

# NAHT Policy Positions Statement

NAHT is an independent trade union and professional association representing more than 29,000 members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. NAHT represents school leaders in early years, primary, secondary and special schools, making us the largest association for school leaders in the UK. We represent, advise and train school leaders and use our voice at the highest levels of government to influence policy for the benefit of leaders and learners everywhere. Our NAHT Edge section supports, develops and represents middle leaders in schools.

This document is intended to provide an overview of current NAHT Policy positions as developed through our Annual Conference resolutions, the decisions of our national executive and the positions taken in response to key issues.

## National Organisation and Regulation of Education

- NAHT advocates an Office of Education Responsibility to plan and manage a five-year reform programme based on sound evidence.
- New proposals for change would need to be submitted to the Office for analysis against three tests: evidence of impact, value for money and *capacity to implement*. It would be difficult for ministers to depart from the programme. A high profile Chief Education Officer, coming from the profession, could lead the office.
- NAHT also believes there should be a set of key principles by which all national policy changes are measured, with findings communicated to the general public.

## Academies

- NAHT believes that the choice to become an academy belongs to the school itself. We support the right of every school to choose the governance arrangements which are best for their school, including becoming an academy, as long as there has been full consultation with parents, staff and governors. It is a choice that should be made for the benefit of current and future pupils and with due regard to the implications for staff.
- We believe changes in structure or status will not automatically deliver improvement. Schools should not be forced to become an academy or to accept a specific sponsor. Where schools are dealing with forced academy status, we support and represent them including offering advice on alternative routes for improvement.
- We strongly encourage schools of any status to operate in effective collaborations - trusts, chains, federations, companies and other groups. There are many effective models but the common characteristics of effective collaborations include quality leadership in each school, clear

accountability, shared staffing and resources, a sensible plan for growth and sustainability, and a shared vision for school effectiveness and improvement.

- In a world of widespread academisation there is still a vital need for services above and around schools at a local, regional and national level. The government has duties for the supply of capital, staff and resources; and co-ordination is required locally on place planning, admissions and facilities time arrangements. Effective local authorities can still have a role to play if they reinvent their relationship with schools.
- NAHT is opposed to any attempt to allow publicly funded schools to be run for profit.

## Accountability

- School leaders want to build the greatest education system in the world – one that values the academic achievement, personal excellence and mental well-being of all young people. And one where all schools are good schools and those working within them have the skills, insight and capacity to provide the best education for all children, irrespective of starting points or circumstances.
- NAHT fully accepts that schools and school leaders should be held to account and that sustained under-performance should be challenged; schools are publicly-funded, and school leaders desire the rigour of accountability. NAHT also accepts that there is a role for an independent inspectorate.
- NAHT believes that **the current accountability system** limits ambition; diverts attention from teaching and learning; drives good people from the profession; and provides less assurance of standards.
- The system has the potential to narrow, distort and corrupt the curriculum and the diagnosis of pupil ability and progress.
- NAHT believes that the current data-focused threshold targets fail to value the achievements of every child and do not provide an accurate assessment of school performance. NAHT is opposed to the use of unreliable progress data as a measure of school effectiveness. The current methodology used to calculate progress at KS2 and KS4 must be improved. Too great a reliance is being put by government on external tests, particularly for school accountability purposes.
- We believe that progress rather than attainment should be the main accountability measure for schools. In secondary education, we question the need for further accountability measures using EBacc and suggest progress 8 is the right measure with a balance between academic rigour and curriculum breadth.
- An overemphasis on formal testing can have a negative impact on children. If the Association identifies compelling evidence that government policy on assessment and accountability continues to be harmful to the health and education of our children, NAHT will explore all options for action.

- NAHT's [Commission on Accountability](#) set out nine recommendations for change focused on pupil performance data; the role of the inspectorate and school improvement:
  1. Comparative performance data (based on a three-year average) is the most reliable data indicator currently available and should be used by Ofsted to inform judgements of school effectiveness
  2. The DfE should use a 'requires improvement' judgement as the trigger for funded support and as a replacement for floor and coasting standards
  3. The Commission proposes a new role for Ofsted, focused on identifying failure and providing stronger diagnostic insight for schools that are struggling.
  4. The DfE should end the exemption from inspection for previously 'outstanding' schools and commit Ofsted to inspect all schools on a transparent cycle of inspection.
  5. The 'outstanding' judgement should be replaced with a more robust system for identifying specific excellence within the sector, to increase the take-up of highly effective, evidence-based practice.
  6. Ofsted should commission research to determine the format and nature of inspection required, in order to provide reliable judgements and reciprocal benefits for schools.
  7. Existing peer review programmes should be evaluated to identify characteristics of effective practice in order to develop national accreditation arrangements.
  8. An invitation should be extended to the Chartered College of Teaching, through the Leadership Development Advisory Group, to produce alternative national standards for head teachers that better reflect the professional behaviours, practice and knowledge required for achieving excellence.
  9. The DfE should extend the career progression strategy to support recently appointed head teachers in the critical first years of headship.

~~NAHT believes that data alone is not a fair measure of school effectiveness.~~

- ~~All schools should publish clear and reliable data on progress, attainment and attendance for parents. We support efforts to define and describe wider outputs for pupils from education such as resilience, confidence and empathy. In return, formal accountability should be connected with qualitative judgments and narrative reports.~~
- NAHT calls on the government to remove the floor and coasting standards which fail to take into account the real progress being made by children in our schools. We welcome the Secretary of State's proposal to end current national floor and coasting standards as triggers for intervention and urge DfE to adopt a single trigger to provide funded support to schools identified as 'requires improvement' in place of punitive sanction. There should be no alternative inspection regimes, including by RSC's, delivered via the Department for Education.
- ~~—Instead, each school should sign up to a path towards an ambitious goal, with the rate of improvement on this path based on evidence about sustainable rates of improvement at different levels of performance.~~

~~Intervention for under-performance should have a single trigger and a single source. We propose that failing schools are identified as those that fall from~~

~~the path of improvement rather than any absolute floor. The consequence would be an HMI-led inspection and intervention would only follow such an inspection.~~

- Schools should benchmark themselves against their peers using family of school data to tackle and reduce variation.
- Every school should be part of a cluster or collaborative of schools with strong mutual accountability. We must reward collaboration. A school could add the gains of any school that it is formally supporting to its own path of improvement. This will help excellent schools sustain progress as internal gains become harder.
- NAHT (NI) notes with concern the ‘accountable autonomy’ agenda of DE which places increasing responsibility with school leaders but does not provide appropriate support. In line with our 2016 Election Manifesto, we call for a system of ‘resourced graduated autonomy’.

NAHT will lobby for consistent and open financial accountability in all sectors of education to help public confidence and understanding of how public funds are spent.’

- NAHT (Cymru) believes that a robust value-added categorisation system is urgently needed in Wales. The present system relies on end of key stage results with no recognition of the hard work that goes into achieving value-added progress.

## Admissions

- We cannot fairly judge the performance of schools without a level playing field. Schools should continue to be their own admissions authorities, but they should not adjudicate appeals. The power to hear appeals should be returned to local authorities or dioceses and costs should be capped.
- Local authorities should have the strategic role in the planning of places – able to commission new schools and places in both the academy and maintained sectors.
- Parents of students with special education needs should have equal right to demand a place in a special school or mainstream school, as they judge appropriate for their children. Local authorities should be accountable for ensuring there is adequate special school provision in their area for this demand.
- To guarantee a level playing field, pupils from low income families should be entitled to first place in admissions (along with looked after children as currently) for any school in the country. This could include independent schools with charitable status, for up to ten per cent of their intake. Independent schools could claim the pupil premium for these students and all schools should be able to phase in the growth in numbers over time. We should begin with a full assessment of the effects of this proposal.
- NAHT accepts existing grammar schools but is opposed to the further expansion of grammar schools and to any expansion of the selection of pupils at age 11 or older. Our opposition is based on the absence of any compelling evidence that selection promotes social mobility, and the considerable body of

evidence that indicates that selection works against the interests of disadvantaged pupils.

