

## Schools in special measures in England and Wales

When a school goes into special measures there can be a considerable impact on the working conditions of teaching and support staff. This factsheet looks at why a school is placed in special measures and addresses the key concerns of its staff.

### **Why is a school placed in special measures?**

Special measures are taken if an Ofsted or Estyn inspection team concludes that:

- the school is failing to give pupils an acceptable standard of education, and
- the people responsible for leading, managing or governing are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

### **What special measures does the local authority (LA) take?**

The LA is required to produce a statement of action to turn around the school that addresses the areas for improvement highlighted by the inspection team.

### **How long does a school stay in special measures?**

This depends on how speedily and successfully the necessary changes are introduced. A Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) team will conduct their first monitoring visit within four to six months of the school being judged as requiring special measures.

The HMI report may, depending on what progress has been made, recommend that the school be taken out of special measures. Alternatively, it may conclude that areas of weakness remain and need to be addressed. Inspectors will make regular, probably termly, monitoring visits until a school is taken out of special measures. These monitoring visits will be without notice.

A final visit will be made within 24 months. It is not expected that a school will remain in special measures for more than two years.

### **What is the likely impact on teaching and support staff?**

Senior management should discuss with staff how the recommendations in the statement of action can be successfully introduced. Staff need to be satisfied that any targets they are set are

reasonable, achievable and appropriate. Ideally, management should ensure that staff feel they are working with the statement of action rather than having it imposed on them.

It is essential staff and management work together to ensure that concerns are addressed, targets are met and that the school is taken out of special measures as quickly as possible.

### **What support can teaching and support staff expect from management?**

If specific concerns are identified then staff will expect school leaders to offer appropriate support and training. Again, in doing so, school leaders should be striving to ensure that they are working with staff to ensure that any support and/or training is best tailored to meeting those concerns.

### **Are teachers still entitled to the benefits secured by the Workload Agreement?**

Yes. These benefits, including rarely cover and guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, form part of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). The STPCD outlines the statutory requirements for teachers' pay and conditions in England and Wales and schools and LAs must adhere to it.

### **What if I am being pressurised to increase my workload?**

The twin aims of the Workload Agreement are to increase standards and, just as importantly, reduce teacher workload. You will need to monitor your workload and raise any concerns if necessary.

### **Will there be increased scrutiny of teaching?**

Yes. The headteacher will want to lift the school out of special measures as quickly as possible. For performance management purposes classroom observations may not exceed three hours per teacher over the school year. However, it is likely that there will be a regular programme of 'drop ins' to ensure that staff are progressing satisfactorily. If any concerns are identified ATL believes you must be given support to help address them.

### **Could I face capability procedures if my school think I am not making suitable progress?**

Yes, and it is therefore essential that any targets set by the school are both reasonable and achievable and that you have been given appropriate support and training. If you have any concerns about your targets or there is a move towards using capability procedures please contact your local ATL branch.

It is clear both staff and school leaders will want their school to climb out of special measures as quickly as possible. The key to doing so is a determination on both sides to work in collaboration to meet the aims of the statement of action.



### **Need advice?**

Your first point of contact is your ATL rep in your school or college. Your local ATL branch is also available to help with queries, or you can contact ATL's member advisers on **020 7930 6441**, email: [info@atl.org.uk](mailto:info@atl.org.uk) or write to 7 Northumberland Street, London WC2N 5RD. Don't forget you can also get lots of help and advice, as well as download copies of other ATL advice sheets, on our website at [www.atl.org.uk](http://www.atl.org.uk)

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