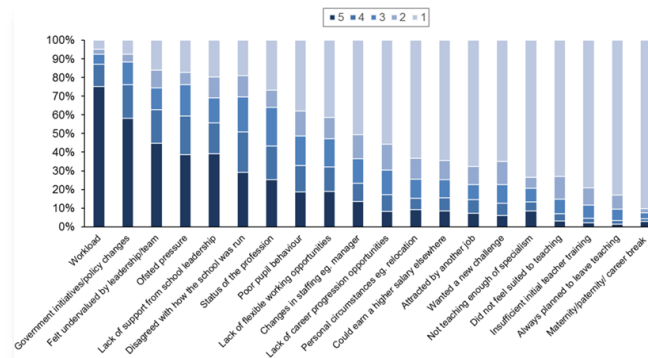


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The need for stability: extract – presenting problems



The need for policy stability in education: extract chapters 1-3

1 | Extent of policy change in education

2 | Examples of policy change and churn

3 | Problems created by constant change

4 | Institutional enablers of change

5 | Factors driving so much change and churn

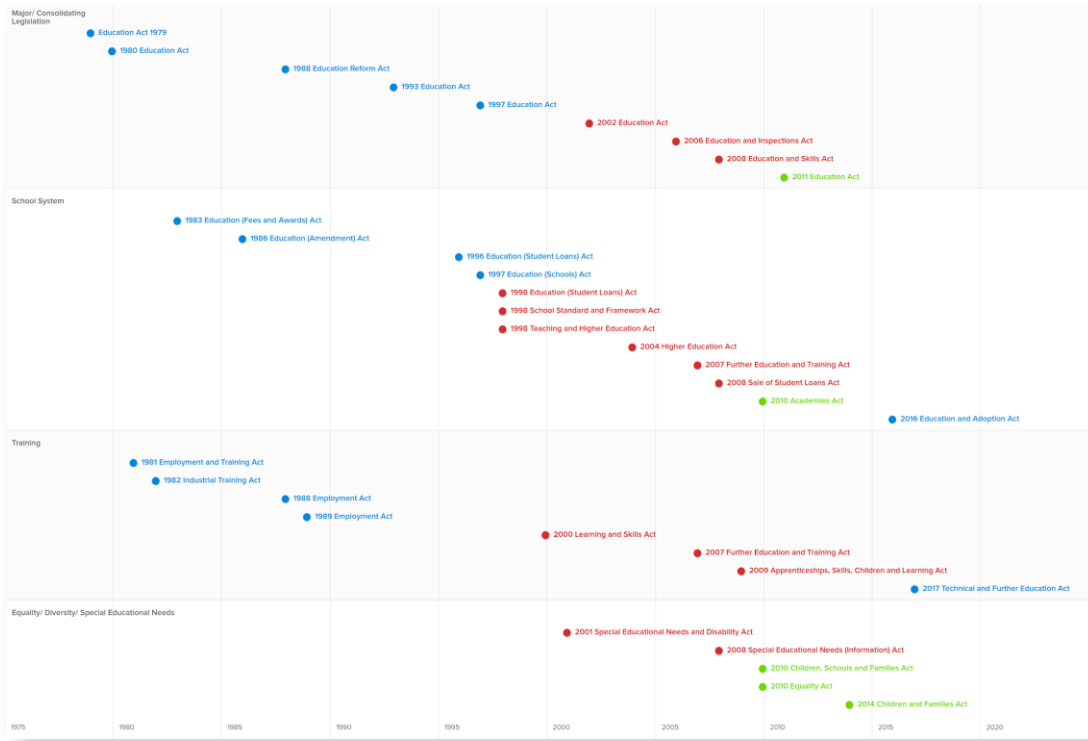
6 | Lessons from overseas

7 | Conclusions and recommendations

1 Extent of policy change in education

- a. Summary: Policy change and churn is the dysfunctional characteristic of Education in England
- b. There have been over 80 Government Acts relating to Education since 1979
- c. Education Acts have run at three to five times other departments
- d. The House of Lords highlighted the greater issue with “secondary legislation” in 2009
- e. Statutory Instruments have run at an average of 88 per year since 1988
- f. Statutory Instruments determine policy in the most critical areas of Education
- g. Education Acts are constantly reworked so there is no continuity
- h. The extent of existing policy makes it incomprehensible

1b There have been over 80 Acts relating to education since 1979



Education in England is characterised by high levels of ‘policy churn’ and this is driven through government legislation

This happens ‘because each educational problem has numerous possible solutions’, it comes out of an adversarial party system and ‘it is relentlessly driven by force of habit, custom and institutional structure’ (Peck 2011, 779)

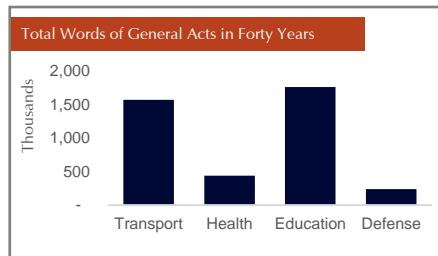
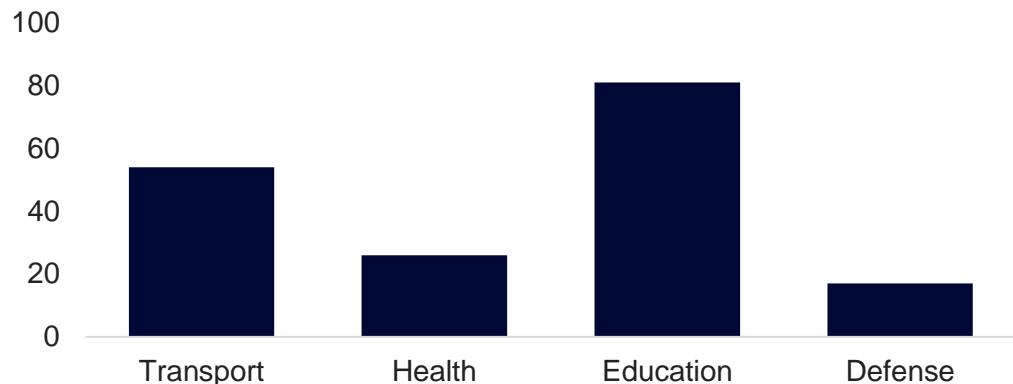
Our new research shows that since the **Education Reform Act 1988**, the amount of new national legislation in education has been colossal

Policy change in education is predominantly driven through Department for Education-sponsored legislation

For initial orientation, examples of the most impactful legislation passed since 1979 are shown here