## **Alternative provision**

- Alternative provision is a vital part of the education system, giving our most vulnerable and complex students the opportunity to maximise their life chances and providing a child's basic right to an education even in difficult circumstances. Alternative provision should be available as part of a menu of educational provision serving local communities which has the capacity, resources and flexibility to meet the needs of all pupils within that area.
- Alternative provision can be set up by anyone and there is no official body registering providers or evaluating quality or safeguarding measures. NAHT believes we need an effective approach to ensuring the quality and usefulness of alternative provision.
- Government and local authorities (LAs) must do more to ensure that appropriate alternative provision is available for those young people who, for whatever reason, are unable to participate in mainstream education on a full or part-time basis. Sufficient funding must be made available for local authorities to offer a range of short, medium and long-term provision. School leaders work closely with alternative providers to try and re-engage students with formal education and to give them the space that is best for them to learn in.
- Proposed reform of the alternative provision (AP) system so that mainstream schools remain accountable for the education of pupils in AP and are responsible for commissioning high quality provision for them must be treated with caution until more detail is provided on how such changes will operate.

## **Apprenticeship Levy**

- Conference calls on national executive to continue to make representations at the highest level, that the apprenticeship levy should not be applied to schools, particularly at a time when school budgets are in crisis.

## **Asbestos**

- The safe management of asbestos in schools is imperative to ensuring the safety of pupils and staff. NAHT is campaigning as part of the Joint Union Asbestos Campaign for government to take more action to achieve this by:
- Data being collected centrally on the extent, type and condition of asbestos in schools - this should become an integral part of the data collection of the condition of the nation's schools.
- Government developing a programme for the phased removal of asbestos from all schools, with the priority being given to those schools where the asbestos is considered to be most dangerous or damaged.
- Setting standards in asbestos training; this training should be mandatory and properly funded.

- The DfE and HSE reviewing the trigger levels for asbestos fibres present in schools to reflect the vulnerability of children to asbestos exposure and should develop air testing that can measure these levels.
- Encouraging a policy of openness so that parents, teachers and support staff can be annually updated on the presence of asbestos in their schools and the measures that are being taken to manage it.
- Reinstating pro-active inspections to determine the standards of asbestos management, to ensure that poor practice is identified, and staff and pupils protected.

## **Assessment**

- The progress and attainment of all pupils must be recognised and there are many ways to assess pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Tests and examinations are not always an appropriate assessment tool.
- All changes to statutory assessment, testing and accountability must first be evaluated against a broad, academic, evidence base, and follow a minimum consultation period prior to being announced as policy.
- All those responsible for children's learning should undertake rigorous training in formative, diagnostic and summative assessment. The government should provide support and resources for the development of independently accredited training for school assessment leads.
- We call for the primacy of teacher assessment but agree that it should be informed by testing.
- Schools should peer moderate, working in partnership to ensure there is consistency between assessment in schools. External moderation is also an essential element in producing teacher assessment that is reliable and comparable over time, and all schools should take part in such moderation.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) should be retained but the data from it must not be used as a baseline or to judge school performance
- An additional category for children who are working below the 'emerging' category should be developed in the EYFSP to provide opportunities to demonstrate the progress and outcomes for these children.

### **Statutory testing – Reception to year 6**

- We accept a national baseline, based on evidence and good practice, as a progress measure of the cohort. There are many challenges about a

reception baseline but, in principle, it is better to measure progress from the start of school rather than the end of KS1.

- Statutory assessment at KS1 must be removed when the new assessment in the reception year is introduced.
- We agree with the non-statutory status of the key stage 1 grammar, punctuation and spelling test and believe that this should be extended to the test at key stage 2. Results from these tests should not be used for external accountability purposes

We believe that the phonics screening check is a poor use of staff time and reduces the amount of quality teaching time that other pupils in the class receive whilst not being tested. Pupils should not have to resit this test. We believe that the phonics screening test should be optional.

- There should be no externally marked testing at years 3, 4 and 5.
- We are strongly opposed to the introduction of a statutory multiplication test for the whole cohort of pupils in Year 4.
- Writing must continue to be teacher assessed.
- There needs to be a redressing of the balance between external testing and teacher assessment at KS2, supported by an increase in the use of a sampling model. The Association believes that there should be national sampling for all tests at KS2, rather than compulsory testing of the whole cohort.

### **Children working below the standard of national curriculum tests**

- NAHT broadly supports the extension of the scope of the pre-key stage standards to cover all pupils who are working below the standard of national curriculum tests but are engaged in subject-specific learning. There is a need to bring coherence to a system without levels and facilitate progression in the assessment of these pupils. However, we believe that implementation of this change will need significant further work, led by the DfE, to secure much greater clarity and coherence in the pre-key stage standards and investment to support effective implementation.
- NAHT believe the language of the pre-key stage standards is unduly negative, failing to convey the progress and attainment of pupils with SEND and with little sense of logic or ordering of the terms chosen.
- NAHT agree that assessment for pupils working below the standard of the national curriculum, but not engaged in subject specific learning, should focus on cognition and learning.

### **Secondary assessment**

- NAHT do not support the development, or use of, optional DfE tests in Year 7 which have no benefit for pupils or schools

- There is a need to develop a stronger climate of collaboration for the purposes of transition between KS2 and KS3 including increased communication regarding assessment of pupils' abilities and specific areas for improvement to allow more focussed teaching and learning and greater progress in Year 7.
- At KS4, there should continue to be multiple examinations boards available to retain flexibility to meet the needs of different pupils.
- We are opposed to the proposed English baccalaureate as it stands. We would argue that those subjects currently included in the EBacc are too narrow and are not the only subjects which are rigorous, demanding and preparation for later life. Also see curriculum.
- We believe that the national curriculum should be fit for purpose for all learners, and that formal qualifications suitable for all learners should be widely available.
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- The GCSE resit policy currently forces young people into a round of re-sits until they achieve a high enough grade in maths and English. For many students, alternative level 2 qualifications may be a more appropriate means of achieving this

## **Wales**

- NAHT (Cymru) welcomes the Welsh government's intention to create an independently regulated, 'made in Wales' examination system that is rigorous, robust and valued in and beyond Wales. We call upon the Welsh government to use all possible means to ensure that schools are fully resourced, and teachers fully trained to achieve these important national objectives. In developing such an examination system, there is an explicit expectation that the 'currency' of new qualifications is carefully monitored by Welsh Government and Qualifications Wales to ensure pupils / students from Wales are not in any way disadvantaged in comparison to the rest of the UK.

## **Behaviour and safety**

- We believe that the very positive behaviour that is the norm in schools is celebrated and affirmed by all partners to promote a more positive public awareness of the strengths of the education system.
- We are concerned by the wide disparity of provision across the country in terms of support in dealing with children who exhibit aggressive and/or violent behaviour.
- We are also concerned about the increasing incidence of concerning and/or harmful sexual behaviour exhibited by pupils.

- We support the right of schools to discipline and exclude students for inappropriate behaviour. Other students have the right to a safe learning environment.
- A school has to set boundaries and be the place in the community where a pupil feels safe. Decisions about security and safety measures need to be taken on a school-by-school basis, as schools bring a variety of challenges and these differ by area and by school. School leaders should work with governors and other agencies in their local communities to assess the risks of different types of incidents occurring in their schools and then work in partnership to develop preventative measures to minimise those risks.

## **Bullying**

- NAHT opposes all forms of bullying and welcomes the government's commitment to continue to support schools in dealing with this issue.
- NAHT encourages all its members to do everything possible to tackle bullying in their schools.
- NAHT welcomes the Government's attempts to protect members of the teaching profession from malicious allegations and would like to see the suggested protection widened to include all school personnel.

## **Careers**

- Good quality careers advice, information, and guidance (CAIG) is important to all pupils in our schools. We have continually stressed that CAIG should be appropriately resourced and of a high standard in order to support pupils to make the best choices and maximise their life chances.
- NAHT believes that schools' contribution to the government's careers strategy must be reasonable, clearly defined, well-funded and appropriately resourced.
- All schools need to be provided with resources, including funding and training, with which to provide impartial and independent CAIG. There is a need for an increased number of independent quality assured careers advisors.
- NAHT supports the development of high quality CAIG and programmes to get young people thinking about their future employment and this should begin at primary school.
- The NAHT led Primary Futures project aims to support the raising of standards of achievement for all primary age children, broaden horizons and aspirations with regards to their own futures, whilst reinforcing the importance of literacy and numeracy in their learning both in school and later life. NAHT supports the development of this project to bring relevant CAIG to Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils with SEND.
- Pupils at secondary school need to have access to good quality information and advice. In order for this to happen effectively, PSHE must be made

statutory and school staff need access to high quality training and resources to support pupils (also see PSHE and RSE)

- There is a need for an increased number of independent, well trained and well-resourced careers advisors.
- NAHT agrees that work related learning at secondary age is crucial to help pupils form opinions about their future, whilst providing them with valuable lessons in the world of work but believes that all schools cannot be responsible for enabling this

## **Categorisation (Wales)**

- NAHT Cymru will press for a robust value-added categorisation system which is urgently needed in Wales. The present system relies on end of key stage results with no recognition of the hard work that goes into achieving value-added progress.

