

Teachers and performance management: one year on. (Provisional results)

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A personal apology to all the teachers who replied to the questionnaire.

I had planned to carry out the first analysis of the questionnaire results during August and September this year, before I took over as head of department. Unfortunately, the data processing company that entered the questionnaire results onto the computer let us down very badly, and I did not have the final data files from them until November – having dispatched all the questionnaires for processing in July. By then, I was submerged under all the teaching and administrative duties that those of you responded know only too well.

All I can do is to offer my apologies for the delay, and hope that these initial results will be of interest. I shall undertake further analyses in the near future, and shall also post these on the web site.

I should of course be interested in any comments that you have, and can be contacted at: d.marsden@lse.ac.uk

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Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Applications for the Threshold	2
3. Views of the Green Paper pay system one year on	2
3.1 The new pay system as a whole	3
3.2 The threshold	3
3.3 The Upper Pay Scale: linking pay with performance	4
3.4 The School Achievement Award	5
4. Mentoring, objective setting, and feedback	5
5. Approach to the Threshold in different schools	6
6. How has Performance Management affected teachers' own work	7
7. Commitment to one's school	8
8. Which groups are seen as sharing the same interests as teachers on PM	8
9. Team leaders' and Heads' views about impact of PM on their schools	9
10. Further work	10
11. References and other CEP work on performance pay	11

1. Introduction

During the academic year 2000-01, a new system of performance management was introduced in primary and secondary schools in England and Wales. It comprises three key elements: Performance Reviews for all teachers; the 'Threshold' designed to give experienced teachers access to a new Upper Pay Scale along which further pay increments are performance related and linked to the Performance Review; and a School Achievement Award.

This paper reports the first results of the second wave of the CEP's study. The first wave took place in February-March 2000, seeking teachers' views of performance management before the introduction of the new system. The second wave was carried out in May-June 2001. By that date all teachers who had applied to pass the Threshold would have been informed of the result, and most schools would have had time to organise feedback to the teachers concerned.

'Health warning': The sample comprises all those who replied to the first survey and who gave their contact addresses for the follow-up survey. The response to wave 2 amounts to about 50% of that for wave 1, about 2,000 replies from class teachers, and about 400 from head teachers. In a later analysis, I shall compare the replies of the 'matched sample' in which I compare the replies of the same individuals. A second caveat for comparisons between these results for wave 2 and those shown last year is that the latter include schools in Wales. The implementation of the Threshold in Wales was delayed, and so wave 2 for Wales has been postponed until teachers there have the full results of their own applications. Finally, as in all surveys, a considerable amount of checking needs to be undertaken before final results are ready for publication. Often the difference between the provisional and the final results is not great, and the provisional results can be of great interest and use to those involved in the implementation of the new system, either as teachers or as managers. Nevertheless, there remains a margin of uncertainty surrounding the provisional results shown here. Final results will be published later on this website.

2. Applications for the Threshold

Of those who responded to the survey, just over two thirds had applied for the Threshold, and 97% were successful. This is in line with the findings of other research. Many of those who did not apply replied that they had not been eligible. About three quarters of the respondents had already had an objective setting meeting with their head or team leader, and most of those who had not, expected to do so within the next twelve months.

3. Views of the Green Paper pay system one year on

The results of the first wave of the study, published on this website last year, and also in a CEP Discussion Paper 'Teachers before the Threshold' showed there was widespread scepticism as to the merits of the new system, and uncertainty as to how it would work in practice.

3.1 The new pay system as a whole

Disagreement with the principle of linking pay to performance remains widespread among classroom teachers (Table 1). However, since its implementation, there has been some softening of opposition to the principle, and the minority of teachers believing it right to take some account of pupil progress has grown. Nevertheless, a majority still see the new system as a device to get more work out of teachers, and the great majority believe the whole exercise was bureaucratic. On the latter point, about paperwork, head teachers shared the same view.

Table 1. Attitudes to the new system: before and after implementation, and comparing classroom and head teachers.

	<i>Class</i>	<i>Class</i>	Class	Class	Head	Head
	<i>Wave 1</i>	<i>Wave 1</i>	Wave 2	Wave 2	Wave 2	Wave 2
	<i>Disagree %</i>	<i>Agree %</i>	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %
The principle of relating teachers' pay to performance is a good one.	<i>63</i>	<i>24</i>	54	32	30	51
The principle that individual teachers' pay should take some account of pupil progress is a good one.	<i>57</i>	<i>25</i>	54	49	27	60
The new pay system is designed to raise pupil achievements.	<i>58</i>	<i>14</i>	53	25	25	49
For all that is said about pupil attainments, the new pay system is simply a device to get more work done.	<i>15</i>	<i>53</i>	15	56	41	23
The Threshold did not involve any unreasonable paperwork or administration	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	85	5	86	7

Note: Percentages relate to respondents to each question, and do not show 'neutrals' and 'don't knows'. Wave 1: February-March 2000; Wave 2 May-June 2001. When comparing waves 1 and 2 see 'health warning' in the introduction.

