

# UCAC's Evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body

December 2009

**UCAC** | yr undeb sy'n diogelu athrawon a darlithwyr Cymru

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 UCAC welcomes this opportunity to provide evidence for the School Teachers' Review Body.
- 1.2 UCAC is not presenting a joint submission.
- 1.3 UCAC may feel it necessary to present supplementary evidence on the receipt of the evidence from other parties.

## 2. SEN Matters

**What revised criteria should be introduced for SEN allowances in light of the increased inclusion of pupils with SEN and disabilities in mainstream settings, including in respect of unattached teachers working in alternative provision; and within existing cost basis whether the value(s) remain appropriate.**

- 2.1 UCAC welcomes the STRB's recognition that SEN allowances should recognise the challenges of the work and acknowledge the skills and experience required to successfully teach pupils with SEN.
- 2.2 UCAC agrees that additional distinct reward should continue to be paid to those working in specialist SEN roles, those teaching in dedicated SEN settings (special schools, special units in ordinary schools and PRU) and for posts requiring a mandatory SEN qualification.
- 2.3 UCAC agrees that the additional reward should be given for the nature of the post and not for acquisition of qualifications for their own sake; but where the teacher has additional qualifications which are relevant to the role, this should be recognised by suitable remuneration.
- 2.4 UCAC has argued over many years that consideration should be given to teachers who teach pupils with SEN in ordinary mainstream classes and that they, too, should be considered eligible for SEN payments. Their work can be very challenging. It would, of course, have to depend on the number of pupils / classes with SEN pupils taught. Unfortunately, the very prescriptive nature of the TLR criteria means that schools cannot award an allowance in these circumstances, unless it awards a recruitment or retention allowance – and there may not be a recruitment or retention issue.
- 2.5 UCAC originally argued to maintain the two SEN allowances (i.e. to ensure recognition of SEN work), but if the decision has been taken to introduce an SEN range, instead, we believe that it is important to emphasise the need to:
  - recognise experience, training and qualifications
  - consider the position of teachers of pupils with SEN in all settings (mainstream schools, PRU, as unattached teachers working for a LEA)
  - recognise the extra challenges of working in a bilingual setting (which is the case in a large number of schools in Wales)
  - ensure appropriate use of the range and sufficient funding so that eligible teachers can access the range

- ensure that all teachers working wholly or mainly with pupils with SEN (50%+ of the time / 50%+ of pupils) should have access to the range
  - allow teachers to progress up the range with appropriate professional development e.g. training, research, and experience. Due to the challenges of the work and the lack of accredited courses in some fields of SEN work UCAC believes that relevant experience and learning should be recognised as being of equal merit to relevant qualifications.
  - ensure that any teacher working as a SENCO receives monetary recognition of the extra demands of the role (whatever the size of the school)
- 2.6 UCAC believes that TLR payments could be the most appropriate way to reward staff in SEN settings who have wider responsibilities, including leading and managing other members of staff. This is also true of SENCO's in ordinary schools as well as dedicated SEN settings. Many SENCOs in secondary schools, in particular, have line management responsibility for a significant number of people (not necessarily all teachers).
- 2.7 UCAC agrees that criteria to guide schools in selecting appropriate spot values for SEN payments could be useful for Head Teachers, Governing Bodies and LEAs. However, it is very important that any list of criteria is not overly prescriptive. The criteria should also note that schools may choose to award a TLR payment for SEN responsibilities.
- 2.8 UCAC is aware of the concerns about cost and that the STRB's remit includes a proviso to ensure that all recommendations are affordable within the current economic context. However we feel that it is vitally important that no teacher currently in receipt of an SEN payment loses money. Anyone already in receipt of a SEN allowance should be placed on a position on the range that reflects, at least, their current allowance. Those who currently receive SEN 1 should receive at least the equivalent payment when the new range is introduced; those who currently receive SEN 2 should receive at least SEN 2 when the new range is introduced. Those currently receiving TLR payments should continue to do so.
- 2.9 UCAC is unhappy with the inference in paragraph 5.46 of the STRB's 18<sup>th</sup> report, which we feel questions the professionalism of teachers:
- "It is our view that any guidelines developed by the group must not unintentionally provide an incentive to increase the use of statements of SEN."*
- We do not expect such comments from the School Teachers' Review Body.
- 2.10 UCAC agrees with the proposed membership of a working group (striking a balance between SEN specialists and those with an overview of broader developments in teaching and learning) and also ensuring engagement with stakeholders; we broadly agree that its remit should include matters noted in paragraph 5.46. UCAC, however, believes that any recommendations by the working group should be subject to further consultation with stakeholders.
- 2.11 UCAC welcomes the development for teachers working in PRU, i.e. *that for the interim period pending the outcome of the working group's review, all teachers working in PRUs receive either an SEN 1 allowance or an additional payment of at least equal value with effect from September 2009.*

2.12 Many SEN teachers work for a Local Authority and, as such, are classed as unattached teachers. There are certainly concerns about the pay, working conditions, professional development opportunities and career progression of unattached teachers. It is vital that unattached teachers also have access to the SEN range and that LEAs are expected to ensure parity with teachers who are based in schools or PRUs.