## **Child Centred System (NI)**

- NAHT (NI) believes that DE and DHSSPS should work closely with school leaders to develop a child centred system which builds a meaningful 'circle of care' around every student. Schools cannot be expected to do this without cross departmental support.

## **Classroom Observation (NI)**

- NAHT (NI) believes that principals have the right to observe teachers in the classroom environment. Unless the Inspectorate and Department remove the duty on principals to ensure the quality of classroom practice, NAHT (NI) will not accept any proposal that prevents principals entering classrooms and observing teaching and learning.
- NAHT (NI) calls on the Department of Education (DE) to do everything in its power to support principals on this issue, and thus demonstrate the DE's commitment to raising standards and promotion of self-evaluation processes in schools.

## **Coasting schools**

- NAHT believes that the labelling of 'coasting schools' is unhelpful and the proposal to make such schools 'eligible for intervention' is not only heavy-handed in the extreme, but also unnecessary.
- We also believe that it is unhelpful to blur the boundary between the inspectorate and RSCs in determining school effectiveness and supporting improvement. The definition of 'coasting' will result in schools currently designated as 'good' by Ofsted potentially becoming eligible for intervention. Such a step undermines not only the great work of many schools and school leaders, but also public confidence in school accountability measures.
- The proposed coasting definition is too weighted on data alone. It is well established that even progress data fails to capture fully the standard of

education being provided by a school. Schools with unusually high pupil mobility (or churn) often find it difficult to demonstrate the quality of their provision through these measures alone, as the pupil cohort data-captured at entry is very different from the cohort at exit, with a relatively small group of pupils completing a full key stage or longer with the school.

- We do not believe that the *coasting trigger* should automatically translate into a judgement of *coasting school*.

## College of Teaching

- We support moves to establish a College of Teaching and believe it can have a voice on standards that is distinct from government, using evidence to determine good practice and promote professional development. Independence and integrity are essential to its success, and to gaining the support and trust of teachers and the public
- NAHT are at the centre of efforts to help teaching establish itself as an autonomous, high status profession. We believe that a truly independent College is a vital and pivotal move towards this goal.
- NAHT believes that there is potential for the Chartered College of Teaching, through the Leadership Development Advisory Group, to produce alternative national standards for head teachers that better reflect the professional behaviours, practice and knowledge required for achieving excellence. These standards would need to be recognised and used universally — by governing boards, CPD providers and funders of training — to ensure consistency of message about the leadership behaviours we most value.
- Over time, this work could further develop with the introduction of a Chartered Head Teacher Status (building on Chartered Teacher Status), open to experienced head teachers, offering recognition of their high professional status and sector leadership.

## Continuing Professional Development

- Teachers deserve an entitlement to professional development at all stages of their career and sufficient funding must be available to support this.
- As well as concern about the number of teachers, our research has shown that schools are struggling to recruit the right kind of skills. The growing and changing demands on teachers and an increasingly challenging accountability framework for schools sets high expectations for teacher recruitment. There needs to be more investment in the professional development of teachers, both at a school and at a national and regional level.
- There also needs to be ongoing funding to support teaching school alliances to deliver low cost CPD, mentoring and coaching that is delivered by experienced practitioners.

- There should be a national entitlement for middle leaders to sufficient time and (full- or part-government aided) funding for places on accredited Middle Leadership programmes after demonstrating 12 months successfully working as a TLR 1 or 2.
- There is market failure in the development of senior leaders, especially head teachers, as the school that benefits from their professional development is often not the school that pays for it. This makes a strong case for the centralised funding of leadership development programmes. The DfE should extend the career progression strategy to support recently appointed head teachers in the critical first years of headship.
- We should reinvent the formal qualification for headship, owned by the profession and reflecting the reality of the job while promoting courage, reflection and engagement with the evidence. The profession should take ownership of standards and professional development for leaders in education.

## Curriculum

See also: Accountability; Assessment; PSHE and SRE; Technical and Vocational Education

- This association believes it is the right of those in the profession to have the freedom to determine the content of the curriculum and will challenge any government policy which threatens to narrow the curriculum.
- NAHT is working to ensure that the curriculum supports the learning, progress and success of all pupils and is not distorted or restricted by external pressures of testing and accountability.
- NAHT supports the principle that a broad and balanced curriculum promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.
- In experiencing a broad and balanced curriculum all pupils should be given opportunities to:
  - Develop their skills in English, Maths and Science;
  - Develop their knowledge and understanding of the world we live in, the environment, different religions and cultures, a foreign language, technology, computing, music and the creative arts;
  - Participate in sport and physical activity;
  - Engage in high quality PSHE;
  - Develop positive character traits including resilience, communication, teamwork, problem solving and empathy;
  - Develop positive attributes including high self-esteem, positive emotional and mental health, tolerance, managing risk, respect and ambition.
- Such a broad and balanced curriculum should:
  - Encourage high aspirations and expectations for all;
  - Enable pupils to become successful, lifelong, autonomous learners and responsible citizens;
  - Be motivational and engage pupils in both the process and the content of learning;

- Promote an enquiring and creative approach;
  - Include learning that takes place both inside and outside of the classroom and the school day;
  - Enable pupils to achieve their potential;
  - Be able to respond to individual needs and talents and to provide increasing opportunities for choice and responsibility;
  - Be planned to reflect local needs in order to ensure it is relevant to the lives of the pupils;
  - Build on the pupil's own experiences, interests and strengths and help to develop their sense of identity as local, national and global citizens;
  - Celebrate individuality and the broad range of pupil success in all areas.
- NAHT are opposed to the proposed English baccalaureate as it stands. Those subjects currently included in the EBacc are too narrow and are not the only subjects which are rigorous, demanding and preparation for later life. Given the pressures created by the Ebacc, there will be precious little time left for subjects outside the core.
  - NAHT are opposed to the government proposal that 90% of pupils take EBacc. NAHT supports our members to put the interests of their pupils first. It is right that schools should be able to personalise the curriculum and determine which pupils take the whole EBacc and for whom it would be inappropriate. It is right that every student should have the opportunity to take the full suite of EBacc subjects if they want to, but not that every student should be forced to.
  - NAHT believes that PSHE Education should be made statutory, for all pupils, in all schools. NAHT welcomes the government's decision to introduce 'relationships education' in all primaries, 'relationships and sex' education in all secondaries and health education in all schools from 2020.
  - NAHT believes that all pupils should experience consistent and high quality Religious Education in order to support the development of understanding, tolerance and respect for religious and non-religious beliefs, practices and viewpoints. In order to secure this, we would like to see amendments made to Section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which provides a parental right to remove children from religious education. We believe that a child's right to develop religious tolerance and understanding should be paramount, and that this parental right should be removed.
  - NAHT recognises the growing body of research which shows that children who are physically fit are better at absorbing and retaining new information and those that take part in Physically Active Learning (PAL) can achieve higher academic outcomes. We believe schools should be supported to make PAL an integral part of a school's approach to teaching through high-quality CPD.

## Early Years

- Early years education is the critical point for intervention to improve the life chances of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, but the quality of provision makes all the difference in whether that intervention is successful.