Among head teachers, the general balance of views is somewhat more positive, but a significant minority has strong reservations about the new pay system for classroom teachers.

3.2 The threshold

Implementation of the Threshold has also brought some change in beliefs about the perceived rewards associated with it. The rewards appear slightly more appreciated than before, perhaps because there was scepticism earlier as to how many teachers would pass the Threshold on the first round. This is particularly notable in the decline in the numbers who believe there is a quota on numbers passing the Threshold (Table 2).

Nevertheless, a majority of respondents still believes that the higher pay levels do not go far enough if they are to retain people in teaching. The one fifth who still believe the Threshold will be subject to quotas reflects underlying uncertainty as to how the scheme will operate in the future, and the fear that the first year of operation will not be typical of subsequent years.

Table 2. Views of pay levels associated with the threshold before and after.

	Wave 1	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 2
	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %
The higher levels of pay above the Threshold mean that good teaching is rewarded at last.	52	25	39	37
The salary levels above the Threshold are too low to make me want to work harder in order to get them.	16	34	22	38
The Threshold has caused resentment among teachers who feel they already meet the standards but are not eligible to apply.	(4)*	(86)*	15	64
The higher pay levels above the Threshold make it more attractive for me to remain a teacher.	54	22	53	23
Introducing the Threshold has had no effect on the quality of my work because it is already at the appropriate standard.	4	81	2	92
Many excellent teachers will not apply for the Threshold because there is certain to be a quota on places available.	4	79	45	21

Note: Percentages relate to respondents to each question, and do not show 'neutrals' and 'don't knows'.

* Question differently phrased in wave 1 and wave 2.

3.3 The Upper Pay Scale: linking pay with performance

Despite continued scepticism that linking pay to performance the Upper Pay Scale would lead to a fairer allocation of pay, and persistent doubts about its linking to the Performance Review, there was a modest shift to a more favourable (less unfavourable) position (Table 3). Likewise, fewer teachers thought managers would use the Review to reward their favourites. However, it is worrying that, even after a year in which nearly all who applied passed the Threshold, so many should think favouritism a problem, and the percentage considering an appeals procedure necessary was unchanged.

Table 3. The link between pay and the Performance Review.

	Wave 1	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 2
	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %
Linking pay with the Performance Review will result in a fairer allocation of pay.	70	11	68	16
The link will undermine my confidence in the Review.	14	56	24	46
The link will make me take the Review more seriously.	47	22	43	28
The link is problematic because it is hard to relate the work done in schools to individual performance.	4	89	9	82
Managers will use Performance Review to reward their favourites.	15	52	26	39
An appeals procedure will be needed to ensure the Performance Review is operated fairly.	2	86	2	86

Note: Percentages relate to respondents to each question, and do not show 'neutrals' and 'don't knows'.

3.4 The School Achievement Award

As with the other comparisons between the two waves of the survey, for the School Achievement Award, the tense of the questions changes from the future to the present for judgements about its merits (Table 4). Greater knowledge about its operation has led more to believe it fails to encourage team working. Now less feel it would be better to spend the award on more school facilities rather than distribute it as a bonus. One factor behind this view may be that about two fifths of those replying thought some staff in their school never do more than the basic requirements of their jobs whereas many of those responding work very long hours during term time.

Table 4. The School Achievement Award: before and after

	<i>Wave 1</i>	<i>Wave 1</i>	Wave 2	Wave 2
	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	Disagree	Agree
	%	%	%	%
The opportunity to gain the Award encourages team working in my school.	39	34	51	16
It would be better to spend the award on more facilities for the school than distribute it as a bonus.	30	45	39	36
It would be unfair to distribute the award equally between all the staff in a school because some never do more than the basic requirements of their jobs.	33	40	32	43

Note: Percentages relate to respondents to each question, and do not show 'neutrals' and 'don't knows'.

4. Mentoring, objective setting, and feedback

The regulations for the Threshold applications are quite specific about procedures for applying and for feedback, and about how schools should set objectives.

There is some evidence that the new pay system has made schools' management more conscious of its role in defining teachers' objectives and relating them to those of the school. Although most teachers and heads may be committed to good education for the children in their charge, scarce resources mean that priorities need to be defined. Objective setting, when well done, can help to ensure that individual teachers aim at objectives that fit with the priorities of their schools.

In the majority of cases, the Threshold was carried out using mentors to advise teachers, and information from the school's PANDA was used (Table 5). This suggests that at least one aspect of the new system was functioning: that schools have been linking the objectives of individual teachers to those of their schools, and beginning to establish a dialogue around this.