### 3. Criteria for Deputy Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher Posts

**Without prejudice to the longer term review of leadership pay and linked work on roles and responsibilities and leadership standards, what criteria should be established for leadership roles and progression, analogous to the framework for teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) posts, and, which provide a consistent, transparent, fair national framework that could be used by the relevant body when establishing Deputy Head teacher and Assistant Head Teacher posts?**

3.1 The criteria should not be overly prescriptive. There needs to be a high level of local flexibility to allow every school to determine the nature of its leadership posts and how they will fit in to the school's staffing structure and, in particular, the structure of the senior management team. Such flexibility would also allow the school to make best use of the skills and strengths of the individuals within the team.

3.2 There must be a clear distinction between Deputy Head Teacher Posts and Assistant Head Teacher Posts, e.g. only a Deputy Head Teacher can take on all the Head Teacher's responsibilities in his / her absence. In terms of progression from an Assistant Head Teacher post to a Deputy Head Teacher Post, the distinction is already contained in the STPCD but would need to be included in any criteria:

*"in the case of a deputy head teacher only, undertake to the extent required by the Head Teacher or the relevant body or, in the case of a foundation, voluntary aided or foundation special school, the governing body, the professional duties of the head teacher in the event of the absence of the head teacher from the school;"* (STPCD 2009, paragraph 62.4, page 121)

This distinction between what is expected of the Deputy Head Teacher and those expected of the Assistant Head Teacher needs to be emphasised.

3.3 If, as suggested by the wording of the School Teachers' Review Body's remit, the intention is to include in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document a list of requirements for a Deputy Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher post, as is included for Teaching and Learning Responsibility posts, we suggest the following as possibilities for discussion. The post:

- a) is focused on leadership and management
- b) requires the expertise, professional skills and judgements of a teacher
- c) requires the post holder to lead, manage and develop whole school policies or initiatives, e.g. the curriculum, assessment, the skills agenda, a particular Key Stage, teaching and learning, staff development, the school's response to national policies / initiatives, etc
- d) has an impact on the educational progress of pupils throughout the school
- e) involves line management responsibility for other members of staff (primary), a number of heads of department / heads of year / support staff (secondary)
- f) in the case of a Deputy Head Teacher only, involves the extra responsibility of taking on the Head Teacher's professional duties in his / her absence.

- 3.4 The remit mentions a “*framework for teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) posts*”. UCAC would argue that there is no real framework, just a list of highly prescriptive criteria, which do NOT “*provide a consistent, transparent, fair national framework,*” for teachers with extra responsibilities. We wonder, therefore, how a list of criteria would “*provide a consistent, transparent, fair national framework that could be used by the relevant body when establishing Deputy Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher posts*”. Job weight and the nature and number of the responsibilities should play a part in determining pay and progression between one Assistant Head Teacher post and another, but in reality, the financial situation of the establishment is very often the determining factor.
- 3.5 The importance of establishing a good work life balance cannot be overestimated or over emphasised. Effectively distributed leadership can make the best use of the individuals’ skills, experience and expertise for the good of the leadership team and the whole establishment. It can also help school leaders achieve a better work life balance.
- 3.6 It is important for governing bodies of primary schools, as well as secondary schools, to be able to appoint a Deputy Head Teacher, not only because of issues concerning taking on the Head Teacher’s professional duties in his / her absence, but also due to serious concerns about the work life balance of Head Teachers.

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## Appendix

### SEN pupils statistics (Wales) (January 2009)

The total number of pupils in Wales with a statement of SEN in January 2009 was 14,832:

- 657 pupils under 5 yrs
- 12,895 pupils 5-15 yrs
- 1,280 pupils 16+

Over 91% (13,535) of pupils with SEN were educated within their “home” authority

Of those educated within their “home” authority, nearly 26% (3,510) were educated in maintained special schools

47% (6,974 pupils) were educated in mainstream classes; 21.2% (3,138) were educated in special classes or units within ordinary schools

26.7% (3,961 pupils) attended maintained special schools and 0.8% (123 pupils) were educated in PRUs. The remaining pupils attended Independent or non-maintained special schools: 2.4% (359) or were educated other than in school 1.9% (277)

The percentage of pupils with SEN educated in mainstream schools – whether in the “home” LEA or outside – varied across LEAs, e.g. Ceredigion 94.4%; Bridgend 18.5%

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