- It is critical that Early Years specialist teachers and middle and senior leaders are valued and recognised by governing boards and senior leaders. We call on the DfE to recognise the importance of Early Years' representation on school senior leadership teams and governing boards in order to improve understanding of and focus on this critical phase of education.
- NAHT will lobby government for a stronger focus on Early Years pedagogy in initial teacher training in order to protect, strengthen and improve the quality of Early Years provision in schools.
- NAHT believes that early years teachers should lead the learning in early years settings, as a teacher will bring a high level of skill and knowledge in how a child learns, and how to plan for that learning.
- Funding for early years education is also critical and we need to see an increase in early years funding based on a clear, transparent and consistent national funding framework.
- In recognition of the importance of this phase of education, children in early years should also be entitled to the pupil premium at the same level as the funding for primary aged children and the same arrangements for school meals as infant age children.
- Full QTS should be available for early years professionals. Every early years setting should have at least one QTS practitioner. They should be on the same pay structure as others with QTS.
- NAHT seeks to ensure that the Early Years Foundation Stage remains protected within our schools and that the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is retained.
- NAHT rejects the Bold Beginnings report on teaching in the reception year which seeks to impose a particular ideology on teachers and school leaders, regardless of evidence and to the detriment of young learners. The report fails to acknowledge the wealth of evidence and research that the role of play is crucial in children's learning as part of the curriculum; requires four-year-old children to sit and undertake formal work too early; fails to recognise the professional judgement of teachers who are best placed to assess a pupil's readiness for formal writing or desk-based learning; and fails to meet the needs of pupils with SEND who will be left behind by an inappropriate Early Years curriculum.
- There is currently insufficient capacity in children's health and social care services to put in place early interventions for the increasing number of young children starting school with severe difficulties which impact on their learning. NAHT calls on government to provide sufficient funding for these services to support the youngest children who are presenting with ever more complex needs when starting school and nursery.
- NAHT endorses the need for early identification of children with complex academic, social and behavioural needs by qualified teachers in an early years setting in Northern Ireland. NAHT NI seeks a fast track process to

provide schools with the resources to adequately support these children and begin to develop the 'circle of care' referred to in the NAHT (NI) 2016 manifesto

- Conference instructs national executive to call on government to offer the 30 hours funded education and childcare policy to all families and children, regardless of family income.

### Elective Home Education

- All children in a school setting deserve an environment which supports their learning, and this is best provided with a sense of continuity, and with as little disruption as possible. Whilst schools will have at their heart the best interests of a child who may be educated at home and appreciate that different settings may be appropriate for some children, they must also have in mind those children who remain in their setting full time.
- The option to offer a flexi-schooling arrangement is currently at the discretion of the school and it is important that this is retained. Any option to offer a trial period of home schooling must also be at the discretion of the school in discussion with the child and parents. Such discretion enables schools to make decisions on a case by case basis, assessing the needs of the child and considering any impact on the children and staff in their school.
- NAHT highlights the possible safeguarding implications of flexi schooling and trial periods. The school cannot be expected to take responsibility for the welfare of the child for the time they are not in school as part of this type of arrangement.
- NAHT believes that schools must retain the discretion as to whether to allow children not on their role to sit examinations on their site.
- NAHT disagrees with the proposal of a financial consequence for schools if a parent withdraws a child from the school role to educate at home. The decision to home educate is one made by the parent who believes it is in their child's best interests, often in discussion with the school; there is therefore no reason why the school should be penalised.
- It is vital that any extra resource needed to support the home education process is properly funded. Local authority budgets are already stretched and the support they provide to schools has already diminished; it is imperative that their resources are not expected to stretch any further.

### Equalities

- NAHT values diversity in both its membership and the wider education community.
- We are committed to promoting equality and diversity in the wider schools' workforce and providing the highest level of service to all members irrespective of their race, ethnic or national origin, nationality, age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, HIV status, marital status or caring responsibilities.

- NAHT will take all steps possible to promote and encourage the participation of all members in our democratic processes and will take active steps to address areas of under-representation.
- The Association is committed to pursuing, developing and championing equalities and equal opportunities in members' employment. The Association will protect members by challenging unlawful discrimination in employment matters. The Association will actively seek to ensure that members are represented by structures that are reflective of the make-up of our membership and the profession as a whole.

## **Foundation for Leadership in Education**

- The Foundation is being established by NAHT with the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the National Governors' Association (NGA) to take ownership of standards and professional development for leaders in education.
- The Foundation will help schools build a pipeline of excellent leaders with the skills, knowledge and support to give every child an outstanding education.
- It will focus on the development of school leaders, working with providers of professional learning to quality assure courses and devise clear progression routes for aspiring leaders. The Foundation will promote greater equality and diversity in leadership teams.
- It will devise and oversee new standards for each phase of educational leadership, and it will identify and share research on the most effective practice.

## **Foundation Phase (Wales)**

- NAHT (Cymru) enthusiastically endorses the Foundation Phase for 3-7-year olds in Wales. We are increasingly concerned that sufficient resources are failing to be provided to:
  - Secure the staffing ratios required to maintain the educational integrity of the Foundation Phase
  - Allow schools to adapt their facilities to satisfy the demands of the Foundation Phase in terms of space, equipment and outdoor classrooms.
  - Ensure that the transition from the Foundation Phase into the next phase of education is subject to careful planning and preparation, and that the training needs of teachers and support staff are met.
  - Ensure that sufficient funding is allocated to schools to remunerate level 3 teaching assistants in the Foundation Phase.
  - Ensure that the Foundation Phase is strengthened rather than undermined by the introduction of reading and numeracy tests

## **Exclusions**

- NAHT is aware that the challenging behaviour of many excluded pupils is a manifestation of SEND. We believe that such exclusions can be avoided if schools are appropriately resourced and supported by their LA multi-agency team, allowing for early identification of need and, where appropriate, a smooth transition to a suitable alternative provider.
- We acknowledge that inter-school collaboration goes some way towards helping schools share responsibility for challenging pupils and would support a significant role for part-time, short-term and dual role placements, in order to deliver a flexible continuum of provision. However, we are aware that this is not always viable for schools in rural areas, special schools and PRUs, because appropriate partner schools cannot be identified.
- Schools must retain the right to exclude pupils who present a serious risk to the health, safety, education or well-being of other members of the school community. It is vital that school leaders will be supported when making these difficult decisions.
- Repeated fixed term exclusions need to be addressed and in these circumstances, it is essential to provide an educational environment that suits the needs of the pupil, together with the appropriate agency support.
- Accountability for the results of excluded students cannot be retained by mainstream schools unless they have influence over the quality of delivery (and not just through market mechanisms).

## Funding

- Funding for schools is not keeping up with the expenditure they face. The government's funding commitment for the 2015 to 2019 spending review period equates to the first real terms cut in education spending since the 1990s and this will have a negative impact on standards. It is time the government stopped seeing education as a cost but instead as an investment.
- The government needs to match the overall level of funding to the real cost pressures in schools, including meeting the shortfalls in funding for early years, sixth forms and for services previously provided by local authorities. There should also be a reversal in cuts to the Education Services Grant (ESG) to academies in England.
- We need a fair national funding formula to ensure that limited funds go where they are most needed; that increases education funding across all regions and does not result in any reduction in real terms for any school.
- NAHT is concerned at the inequalities in funding arrangements across the UK and calls for a fair, transparent funding system to combat these inequities. This should reflect the following principles:
  - The majority of the dedicated schools grant should be transferred directly from national government to schools using funding factors that are transparent so that all schools are clear as to why they are funded at a certain level

- This will also allow schools to have clarity over what funding they can expect over the next three years, allowing them to implement changes in a smooth way to minimise disruption to the school
  - A small percentage of the dedicated schools grant should be top sliced to give LAs some local discretion to meet specific local requirements.
  - The transition to a new national funding formula will be critical to provide enough time for schools to implement structural changes such as redundancies etc.
  - The pupil premium has been extremely important in targeting support to those children at greatest risk of educational disadvantage and this funding stream should be retained
  - The Formula should not lead to a levelling down for schools but a levelling up. NAHT opposes the implementation of a "Fair Funding Formula" that leads to cuts for any school or local authority.
- NAHT (Cymru) believes that a fairer funding system for Wales should ensure less money is held back by the Government in Cardiff and by local authorities.
  - NAHT (Cymru) and NAHT NI believe that there should be a comprehensive, transparent and effective review of funding that fairly supports all pupils across Wales and Northern Ireland; with schools given effective control of sufficient resources necessary to continue to support the high-quality education that their pupils receive and deserve.
  - The current school funding mechanism in Wales is inequitable. NAHT believes there needs to be a more consistent, fairer and transparent way of distributing school finance that benefits pupils across Wales, regardless of where they live.
  - NAHT Northern Ireland seeks a comprehensive, transparent and effective review of current funding from the Northern Ireland Government that fairly supports schools and gives all schools effective control of the resources necessary to provide high-quality education.
  - Government must ensure appropriate additional funding is available to support any and all new initiatives.
  - The full cost of the increased employer's pension contributions to teacher's and support staff pension schemes expected from 2019 should be fully funded by governments in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
  - Mainstream funding for schools should cover the full costs of pay increases and increased employer pension contributions to school staff pension schemes rather than those being covered in ad hoc grant pots.
  - NAHT has made the case for a review of early years funding that is currently inadequate to meet the costs of provision in many areas. This should be allocated through a national formula to create greater transparency and consistency across local authorities and also address the particular needs of nursery schools that can offer the highest quality provision, especially in deprived areas.