1c Education acts have run at three to five times other key departments

Number of General Acts in Forty Years



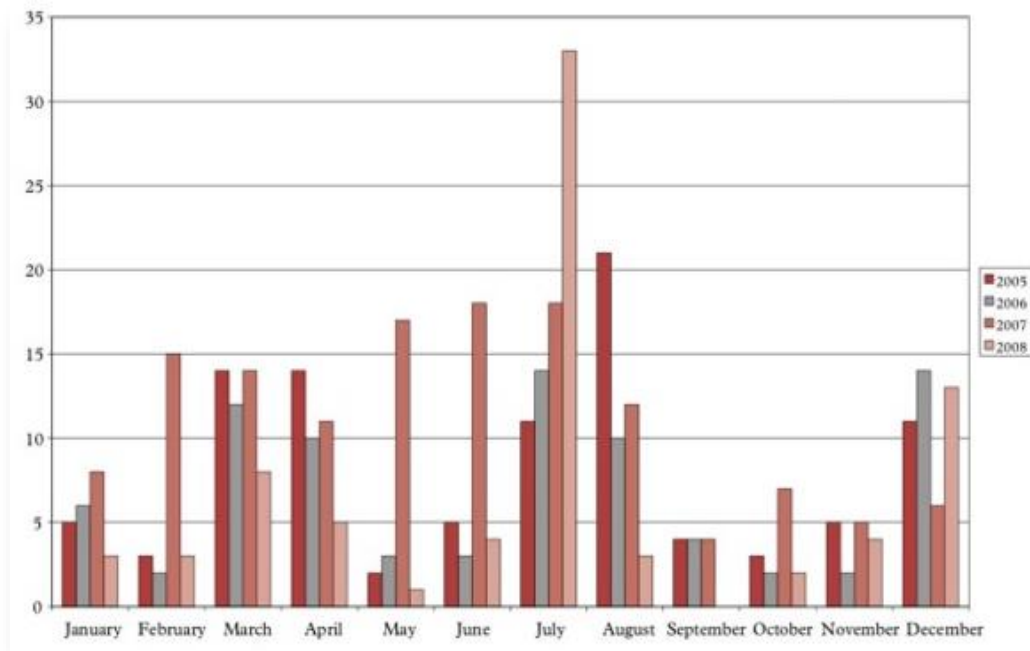
There have been three times more primary legislation focusing on Education as have focused on Health, and five times more than for matters of Defence

Any practitioner wishing to arrive at an understanding of all of the extant primary statute law passed since 1979 would have nearly 1.8 million words to read (the equivalent of ten full readings of Great Expectations)

A very large amount of this primary legislation has been 'empowering'. That is, it has authorised the making of further and even more detailed law by regulation and order

Therefore a vast quantity of new education law has been made with very little scrutiny at all by those who might have doubts about its wisdom and good sense

1d The House of Lords highlighted the issue with 'secondary legislation' in 2009



Note: This chart shows SIs laid by DCFS/DfES and considered by the Merits Committee each month between 2005 and 2008. Not all DCFS/DfES SIs affected schools; Merits of Statutory Instruments Committee 2009

Acts of Parliament typically receive Royal Assent with large amounts of detail yet to be written

Statutory Instruments (SIs) are 'delegated' or 'secondary' instruments and are used to fill in this detail at a later date

A disproportionate quantity of SIs are made that relate to education. This was noted by the House of Lords in their 2008/9 review, conducted by the 'Merits of Statutory Instruments Committee'

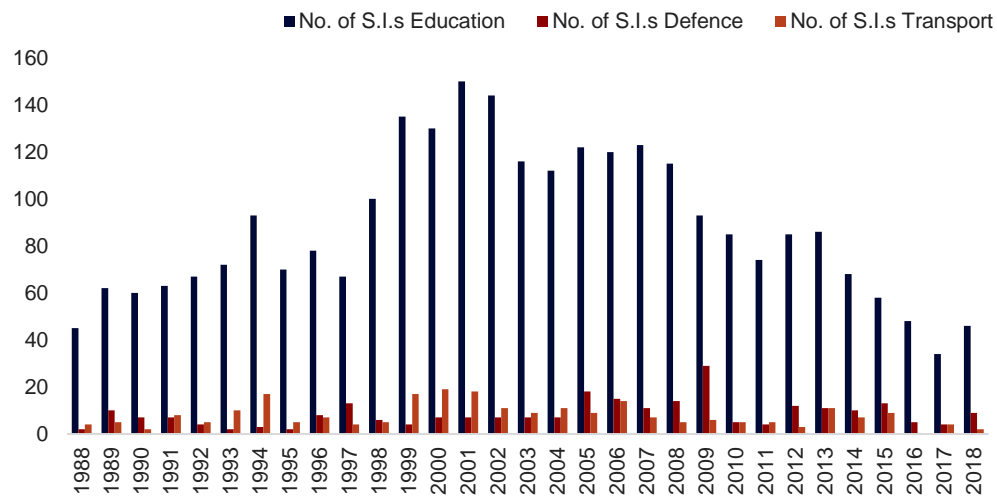
Around 80% of SIs take a 'negative route' through parliament; they do not need active approval

One SI was used to abolish maintenance grants (**Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2015**), and 'just 18 MPs had the chance to discuss and approve this measure' (Hardman 2018, 102)

1e Statutory Instruments have run at an average of 88 per year since 1988

- Our research broadens the House of Lords study to the thirty-year period from 1988 to 2018.
- There was an average of 88 SIs filed under education per year since 1988, and this is averaged at 68 for the Thatcher/Major years, 116 for the Blair/Brown years, and 61 for the Cameron/May years

No. of Statutory Instruments



Secondary legislation rose especially in the New Labour years, reaching 150 pieces of legislation in 2001 alone

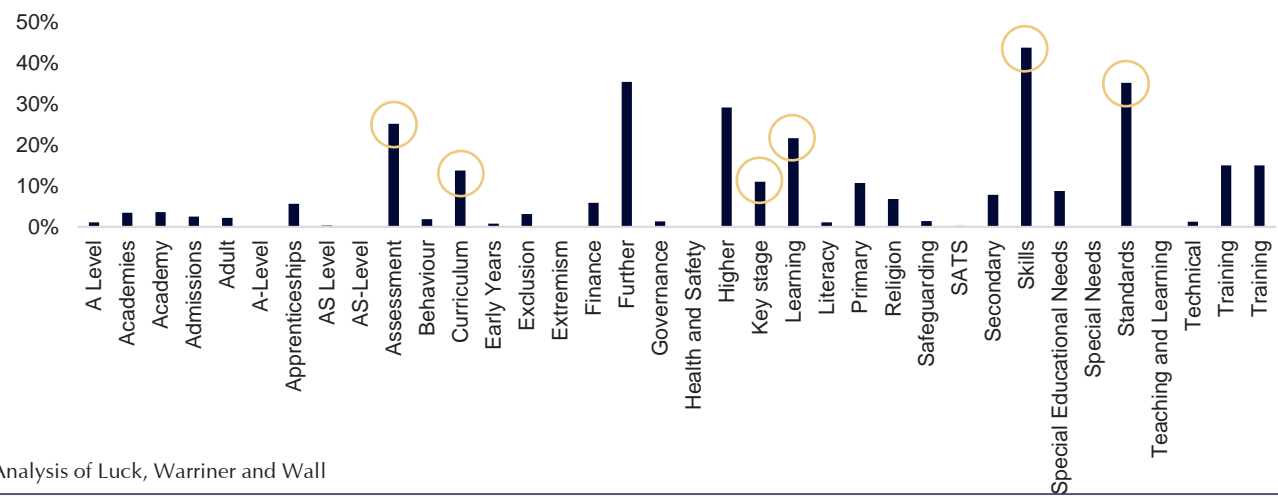
Education in the past thirty-one years is strikingly higher than Defence or Transport: from 1988 it has been on average 13 times higher (and much higher than Health but the data is harder to extract in a useable form)

The dip in 2016 and 2017 can reasonably be accounted for by the diverting of attention, ministers, and civil servants to the newly founded DExEU, and the required focus on Brexit

