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DFE REVIEW OF TEACHERS' STANDARDS PHASE 2

CALL FOR EVIDENCE SUBMISSION FORM

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Organisation (if applicable): Cambridge Primary Review

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Do you wish this submission to remain confidential: No

The new Teachers' Standards published on 14 July can be viewed at <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/t/teachers%20standards.pdf>

<p>Question 1: Is there a need to develop additional standards for teachers beyond those published by the Department for Education on 14 July 2011? (Please add further comment in the box below)</p>	<p>Neither 'yes' nor 'no': there is a need for <i>an additional statement</i>, relating to the qualities of teaching which is better than merely competent, but not for additional standards as such.</p>
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The equivocal answer above is explained below. We want something, but not the continuation of the current model, which the evidence received and reported by the Cambridge Primary Review (CPR) shows to be conceptually flawed and empirically unsafe. **To understand the position we are taking in the responses below, the standards review needs to be aware of the CPR's evidence on / critique of the existing standards and its exploration of what 'expertise' for (primary) teaching entails. This appears on pp 408-419 of *Children, their World, their Education: final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review* (Routledge, 2010). We include relevant extracts from this report, which arises from the most comprehensive and thoroughly researched enquiry into English primary education for half a century, under 'additional comments' below.**

Question 2: What characteristics over and above the standards published on 14 July should the best classroom teachers have?

This presumes that we are happy with the post-QTS standards published on 14 July, which we are only up to a point. The emphasis on high expectations, assessing and being accountable for pupil progress, subject knowledge, planning, behaviour, feedback and so on are all apt – and indeed some of them are expressed in terms which are very close to what

the CPR itself has proposed. However, in as far as any statement of standards should be firmly rooted in research and other evidence about the characteristics of effective teaching at a given stage of professional development, the standards to be adopted from September 2012 fall short in three significant respects:

1. Section 3 rightly emphasises subject knowledge. However, there is an important distinction between knowledge of a subject in its mature form, in the kind of depth that gives the teacher the necessary command, flexibility and enthusiasm which are prerequisites for teaching, and what Shulman calls 'pedagogical content knowledge', which is knowledge of what is to be taught in the classroom. The latter is rooted not only in 'subject knowledge' in the first sense, but also in that vital knowledge of learners, their development and their learning which mediates and shapes decisions about what should be taught, how it should be structured, sequenced, presented and so on. Both versions of what the published standards call 'subject knowledge' are essential.

As the attached extract from the CPR final report explains, in other countries this distinction is better understood than in the UK through the emphasis given in teacher training and development to what is called 'didactics'. In Germany this has four subdivisions and in most other countries at least two (e.g. in France, *savoir savant*, scholarly knowledge and *savoir enseigné*, taught knowledge). Good teaching requires curriculum/pedagogical content knowledge to be firmly grounded in this wider and deeper framework, otherwise the teacher merely keeps a few steps ahead of the pupils. The latter is a particular risk in primary schools because of the dominance of the generalist classteacher system which makes it unlikely that teachers will have equal command of everything they teach.

For all teachers, but especially for those defined as 'expert' or 'advanced skills', those undertaking curriculum leadership roles, and those working with trainee teachers in teaching schools and school-UDE partnerships, subject knowledge in this deeper and more rigorous sense is absolutely essential. It is particularly critical in the context of curriculum leadership in primary schools.

2. The curriculum knowledge defined in section 3 starts and ends with the 'relevant subjects and curriculum areas'. What does this mean? Those subjects made statutory by the current national curriculum review? Other subjects that schools choose to teach? Those subjects which arguably should be in the curriculum but are not, because they are neither statutory nor, in schools x or y, made available to the pupils? 'Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge' begs too many questions. Again, we can get just about get away with 'relevant subjects and curriculum areas' for NQTs, but it this is a wholly inadequate specification for teachers those teachers who have leadership, support or mentoring/training roles.

In its recommendation to the Secretary of State for a review of primary schools' curriculum capacity (a recommendation which the Secretary of State has acted on, and which has implications for phase 2 of the standards review), the CPR distinguishes between '(i) a school's ability to teach to the highest possible standard ... each aspect of the curriculum which its pupils encounter, and (ii) a school's ability to discuss, conceive and develop the curriculum with the rigour that such matters demand.' About both capacities the CPR final report expressed concern.