- NAHT will seek to secure a long-term commitment to the future of nursery schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This must include a funding commitment that recognises the unique financial pressures they face.
- The proposed £3 billion funding cuts caused by rises in costs threaten the education system and its children. NAHT seeks a reversal of these irresponsible education cuts, in order to protect the high standards of education currently delivered. If these are not reversed, then NAHT will investigate actions to be taken by schools. This may include reducing the school week to four and a half days; refusing to submit budgets to local authorities or EFA and permitting all schools to run a deficit budget.
- NAHT believes that no school is overfunded and that fair funding can only be fairly implemented if additional funding is provided by the Government.
- Funding for high-quality outdoor education and residential experiences should be protected to ensure that children and young people can continue to be able to enjoy the unique benefits of outdoor learning.
- The Association believes that further savings cannot be achieved without having a significant impact on the education of this nation's children. NAHT seeks acceptance from the Treasury that school funding is insufficient;

### ***High Needs Funding***

- NAHT has welcomed the government's new national formula for allocating high needs funding to local authorities based on strong proxies of need. Whilst the formula is an improvement, it cannot overcome the shortage of funding created by real terms cuts to school budgets since 2015 and growing demand from increasing levels of high need amongst pupils. The government must review the funding allocation for high needs in the light of growing demand.
- The new formula for high needs fails to create greater consistency and transparency in the allocation of high needs funding, and there is wide disparity in how pupils with complex needs are funded both across and within local authorities. The government needs to set out clear criteria to create a level playing field in access to education for all pupils with high needs.
- Further, each pupil should attract the same top-up funding for their relevant needs to ensure equity. Therefore, for example, an SEMH pupil should receive the same top-up funding in both local authority A and local authority B, while recognising that there may be variation in specific local circumstances that might result in additional funding, such as transport costs. It is important that in establishing this approach that there is no 'levelling-down' of funding
- The funding crisis for both mainstream pupils and high needs funding for pupils with additional needs, alongside cuts to health and social care services, threatens the ability of mainstream schools to support children with SEND. We call on the government to review the provision and find solutions so that mainstream schools can offer the same high-quality education to pupils with SEND.

- We are failing many of our children with additional needs because of the shortage of specialist support, appropriate funding and adequate systems required to deliver effective early intervention. Increasing social care demands on schools whilst implementing budget cuts is a paradox. NAHT will press the government for appropriate funding in order to provide the high-quality specialist support and systems required to deliver effective early intervention in all schools.
- The SEND sector is seeing diminishing resources coinciding with the increased complexity of children's needs. NAHT is concerned about the government's failure to adequately fund high needs provision for the education of pupils with SEND and by the negative impact this has on a school's ability to provide for those pupils. We will campaign nationally on this issue, working jointly with local authorities in London and nationally, and raising awareness with MPs of how government policy is damaging our pupils with the greatest needs.

## **Governance**

- All governors should be entitled to paid time off work on the same basis as service in the armed forces reserves or as magistrates.
- Governors require training; this should be compulsory and funded by the government. We need more clarity on the distinctive roles of governors and school leaders.
- NAHT supports the creation of a national governor compact, designed to maximise the positive and proactive partnership necessary to lead our schools professionally.
- We support new powers to remove governors who are failing to meet the expected standards of governance which should be supported by clear statutory guidance on their use.

## **Health and Safety**

- The Association recognises the importance of working with other trade union colleagues to promote safety in educational buildings specifically looking at removing flammable materials from schools and using preventative measures such as fire sprinklers.

## **Health and social care support to schools**

See also: Mental Health; Safeguarding

- NAHT seeks a commitment from the government to prioritise funding for children's social care services. Present funding levels are not sufficient to meet the social care needs of all children.
- The government's green paper on transforming mental health provision for children and young people, fails to recognise and provide the scale of urgent

improvements and resourcing required for mental health services across the country. NAHT believes that the government must address this as a matter of urgency.

- There is currently insufficient capacity in children's health and social care services to put in place early interventions for the increasing number of young children starting school with severe difficulties which impact on their learning. NAHT calls on government to provide sufficient funding for these services to support the youngest children who are presenting with ever more complex needs when starting school and nursery.

## Higher Education

- NAHT retains its support of the principle of introducing a Post Qualification Admission system on the basis that a system based on known achievements is inherently better than one based on predicted outcomes.

## Inspections (England)

- We believe that all state-funded schools should be inspected, without exception to provide public reassurance that no school is failing or at risk of decline; checking that standards aren't slipping; investigating the extent to which the school is outward looking and collaborative; and rooting out sharp practices and gaming, including off-rolling. NAHT therefore

believes that the 'exemption' from inspection for outstanding schools should end.

- Beyond that, Ofsted's work should be refocused on those schools where it has historically had the greatest impact, by providing a clearer, more detailed diagnostic analysis of the issues that have resulted in a school being judged as 'requires improvement'.
- The broad, non-specific nature of the 'outstanding' judgement has not driven wider improvement in the system or mobilized support for schools that are struggling to improve in the way that was envisaged. NAHT therefore believes that the outstanding grade should be abolished. The definition of educational excellence should be returned to the profession through a mechanism anchored within school improvement that precisely identifies specific areas of excellence within individual schools, and which is clear about the context in which excellence was achieved; facilitates the dissemination of leading-edge practice; fosters collaboration; and has a positive impact on school improvement
- We propose a sector-led system for identifying excellence underpinned by accredited peer review.. Many of the highest performing education systems across the world are moving to models of lateral accountability, to push beyond the limits of top-down accountability. A number of peer review systems already operate in England: NAHT proposes that the groundwork is laid immediately, by first understanding the characteristics of highly effective peer review, before establishing accreditation arrangements to oversee the expansion of suitable models that are proven to deliver tangible and sustainable benefits.

- We believe that it is a duty of all experienced school leaders working in stable schools to participate in such peer review at appropriate times.
- Ofsted needs an independent complaints process; it is unacceptable for providers to investigate their own complaints.
- In order to support accountability across all types of structures, Ofsted should be able to inspect multi academy trusts in the same way that local authorities are inspected.
- NAHT is opposed to any move towards 'no-notice inspection' as all school leaders have a right to be present for all parts of the school inspection process.
- NAHT recognise that schools must take seriously their responsibility to safeguard pupils. However, technical and clerical errors should not be a limiting judgement. Ofsted must ensure that all inspectors consistently follow its latest guidance, and that they engage in dialogue with schools to provide a proper opportunity for school leaders to explain their safeguarding policies and procedures.
- NAHT believes that the emphasis on governance in Ofsted inspections within the judgement for leadership and management should be reduced. NAHT seeks to work with the National Governors' Association and other relevant organisations, to reduce the expectations, workload and ever-increasing accountability of the volunteers who put themselves forward as governors.

## **Inspections (NI)**

- NAHT (NI) has presented the Education and Training Inspectorate with proposals to make the inspection process fairer and less obscure. The continued use of anonymous staff questionnaires to obtain information on school management is opposed by NAHT (NI).
- NAHT (NI) believes that the current system of snapshot inspection creates a culture of fear which should be unnecessary in a professional education system. We call on DE and ETI to engage in constructive discussions aimed at developing a more participatory process which would secure high standards and sustain improvement in all schools in the interests of every learner.

## **Inspections (Wales)**

- NAHT (Cymru) supports the move towards an inspection service run wholly by HMI and hopes that this will ensure greater consistency and considerably increase school leaders' confidence in the inspection system.
- NAHT (Cymru) believe new inspection arrangements should include robust qualitative data and incorporate sector appropriate metrics.

## **International**

- The Association believes that Brexit and withdrawal from the European Union presents threats to a rounded European education for our children.
- The Association will continue to press the Government to demonstrate its ongoing financial support for European linking projects such as Erasmus+ and to secure funding for all projects which help to support schools in giving their pupils an understanding of their place as European citizens.