1f Statutory Instruments have run at an average of 88 per year since 1988

- Keywords were used to examine the content of Education related Statutory instruments over the last thirty years
- This illustrates
 - The far-reaching nature of legislation
 - The dominance of policy change in curriculum, assessment and key stages and skills
 - The focus on 'standards' and 'learning

Percentage of S.I.s including keyword in text

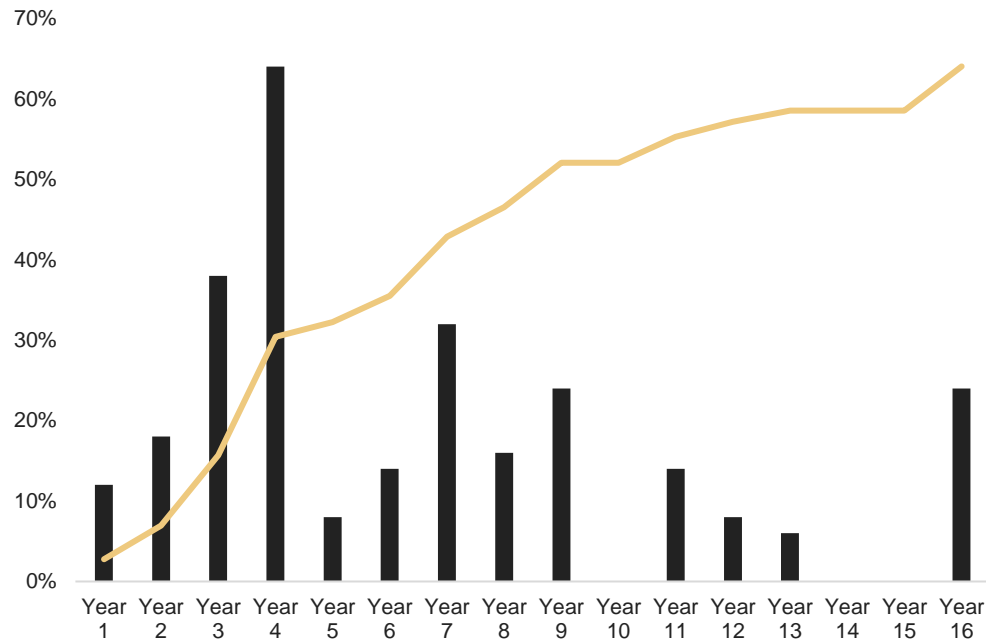


This legislation brought classroom control into the hands of central government in terms of: what is taught ('Curriculum'), and how accountability to government for what is taught is made possible ('Key Stage', 'Assessment', 'Standards')

1g Education Acts are constantly reworked so there is no continuity

Case Study: The turnover of provisions in the Education Act 2002

Provisions changed by year with running % of Education Act 2002



Analysis of Luck, Warriner and Wall

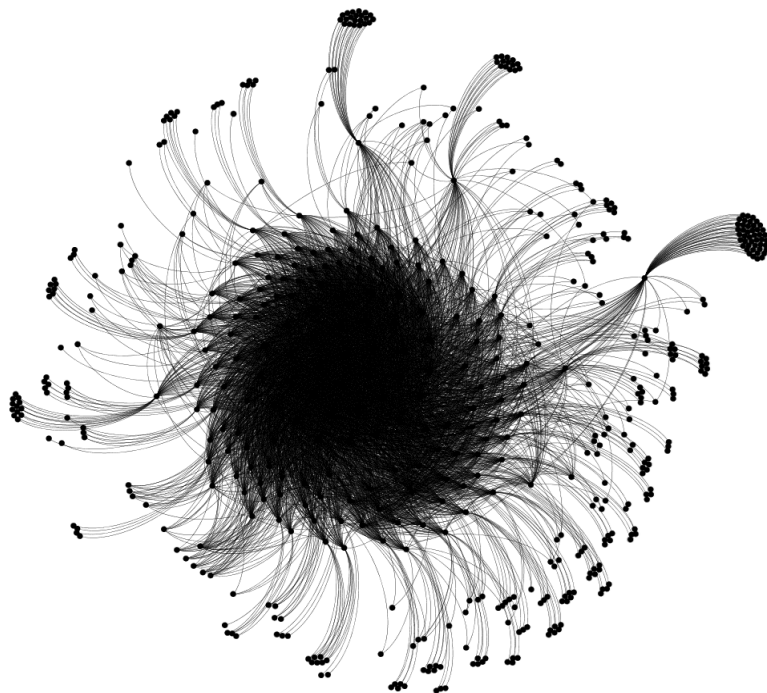
- Much of the legislation is reworking of existing acts, for example, the Education Act 2002 encouraged the adoption of Academies, added Citizenship to the National Curriculum and launched Birth to Three Matters
- Within four years of the original act being made, more than one third or 65% of all provisions changed (they were either repealed, modified, or added to)
- 47% of provisions were reworked before a change in government, 30% before a change in premiership
- Wendy Scott was an Advisor to the Department of Education from 2000 to 2002. She comments that a new initiative must show that it is effective very quickly or lose further investment: 'I saw little evidence of corporate memory in the department, partly because of the career structure of the Civil Service, where people tend to move on every two or three years. This churn means that continuity is compromised' (Scott 2015, 39)

1h The extent of existing policy makes it incomprehensible

In 2019 the government launched a new archive of guidance for school governors. For stakeholders in both academy and LA-maintained schools, this is intended as a reference tool to ensure that duties under government legislation are fully-accessibly and fully-understood

This includes guidance on: SRE policy; Safeguarding; SEND; Teaching and Learning; Offsite activities and trips; Complaints policy; Behaviour Policy; Accessibility Policy; Attendance and Punctuation Policy; Anti-bullying policy; EAL policy; Evaluating and developing teaching and learning; Literacy Policy; Numeracy Policy

Analysis of Luck, Warriner and Wall



Over 2,494 web pages and A4 pages of advice were issued for LEA-maintained schools, and over 1,971 for academies

On the left is a graphical depiction of the archive. Each black point is a webpage or pdf page, and lines represent online links connecting them. A reader of the archive would naturally start at the centre

This 'black hole' of published materials, for a school governor in a voluntary, part-time role, is obviously overwhelming, and much of this guidance must inevitably remain unread

2 Examples of policy change and churn

- a. The only constant for the National Curriculum has been change
- b. Assessment and qualification frameworks have not stood still
- c. Change in the Further Education sector is perhaps the most extreme
- d. Curriculum and assessment institutions have themselves frequently changed
- e. The Department of Education is regularly renamed
- f. New policies to address societal challenges are frequent

2a

The only constant for the National Curriculum has been change

The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, introduced in 1998 and 1999, directed teachers to the content and form of delivery, of a prescribed syllabus — Not just what should be taught, but at the time, also, how it should be taught

The Primary National Strategy was introduced in May 2003 with the aim of combining measurable performance with 'enjoyment of learning'; followed by Excellence and Enjoyment and Every Child Matters. These in turn found legislative form in the **Children Act 2004**

In 2006, the Rose Review Report added the importance of 'high-quality phonic work'. The level of monitoring and target-setting became ever more particularised in order to address the target demographic groups identified by policy, most notably boys (Whitty 2008, 173)

Although the National Strategies project was intended to be a fixed-term intervention programme, the Primary National Strategy was 'renewed' in 2006, and since the Coalition government came into power in 2010, ministerial control of the Primary curriculum and of assessment at all key stages has tightened further

2015 introduced substantial changes: The addition of a modern language to the Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) and major revisions to the subject content of all national curriculum subjects, for example

