

# How does receiving a negative Ofsted grade affect the teacher workforce?



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What's behind the teacher workforce crisis? A look at current challenges and future solutions

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## Improvement

- Acting as a catalyst for change (Allen and Burgess 2012) and speeding recovery (Stark 2004; Mathews and Sammons 2004).
- Providing tough penalties for those schools that do not comply (Amrein-Beardsly 2014)
- Providing external pressure and support (Jas and Skelcher 2005)

## Decline

- Lowering teacher morale and increasing feelings of impotence (Stoll and Myers 2002; Nicolaidou and Ainscow 2005)
- Increasing teacher mobility, stress and burnout (Perryman 2010)
- Weakening school ethos (Jeffrey and Woods 1998; Elton and Male 2015)
- Narrowing the curriculum to focus on tested subjects at the expense of other subjects and activities (Ehren and Shackleton 2016)

# HOW DOES CONSISTENTLY RECEIVING NEGATIVE OFSTED GRADES AFFECT THE TEACHER WORKFORCE?



## MIXED-METHODS DESIGN

### Quantitative methods

**Sample:** 580 primary and secondary ‘stuck’ public schools **continuously judged by Ofsted to be less than good over a minimum of 3 inspections over more than a decade** (From September 2005 to August 2018)

**Data:** Ofsted management information records, School performance, value-added progress and pupil demographics; School workforce teacher data (School Workforce Census), School governance and location data (Get Information About Schools); DfE academy and sponsor pipeline and School finance data on income and expenditure

**Analysis:** Propensity score matching, Cluster analysis and Path analysis

### Qualitative methods

**Sample:** Ten ‘stuck’ schools (five ‘stuck’ primary schools and five ‘stuck’ secondary schools) and six comparison ‘un-stuck’ schools (three comparison ‘un-stuck’ primary schools and three comparison ‘un-stuck’ secondary schools). ‘Stuck’ from 2005 to 2018; good between 2019 and 2021

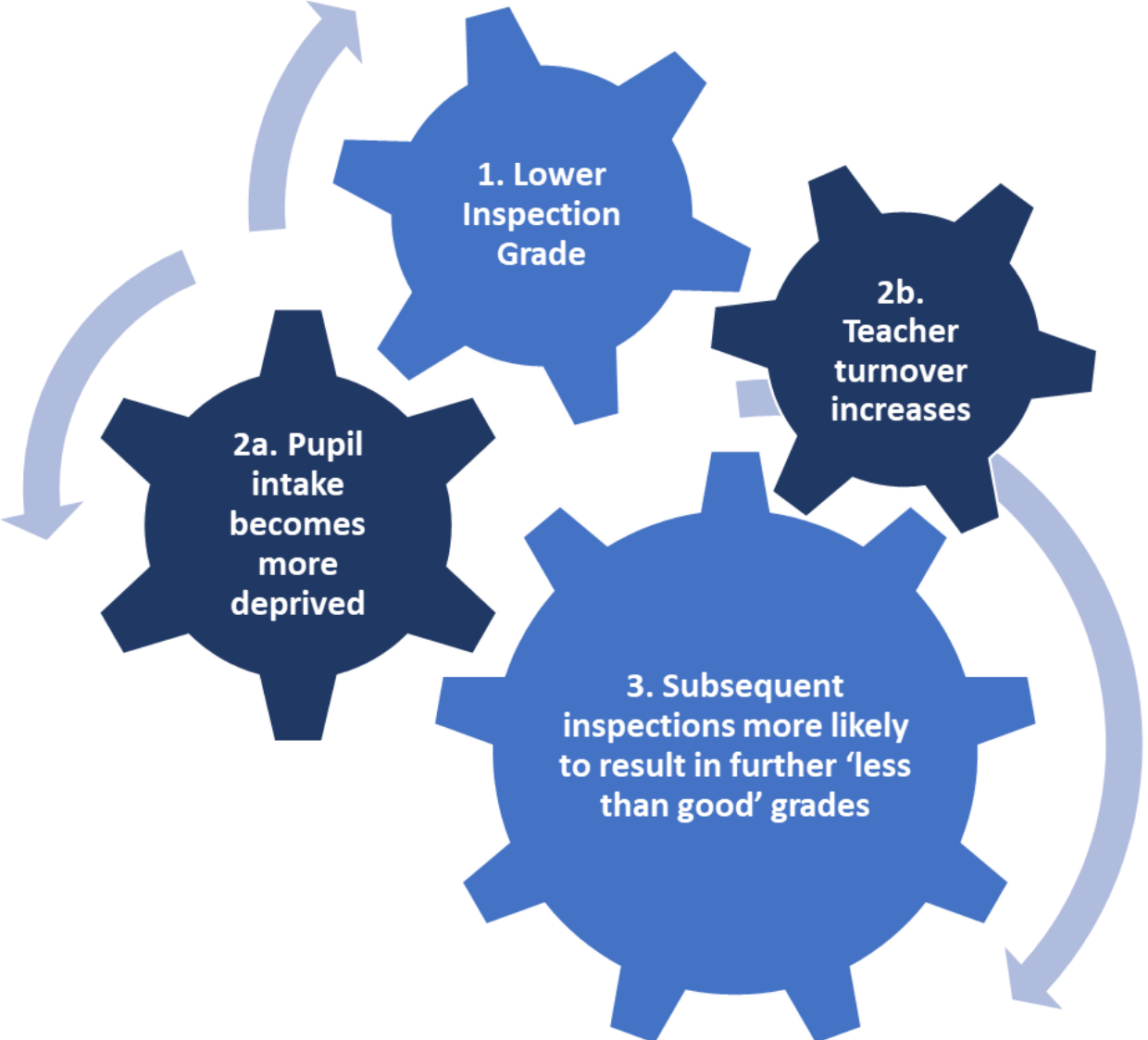
**Data:** 56 interviews and focus groups with headteachers, teachers, and governors; 166 documents