## **Mental Health**

See also: Health and social care support to schools

- NAHT recognises the fundamental role that mental health plays in children's wellbeing and educational attainment and that poor mental health is a significant barrier to learning.
- NAHT believes that the vital role for schools is to contribute significantly to promoting good mental health and emotional wellbeing amongst pupils of all ages. The vast majority of schools already undertake activities to support pupils' mental health and engage with a wide variety of activities to promote and support good mental health and wellbeing.
- NAHT supports the introduction of a statutory framework for PSHE for all pupils in all schools to enable pupils to understand and explore the issues around mental health and to protect children in the digital world by teaching them about their rights and responsibilities online.
- In order for staff in schools to promote and support good mental health in their pupils, teachers and school leaders must be supported to maintain their own mental health.
- Schools have an important role to play in the early identification of pupils suffering from mental health problems. Teachers and school leaders must be empowered to play this vital role in the system.
- NAHT believes that all school staff should receive high quality CPD throughout their career to allow them to promote good mental health and emotional wellbeing and ensure that they are well placed to identify emerging mental health needs of pupils and can support and manage pupils with mental health needs in the school environment.
- NAHT does not support the training of teachers to deliver frontline mental health care services. This is not a teacher responsibility and cannot be safely supervised through an educationally based line management structure.
- Schools are most successful as places of learning when they work together with high quality social care, health and other services to meet students' needs. Crucially, those services need to be available and accessible to offer the therapeutic support that those children and young people need.
- The government's green paper on transforming mental health provision for children and young people, fails to recognise and provide the scale of urgent improvements and resourcing required for mental health services across the

country. NAHT believes that the government must address this as a matter of urgency.

- NAHT seek a commitment from the government to invest further in health and social care services that support the mental health needs of children and young people, including CAMHS, to increase the capacity to meet the growing demand from schools and pupils and to reduce waiting times for this support.
- Recognition must be given to the increasing contribution that schools are making to support the mental health and wellbeing of children. There is currently a significant gap in the provision of services to support the mental health and wellbeing of children which schools are seeking to bridge.
- There can be no expectation on any school to provide health and social care services funded from the school budget. Additional secure funding must be provided if schools are to be expected to commission such support for the unmet mental health needs of pupils. The duty to directly address pupils' mental health needs ultimately rests with health and social care services.
- NAHT does not support the development of additional accountability measures which seek to measure a school's effectiveness in supporting the mental and emotional wellbeing of their pupils. This is already taken into account in the current Ofsted framework through the judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children and learners.
- NAHT NI requests that the new Government in Northern Ireland creates an effective partnership between the Department of Education and the Department of Health to produce a consistent and fully funded approach to Children's and Young People's Services

## **Online (and other media) safety**

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- Internet safety in schools is a key NAHT concern. School leaders are committed to keeping children safe, so they can learn well. Both the benefits and dangers of easy internet access for pupils are clear and thus it is important to find the right balance between the two.
- Schools have a role in educating children and young people about the risks and consequences of their online behaviour, including on social media channels. Children and young people need to be digitally literate and resilient as digital technologies are integrated into so many aspects of their lives.
- NAHT believes that issues around online safety and social media use are most effectively addressed by school staff who are knowledgeable and who have the confidence in teaching pupils about the subject. High quality training, therefore, must be made available to all teachers to develop their knowledge and confidence in teaching pupils about these issues

- The increase in the use of technology means children and young people are exposed to inappropriate content which normalises negative relationships and behaviours. This is not only through pornography, but also through access to social media, dating and gaming websites and apps which are not appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children and young people who can easily access them.
- Greater responsibility must be taken by online providers to regulate the access children and young people have to inappropriate online content including through age verification, safety features and moderation processes.
- Appropriate online filters and monitoring systems should form an essential part of schools safeguarding provision. The government must assist schools in the procurement of online filtering and monitoring systems, reducing costs for schools whilst ensuring an appropriate level of safeguarding for pupils.

## Pay and Conditions

### *General Principles*

- NAHT believes that a *national* education service, that employs teachers trained to *national* standards, that is implementing a *national* curriculum, that is *nationally* inspected, upholds *national* standards and a *national* appraisal system, with *national* accountabilities and outcomes should have a *national* pay and conditions service framework.
- NAHT believes that there should be a national framework that defines the roles and sets out the pay and conditions of **all** those employed in a national, publicly funded education system.
- NAHT seeks to raise awareness of and improve school leaders' working conditions and access to employee assistance programmes.
- NAHT believes that there should be a review of the operation of the STRB and a new way of reviewing and improving teachers' pay. The STRB is impossibly constrained in its remit, effectively rendering the group ineffective in maintaining its role. The Government needs to withdraw its influence to enable the STRB to act independently in order to be a more effective panel.
- Any pay increase should be applied to all salaries and allowances in payment as distinct from performance related progression in order to retain the framework and retain cost of living protection for all staff.
- It is also imperative that any salary increase be fully funded in school budgets if they are not to worsen an increasingly untenable situation as highlighted in NAHT's 'breaking point' survey of school funding.
- Government should treat teachers and school leaders as professionals; trust them to do a professional job and stop micro managing the system.

- NAHT originally supported the principle of performance related pay progression based on a rounded judgment of performance and within the context of a national framework. The government has introduced PRPP in a way that has undermined the national framework and at a time of unprecedented real terms funding cuts that have limited the potential of pay awards. Having reviewed the efficacy and impact of performance related pay progression (PRPP) as implemented by government; the current funding crisis and the blurred distinction created between the cost of living uplift and PRPP, NAHT can no longer support PRPP and will campaign for a change to the statutory pay framework.
- NAHT accepts the need for London pay weighting, however we are opposed to any further move towards “market-facing” or local pay; and we reject the various assertions made by the Government in support of local pay as being fundamentally inaccurate and misguided. If enacted, local pay would substantially harm both the education service and the economy.
- Where alternative provision is deemed necessary, we will work with external partners to ensure that there is clarity of role in terms of pay and conditions and that the other senior leaders in a school are paid commensurate with the role for which they are held accountable.
- NAHT seeks a statutory requirement to undertake a workload impact assessment on all new government initiatives before they are introduced to schools.
- All teachers should be eligible for a paid, half-term-length sabbatical for every ten years of service.
- We believe that successive Governments have thrived on the divisions between teaching and leadership unions and that from time to time, the same professional associations and unions have sought to emphasise their differences from each other. NAHT seeks to develop a common strategy, with all the other teaching and leadership unions to promote the interests of all professionals in education.

No school employee should have to experience violence and/or harassment from parents or family members. NAHT seeks to continue negotiations with the Government to achieve greater consistency and transparency in anti-violence and anti-harassment policies that should reflect zero tolerance of such unacceptable and damaging behaviour.

### ***Heads and senior leaders***

- Schools in challenging circumstances require strong, visionary leadership. We therefore promote a policy of a specific substantive head to lead a school in order to ensure outstanding learning and teaching.
- NAHT is concerned about the number of school leaders being forced from their posts by spurious and unacceptable means by some local authorities who seek to remove experienced and skilled head teachers to make way for academy sponsorship or other forms of school governance.

- NAHT’s leadership compact sets out the high expectations we have of ourselves, our schools and of others.
- Under the new approach to setting leadership pay, governing bodies should be supported in setting leadership pay scales by:
  - Pay benchmarking provided at national level by the DfE to ensure that benchmarking offers fair comparisons for the level of challenge in a school,
  - The use of external advisers who should be professionally accredited
  - Members of the governing body taking pay decisions should be required to undertake training on pay and in particular equalities – this should include training on making use of benchmarking.
- An enhanced role for professional clerking to ensure governors make considered decisions, mindful of all regulatory impacts
- Head teachers must receive dedicated headship time to properly fulfil their leadership responsibilities and this should be no less than 50% of their working time as there is a core leadership role even in small schools.
- NAHT seeks Government commissioned research to assess the true level of well-being of school leaders and teachers in our schools.
- NAHT is alarmed by the ongoing indifferent and superficial attitude shown by governments, government departments and agencies alongside some employers to school leaders’ and teachers’ statutory entitlement to school employee safety and a reasonable work/life balance.
- NAHT is concerned about members in small schools who are increasingly being put under pressure to formulate alternative models of school leadership which, in some cases, threaten their health, well-being and professional futures. NAHT will develop appropriate guidance to support them.

