



## **INTRODUCTION FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

Current demands and expectations for planning contribute to teachers' excessive workload. The Teacher Workload Study, undertaken for the DfES by PricewaterhouseCoopers, found that planning and preparation was the second highest workload burden for teachers.

Much of this workload has been driven by the fear that teachers will be called to account by OFSTED and must have evidence of what has been taught. Local Education Authority advisors and inspectors can place immense pressure on headteachers to require of teachers detailed planning which is, in fact, unnecessary. Headteachers themselves can sometimes misinterpret what is expected. Yet OFSTED has insisted that the focus should be on what has been learnt rather than on what has been taught.

The National Union of Teachers ballot protecting members from bureaucratic burdens applies to excessive planning expectations of teachers. This protection arises from the principles enshrined in the report of the Government's 1998 Working Party on Bureaucracy and from the provisions of Government Circulars in England and Wales on Reducing Bureaucratic Burdens.

This leaflet provides advice and protection to members on excessive demands for planning which draws on the practical experience of NUT members in schools.

The relevant section of the NUT's guidance on protecting members from bureaucratic burdens is set out below and applies to the Union's guidance on planning.

The guidelines apply to NUT members in community and voluntary-controlled schools and in voluntary-aided and foundation schools.

The guidelines are issued as a set of instructions that, if followed, will reduce or remove bureaucratic burdens. They are written in such a way as not to leave members feeling isolated, nor feeling constrained against using their professional judgements.

Use of the guidelines will support, not hinder, members in their professional work. Members will exercise their professional judgement in deciding whether to draw on the protection afforded by the ballot. Where members consider that carrying out any aspect of the guidelines would, in fact, increase pressure on them, then they should continue to operate according to their professional judgement.

The NUT regional office or, in Wales, the NUT Cymru Office, should be informed immediately if members believe that they are subject to excessive demands for planning.'

Some activities set out in the NUT's guidance may appear specifically in job descriptions. Members requiring clarification should contact their NUT regional office or, in Wales, the NUT Cymru Office.

DOUG McAVOY  
General Secretary

## GUIDANCE ON PLANNING

Medium-term planning should involve all staff in a key stage or phase working together to ensure coherence and curriculum continuity. Individual teachers should not be expected to produce all such plans independently. Joint guidance on planning from OFSTED, the DfES and QCA can be downloaded from [www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/3179/DfES-Planning%20Guidance.pdf](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/3179/DfES-Planning%20Guidance.pdf). It provides a useful background to the NUT's guidance.

It is not reasonable to expect teachers to write new plans for every group or cohort of pupils. Plans can be stored and revised and, often, only minor amendment is necessary.

Plans can be photocopied from the relevant QCA or other curriculum documents or downloaded from the Internet (see below). It is quite acceptable to annotate, highlight, date and amend these.

Planning is the professional responsibility of all individual teachers, who can use medium-term plans by taking into account the particular needs of their class or groups.

Plans should be 'fit for purpose'. They should be useful to individual teachers and reflect what they need to support their teaching of particular classes. Other teachers should be able to understand the plans.

Plans should be kept to a minimum length. They can be set out in the form of bullet points or notes, including how learning objectives will be achieved. This is a matter of professional judgement.

Plans are working documents and do not need to be beautifully presented or copied out for others. Separate weekly and daily lesson plans are not necessary. As the OFSTED, DfES and QCA guidance says, for medium-term planning, '*QCA schemes of work contain the detail you need for each subject*'. Annotations or post-it notes can be used to convert medium-term plans into lesson plans. For those intending to apply for the Threshold, the DfES' 2003 Threshold guidance should be read in this context.

Teachers should use their professional judgement on whether to use non-mandatory schemes of work.

Plans do not have to be very long or complex. They should be updated only when necessary and not more than once a year.

With the exception of some children with specific needs, lesson plans for individual pupils are not necessary. Planning should be kept to the minimum necessary. Discussions with headteachers on any concerns about planning should not lead to requests for planning which contradicts this guidance.

Teachers' lesson plans should be treated with respect. Other teachers should not write comments on them without consulting the teacher concerned.

Despite OFSTED's own conclusions about excessive planning, there are some inspection teams which still expect to be provided with plans which are unnecessary and over-detailed. Where members find that OFSTED teams have such expectations, they should contact their relevant regional office or, in Wales, the NUT Cymru Office immediately, for advice.

## **USING ICT**

The joint OFSTED, DfES, QCA guidance says that headteachers should encourage teachers to use and adopt existing plans. The decision to use ICT in planning is very much dependent on individual teachers' access to it and on their levels of skill and confidence. It should also be remembered that the amount of time spent producing plans might initially be longer than those produced by more traditional means, although time can be saved if this work is able to be edited and re-used in the future.

Whilst it is true that no plans written by someone else can be completely suitable for an individual teacher or class, taking a pre-prepared plan and adapting it to a particular situation can save a lot of work. There is a range of high quality material for all of the primary core and foundation subjects available on the Internet which many teachers have found to be extremely helpful.

Teachernet, ([www.Teachernet.gov.uk/Useful Lesson Plans And Resources](http://www.Teachernet.gov.uk/Useful_Lesson_Plans_And_Resources)), for example, offers over a thousand lesson plans and resources which have been evaluated by teachers. These are downloadable in such a way as to enable teachers to alter them to suit their own needs. Links to other relevant materials from reputable sources, such as the QCA and the BBC, are also provided.

Schemes of work, which are identical to those published by QCA, are available on the Standards Site ([www.Standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes/](http://www.Standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes/)). These schemes are able to be browsed, printed, downloaded and edited, saving time from not having to photocopy or write out extracts, for example.