

## Oddments

Links to new documents:

- [The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework 2019;](#)
- [Effective school governance;](#)
- [The Early Career Framework;](#)
- [Making data work;](#)
- [Strategic Estate Management](#)
- [Improving school resource management.](#)

**Homophily** refers to the tendency for people to have (non-negative) ties with people who are similar to themselves in socially significant ways. The term itself (coined by Lazarsfeld) specifically refers to an internal preference. This is an explanation of the natural tendency for creatures, including humans, to take a lead from just a few others, even in a crowd, and so explains why, for example, poorly-behaved pupils appear to be drawn to each other. (NB The word derives from murmurations of starlings, where research showed that a starling only takes any notice of a maximum of seven other starlings flying alongside.)

**Reading buddies** pairs older and younger readers together in a mutually beneficial exercise. <https://www.teachervision.com/reading-buddies>

**Thrive** Preparing children for life's ups and downs. Where children have been thrown off track and are demonstrating this in their behaviours, the Thrive programme shows teachers how to read the signs. <https://www.thriveapproach.com/>

**School self-evaluation.** Many SSEs describe what has happened in the school, but don't evaluate much of it. Other SSEs are wholly positive about a school, as if trying to impress governors, but don't then evaluate any areas which might be improved, and so don't feed successfully into the school improvement plan or school improvement. Within the evaluation, each sentence should include an evaluative word or phrase, such as 'well', 'as intended', 'not always', 'low impact', 'weak', etc. Without doing so, it is not an evaluation, but a narrative or a description, and will have very limited use. The most impressive SSEs are honest and open, and give a clear steer to the school. NB 'School self-evaluation' and not 'SEF' (self-evaluation form, which used to be, but is no longer, an Ofsted requirement for inspection).

The notion of **budget** as:

- Cost in money
- Cost in human resources (the skills, experience and time of people)
- Cost in school estate (educational resources and space)
- Cost in workload

Even for middle leaders, action plans should include a consideration of each.

Ofsted have produced a useful series of areas to look for when carrying out a **lesson observation**:

<b>Figure 1: List of indicators used in the lesson observation</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Model No.</b>
<p><b>1Curriculum</b></p> <p>1aTeachers use subject expertise, knowledge and practical skills to provide learning opportunities</p> <p>1bTeachers ensure there is an equality of opportunity for all learners to access every lesson, as building blocks to the wider curriculum</p> <p>1cStrategies to support reading/vocabulary understanding/numeracy are in place for pupils who need it/cannot access the curriculum</p> <p>1dThe content of the lesson is suitably demanding</p> <p>1eThe lesson content is appropriate to the age group and does not lower expectations</p> <p>1fThere is a logical sequence to the lesson</p> <p>1gTeachers provide opportunities to recall and practise previously learned skills and knowledge</p> <p>1hAssessment provides relevant, clear and helpful information about the current skills and knowledge of learners</p>	
<p><b>2 Teaching</b></p> <p>2aTeachers demonstrate good communication skills</p> <p>2bTeachers’ use of presentation allows pupils to build knowledge and make connections</p> <p>2cTeachers use relevant and appropriate resources during presentation to clarify meaning to pupils</p> <p>2dTeachers possess good questioning skills</p> <p>2eTeachers give explicit, detailed and constructive feedback in class</p> <p>2fTeachers effectively check for understanding</p>	
<p><b>3Behaviour</b></p> <p>3aTeachers create supportive classrooms focused on learning</p> <p>3bTeachers create focused classrooms through their high expectations for pupils</p> <p>3cTeachers communicate clear and consistent expectations which are understood and followed</p> <p>3dPupils’ behaviour contributes to the focus on learning</p>	

**Workload** It’s that time of year:

Have lots of events fallen at the same time? For example: sports day, reports, summer fayre, trips, parents’ evenings, move-up, leavers’/ new starters’ events, etc.? Is this on top of a teacher’s normal working week? What is your workload consideration? From September, you will be asked during inspection. NB If you are too worn to deal with it now for this year, will the same issues repeat next year?

See the ‘typical’ letter below: could this be about your school?