### ***School Business Leaders***

- Where SBLs are performing leadership roles, then it should be possible to pay them on an equivalent pay scale to assistant and deputy head roles in the school as they, in effect, deputise the school management parts of the head teacher’s role. Determination of whether a SBL is operating as a school leader is that they are:
  - formally included in the school’s senior leadership team;
  - perform at a level of competence of ‘School Business Manager’ or above in the National College competency framework for school business management; and
  - have a minimum of a level five qualification such as a relevant diploma in school business management or other level five qualification in a relevant discipline.
- The determination of whether their salary should be at the level of an assistant or deputy head would be down to the governing body and employer to consider based on the level of accountability and responsibility in the role.

- That NAHT use the ISBL professional framework to evaluate SBL roles in the context of pay to support local authority pay evaluations

### **Northern Ireland**

- NAHT (NI) call upon the employers of teachers in Northern Ireland to settle the ongoing pay dispute and the associated six years of industrial action effectively so that school leaders are recognised for the challenging role they play and rewarded adequately for the leadership of schools.
- The workload of school leaders should also be addressed with support in time and sufficient administrative and management staff.

### **Wales**

- NAHT (Cymru) will work with Welsh Government in preparation for devolved pay and conditions in order to influence improvements.
- With the delegation of teachers' pay and conditions being devolved to Wales, NAHT Cymru seeks to ensure that members are properly rewarded to ensure that there is not a movement out of Wales for higher school leadership and teacher pay elsewhere.
- NAHT (Cymru) are increasingly concerned about school leader well-being and call upon Welsh Government to utilise robust evidence and subsequently press employers to fulfil their duty to supporting the well-being of school leaders.

### **Pensions**

- NAHT deplores the attacks on the Teachers' Pension Scheme and the attempts to make school leaders work longer, pay more and get less.
- NAHT is opposed to tiering arrangements in the Teachers' Pensions Scheme contributions that disadvantage school leaders and to increases that are only applied to leadership contributions.
- NAHT applauds the contribution of school leaders, teachers and other public service workers, acknowledging the challenging nature of their work and their entitlement to a decent quality of life in retirement. NAHT opposes increases to the pension age for teachers. We oppose acceleration of further increases to the state pension age, and the linking of state pension age to the Teachers' Pension Schemes.
- We believe the changes will result in a major exodus from the profession combined with a difficulty in attracting the brightest and best new graduates into the profession.
- The full cost of the increased employer's pension contributions to teacher's and support staff pension schemes expected from 2019 should be fully funded by governments in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- NAHT believes that carers should continue to receive Carer's Allowance beyond their State Pension age without any detriment to their payments of State Pension.

## **Prevent**

- NAHT is broadly supportive of the Prevent duty on schools, but we are concerned that there is insufficient guidance, support and training for all schools to fully understand and implement the duty.
- It is also important to provide greater clarity that the prevent duty does not just relate to Daesh and related groups but also extends to other extreme groups whose ideologies run counter to British values and whose activities could be akin to acts of terrorism.

## **Pupil Premium & Pupil Deprivation Grant (Wales)**

- NAHT acknowledges that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may require additional support and resources to achieve their full potential and so is fully supportive of the Pupil Premium / Pupil Deprivation Grant. The challenge for Government is to identify an equitable and efficient system of distribution for this premium to ensure that the pupils most in need benefit the most.
- Social class remains the strongest predictor of educational achievement in the UK, where the social class gap for educational achievement is one of the most significant in the developed world. This is a major policy concern for all political parties as we have one of the most stratified, segregated school systems.
- Children enter the school system from different backgrounds, have different experiences of education and leave with very different results. Evidence shows that schooling can lessen the impact of deprivation on children's progress. However, its influence is limited by factors often beyond the control of the school system.
- NAHT welcomes the Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit, which provides guidance for schools on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- In recognition of the importance of this phase of education, children in early years should also be entitled to the pupil premium / pupil deprivation grant at the same level as the funding for primary aged children and the same arrangements for school meals as infant age children.

## **Pupil Premium Registration & Pupil Deprivation Grant**

- Pupil premium and PDG funding has a valuable role to play in allowing schools to support children from deprived households to make good progress and close the gap between them and their peers. Currently, the onus is on families and schools to claim free school meals to make them eligible for the Pupil Premium / PDG. Many do not do so and their children miss out.

- We would like to see local authorities share data to allow for automatic registration by schools; helping the children most in need, whilst delivering extra support for schools.

## **PSHE and SRE**

- NAHT believes that PSHE Education should be made statutory, for all pupils, in all schools. NAHT welcomes the government's decision to introduce 'relationships education' in all primaries, 'relationships and sex' education in all secondaries and health education in all schools from 2020.
- It is important to ensure the development of clear guidance for schools on PSHE and RSE to support consistency of experience and quality for all pupils in all schools. Guidance should also contain advice as to age appropriate content whilst maintaining the flexibility needed for schools to adapt to particular children, classes or community needs.
- NAHT believes that we must ensure inclusion of all pupils in PSHE and RSE no matter what their stage of development or special educational need and the importance of a child's stage of development must be made explicit in any DfE guidance.
- In order to provide effective PSHE and RSE, dedicated curriculum time is needed along with high quality resources to support teaching and learning. A centralised reference point for all schools to access up-to-date and recommended resources would support teaching, learning and safeguarding.
- High quality training must be made available to teachers of PSHE and RSE to develop their knowledge and confidence in teaching pupils about, and dealing with, these issues. Such training is a necessity, not an option, and with school budgets at breaking point it should be centrally funded in order that all pupils across the country experience the benefits of their teachers having the understanding and expertise to support them.
- In the longer term, training in teaching PSHE and RSE must be included in primary ITT and a specialism in PSHE developed for secondary trainees so individuals with a passion and expertise in this area can become fully qualified teachers with QTS in this subject.

## **Qualified Teacher Status**

- NAHT believes that all school and college leaders should have Qualified Teacher Status.
- NAHT believes that all SENCOs should have Qualified Teacher Status.
- NAHT opposes any non-graduate route into the teaching profession, such as teaching apprenticeships, that undermines the value of the profession.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

- Schools are struggling to recruit across both the primary and secondary sector, and we therefore urge the government to reconsider their recent decision to reduce the investment in primary sector initial teacher training and review their modelling assumptions about the numbers of new primary teachers needed.
- There is a significant difference between official statistics and the perceptions of those in schools. Recruitment difficulties are masked in the official data by the timing of information gathering and interim solutions put in place to keep schools operational. Headline figures also mask local, regional and subject variations. The DfE needs to work with key partners to develop more nuanced approaches to measuring recruitment.
- Only a comprehensive strategy on pay, workload and support for teachers can address the crisis in recruitment and retention.
- The erosion of teachers' pay since 2010 means that it is falling behind relative to other graduate professions, at a time when the private sector is starting to recover and be in a position to recruit more graduates and as schools are increasingly struggling to recruit and retain teachers. There should be a fuller review of the national pay framework to ensure that it enables schools to attract and retain high calibre graduates in an increasingly competitive labour market.
- The language of criticism and failure deployed by successive governments is a serious deterrent to recruitment and retention. Teachers need to believe they can and do make a difference. It is possible to be both proud of past achievements and ambitious for more. Government needs to develop a better way of engaging with the profession for improvement.
- As well as concern about the number of teachers, NAHT research has shown that schools are struggling to recruit the right kind of skills. The growing and changing demands on teachers and an increasingly challenging accountability framework for schools sets high expectations for teacher recruitment. There needs to be more investment in the professional development of teachers, both at a school and at a national and regional level.
- The teacher recruitment crisis has led to a growing role for supply agencies for permanent and temporary recruitment, leading to additional financial pressures on schools who are already struggling. NAHT believes government should regulate payments to supply agencies to secure best value for public funds
- There also needs to be ongoing funding to support teaching school alliances to deliver low cost CPD, mentoring and coaching that is delivered by experienced practitioners.

There is a role for both higher education and practical experience in developing new teachers, but it seems that school experience is crucial in honing some of the practical skills that schools are concerned about.

- NAHT broadly supports the extension of the NQT period from one to two years underpinned by the development of an Early Career Framework, with associated mentoring, to support Early Career teachers. However, we are clear that these developments must be fully funded, including: the cost of

additional non-contact time in the second year of the NQT period; training costs for NQTs; the direct and indirect costs of mentor training; and the direct and indirect costs of delivering mentoring programmes.