It seems too that in nearly all cases in our sample, objectives were set by discussion with management, and individual teachers felt they had the opportunity to influence these, and were able to agree them (Table 6). The research literature on objective setting stresses the importance of employees agreeing their objectives with their management if the process is to lead to better or different performance. This then would seem to be a positive outcome for the new performance management system. Perhaps too one should not worry too much about the schools without all the formal

procedures for mentoring and feedback as many small schools may do things just as effectively but in an informal manner. It is possible too that many did not feel it worth bothering about feedback once they knew the application had been successful.

Nevertheless, on there were several items on the negative side. Providing incentives for performance is partly about objective setting motivation, but also, partly about the organisation providing the resources so that employees can improve their performance. Here, the lack of resources in schools could well undermine the new pay system's ability to raise or reorient schools' performance. If schools were good at dialogue, most teachers thought they failed to provide adequate attention to teachers' further professional development (Table 5).

Table 5. Procedures for applying for the Threshold and feedback for teachers.

Threshold applications	Yes	No
Was there someone in the school available to advise or 'mentor' your application?	70	28
Was information made available to you from the school's PANDA, School Improvement Plan or similar documents?	91	7
Was your application successful on this occasion?	97	2
Did you receive feedback from your head teacher when you were informed of the result?	43	55
If yes, did this feedback:		
fully take account of the nature of your position in the school?	70	25
give clear reasons for the result?	74	23
help you identify areas for your further professional development?	45	51

Table 6. Setting objectives for individual teachers

Thinking about how your objectives were established:	Yes	No
Did you have the opportunity to discuss them with your team leader?	95	4
Could you influence which objectives were chosen?	93	7
Did you agree them with your team leader?	94	5
Do the objectives take a fair account of your current performance?	88	8

5. Approach to the Threshold in different schools

The reasons for the lack of feedback and attention to professional development may be due to the general approach taken in schools to treat the Threshold simply as a way to get teachers more pay (Table 7). Many head teachers were of the same view. This was indeed the carrot that the government held out to teachers, and was no doubt an important factor in weakening opposition among teachers and some of their unions to the new pay system.

Table 7 Approach to the Threshold in schools

	Classroom teachers		Head teachers	
In your school, would you say the Threshold process was:	Yes	No	Yes	No
Treated mainly as a way to ensure teachers in your school get their pay increase?	73	19	69	11
Used as a means to make staff better informed about objectives within the school?	18	74	44	34
Used to help better identify teachers' professional development needs?	26	66	54	29
The cause of divisions between management and staff?	22	67	12	71

The replies for classroom and head teachers are very similar over use of the Threshold to secure the pay increase, as they were over divisiveness. On the other hand, differences were greater over objectives, as more head teachers thought the Threshold helped inform staff about their school's objectives, and they diverged sharply over professional needs which classroom teachers felt were neglected. The reasons for this difference of perceptions will need to be explored more fully in a late analysis of the results.

6. How has Performance Management affected teachers' own work

Turning to the effects on some aspects of performance, a significant minority, about a quarter of the sample, consider that performance management has increased their awareness of the school's targets as set in the School Improvement Plan. Two fifths think that PM has made team managers set work targets more clearly, and it seems that the great majority of teachers believe their managers know enough about their own work to identify poor performance. Compared with the CEP's evidence for other parts of the public services, this is a remarkably high percentage.

In contrast, performance management is believed to have provided little by way of direct incentives to teachers to alter their performance, by showing more initiative, or to work beyond job requirements. It may be that teachers feel they already do this in abundance.

Table 8. Effects on performance

	Disagree %	Agree %
Performance Management has made me more aware of the targets set in the School Improvement Plan.	47	26
PM has reduced my wish to co-operate with management	60	9
PM has made me want to show more initiative in my job	56	12
Even if my performance is good enough, I doubt if the school can afford to reward me with a pay rise.	18	57
PM has made team leaders and managers set work targets more clearly	29	42
Managers/team leaders in my school know enough about the work of their staff to identify poor performance	16	73
Linking pay with performance will give me more incentive to work beyond the requirements of my job	77	8

Note: Percentages relate to respondents to each question, and do not show 'neutrals' and 'don't knows'.

7. Commitment to one's school

School teachers score very highly compared with other occupational groups on commitment to the organisation for which they work. Despite the strains of the past year, commitment seems to remain very strong. Nevertheless, there appears to be a growing willingness to leave one's school for a better paid job in another school, and an increased awareness that this is an option. In view of the widely publicised recruitment difficulties, it would be surprising if more teachers did not think on these lines.

Table 9. Organisational commitment among teachers.

