'planning' should include the daily production of extensive written lesson plans. This approach is often needlessly used as evidence for an accountability 'paper trail', or as a substitute for effective teaching.
- ❖ Developing good quality schemes of learning (work) that are fully resourced should reduce workload rather than create it.

Acknowledgments

Thanks go to the members of the 'Teaching Workload Group' for taking the time to attend meetings, contribute to discussions, and share their views and expertise. Their help and support has been invaluable towards the preparation of this report:

- Sam Cooper (Jersey Association of Head Teachers)
- Marina Mauger (National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers)
- Robert Ward (National Education Union)
- John McGuinness (Secondary school)
- Pip Hobson (Secondary school)
- Dave McAllister (Primary school)
- Louise Dewhurst (Primary school)
- David Berry (Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills)
- Anthony Goldhawk (Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills)
- Keith Posner (Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills)