



Reducing workload

**Implications for
governing boards**

RoSIS Governance Forum

January 2020

Context

Workload is creating 'high stress', say 80% of teachers

The figure is significantly worse than last year – and most teachers also say their workload is 'harming learning'

By Dave Speck
28 October 2019

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Context

- The revised Ofsted inspection framework (September 2019) will judge (under ‘Leadership and management’
 - the extent to which leaders **take into account the workload and well-being of their staff**, while also developing and strengthening the quality of the workforce



DfE support and guidance

- In 2016 DfE published findings from **three independent teacher workload review groups**:
 - Data management
 - Marking policy
 - Planning and resources
- In 2018 a series of **case studies** were published based on good practice in schools e.g. 'Replacing written feedback in primary schools'.

DfE School Workload Reduction Toolkit

- In October 2019 DfE published a 'School Workload Reduction Toolkit'. The toolkit is designed to support schools to:
 - **identify** workload issues in your school
 - **address** workload issues in your school (such as feedback and marking)
 - **evaluate** the impact of workload reduction measure

DfE School workload reduction toolkit

- The toolkit contains **nine** sets of resources on the following topics:
 - Identify workload issues in your school
 - Data management
 - Feedback and marking
 - Curriculum planning and resources
 - Behaviour management
 - Communications
 - Wellbeing and workload
 - Plan your yearly calendar
 - **Support for governing boards and trustees**
 - Evaluate the impact

DfE School workload reduction toolkit

- Each of the **nine** resource sets include:
 - One or more **Powerpoint presentations** for staff training workshops around the theme
 - **Presenter notes**, and separate **briefing notes** for the workshop
 - **Printable resources** to use with staff
 - Links to **case studies**
- **Eight** of the resource sets are for staff workshops, one is specifically for governors

Discussion task



- To what extent are school leaders including governors **aware** of current concerns around the issue of teacher workload?
- What **actions** have been taken to identify and address workload issues by:
 - Leadership teams
 - Governing boards
- Have schools made use of any DfE (or other published) **materials**?

Workshops for staff



Plan your yearly calendar

For resources to plan your yearly calendar, download the zip file which contains:

- a calendar planning workshop presentation – with facilitator notes
- a summary sheet to accompany the workshop

You can use the workshop with staff to help you plan your yearly calendar and avoid pinch points.



[Plan your yearly calendar: school workload reduction toolkit](#)

ZIP, 434KB

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)

Reducing workload

Plan your yearly calendar

Agenda	Timing
Introduction	5 minutes
Yearly overview	30 minutes
Questioning your overview	30 minutes
Planning, revising and finalising your calendar	55 minutes

Introduction: avoiding pinch points

“The worst aspects of workload are those moments in a term or a year when it seems everything is happening at once. SLT are asking for data to be updated and discussed, parent consultations are about to start, the pupils have done a long project which needs in-depth marking and then just to top it off a new child starts...”

Key Stage 2 Teacher, 10 years of experience

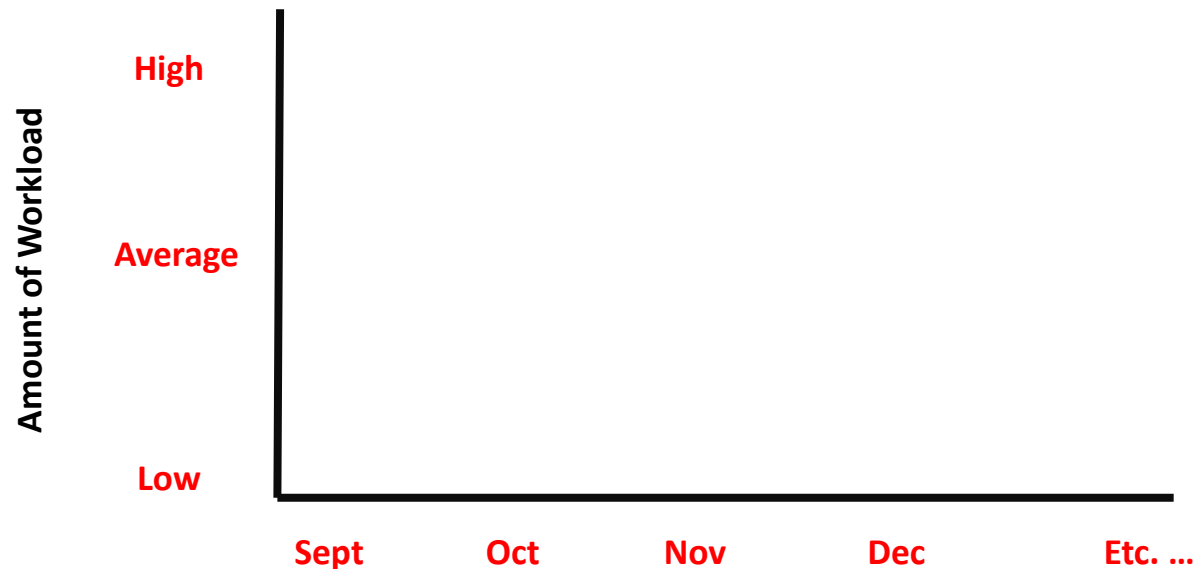
“Exam preparation, coursework to mark and a Year 7 residential, always seems to mar my run up to Christmas. Every year I ask myself why we didn’t just plan a little bit differently and yet every year is the same.”

Secondary Maths Teacher, 7 years of experience

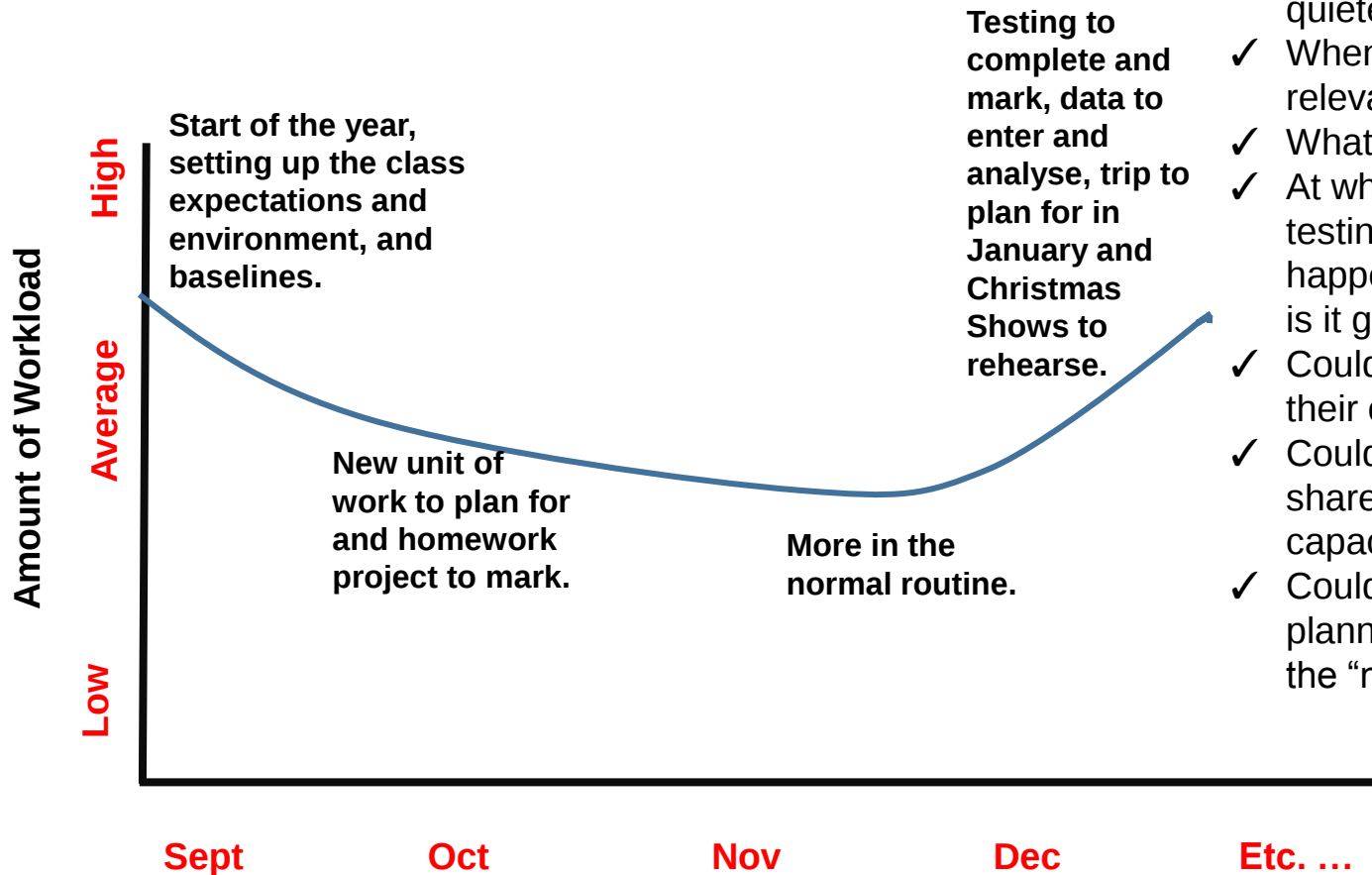
Aim: to examine our own calendar, review any ‘pinch points’ and make changes to avoid them

Yearly overview (1 of 2)

- Think about your current annual cycle of workload in school and discuss at which points in the year workload is higher.
- Roughly plot a graph to show this, add in labels to explain why.



Yearly overview (2 of 2)



Considerations:

What could we change/ reduce/ eliminate? For example:

- ✓ Could the trip be moved to a quieter time?
- ✓ When is a data drop most relevant?
- ✓ What is the data for?
- ✓ At which point could the testing take place and why is it happening? (What information is it giving you?)
- ✓ Could pupils edit and review their own work?
- ✓ Could the unit be planned in a shared or collaborative capacity?
- ✓ Could staff find time for planning by easing of some of the “normal” pressures?

Looking at your graphs - questions

Looking at the graphs and notes that have been made:

- Post-it note the graphs with key questions to consider when looking at the impact of the yearly planning on workload.
- Consider what aspects can be reduced or do not need to be there at all.

Which aspects could be changed and which have to stay where they are?

How much does your yearly planning affect the amount of workload staff have to do?

Yearly planning (1 of 2)

Map out our year.

- Take 12 pieces of paper and lay them out from September to August.
- Split each sheet into the approximate weeks in that month.
- Decide as a whole staff the parts of the year which really cannot change and make sure you discuss why.
- Decide on the parts which you will block out, consider holiday times.
- Put each one on a post-it and add these on to your calendar.

Yearly planning (2 of 2)

Decide on key school-wide events and add these on to the calendar. Consider:

Where will you have your parent consultations?

When will you ask for reports to be given in? What format will you use for this?

When are your summative assessments and data drops?

Consider key administration tasks, including meetings, and the points at which these occur:

- How will these impact the workload of teaching staff?
- How will these impact the workload of SLT/Leadership?
- How will these impact the workload of administration staff?

Questioning your pinch points

Check your calendar for pinch points. Consider:

Workload-heavy tasks – are they well spaced out?

Is the purpose and timing of each activity clear to everyone?

What other events or activities need to be added?

Is there anything more we can take away?

Action for change:

Discuss and agree how you will make and monitor changes:

How will you make the calendar accessible to staff?

Who will make changes, and how can staff suggest these?

When / how often will the calendar be reviewed?

How will we communicate changes with pupils, parents/carers and governors?

For further information....

- [Ways to reduce workload in your school](#) – tips and case studies from school leaders, teachers and sector experts
- [Case studies](#)
- [Ofsted inspection guidance](#)

Case study material

ELM/SHIT/NFL/EA

Our learning outcomes are:

1 2 3 4
H No point
Min Max

1
Science teacher
Specialist teacher

5 year plan - 1 KS

Specialism →
7 8 9 10 11 12 13

Activity	Purpose	Value to learning	Marking Workload	Overall value	Issues	Actions
Ex. books	Record of learning	3	2	inconsistent value of books needs to ↑	Perceived value impacts on st/stk actions	↑ importance of these - monitoring expectations (4) CL
Tests	Measure learning	1	2	✓	Effectively used	Continues
Homeworks	Consolidate learning	KS3 3 KS4 1	KS3 4 KS4 2	KS3 X KS4 ✓	KS4 effective Don't want to lose creativity at KS3. Need developing 'being a scientist'	KS4 continues KS3 in books emphasis on praise + enthusiasm USE KS3 as a model for KS4/3 (4) CAOT
Skills (Assess)	Develop scientific skills	2	4	marking load to reduce	Effectively used	Continues
Mid-unit tests	Formative confidence building	1	2	✓	Effectively used	Continues

for Matt → explores y7 having 1 science teacher

City of Norwich School – impact matrix on marking



Governor workshop



Support for governing boards and trustees

For resources to help governing boards and trustees reduce workload in their school, download the zip file which contains:

- a workshop presentation – with facilitator notes
- a summary sheet to accompany the workshop
- a workshop discussion template
- a practical example of a primary school governing board looking at reducing school workload

You can run the workshop during board meetings, as a whole school activity or in teams, using the discussion template to help, and adapt the example for use in your school.