- In maths, children are expected to learn more at an earlier age - for example to know their 12 times table by the age of nine
- History has taken a more chronological approach than under the old curriculum
- In English, pupils learn more Shakespeare and there is more importance placed on spelling
- The new computing curriculum requires pupils to learn how to write code
- In science, there is a shift towards hard facts and 'scientific knowledge'
- Syllabuses across disciplines are said to include 'harder' content and 'tougher' exams

Once such top-down control is taken, it becomes difficult to withdraw without 'leaving a vacuum for some teachers who made considerable use of its many resources' (Waugh and Jolliffe 2013, 1)

2b Assessment and qualification frameworks have not stood still

Changes to assessment and qualifications happens on a continuous basis, largely using secondary legislation such as DfE circulars

The complex debate around coursework and 'controlled assessment', introduced in 2009 as a replacement for traditional coursework in GCSE subjects, rages on (Crisp 2008). Likewise, disagreement between advocates of modular and of linear assessment continue

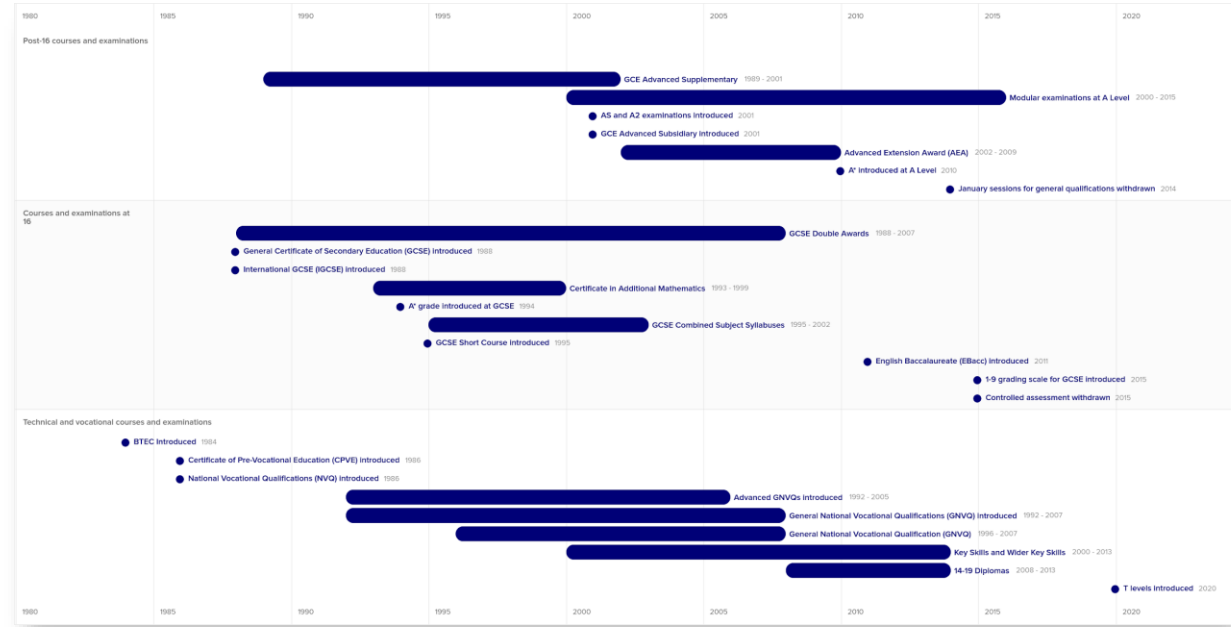
Major reforms were made to GCSE in 2015. The new GCSE exams involve changes to content, exam formats and the grading system

Since GCSEs were introduced in 1988, there have been at least five very substantial reforms to the grading system: An A* band, later a fully revamped numerical grading system, an experiment with combined subjects and short courses, and an entirely new framework, the EBacc

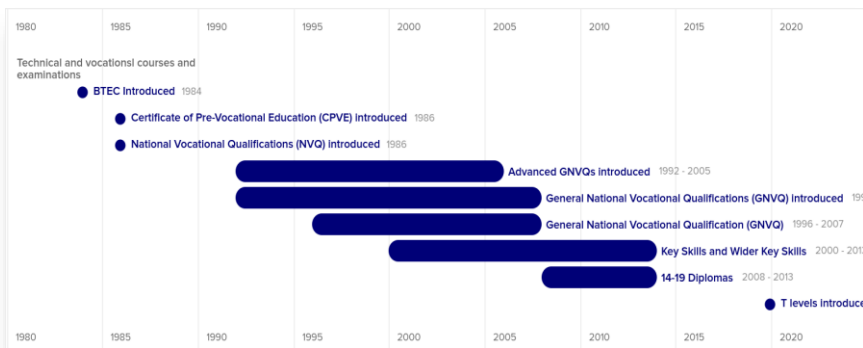
Exams at the end of courses were to account for final results in most subjects. Modular courses were ended

This is on top of changes to individual subject syllabuses across exam boards

The changes were presented as, in part, a response to the previous year's GCSE English marking issue (exam boundaries were altered between January and June sessions in 2012) which required tens of thousands of students to resit their exams



Change in the Further Education sector is perhaps the most extreme



In 1982, the Conservative Government launched the **Technical and Vocational Education Initiative** (by-passing LEAs) and this lasted until 1997

In 1984, **Business and Technology Education Council qualifications (BTECs)** were introduced

In 1986, the Conservatives also set up the **National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQs)**, later reviewed by Beaumont, with an offering of NVQs and **Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs)** with a greater input from business. In 1997 it was merged with the **School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA)**

In 1996, **General National Vocation Qualifications (GNVQs)** were introduced — and withdrawn in 2007

Connexions was launched in 2000 as a ‘single, coherent strategy’. Over the years the initiative fell away. Labour then introduced the **Learning and Skills Council**

Ideas for **Advanced Diplomas** were launched in 2002 with the fanfare of their being the most important educational reform since 1945. These was abolished in 2010

14-19 Diplomas were launched in 2008 and withdrawn in 2013

The **Learning and Skills Council** was also abolished by the coalition and BTEC was endorsed as an A Level equivalent, reducing many Applied GCSEs

The **2011 Wolf** report on 14-19 vocational courses made 27 recommendations including that ‘students who are under 19 and do not have GCSE A*-C in English must find a pathway to gain them’

‘**T Levels**’ are the latest initiative, due for launch in 2020

2d Curriculum and assessment institutions have themselves frequently changed

There has been regular changes to the organisations that manage curriculum and assessment. Existing institutions are continually reformed, rebranded and relaunched

- 1997: **Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA)** formed by merger of SCAA and NCVQ
- 2004: **National Assessment Agency** launched by the QCA to administer National Curriculum assessments
- 2008: **Office of Qualification and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)** takes over QCA's regulatory functions. Supervision of the examination system becomes independent of the education ministry
- 2008: **Qualification and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)** was, like Ofqual, formed from the former QCA
- 2011: **Standards and Testing Agency (STA)** took over the functions of the QCA. Regulated by Ofqual
- The **Education Act 2011** abolished the QCDA, and put no similar authority in its place. As a consequence, the Secretary of State may now make changes to the curriculum 'by order' (a kind of statutory instrument) without referring his proposal to an independent authority. Although he/she must give notice of the proposal to key stakeholders, an independent authority no longer decides who those stakeholders are. They are now those that 'appear to the Secretary of State to be concerned with the proposal' (s.69)