The DfE standards review has registered the importance of the first of these but not the second, yet the CPR found that 'curriculum debate, and thus curriculum practice, are weakened by a muddled and reductive discourse about subjects, knowledge and skills. Discussion of the place of subjects is needlessly polarised; knowledge is parodied as grubbing for obsolete facts; and the undeniably important notion of skill is inflated to cover aspects of learning for which it is not appropriate' [CPR final report, p 493]. Indeed, we are hearing a great deal of this 'muddled and reductive discourse' at present, in the vacuum created by the national curriculum review. Much is made of 'the skills-based curriculum' and/or 'the creative curriculum' but the thinking behind these, where there is any, is notably woolly.

In the context of the new curriculum freedoms offered by the Secretary of State, it is essential that this deficiency in the new NQT/core standards be attended to as quickly as possible.

3. In the draft of section of the September 2012 standards that dealt with classroom practice (section 4) there was a brief reference to teachers' classroom questioning. Fortunately, for this gave the impression that questioning for recall is the only interactive skill that teachers need, this did not appear in the final version. However, what thereby also disappeared was all mention of what research shows to be one of the true fundamentals of effective teaching: high quality classroom interaction - between teachers and pupils and among pupils themselves - which 'engages pupils' attention and interest, stimulates and extends their thinking, advances their learning and understanding, and helps the teacher more precisely to diagnose pupils' needs, frame their learning tasks and assess their progress ... Such talk is not just about the mechanics of questioning, explaining or instructing: it is about making cognitive demands on pupils, getting pupils – in Martin Nystrand's words - to think for themselves rather than merely report the thinking of others. Properly undertaken, such talk is grounded in research on the relationship between language, learning, thinking and understanding, and in observational evidence on what makes teaching truly effective.' (Alexander 2008).

This last omission is unacceptable in any statement of professional standards for teaching, but it is particularly unfortunate for standards relating to experienced teachers, because research shows that interaction of the kind characterised above is one of the key attributes differentiating the best teachers from the rest (more on this below). This too ought to be attended to in phase 2 of the standards review.

Question 3: Are standards the best way to identify higher level characteristics in teachers? (Please add further comment in the box below)	Yes but in this case no.
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An equivocal answer again, explained below.

Assuming that the review finds ways to refine the published September 2012 standards as proposed above, I would argue as follows:

The existing (i.e. TDA) higher level standards appear to be premised on the notion that excellent and advanced skills teachers have pretty well the same competencies as NQTs only more so; or that development is a matter of degree rather than real qualitative change. This means, as the CPR has pointed out, that in some cases exactly the same statement is used for teachers at different developmental levels, which as a basis for evaluating performance, let alone for determining promotion or remuneration, is no use at all.

The assumption that professional development is merely a matter of degree is incorrect - evidence shows that outstanding teachers think and act in ways which can be very different from beginning or merely competent teachers - so the existing higher level standards are neither safe nor easily usable.

Properly undertaken, differentiating developmental levels in terms of statements which are sufficiently distinct and graduated to be meaningful is complex and difficult. It is true that experience from the United States and Australia shows that the task *is* possible, though it takes much more time and more extensive resources than the present standards review has at its disposal (see for example, the US Greensboro study referred to in the attached CPR final report extract, which has been validated against student learning outcomes). However, the parameters of the present review are as they are, there is little time and – particularly unsatisfactory – the standards appear in draft for comment but they are not rigorously trialled and tested against measures of teacher development or pupil progress and attainment. Instead, they progress from draft through user group comment to DfE requirement, without the vital stage of validation.