## **A (fictitious) letter to a headteacher about workload.**

*NB All of the items in this letter have been seen numerous times in multiple schools.*

Dear headteacher,

I'm writing to you because we are both so busy, I'm having trouble finding a time I can see you. I hope you are not too stressed in trying to make the school 'good' and with the pressures from the MAT that the school has recently joined.

I need talk to you about workload. This time of year is always busy, but I'll give you some examples.

My time at home is increasingly being taken up with school work. On the last two Fridays senior leaders have emailed me to give me tasks which had a completion date of Monday, and so I needed to work over the weekend to complete them. One was to write the class letter to go with the reports, which took quite a time, and the other task was to write the objectives and action plan for the history policy, which has taken several additional and unexpected hours. I sent my partner and children out for the day so I could stay at home and complete the work in peace.

I teach in reception, and you require me to write the same reports that all other teachers have to write. I am unsure why I have to do this, as I spend one to two hours every day completing Tapestry observations for children. As Tapestry is a reporting software, why do I need to report twice to parents, when Tapestry gives a much fuller picture of a child to their parents? I am not sure that you and other senior leaders understand Tapestry. You never look at it, or check the quality of what is written. Consequently, in one of the other reception classes, one of the teachers does not add observations for up to four weeks on occasions. How is this fair?

At the staff meeting whilst you were away last week, one of the NQTs said 'I don't do any work at home'. There was a gasp across the staffroom! How can she, at this late stage in the year be saying this when she arrives at 8.30 am and has left by 4.15 every day. I arrive at 7.30 and leave at 5.45, and then work for up to two hours most nights, plus time at weekends! I have heard staff saying 'If she gets away with it, why should I bother?'

For the wider curriculum, as you know I lead a spoken performance group, and run a weekly after-school club. Twice a year we perform in a proper theatre with a large audience, on a proper stage with proper lighting – an experience pupils would just not have otherwise. I booked the date for this in the school diary a year ago, and yet last week, the Y6 trip and KS1 sports day had been set on the same date. The first I knew of it was when the letter had already gone out to staff and parents. This meant I could not do the tech rehearsal with half of the spoken performance group and I had to stay very late on Wednesday for an additional final rehearsal with all pupils. Last year a choir performance was set on the same night as the performance date and pupils who were in both groups had to choose between them.

I am a main scale teacher in a large school, and yet you asked me to lead history because so many of the teachers in the school are NQTs or on maternity cover. I have been prepared to work on this, but the lateness of requests and instructions, with consistently short deadlines, has not helped.

Last week, there was: reports to be handed in; objectives to be written for curriculum leadership; KS2 sports day; summer fayre; Y4 and 5 trip; new starters' day; move-up day; corrected assessments

to be put on the system; TA training during the day (so I lost my TA again); special assembly to raise funds for Somalia. Too much, maybe, for one week? Out of these, I would have loved for my vocal performance group to perform at the summer fayre, but it was just beyond me, due to my workload. It is always so valuable to have an audience, but I simply could not prepare and wash all the costumes and prepare the pupils sufficiently without additional support. For move-up day, my TA was used which meant that for the two of us remaining, there wasn't enough adult support for children, and we were very busy dealing with everything. For the new starter's meetings, the date was set without consultation with me. I had to set the first meeting with parents at 7.30am, and the last one finished after 7.30pm. Perhaps you could review this for next year, and at least talk to me before advertising any date.

Please remember that my main job is to teach a class, and the lack of thought given to workload and work-life balance is not helpful, particularly when various and sometimes numerous instructions are coming from the school's various senior leaders, as well as yourself. I simply do not have the time to carry them all out. It was exactly the same last year, and when I raised it with you, you said 'Just get through the next couple of weeks and it will all start to calm down.'

Yours

*A Teacher*



St.John 07906 375349

[stjohnburkett@sbservices.org.uk](mailto:stjohnburkett@sbservices.org.uk)

*Get in touch to book  
an appointment in the autumn term*

- ❖ Head teacher performance management
- ❖ Safeguarding/ governance reviews
- ❖ Self-evaluation/ SIDP review
- ❖ Pre-Ofsted checks/ 'mock inspection'
- ❖ Training, staff meeting input, etc.
- ❖ Leadership development
- ❖ School improvement