2e Even the Department of Education is regularly renamed

The renaming of department institutions and changes in their remit have been frequent: The cumulative effect of causing confusion and an impression of turmoil

- 1992: **Department for Education (DfE)** formed after responsibility for science is transferred to the Cabinet Office's Office of Public Service and the Department of Trade and Industry's Office of Science and Technology
- 1995: **Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)** formed after a merger with the Department of Employment
- 2001: **Department for Education and Skills (DfES)** formed after the employment functions of the previous department are redirected
- 2007: **Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)** formed with a remit which does not include adult education, further education and higher education
- 2010: **Department for Education (DfE)** reformed by the incoming ministry of David Cameron
- In 2016, the department took on responsibilities for higher and further education, as well as the apprenticeship programme



Department
for Education



department for
children, schools and families

department for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence



Department for
Education and Employment

2f New policies to address societal challenges are frequent

Schools policy is continuously used to effect social reforms and to counter areas of concern, e.g.: British history and values; diversity and inclusion; counter-terrorism, youth sexual health and pregnancy; and, most recently, the problem of knife crime

- September 2002: Citizenship becomes a statutory National Curriculum subject. The subject 'remains key to providing a broad and balanced curriculum in all schools'. In the primary curriculum, citizenship has a non-statutory framework setting out what should be taught at Key Stages 1 and 2
- October 2010: The **Equality Act 2010** replaces all existing anti-discrimination legislation (including the the **Equal Pay Act 1970** the **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**, the **Race Relations Act 1976**, and the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**). This comes with 45 pages of new guidance. Ofsted makes it clear that tackling inequalities and disadvantages should be reflected in every aspect of school life, and would be considered as part of all inspection judgements
- November 2014: The Department for Education publishes guidance on promoting British values in schools 'to ensure young people leave school prepared for life in modern Britain. All schools have a duty to 'actively promote' the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (Department for Education 2017)
- July 2015: All schools become subject to a duty under the **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 s.26** to, in the exercise of their functions, have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is known as the 'Prevent duty'
- April 2017: New internet bullying guidance (19 pages) is issued to update the **Education and Inspections Act 2006 s.89**, providing that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. At the same time, the **Children and Social Work Act 2017** includes four sections relating to education including children in care and safeguarding policy
- April 2019: Ministers propose to launch a 'multi-agency' response to the problem of knife crime, including a new legal duty 'to ensure public bodies ... raise concerns about children at risk of becoming involved in knife crime' (Bulman 2019)
- June 2019: the Department for Education launches statutory guidance to accompany the introduction of compulsory health education, relationships education and relationships & sex education (RSE) in 2020

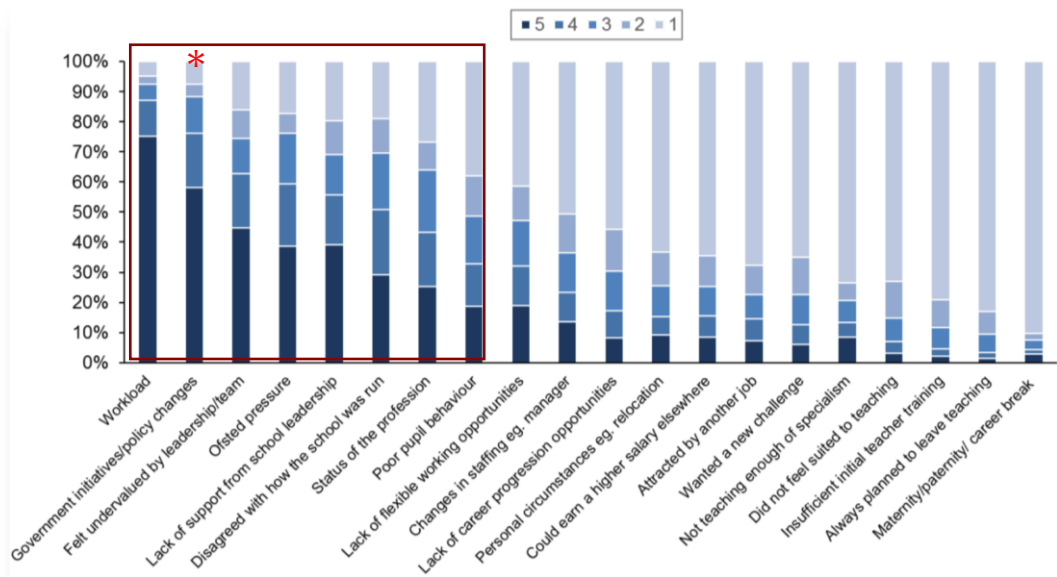
3 Problems created by constant change

- a. Policy change and consequent workload have negatively affected teacher retention
- b. DfE 2017 retention survey highlights huge dissatisfaction with policy changes
- c. Policy change is the root cause of many other areas of teacher dissatisfaction
- d. The government's response has been more policy, less autonomy
- e. Curriculum modifications leave teachers in continual "catch up"
- f. Changing exam formats undermine teacher confidence
- g. 'Teaching to the test' is regrettable but a logical response
- h. There has been a particularly poor deal for those in FEs and on vocational studies
- i. Constant change promotes compliant practitioners rather than "mastery"
- j. Policy change and desire for a long term plan
- k. There is widespread frustration and a new planning approach is being called for

3a Policy change and workload have negatively affected teacher retention

- » Teachers are leaving the profession faster than they can be recruited; all the while increasing pupil numbers make them more necessary than ever. Around 22% of new teachers leave the profession within their first 2 years of teaching, and 33% leave within their first 5 years (Department for Education 2017b, table 8). Meanwhile, secondary pupil numbers are expected to increase by 15% by 2025
- » The problem of teacher shortage is felt acutely in certain geographic regions and for certain subjects, particularly the hard sciences and maths
- » Why is this happening? Excessive workload has been a recurring theme of all recent teacher retention studies
 - Back in 1991: The main reason for leaving given by teachers were: work overload, poor pay, lack of respect, poor discipline and having to teach outside of their subject (Robinson and Smithers 1991). When repeated in 2001, the most frequently given reason for leaving was, again, workload (58 percent)
 - In 2001 a new category of 'government initiatives' was added to the survey. Immediately, 37 percent sited this as a reason for leaving. Primary school teachers over-indexed on complaints about workload (74 percent) and government initiatives (42 percent) (Robinson and Smithers 2001)
 - In 2003: 56% of teachers said that workload was the main source of demotivation, followed by initiative overload (39%) and a target-driven culture (35%) (General Teaching Council 2003).
 - In the DfE Teacher Workload Survey of 2016 workload was a 'very serious problem': 49% of primary respondents, 56% of secondary (Department for Education 2016)
 -they have found that **high workload, driven by policy changes and the demands of inspection** is the key reason teachers give for working long term-time hours (Department for Education 2018)

3b DfE 2017 retention survey highlights huge dissatisfaction with policy changes



Reasons given for leaving the profession, ranked from 1 (not very important) to 5 (very important) (DfE 2017a, 39)