[Support for governing boards and trustees: school workload reduction toolkit](#)

ZIP, 455KB

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format](#).

Reducing workload in school(s)

**Workshop for governing boards and trustees:
supporting workload reduction across our school(s)**

Contents	Timing
1. Understanding the issues	20mins
2. Activity 1: reducing workload in your school	40mins
3. Activity 2: streamlining data collections	20mins
4. Action for change	10mins

Purpose of these materials

Aims

These slides provide information for boards on the importance of addressing workload issues in schools, and the role of the board in supporting this. The overall aim is to improve the recruitment and retention of teachers as part of the board's strategic leadership role.

Structure

The slides are divided into four sections which can be delivered in one workshop or separately:

1. Understanding the issues, nationally and at school level (you may wish to prepare for this session by assessing the current position in your school)
2. Activity 1: reducing workload across your school(s)
3. Activity 2: streamlining data collections
4. Action for change

It is accompanied by a short information sheet for governors to read ahead of the workshop or meeting, and a discussion template to use in the workshop. The workshop slides and discussion template can be adapted to suit different contexts.

1. Understanding the issues

Myth: Teacher and leader workload is not part of the Governance role

Fact:

- Unnecessary workload **takes teachers and leaders away from their primary role** of helping their pupils achieve their goals.
- Teachers in England work longer hours than the average across OECD countries, and the time is often spent on tasks they believe are not helping their pupils. ([TALIS 2018](#))
- The [competency framework for governance](#) sets out the **importance of ensuring that leaders and teachers are able to have a satisfactory work-life balance**, including a manageable workload.

Myth: Teachers and leaders need to work long hours to improve outcomes for pupils

Fact:

- Long hours spent on **unnecessary and burdensome tasks affect wellbeing and morale.**
- High workload is **one of the main reasons teachers give for wanting to leave the profession.**
- This leads to **recruitment and retention issues**, and can have a negative impact on outcomes for pupils.

Therefore, teachers and leaders **need to be able to focus on the most important tasks** which impact positively on pupil progress, and **in a way that reduces workload as much as possible.**

Some teachers' views about the practices in their schools

'We are expected to input data for data collections 7 times a year for Y11, 5 times a year for Y10, Y12 and Y13 and 3 times a year for Y7 and Y8. This includes an effort score, predicted grade, controlled assessment grade and a comment on general approach/targets for each student in our class.'

'Weekly planning ... with learning objectives and success criteria for every area of submission to head of year, due in Saturday 5 p.m. Feedback given on Sunday evening with suggestions for even better if. This takes all day on a Saturday- so I have no weekend... I find it demoralizing and soul destroying that my class is outstanding and yet this gives the impression of lack of trust.'

'Marking every last shred of work with developmental and next step marking, checking that the children have responded to the marking and getting them to respond to yesterday's marking as well as today's marking, and marking that they have read my marking and so on ad infinitum.'

Department for Education Workload Challenge 2015

Discussion: what do we know about workload in our school(s)?

What effect is workload having on teaching, staff morale and recruitment and retention in your school(s)? How do you know?



What areas are particularly burdensome for teachers and leaders in your school(s)? How do you know?



What action have your school(s) taken to review and streamline policies and practice?



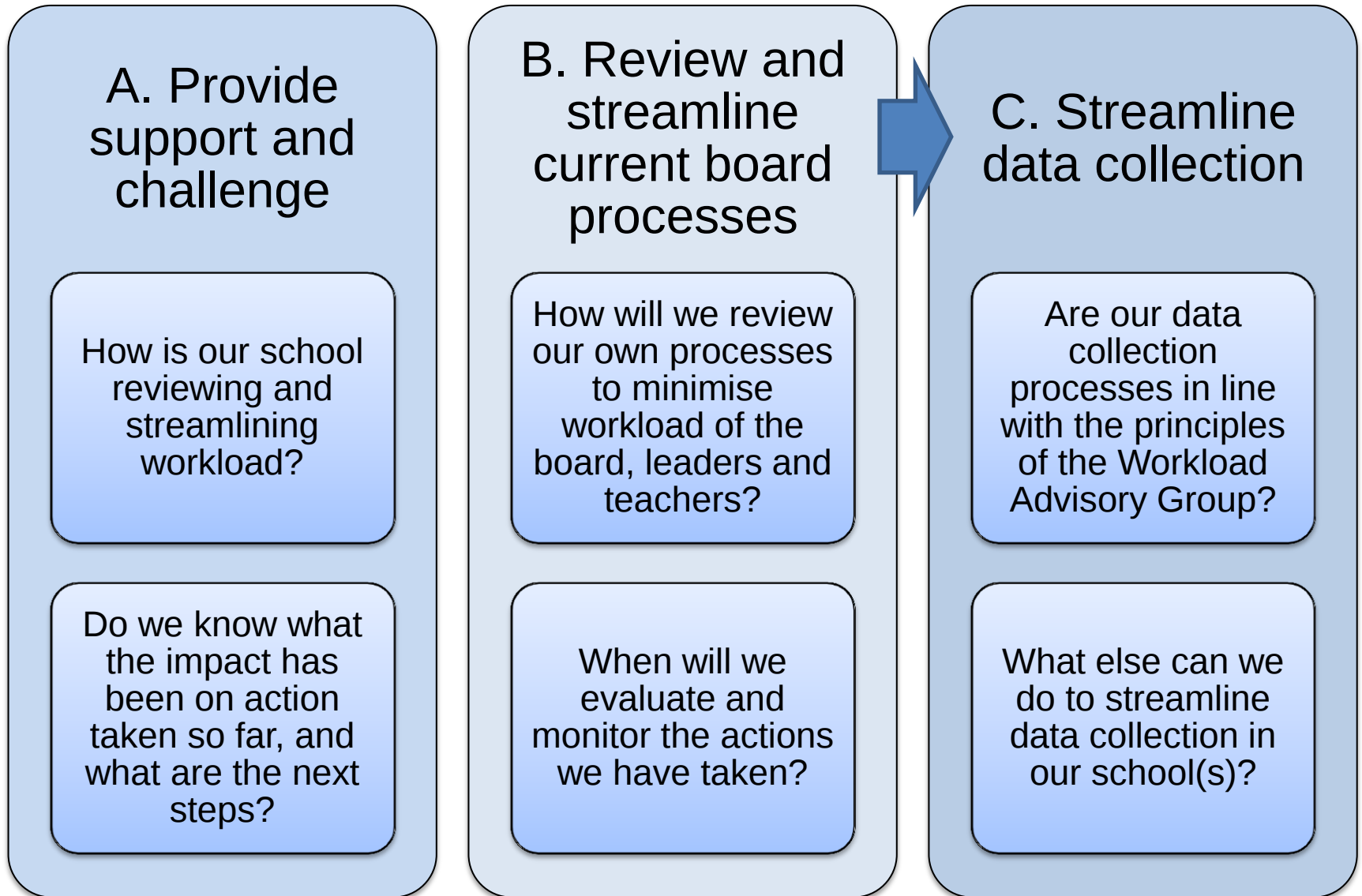
Have these actions had an impact? How do you know?

EXAMPLE

What do we know about workload in our trust?		
Effect on teaching, morale and recruitment / retention of staff	Areas which create the most workload for staff	Action taken to date to review and reduce workload
WORKLOAD SURVEY CARRIED OUT : - Overall perception that staff workload is high, particularly for phase leaders and NQTs - Staff said that they would like to have more time for collaboration and CPD.	MAT lesson planning protocol identified as creating unnecessary workload for: - Teaching staff (especially NQTs) –creating individual lesson plans from scratch and searching for resources - Senior leaders – taking in lesson plans on Fridays and giving feedback to teaching staff	Curriculum planning workshops carried out as part of individual school INSET days, fed back to Trust Board. - Removed template for individual lesson plans and requirement for SLT to review these - Reviewed existing curriculum resources, identified need to source additional materials - Agreement to timetable collaborative planning time where possible - Agreed review date to track impact on workload /outcomes

2. Reducing workload across your school(s)

How can boards support schools to reduce workload?



A. Providing support and challenge

In groups consider the following:

- Do school leaders feel able to take action on workload?

- How does the board address work-life balance of the headteacher and other staff?

- How can the board support workload reduction?

B. Reviewing current board processes

How can the board be as effective as possible to minimise unnecessary workload on **the school** and for **the board** themselves? In groups, discuss the following.