- NAHT believes that continuing career development programmes should be established to build follow on from the Early Career Framework, facilitating career development for leadership pathways and creating new non-leadership pathways to support teacher retention. These should be underpinned by further professional accreditation. These programmes must be fully funded to meet direct and indirect costs – such investment is essential to stem the loss of teachers from the profession
- NAHT supports the development of fully funded sabbatical or secondment opportunities specifically focused on improving teacher retention rates.
- NAHT will lobby government for a stronger focus on Early Years pedagogy in initial teacher training in order to protect, strengthen and improve the quality of Early Years provision in schools.
- NAHT (NI) believes there should be a review of the advertising of Principal and other senior positions in Primary schools by EA regions to ensure that it is an equitable playing field for other experienced senior leaders and serving Principals from other sectors.
- Perceptions of risk are also serious deterrents to applicants for senior leadership roles. School accountability needs to depend on more than just data; needs to be applied over a number of years; and needs to be coherent among different agencies. It also remains the case that the task of leading a challenging school is more risky than leadership in other contexts. This deters applicants. A more genuine and widespread use of progress as a defining feature of accountability would help to mitigate this.
- There is market failure in the development of senior leaders, especially head teachers, as the school that benefits from their professional development is often not the school that pays for it. This makes a strong case for the centralised funding of leadership development programmes.
- NAHT calls for the adoption by the Government and local authorities of a policy of designating teachers as key workers and consequently providing them with assistance with housing and concessionary fares for public transport.
- NAHT recognises that any improvement in the pay and conditions of school staff will aid recruitment and retention and make a significant contribution to the outcomes for pupils and the future prospects of the nation, and will seek, alongside relevant partners, to promote this view to Government.

## **Safeguarding**

See also: Online (and other media) safety; PSHE and SRE; Behaviour and safety; Prevent and Disqualification by Association

- NAHT believes that schools play an incredibly important role in the safeguarding and support of children and young people.

- All staff within a school have a responsibility for the safeguarding of pupils and schools must be supported to enable all of their staff to access suitable high quality training related to their safeguarding responsibilities.
- One of the key barriers to improving educational outcomes for children in need is the decline in availability and accessibility of social care and health services for these children and their families. It is vital that these children receive the support, treatment and intervention which they might need from these specialist services.
- The number of children not meeting the social care threshold creates an increasing burden on schools to support those children. This leaves schools attempting to support children who really need specialist support from children's social care. This situation cannot continue. It is imperative that the capacity of children's social care services grows to support those children who need it.
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- NAHT believes greater clarity is needed as to the expectation and remit of a head teacher/designated child protection lead, including the support they can expect, so that this is understood and adhered to by all relevant agencies.
- NAHT supports the work of Operation Encompass and its innovative approach to information sharing between police and schools to support families experiencing domestic abuse.
- Female genital mutilation: NAHT recognises with concern the increase in the incidence of FGM in the UK and acknowledges that schools have a part to play in tackling this complex well-being and safeguarding issue. The government should provide the resources and support necessary to help identify and support potential victims, adopt appropriate safeguarding responses and address the matter through relevant curriculum activity at the appropriate key stage.
- **Mandatory reporting:** NAHT cautiously supports the call for effective forms of mandatory reporting, but this should not be regarded as the single solution to a complex issue. Both the benefits and challenges of such an approach must be acknowledged and lessons from mandatory reporting schemes in other nations must be taken on board. Full training must be given to mandated reporters so that they understand what is required of them in law. A lack of resources in children's services nationwide must be recognised and addressed.

## School Business Leaders

- NAHT recognises the need for all schools to have adequate access to the services of a School Business Leader. Evidence suggests that standards rise quickest where heads are free to focus on developing teaching and learning. This is of particular relevance in relation to small schools, where the need for this support is not necessarily reflected in the available funds to pay for a School Business Leader.

- School Business Leaders form a key part of the school leadership team and are integral to the running of many schools. To acknowledge their importance to school success, NAHT seeks a fair level of reward for School Business Leaders that reflects their role and rewards them at a level commensurate with leadership pay scales.

## **School Development Service (NI)**

- NAHT (NI) is greatly concerned about the ability of the new School Development Service to deliver effective support for schools and calls on the Education Authority to consult urgently on the capacity and operational roll out of this service.

## **School Improvement**

- NAHT believes that the over-reliance on selective data has run its course and that school improvement is best achieved through support and encouragement, rather than bullying and public humiliation.
- The NAHT Aspire project demonstrates the benefits of the school improvement agenda being taken back into the hands of the profession. NAHT urges that all political parties should be lobbied to endorse this way of working, as a blueprint for the future.

## **SEND**

- The government should ensure the needs of SEND children are a core part of any educational developments and not be seen as a 'bolt-on'. They should ensure that schools have a period of stability to allow time for the new SEND reforms to be fully embedded. These reforms must be properly funded and resourced – both through school budgets, and health and social care budgets.
- NAHT believes the government should urgently address the lack of access schools have to dedicated support services including those provided by health and social care, especially educational psychologists, and speech and language therapists. Education, Health and Care plans should be appropriately funded by education, care and health.
- The government should work with the education, health and social care sectors to identify and address barriers to effective joint working.
- NAHT believes SENCos need sufficient time and administrative support to carry out their role.
- All teachers must be supported to fulfil their responsibilities regarding the progress of SEND pupils and should have access to regular high quality training to enable them to meet the needs of these pupils.
- NAHT (NI) believes that the current levels of support for children with SEN, in Northern Ireland are unacceptable. Particularly, the lack of access to Statements of Special Educational Needs and early intervention for pre-school children in mainstream and special school sectors and seeks to advance the 2016 Manifesto aim of 'A circle of care' around every child.

## **ALN (Additional Learning Needs)**

- NAHT (Cymru) believe Welsh Government should ensure all relevant partners recognise their duty to ALN and have sufficient resource to respond to need
- NAHT (Cymru) believe Welsh Government should learn from the SEND experience in England in order to establish clearer duties upon support services, including health and social care, in order to ensure equality and clarity of access

## **Special Schools and specialist provision**

- NAHT believes that parents of students with special education needs should have equal right to demand a place in a special school or mainstream school, as they judge appropriate for their children. Local authorities should be accountable for ensuring there is adequate special school and specialist provision in their area for this demand.
- We believe there is a need to maintain specialisms within this provision that meet the needs of pupils who have particular special needs or disabilities, for example schools which cater for children on the autistic spectrum, provision for deaf children or those with profound and multiple complex needs.
- NAHT believes all schools should be sufficiently resourced with appropriately qualified staff and other necessary resources, to enable them to provide for the delivery of the outcomes identified within individual pupils' EHCPs.
- NAHT recognises the work of schools in managing pupils with complex needs. NAHT believes that clear pathways and proper support networks must be established to support those pupils who can compromise the safety and academic focus of others

## **Technical and Vocational Education**

- NAHT believes that technical and vocational qualifications should have the same worth as general qualifications and that there should be a parity of esteem for vocational and technical education within the wider education system.
- Current Government policy exacerbates the perceived lesser value of VT education, and this is apparent in the increased focus on knowledge-based curricula and academic achievement pre-16.
- Young people should not be faced with a blunt choice between an academic and a VT route post 16. There needs to be a coherent and integrated system, which retains the flexibility young people need.
- NAHT believes that Ofqual, as the qualifications, examinations and assessments regulator in England, should have oversight of all qualifications (as far as possible), to ensure parity between the two pathways.
- If school sixth forms deem that this is what is most suitable for their students and they have the capacity and resources to do so, NAHT believes that they

should be able to offer a full range of qualifications for students, including technical and vocational qualifications.

- NAHT believes that schools with viable and successful sixth forms should be able to retain sixth form provision.
- Schools need access to funded, independent careers advisors, to address the current shortage of independent advice and guidance for pupils about VT routes.

## **Trade Union recognition**

- NAHT is a party to the TUC Model Agreement for Academies in England that sets out the arrangements for trade union recognition, facilities and machinery for consultation and negotiation between academy employers and trade unions.
- This agreement is intended to promote and assist in the establishment of:
  - jointly agreed pay and conditions of employment;
  - good practice with regard to matters of employment and health and safety;
  - effective communication;
  - participation and involvement of staff;
  - effective and prompt resolution of issues and disputes;
  - equal opportunities in employment; and
  - Arrangements for discussion of professional issues concerning teaching and learning, including issues relating to the curriculum, behaviour policy etc.