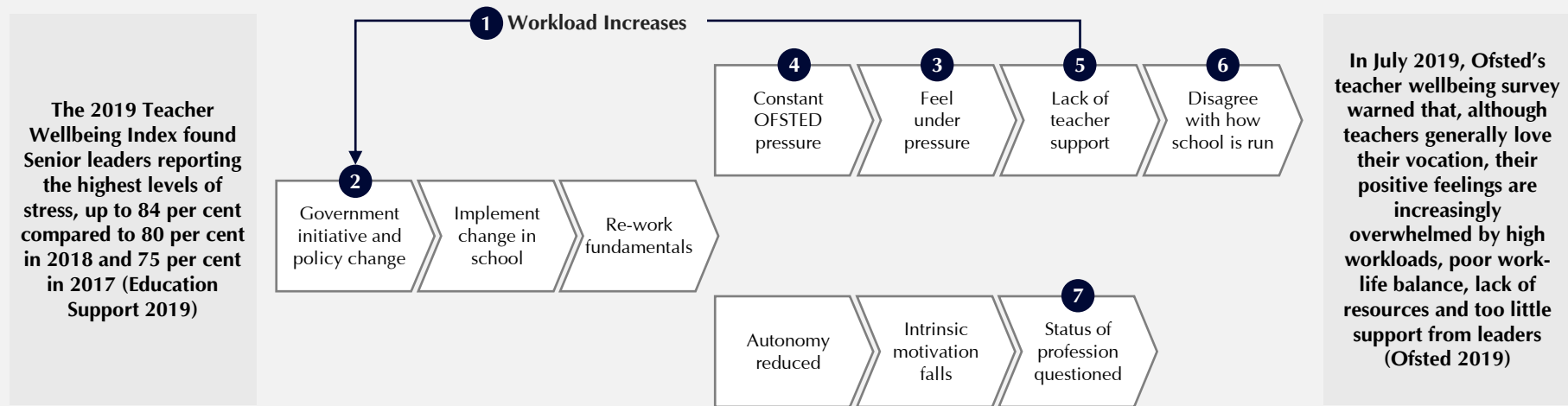
In the 2017 Department of Education survey of former teachers were asked to rank the importance of certain factors in their decision to leave the profession. 'Government initiatives/policy change' was second only to 'Workload' as the factor driving teachers from the profession (DfE 2017a, 38-9)

All seven of the most important reasons teachers gave for leaving are in some sense related to the frequent policy changes identified in this paper's research

The role of policy change on practitioner abandonment of the profession is also a worsening problem, as can be seen when the DfE study is compared to earlier findings

3c Policy change is the root cause of many areas of teacher dissatisfaction

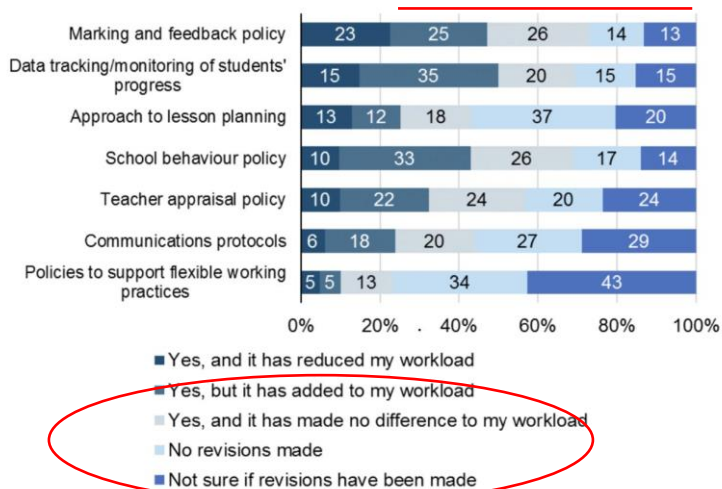
- The DfE's own research in 2018 shows many teachers take issue with the level of accountability and scrutiny they face in their roles: 'Almost half of primary and almost one-quarter of secondary teachers did not feel that they were being trusted to do their job and that levels of scrutiny into lessons and teacher styles were too high. Classroom observations were felt to be intrusive, unconstructive and feedback could be demoralising' (Department for Education 2018, 23).
- Though pressure from school leadership was understood to be 'disproportionate', teachers understood that school leadership is itself pressurised by Ofsted, and the need to demonstrate 'pupil performance and progress' (24)



- The schematic shows the interrelationship between the top seven reasons for teachers leaving the profession (see top 1-7 reasons on previous page)
- 'For me, teaching a class of young children has always been hard work, but also enjoyable — at least most of the time. However, there is [now] far less enjoyment, for teachers and children with more pressure for results.' (Eaude 2015, 50)

3d The government's response has been more policy, less autonomy

Figure 27: Secondary teachers', middle and senior leaders' views on the effects of revisions to schools' policies and approaches, which had been made as part of a specific attempt to reduce workload



Q14 - In the last two years, have any of the following school policies or approaches been revised in your school as part of a specific attempt to reduce workload? (response for secondary teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders).

Teachers were also asked in the DfE 2019 Teacher Workload survey about top-down policy changes implemented in the past two years as part of a specific attempt to reduce workload — such as new approaches to data tracking, lesson planning, school behaviour, and marking (Department for Education 2019)

Secondary teachers reported that each of these initiatives was at least as likely to cause an increase in their workload as it was to reduce it (96). Changes were only somewhat more successful in primary schools (95).

Teachers report spending a lot of their time on marking, administrative work and 'recording, inputting, monitoring and analysis of pupil data' (Department for Education 2019). 53% of primary school teachers and 62% of secondary school teachers say that they spend 'too much' time managing data.

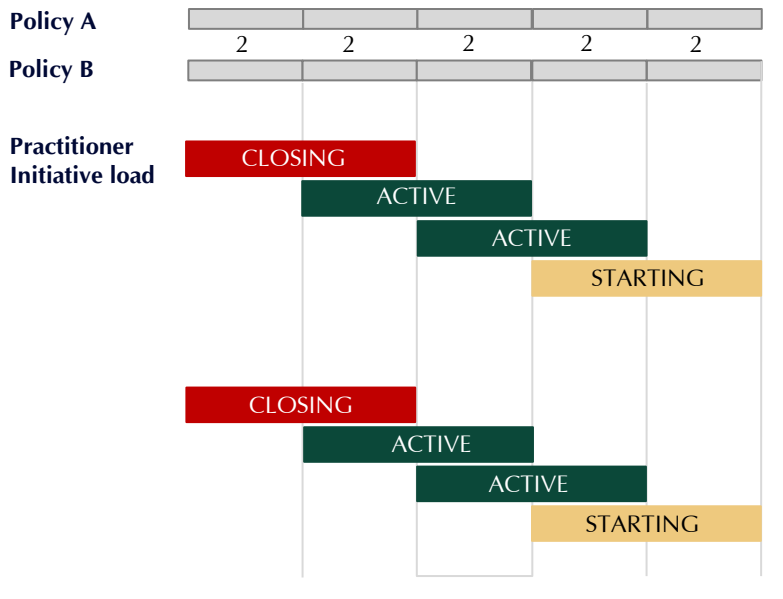
Of secondary school leaders, 34% say that they spend 'too much' time on management with external bodies.

In an attempt to respond to complaints about the rapid level of policy change, government is introducing more policy at an increasingly micro level.

Recruitment for new teachers in secondary schools have fallen short of targets seven years running.