Does the board:

- **Embed** workload and wellbeing considerations when reviewing school/trust policies?
- **Consider** the impact board decisions have on workload across the school, and consider how workload can be minimised?
- **Review** the composition and business of the board, including meetings (length, frequency and content) and papers?

3. Streamlining data collections

Making Data Work: report of the Workload Advisory Group

The Making Data Work report set out four principles:

1. The ***purpose*** and use of data is clear, is relevant to the intended audience and is in line with school values and aims.
2. The ***precision*** and limitations of data, and what can be inferred from it, are well understood.
3. The amount of data collected and the frequency with which it is collected is ***proportionate***.
4. School and trust leaders review ***processes*** for both collecting data and for making use of the data once gathered.

Making Data Work: report of the Workload Advisory Group

In relation to governors, the report states:

“Governing boards are responsible for setting strategic direction for their schools, holding senior leaders to account for performance and overseeing financial performance. They need access to high quality data in order to carry out these functions effectively. **However, they need to be clear that theirs is a strategic oversight role rather than an operational management role, and the data they need should be commensurate with this role**”.

Making Data Work: report of the Workload Advisory Group

In relation to governors, the report states:

“Governors should normally be prepared to receive information in whatever form it is currently being used in the school. They should agree with school and trust leaders what high-quality data they need, and when, in order to fulfil their role effectively and to **avoid making unreasonable, ad hoc data requests during the course of the school year.** This includes consideration of any in-year data they receive, how meaningful this is and whether this can be reduced”.

Making Data Work: report of the Workload Advisory Group

In relation to governors, the report states:

“Governors should also consider whether data is proportionate, how school and trust leaders are collecting it, and the frequency and time costs of data collection. For example, they should not routinely see data on individual pupils, ‘flight paths’ or other teacher judgement tracking data. They should understand the limitations of attainment, progress and target setting data, and be able to access training on the effective use of data on pupil performance”.

Case studies (1 of 2)

St Peter's C of E Primary School worked with 4 other schools to identify ways to measure pupil progress that could be collected easily. They:

- identified learning objectives and developed key performance indicators*
- developed a bespoke tracking system to enter and extract data.*

An important feature of the system was to ensure data would be entered once and could be used multiple times at class level, school level and MAT level. Most teachers reported that their increased understanding meant a reduction in time taken to assess pupils' learning using the KPIs, and a reduced teacher workload.

[St Peter's C of E Primary School](#)

"We scrapped whole-school data drops and asked subject leaders to create their own assessment calendars to suit their curricula. Departments have appreciated the opportunity to establish their own assessment policies and have welcomed the move away from whole-school deadlines. Giving greater freedom and autonomy to subject teams has removed stifling, inflexible demands, and has enabled teachers to have greater control over their workload."

[Linton Village College](#)

Case studies (2 of 2)

“An annual data audit has been introduced for all schools in the Ark network....this ensures data management activities are proportionate in terms of the burden placed on school staff. It encourages staff to think through the processes within the school, with an assessment of the time taken to complete each activity. The audit includes:

- Identifying who performs various data processing activities within the school.*
- Ensuring key data processing activities are carried out correctly and efficiently.*
- Checking key personnel have been trained to perform their role.*
- Ensuring processes to support better data collection and management are automated where possible.”*

[Ark network of schools](#)

Discussion: data collection

As a board:

- do our data collection practices reflect these principles?
- do we understand the limitations of the data we use?
- do we make additional or duplicative data requests on school leaders which could be reduced?
- what should we stop doing, or do differently?

4. Action for change

Action for change:

Who will be responsible for taking forward our recommendations and by when?

How will it link with work the school(s) is/are already doing to reduce workload?

When and how will impact be reviewed?

For further information....

- [Governance handbook and competency framework](#)
- [Professional development](#) for governors
- [School teachers' pay and conditions Document](#)
- [Workload Advisory Group report](#): 'Making Data Work'
- [School workload reduction toolkit](#)
- [Ways to reduce workload in your school](#) – tips and case studies from school leaders, teachers and sector experts
- Hiltingbury Junior School case study: [Managing staff workload – a Governor's perspective](#)
- [Ofsted inspection guidance](#)
- Education Endowment Foundation – [Guide for governing boards](#)



Discussion task



- What actions might your governing board now need to take to support school(s) in reducing workload, by:
 - A. Providing support and challenge?
 - B. Reviewing and streamlining current board processes?
 - C. *Streamlining data collection?*
- What further support or guidance would be useful in this process?