

## Education update – Monday 6 November

(Below is a summary of some of the main education news stories from the last week. They do not reflect the opinions of *The Exams Office*)

### Teaching assistants allowed to gain QTS status through assessment-only route

**The number of teachers qualifying through a 12-week “assessment-only” route is rising, fuelling fears that providers are letting applicants without proper experience qualify for a price.**

Two years ago 912 people were awarded QTS through assessment alone, but that figure rose by 13% to 1,034 last year, new data obtained by Schools Week shows. Four years ago, just 429 people qualified in this manner, but now more than 80 training providers have assessors who can look over a trainee’s evidence portfolio, observe their lessons and sign-off their qualification.

Some of these providers even allow cover supervisors and teaching assistants to qualify as full teachers within three months, even though the government has said it only wants “experienced” unqualified teachers to enter the profession this way.

The route was originally intended for overseas trained teachers or those moving from private schools but Alan Smithers of the University of Buckingham claimed the parameters of the assessment had now been stretched “too far” by some providers. “They are advertising that they can ‘upgrade’ a teaching assistant but without providing the nub of the training,” he said.

While it is appropriate in some cases, the route is, he believes, “being used as a short-cut”. Providers are also incentivised to pass teachers, as they usually charge schools around £2,000 per applicant for the service, he added.

Derek Boyle, director of the Bromley Schools’ Collegiate SCITT in south-east London, said more schools were applying to have Special Educational Needs co-ordinators signed off, as QTS is now a requirement of the role.

For more details visit the [Schools Week website](#)

### Education Secretary launches new Institute of Teaching

**Education Secretary, Justine Greening has opened the Institute for Teaching, urging the profession to embrace the high-quality training it will provide.**

The Institute for Teaching – which has received government funding to set up bespoke training programmes for teachers – will support and ‘spread great teaching’. Its’ courses will be available for teachers at all stages of their career, including those wishing to become experts in their subject or wanting to learn the most effective ways to share best practice.

This investment in the profession is part of the government’s wider drive to build an education system that creates clear and rewarding career pathways for the people entering and progressing in teaching.

The Institute for Teaching will operate mainly in the North and central England, including in the Education Secretary’s Opportunity Areas which have been identified as social mobility ‘cold spots’.

The Institute for Teaching has received government funding as part of the £75 million Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund. This fund supports new programmes to deliver knowledge and skills-based training for teachers. The first eight projects to benefit from the fund have now been announced and include programmes focused on leadership, managing challenging pupil behaviour, improving the quality of teaching and phonics.

For more details visit the [Department for Education website](#)

## 'Accelerate' GCSE and A-level 're-mark' data to address concerns, urge unions

**A working group set up to discuss marking concerns has only met once since January, amid major exam reforms**

There are calls for the exams watchdog to expedite the publication of data showing the proportion of challenges leading to grade changes, to address widespread concerns over the quality of marking.

Schools are reporting that a higher proportion of pupils' results in the new GCSEs – especially in English – have improved significantly after 're-marks' this year.

Ofqual normally publishes the national figures on re-marks just before the Christmas holidays – around four months after results day – but Anne Heavey, education policy adviser of the NEU teaching union, said that accelerating this would enable “more transparency” in the exam system.

Malcolm Trobe, public affairs director at the Association of School and College Leaders, added: “There are clearly issues emerging. Ideally, we would like the information earlier. The sooner they can get all the public figures out into the public arena the better.”

For more details please visit the [TES website](#)

*(please note that the above text has been taken directly from the TES website and that The Exams Office uses the term 'enquiry about results' rather than 're-marks')*

## 'Insular' schools failing to promote British values, says Ofsted

**Schools serving "insular" communities which also fail to promote "British values" are a cause for concern, Ofsted's national education director Sean Harford told a Lords committee today.**

"The vast majority of schools are doing well in this area," Harford told the Lords committee on citizenship and civic engagement. We do have concerns over a very small minority of schools that are mainly in the independent sector." He added that around 40 to 45 schools had been identified as inadequate in promoting British values, and had failed the Independent School Standards in this area.

"They are predominantly faith schools," said Mr Harford. "They tend to be serving communities that are quite insular anyway so need more promotion of fundamental British values than other communities where there are connections with the wider community."

He concluded that the teaching of British Values was: "mostly very good, but there is concern and acute concern in a small number of schools." Ofsted does not inspect all independent schools.

For more details visit the [TES website](#)

## Ofsted investigates inspection gaps at outstanding schools

**Ofsted is to examine "unusually long gaps" between inspections of 'outstanding'-rated schools, according to minutes of a board meeting.**

In July, Ofsted's board requested analysis of inspection intervals for 'outstanding' schools with "reasons for any unusually long gaps".

A policy introduced by the government in 2011 exempts schools with the top grade from further routine inspection as long as data shows they are "maintaining performance".

In January, *Schools Week* revealed that more than 1,200 schools in England have not had a full inspection in seven years, and more than 100 have been left alone for over a decade.

For more details visit the [Schools Week website](#)