3e Curriculum modifications leave teachers in continuous “catch-up”

Illustration: Government policy cycles typically span two years and implementation may take four years. With initiatives from just two areas of policy, a school may be closing off two initiatives, in the midst of bedding in four and about to start two more



Successful curriculum reform is not just a matter of making new prescriptions and expecting overnight results: to maintain, let alone improve on, existing standards, a teacher must ‘master’ the new content. This requires at least one year of planning new lessons, and it may take three to five years for practitioners to reach levels of competence with the new material that they had achieved pre-reform. This “capacity to absorb” seems to be under acknowledged in policy making.

Details of the syllabus may come from the specific school exam board after new curriculum teaching starts in September, specimen papers for exams may be late or not properly tied into the exam and syllabus.

Delivery in class, depending on pedagogy, must be reformulated, including lesson plans, exam-style questions, model answers, schematics for independent study etc.

Familiarity helps marking and reporting, but both must adapt to maintain insight, coaching and feedback.

Curricular change also re-sets the competitive landscape between schools. With market style competition, schools are disincentivised from co-operating with each other.

Teachers may not be given extra time, training and support to respond to a new curriculum.

Having experienced multiple cycles of such reform, teachers may leave the profession out of frustration. Newly qualified teachers face a steeper learning curve if they enter schools during a period of transformation.

3f Changing exam formats undermine teacher confidence

- » Significant disruption takes place when changes are made to marking criteria, standardisation and grading systems, as they were in the overhaul of GCSEs in 2015 (with first assessment in 2017). Such reforms require wholesale changes not only to lesson plans, but teacher recruitment and school infrastructure.
- » Most significantly, the introduction of a new numerical scale comprising 9 (rather than 8) grade categories asked teachers and examiners to radically revise the way they divide the spectrum of student performance.
- » This caused particular confusion in distinguishing between level 8 (supposed to be equivalent to the old A*), and level 9 (supposed to be equivalent to an 'A**', for which there has been no precedent).
- » Where there was once a 'pass', a common metric of student and school performance, there is now also both a 'standard pass' (level 4) and a 'strong pass' (level 5).
- » Changes to grading scales make it difficult for exam boards to maintain consistency with previous years using variable boundary fixing (a method to ensure that the same percentage of students each year are awarded each grade).
- » Teachers have been unable to confidently mark work and predict student outcomes in terms of the new grading system. The changes have been substantial, yet there have been only a limited range of 'specimen' examination papers available as teacher and student resources. This has inhibited understanding of the new requirements.
- » Changes also erode public confidence in the integrity and fairness of the exam system. Parents worry that their children will be 'guinea-pigs' for untested new curricula and grading systems.
- » Unpredictable outcomes during transitional years have long-term repercussions for entire cohorts of students, affecting applications for sixth form/colleges and universities (who rely heavily on GCSE grades in the absence, since 2015, of AS grades).

Example: The confusion of triple marking and interpretation of policy

Nov 2019: National Governors Association calls for a “policy relief period”, providing schools with space to review the impact of central policy and local practice. This must include a reduction in the number of new initiatives from central government resulting in a period of stability

- » In 2016, Ofsted stressed that inspectors should not be passing judgement on marking in schools. In the Department for Education's 2015 Workload Challenge survey, 53% of teachers asked highlighted ‘excessive/depth of marking – detail and frequency required’ as significantly adding to their workload burden. When asked who the primary drivers of this workload burden were, the largest answer given was ‘accountability/perceived pressures of Ofsted’ (Department for Education 2015).
- » ‘Triple Impact Marking’ (TIM), or ‘deep marking’ as it is otherwise known, is a method whereby written work produced by students is marked and feedback provided, at which point the student redrafts it in light of the feedback, who then returns it to the teacher to be marked for a second time.
- » Despite the fact that this labour-intensive system of marking has never been promoted or mandated by Ofsted, it seems to have become common practice (Busby 2016). It is not a requirement for pupils to respond to feedback in written form, merely to act upon it in future work.
- » How has this happened? According to a report by the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group titled “Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking” : ‘The growth of deep marking seems to have arisen for several reasons, including: practice which misinterpreted and ultimately distorted the main messages of Assessment for Learning; Ofsted praising particular methods of marking in an inspection report so that other schools felt they should follow the same example, and false assumptions about what was required by Government’ (National Archives 2016, 6).
- » This shows how much ambiguity exists as to the requirements set by central government of teachers, and how this can produce unnecessary workload for teachers.

3g 'Teaching to the test' is a regrettable but logical outcome

Many practitioners are convinced that they should 'teach to the test', focusing their expertise first and foremost on ensuring that their students tick all of the boxes as set out in detailed new course specification. This is due to:

- » The constant churn of detailed, highly prescriptive policy
- » The non-negotiable nature of legislative prescriptions
- » The encroachment of ministerial opinion into day-to-day classroom teaching methods
- » The glaring publication of success-measures as defined by Ofsted

In Sept 2018, Ofsted leader Amanda Spielman said that those working in education need to ask themselves 'how we have created a situation where second-guessing the test can trump the pursuit of real, deep knowledge and understanding':

- 'We saw curriculum narrowing, especially in upper key stage 2, with lessons disproportionately focused on English and mathematics'
- 'Sometimes, this manifested as intensive, even obsessive, test preparation for Key Stage 2 Sats'
- 'Some secondary schools were significantly shortening key stage 3 in order to start GCSEs'
- 'This approach results in the range of subjects that pupils study narrowing at an early stage and means that they might drop art, history or music, for instance, at age 12 or 13'
- 'At the same time, the assessment objectives from GCSE specifications were being tracked back to as early as year 7' (Spielman 2018)

One commentator speaks of the development of 'evasive survival techniques' for dealing with unrealistic expectations of compliance: teachers cannot keep up with what is asked of them, and develop methods of reporting that keep themselves out of trouble (Gibton 2013).

3h There is a particularly poor deal for those in FEs and on vocational studies

- » The Institute for Government, as well as the City and Guilds group, has lamented the flow of disjointed initiatives in the FE sector. Yet there are more students in FE colleges than sixth forms. Almost half of college attendees are on pre-vocational or vocational courses, but FEs also account for one third of all A level students. While many believe apprenticeships are the answer for less academically inclined students, currently, they only cater for 6% of 16-18 year olds (Oates 2015)
- » In 2017/18 a study by the Policy Forum and TES looked at change relating to 'FE and the Skills System'. Their work was based on a substantial survey of over 500 practitioners. The report comments: 'Respondents are unequivocal about the policy decisions that have failed to create the conditions for success in their sector. But underneath all of the root-cause issues... lies a significant common denominator: the unintended consequences of policy volatility.' Furthermore, 'It appears that the single biggest barrier to creating the conditions needed for wholehearted investment by staff is policy makers continually changing their minds' (Policy Consortium 2018)
- » In 2019 City and Guilds commented that its key conclusions have not changed. Reflecting on previous versions of its research, the report laments that 'many of the issues identified in our 2014 and 2016 reports still persist, and we continue to find ourselves calling for adequate success measures for skills policy' (City and Guilds Group 2019, 16)
- » University Technical Colleges (UTCs) were intended to provide quality vocational education, combining technical and academic learning, for young people from the age of 14. Despite significant investment, they have had poor GCSE results and have not attracted sufficient numbers of students. Seven were closed in 2017
- » The New Direction think tank comments: 'Although for 16- to 19-year-olds further education colleges have continued to provide courses, the FE system did not aspire to the standards established in Germany or to the range and diversity of French or German vocational and technical routes' (Lawlor 2017)
- » 200,000 students study for BTEC or one of many other 'applied general qualifications'. The government wishes to quickly reduce these in favour of T levels or A levels, but the CBI have said this must be done gradually with time for employers and providers to adapt. Geoff Barton of the ASCL and David Hughes of the Association of Colleges agreed (Jeffreys 2019)