So, mindful of these unsatisfactory realities, I would recommend:

1. The September 2012 standards should serve as a basic statement for all teachers regardless of career stage, *subject to the remedial action on subject knowledge, curriculum understanding and classroom interaction proposed above in order that the standards have somewhat greater validity in relation to evidence about effective teaching.*
2. What is needed in place of the currently separate standards for 'post-threshold', 'excellent' and 'advanced skills' teachers is a statement which raises the bar of *excellence* as high as possible - that is, it doesn't bother with intermediate steps - and does so by identifying the characteristics that research shows differentiate the very best teachers from the rest. The extract from the CPR's *Children, their World, their Education* spells out some of these characteristics and the point is developed at (3) below.
3. In place of the current higher level standards I'd simply propose the following statement, or something like it. I cannot stress too strongly my belief that it will be much more useful to set the bar high in this way than to struggle to produce graduated steps to excellence in which the destination reads not that differently from the starting point, especially as the current standards review has not allowed time or resources for proper validation.

Note of caution: not all teachers have what it takes to become exceptional. Exceptional teachers are also exceptional people. Nevertheless, so as to provide something that all can aspire to, here is my proposed statement:

i. With our best teachers, mastery of the attributes listed in the government's standards for introduction in September 2012 can be taken for granted. Our best

teachers not only possess all of these attributes; they also exhibit a command of them that is confident, fluent and secure.

- ii. **But unlike those beginning or competent teachers who depend heavily on others for their ideas and whose teaching can therefore appear formulaic, no two outstanding teachers are outstanding in the same way. Research shows that outstanding teachers operate in ways which are distinct and even idiosyncratic, and that having mastered the foundational skills of teaching, and the knowledge in which these skills are grounded, such teachers are able to put a very personal stamp on what they do. In this idiosyncrasy, this easy melding of the person and the professional, lies much of their capacity to engage and inspire their pupils. These are the teachers we remember. These are the teachers who don't just deliver what is required. Truly outstanding teachers push well beyond the boundaries of the safe and familiar and they take risks, thereby transforming their teaching. In the process they also transform the lives of their pupils.**
- iii. **Yet research also shows that alongside this easy command of the knowledge and skills of effective teaching, and the unique personality with which they imbue their work, what all outstanding teachers share is: (i) a deep and ever-expanding understanding of what is to be taught, and the infectious enthusiasm that accompanies and animates that understanding; (ii) the capacity to orchestrate classroom interaction – between teacher and pupils and among the pupils themselves – which is cognitively challenging yet instantly engages and is always inclusive and sensitive; (iii) analytical and interactive skill in monitoring, assessing and providing feedback on pupils' learning, not just in occasional formal assessment activities but as an intrinsic aspect of their teaching.**
- iv. **Outstanding teachers can do something else. Liberated by the hard work they have put into their development over the years, they have the repertoire to respond effectively to a wide range of challenges and circumstances; and in each case they know exactly what they are doing and why. They do not act as they do because others require them to, or in response to the latest fad, *but because they know what they do to be right and have evidence to back their certainty.* Adapting the words of the Cambridge Primary Review final report (recommendation 60): 'Our best teachers, like our best doctors, have as much command of the evidence, principles, aims and values underpinning their practice as their do of the skills that the practice requires. The test of their expertise is that if challenged, such teachers - again like good doctors - are able to give a coherent justification for their decisions, citing evidence, principle and aim, rather than falling back on slogans or offering the unsafe defence of compliance with what others expect.'**

[In view of the parallels currently being drawn between teaching schools and teaching hospitals, we believe this comparison to be doubly apt].

Question 4: What are the areas of professional practice that contribute most to developing good teaching?

See above

Question 5: If there are areas of practice that are not already covered in the new Teachers' Standards, should these be identified through additional standards? (If yes, please specify in the box below)

Yes and no.

Yes: more work is needed on the published September 2012 QTS and Core standards as proposed under Q1 above.

No: in place of further standards on the existing model there should be a single statement, such as that proposed under Q3 above, which sets out some of the characteristics of outstanding teachers and provides a vision to which others can aspire. The current bar, in the listed standards for ASTs, is simply not high enough.

Please make any additional comments in the box below

The extract from the Cambridge Primary Review final report referred to at Q1 is attached. The electronic form would not permit it to be cut and pasted.

This form should be completed electronically, saved and returned by email to TeacherStandards.REVIEW@education.gsi.gov.uk