

# School Teachers' Review Body (STRB): Submission of evidence

## Response of the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE)

### Introduction

The General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) was established in 2000 as the independent professional regulatory body for teaching. Its role is to uphold standards of teaching in the public interest. Its statutory duties are to register and regulate the teaching profession and to advise the Secretary of State on a range of matters relating to teaching.

This submission relates to two elements of the Invitation to Submit Evidence accompanying the Secretary of State's letter to the STRB of 17 May 2006:

Whether a description of teachers' professional role and responsibilities is needed (specifically whether it is needed in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document).

What do the descriptions of teachers' professional duties currently in the STPCD add to:

- GTCE Statement of Professional Values and Practice for Teachers
- GTCW Professional code for Teachers [*sic*]
- Teachers' professional standards (e.g. the standards currently in the STPCD, the draft standards published by the TDA and the professional milestones and related standards proposed by GTCW)
- Teachers' job descriptions and objectives agreed locally
- Any other relevant descriptions of or influences on teachers' professional roles and responsibilities?

This response is in two parts. Section one sets out some general observations about how teachers' work is framed, and where the GTCE has a stake. Section two addresses the specific question about the relationship between the GTCE's *Statement of Professional Values and Practice* and the coverage of the professional duties section of the current *School Teachers' Pay and Conditions* document (STPCD).

## Section 1

### The GTC's stake in teachers' professional duties

1. The GTCE's stake in the area of professional duties derives from the 1998 Act that legislated for the establishment of the GTCE. Among the areas in which the GTCE has a statutory duty to advise the Secretary of State, in the public interest, are:
  - standards of teaching
  - standards of conduct for teachers
  - the role of the teaching profession
  - the training, career development and performance management of teachers
  - recruitment to the teaching profession
  - medical fitness to teach.
2. While the GTCE plays no role in deliberations of teachers' pay, or HR/IR dimensions of teachers' conditions, it has a stake in descriptions of the professional practice of teachers, the means by which the practice of teaching is described (standards, codes), and influenced (professional development, performance management).

### Descriptions of teachers' work: how, where, and to what end?

#### *Professional duties set out in the STPCD*

3. The statutory and non-statutory contexts in which teachers' work is framed are many and varied and serve a number of legitimate purposes. Among these, the professional duties section of the STPCD has provided a national framework for HRM and IR matters at the level of the school and local authority. Annex C of the RIG evidence to the STRB of 21 July 2006 helpfully sets out the uses to which the duties are put in this respect.

#### *Teaching Standards Framework*

4. The Teaching Standards Framework has been significant at certain career points but is likely to assume a greater significance for the generality of teachers under the proposed performance management arrangements. The teaching profession needs robust entry standards, and standards denoting various forms of accomplishment and expertise, including in the leadership of teaching. The standards framework is substantially therefore about the detail of the nature, level or degree of practice which is expected of teachers at different stages of their career. The newly revised framework defines practice at entry standard (QTS), after the first period of practice (induction), following a further period of practice (Threshold), as an advanced specialist practitioner working beyond the school (AST) and at a standard of excellence working within the school. The standard for the qualification to headship is in the process of being reset. These are detailed descriptions of practice which encompass all areas of part 12 of the STPCD.

***GTCE Code of Conduct***

5. The GTCE's *Code of Conduct* defines unacceptable conduct and serious incompetence. It serves teachers in clarifying the minimum levels of conduct and competence and serves the public interest, along with those local frameworks relating to competence and conduct, such as a school's own capability procedures. ([Copy enclosed.](#))

***GTCE Statement of Professional Values and Practice***

6. The GTCE's *Statement of Professional Values and Practice* addresses the scope of teachers' work but is particularly concerned with *how* teachers approach their practice, and the enactment of certain shared values in practice. It provides a foundation for quality practice and a foundation for the skills, knowledge and attributes defined in detail in the teaching standards framework. ([Copy enclosed.](#))

***Work to be undertaken by a qualified teacher***

7. There is a further important dimension to framing teachers' work and that is the description of work that can only be undertaken by a qualified teacher. This is a matter of public interest which is not transparent to the public, buried as it is in primary and secondary legislation. School workforce remodelling, it could be argued, has made this area less penetrable to those who have a legitimate stake in it.

## Section 2

### ***Detail on the GTC Code and Statement***

8. Since it started work in 2000 the GTCE has produced two documents that contribute to setting the context for and guiding qualified teachers' professional practice, the ***Statement of Professional Values and Practice*** and the ***Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers***.
9. The Statement attempts to capture the values underpinning teachers' professional practice. It is not a standards setting documents with the status of a binding code. It provides a reference point for the profession on ethical issues and informs the Council's regulatory and advisory work.
10. The Code, by contrast, sets minimum standards expected of registered teachers and is used in decision making within the Council's regulatory procedures. Failure to comply with the provisions of the Code is one of the factors that may determine whether a case goes forward to hearing as well as the outcome of that hearing in terms of a disciplinary sanction affecting a teacher's registration and thereby their ability to work in maintained schools.
11. The STRB consultation cites only the Statement – presumably to maintain parity with references to the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW), which has not chosen to produce a Code of Conduct.