3i Constant change promotes compliant practitioners rather than “mastery”

- » Evidence put before the House of Lords for its 2009 report on the Cumulative Impact of Statutory Instruments identifies the connection not only between policy change and the problem of teacher retention, but legislative change specifically: ‘For the professionals in schools the endless piecemeal change has become one of the main reasons given for leaving the job. It is not unruly and undisciplined children that are forcing good teachers and governors out of our schools; it is unruly and undisciplined legislation’ (Merits of Statutory Instruments Committee 2009, 69).
- » Ofsted inspects schools against standards set by central government. A 2014 survey by the Teacher Support Network found that 93% of teachers felt that Ofsted inspections contributed to their stress and 74% said that inspections ‘negatively impacted on their motivation to continue in their career in education’ (Bajorek, Gulliford and Taskila 2014).
- » The January 2019 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy is an acknowledgement that successive waves of directives, coupled with performance transparency and OFSTED classifications have taken teacher workloads to unsustainable levels. However, somewhat perversely, the paper is robust in defending the extent of policy change.
- » For some time, there has been widespread concern about the unintended consequences of ‘command and control’ within education. It is generally accepted that directed people become compliant but risk averse. There is a greater tendency to aim to please the directing body. The Cambridge Primary Review calls this a ‘culture of compliance’ (Alexander 2010, 437) which significantly alters teacher behaviour and Lawrence Freedman says if you overdo the exercise of power you risk achieving compliance rather than collaboration (quoted from M. Barber)
- » This is ironic, as at the time of the 1988 Education Reform Act, Kenneth Baker talked about how he wished ‘to move things out from the hub of the wheel to the rim, because at the rim schools could be independent and use their own inventiveness and creativity’ (Baker 2015, 22).
- » Tony Eade (an experienced teacher, head, and now research fellow) comments that ‘The last 25 years have seen continual political interference and attempts to micromanage, resulting from a short-term desire to achieve measurable results. Policy is based on, at best, a sketchy and partial view of evidence from research, and frequently from the political complexion of the government, or even the whim of a minister’ (Eade 2015, 50). Who is going to constrain the minister with the next ‘big idea’?

There is widespread frustration and a new planning approach is called for

The Sunday Times Festival of Education and Summerhouse Education have run a series called “**If I Were Secretary of State for Education...**” with articles written by leading educationalists describing what they would do if they were given the opportunity to make major reforms to the education system (Sunday Times 2015). A theme running through the pieces is that the Secretary of State should develop a long-term plan, built on consensus, and/or do nothing at all for an allotment of time. These are a few extracts from a range of backgrounds and political stand points

Richard Pring, University of Winchester

If I were Secretary of State for Education, I would do nothing – at least for the first two years. That is because more damage is done to schools by the swiftly changing secretaries of state who, despite (or because of) their ignorance and lack of experience, insist upon making instant changes which their successors (sometimes staying only a few months) then retract or change again.

Dame Sally Coates

We need to rethink the role of politicians in our education system. Politicians have a right to offer direction and to provide the thrust of education reform — this is the foundation of our democratic system — but they should not interfere at a micro level ... We should have a seven-year lock-in for key changes to curriculum and assessment

Sir Mike Rake, President of the CBI

I would set about getting all groups with a key stake in our children’s futures — teachers, parents, businesses, major political parties — to commit to a 20-year plan. The lesson we drew in industry years ago was that assurance — setting and holding high standards, but ensuring that staff own them — is far better than a raft of inspectors judging people’s work after the damage has been done

Lee Elliot Major, CEO Sutton Trust

To agree on an unprecedented national strategy for education embraced by all the main political parties ... ensuring a much-needed long-term approach for our schools to the benefit of all children

Guy Claxton, University of Winchester

If I were Secretary of State for Education, the first thing I would do is drastically limit my own powers, and those of my successors, by irreversibly vesting a major chunk of them in a non-political National Institute of Education (NIE). Politicians are condemned by the nature of the political process and by their own lack of experience to — or at least appear to — think superficially, plan only for the short term, and always do too little, too noisily and too late

Chris Husbands, UCL

In my first ten days, I would call a national education summit which would contribute to establishing long-term goals for a system in which every child can thrive and every school succeed ... The national education summit would establish — in this, the 800th anniversary year of Magna Carta — a great charter for education, shaping our shared moral commitment to our children, the quality of their education and their future

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Examples: education questions needing rigorous evaluation

System

Curriculum

Disadvantaged

Assessment

Accountability

National

- What do we want education to deliver in the next 5/10/20 years?
- What is the correct resource balance between sectors¹?
- What is the strategy for adult education ?
- How should the primary sector be managed?
- How is parental choice managed v balanced intake? (Choice v equity v effectiveness)
- How far will policy stability improve teacher retention?

Local

- How far can underperformance be rectified by local/area intervention? - Should Opportunity areas be continued?
- Are there benefits in local school cooperation
- What is the most effective model of cooperation between schools, FEs and local employers?
- What are the future skills needs by area?
- How do we identify, evaluate and scale successful initiatives?

- Does the KS4 curriculum meet present and future needs?
- How are minimum standards best achieved?
- Should the single curriculum run to year 9, 10, or 11?
- What is the importance of problem solving and team work?
- Does tertiary education determine secondary school goals and is this a problem?
- What is the role of technology

- To what extent should the vocational curriculum be defined locally?
- Is there a trade off between equality and excellence?

- What is the cost/benefit of early intervention?
- How far can the best schools overcome pupil disadvantage?
- How do we improve the health welfare and life satisfaction of children in school?

- How are care services coordinated where LAs no longer fulfil the role?
- At what level should care services be coordinated e.g. neighborhood; community; council level; mayoral or regional?
- How is the best teaching talent attracted to the most disadvantaged areas?

- Should we have comparable or criteria based attainment levels?
- What are the costs and benefits of the exam centered system?
- Should curriculum and assessment change be recommended to government?
- Should the timings and form of assessment/examination change?

- How is school accountability and responsibility best balanced?
- Should inspection really be “improvement”?
- How should secondary school success be measured?

- How to better engage parents and the community?

1. Including but not limited to EYS, Primary, Secondary, FE, vocational and skills, apprenticeships, University, adult education * Assumed categorization – trade-off between education beneficiaries or stakeholders

Version control

Version	Date	Category	Development	Input
4.1	27th April 2021	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extracts from 3.4 for website sections 	
3.4	28 th July 2020	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of key questions 	
3.3	28 th May	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New recommendation (2) re ministerial accountability 	12.5.20 meeting
3.2	7 th May	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formatting 	
3.0	30 th April 2020	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant review of recommendations; inclusion of policy framework schema; new overview; 	Various: Think Tanks, Sector bodies; head teachers
2.2	3 rd Feb 2020	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-organising recommendations 2 year moratorium changed to “policy stability” 	29.1.20 meeting
2.1	27 th Jan 2020	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spell edits; change in headings and content pages; conclusion and recommendations to front; distributed as draft 	
2.0	17 th December 2020	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Format change to ppt Further analysis; addition of international comparisons; PISA; conclusions and recommendations 	
1.0	July 2019	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start March 2019 - UK/England analysis 	