	<i>Wave 1</i>	<i>Wave 1</i>	Wave 2	Wave 2
	<i>Disagree %</i>	<i>Agree %</i>	Disagree %	Agree %
I feel quite proud to be able to tell people that I work at my current school	<i>10</i>	<i>69</i>	14	64
I feel myself to be a part of my current school	<i>4</i>	<i>89</i>	5	87
To know that my own work had made a contribution to the good of my school would please me	<i>0</i>	<i>98</i>	1	95
In my work, I like to feel that I am making an effort not just for myself but for my school	<i>1</i>	<i>94</i>	2	91
Even if my school were in serious financial difficulty, I would be reluctant to change to another school	<i>17</i>	<i>61</i>	24	55
The offer of a bit more money at another school would not seriously make me think of changing school	<i>19</i>	<i>64</i>	26	56
I can always get a similar job in another school if I want to	<i>27</i>	<i>44</i>	21	50

8. Which groups are seen as sharing the same interests as teachers on PM

Who teachers see as being on 'their side' with performance management is important for understanding who is seen as best capable of speaking on their behalf. Bearing in mind these results are provisional, it seems that the broad picture has not changed

much. Other teachers in one's school, those in one's profession, and the teachers' unions have remained far ahead of the other groups, at least in the eyes of our respondents.

One of the most interesting changes, albeit moderate, is that the number of teachers replying 'it is hard to say' about their school's governors and its leadership group has declined, and there has been a polarisation between schools where teachers see their governors and the leadership group as 'on the same side' and those where they do not. For governors, the percentages in 2000 were 23% and 14%, and for the leadership group, 54% and 17%.

Table 10. Who shares teachers' interests over PM?

When considering the implementation of PM, which groups do you feel share broadly the same interests as yourself? <i>(Please circle)</i>	<i>Broadly the same</i>	<i>Mostly different</i>	<i>It's hard to say</i>
Your school's governors	30.4	20.4	49.3
The leadership group/management team in your school	60.2	21.0	18.8
Other teachers in your school	84.0	4.7	11.3
Other teachers in your union or professional association	66.9	5.2	27.9
Your union or professional association	61.9	8.6	29.5
Your LEA	17.2	25.4	57.4
The DfEE	13.1	40.9	46.0

9. Team leaders' and Heads' views about impact of PM on their schools

One of the less publicised goals of performance management has been to improve management within schools. Some moves in this direction can be seen in the replies by team leaders and head teachers. Almost half in each category thought PM had made teachers in their schools more aware of their School Improvement Plan; many thought it had caused teachers to think more systematically about their work priorities; and many thought PM had increased the importance of middle management in their schools.

Table 11. Effects of PM on management in schools

	Team Leaders		Head teachers	
	Disagree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree %
Performance management has made more teachers aware of the school's objectives in the School Improvement Plan	32	46	23	49
Performance management has caused many teachers to increase the quantity of work they do	43	34	42	24
Performance management has made many teachers less willing to cooperate with management in the school	48	18	77	3
Performance management has caused teachers to think more systematically about their work priorities	34	37	21	43
Performance management has increased the importance of middle management in my school.	35	40	15	64

One important element in the Threshold system has been the external assessors whose role has been to ensure common standards across schools. On the whole, these were regarded positively by head teachers, although it should be noted that research by Ted Wragg of Exeter University seems to show that heads' initial judgements were only very rarely overturned by the assessors (The Guardian 14/07/2001).

Table 12. Head teacher views on external assessment.

Relationship with the external assessor	Disagree %	Agree %
The external assessors are needed to ensure common standards for the Threshold across all schools.	23	63
The criteria applied by the external assessors were inappropriate to the needs of my school.	68	12
The presence of the external assessors has helped me reach fair judgements on teachers applying for the Threshold.	41	36

10. Further work

Seven preliminary conclusions emerge from this first, provisional, analysis:

- Some of the early opposition to the principle of linking pay to performance, and to pupil progress appears to have abated slightly;
- The new performance management system does not appear to have had a major effect on teachers' motivation to perform well;
- Teachers remain highly committed to their schools;
- Despite the very high success rate at the Threshold, many still believe there is a quota;
- On the whole, it has not proved divisive and caused reduced cooperation with management within schools;
- It appears to assist communication between management and staff over school and work objectives;
- It has enhanced the role of middle management within schools.

It should be stressed that these results are provisional pending further work on response patterns. Much work remains to be done, notably, further analysis will be undertaken on:

- Methodological checks on data reliability;
- Exploration of how responses to PM differ between different types of schools;
- Comparison based on those who responded to both surveys to see how their views changed in relation to PM (using the matched sample);
- Analyse the replies of head teachers in greater detail as to the effects of PM on their schools.

As these analyses are completed, they will be posted on the website, and eventually come out at CEP Discussion Papers.

11. References and other CEP work on performance pay

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* Available to be downloaded from the CEP website: www.cep.lse.ac.uk