### ***Scope of the GTCE code and statement***

12. The Statement relates to qualified teachers as a whole cadre, without reference to their role (e.g. deputy headteacher) or phase (e.g. NQT). The GTCE's statement, therefore, relates most closely to Part 12 of the current STPCD.
13. In addition to the provisions of the Code, assessment of whether a registered teacher has demonstrated serious incompetence includes the use of the standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) and induction for teacher competence and the national professional qualification for headship (NPQH) standards in respect of failings of management and leadership.

### ***The case for a continuing separate description of professional duties in the STPCD***

14. The new teaching standards framework provides additional detail further to either the GTCE Statement or the STPCD on specific elements of practice expected at different roles and phases. It does so only for some and not all roles which are set out in the STPCD (e.g. deputy head teachers).
15. It is our understanding that it is the combination of the STPCD and the teaching standards which are most often used for the specification of job descriptions.
16. The GTCE further notes that some roles (e.g. SENCO) feature neither in the STPCD professional duties nor in the new professional standards framework.

**Extent of the consonance between Part 12 of the STPCD and the GTCE statement**

17. There are many common themes between the GTCE's statement and Part 12 of the STPCD. For example:

STPCD Part 12	GTCE Statement
73.1...promoting the development of the abilities and aptitudes of the pupils in any class or group assigned to him	Teachers have insight into the learning needs of children and young people. They use professional judgement to meet these needs and to choose the best ways of motivating pupils to achieve success
73.2.1 promoting the general progress and well-being of individual pupils and of any class or group of pupils assigned to him  73.2.2 providing guidance and advice to pupils on educational and social matters and on their further education and future careers...	[Teachers] enable [children and young people] to get the most out of life and develop the knowledge, skills and attributes for adulthood – so their can achieve their potential as fulfilled individuals and make a positive contribution to society while staying safe and healthy
73.5.1 reviewing from time to time his methods of teaching and programmes of work  73.5.2 participating in arrangements for his further training and professional development	[Teachers] take responsibility for their continuing professional development  [Teachers] reflect on their own practice, develop their skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapt their teaching appropriately to take account of effective about effective practice...
73.7 maintaining good order and discipline among the pupils and safeguarding their health and safety both when they are authorised to be on the school premises and when they are engaged in authorised school activities elsewhere	Teachers inspire and lead children and young people to learn in and beyond the classroom  They use their expertise to create safe, secure and stimulating learning environments
73.2.4 communicating and consulting with the parents of pupils	[Teachers] recognise the key role that parents and carers play in children's education. They seek to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support the young person's learning and well-being in and out of school

18. There are also areas which feature in one document but not explicitly in the other. For example, the GTCE statement makes reference to:

- commitment to equality of opportunity
- standards of personal behaviour befitting the professional status of teachers, modelling desirable qualities (enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of intellectual enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience, and a genuine concern for other people)
- high expectations of all
- sharing expertise and learning with and from others in the children's workforce

19. Among issues covered in the STPCD that do not feature explicitly in the GTCE statement are:

- administration (with reference to what may and may not routinely be required of teachers)
- working, planning, preparation and assessment (PPA), and management time
- staff meetings
- cover
- external examinations

20. Neither the teaching standards nor the GTCE Statement address matters of deployment (e.g. attending assemblies; cover); only the STPCD does so and it may be here that the distinctive contribution of the STPCD lies. It is for those whose interest is in the deployment of human resources to judge the extent to which these deployment specifications are a continuing requirement in the current era of professionalism. We take from the RIG submission that there is a shared conviction that national parameters are essential in this respect.

### **Concluding remarks**

21. The STRB has posed the question of whether the professional duties section of the STPCD adds value to a range of other descriptions of teachers' professional duties. The GTCE's view is that the STPCD is the only description that deals in detail with the *deployment* of teachers, as distinct from values and behaviours (GTCE's code of conduct and statement of values and practice), or skills and knowledge (Secretary of State's standards for teaching).

22. It is not for the GTCE to adjudicate on the nature or locus of descriptions of teachers' work that inform human resources management and industrial relations at the school and authority level, although the proper conduct of our regulatory work depends on those processes being as robust and effective as they can be.

23. The GTCE does have an interest and a stake in ensuring that taken in the round descriptions of teachers' work meet the range of legitimate interests in teaching quality, including the public interest. The Council is also concerned that descriptions of teachers' work have credibility and resonance with teachers themselves, to maximise the chance that they will be used to inform and enhance effective practice, rather than constrain and impede it.

**August 2006**