**Analysis:** Historic document analysis and thematic analysis

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS: PATH ANALYSIS REVEALED TWO NEGATIVE CYCLES THAT  
INDIRECTLY INCREASE TEACHER TURNOVER: PUPIL INTAKE



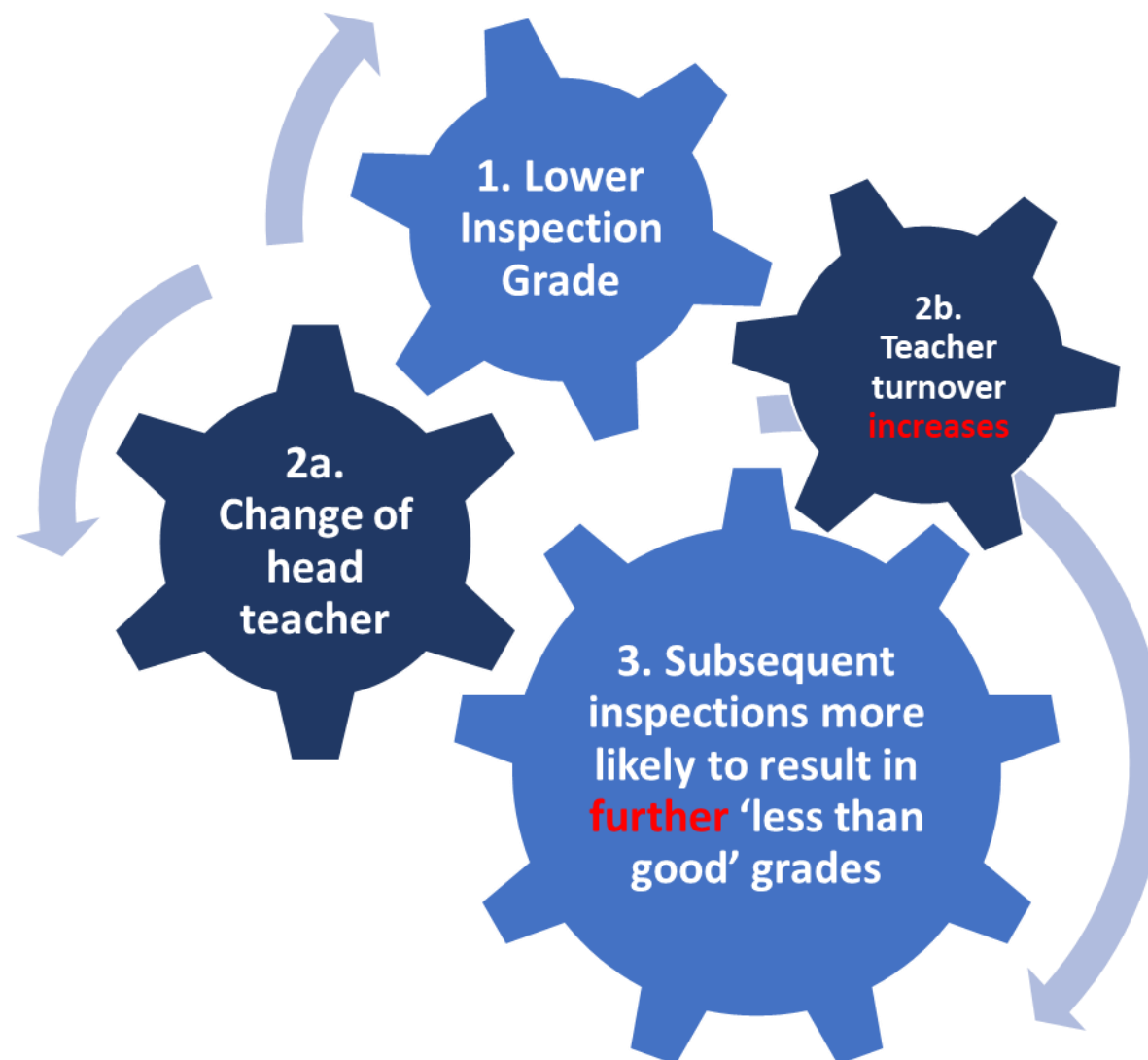
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# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS: PATH ANALYSIS REVEALED TWO NEGATIVE CYCLES THAT INDIRECTLY INCREASE TEACHER TURNOVER: CHANGE OF HEADTEACHER



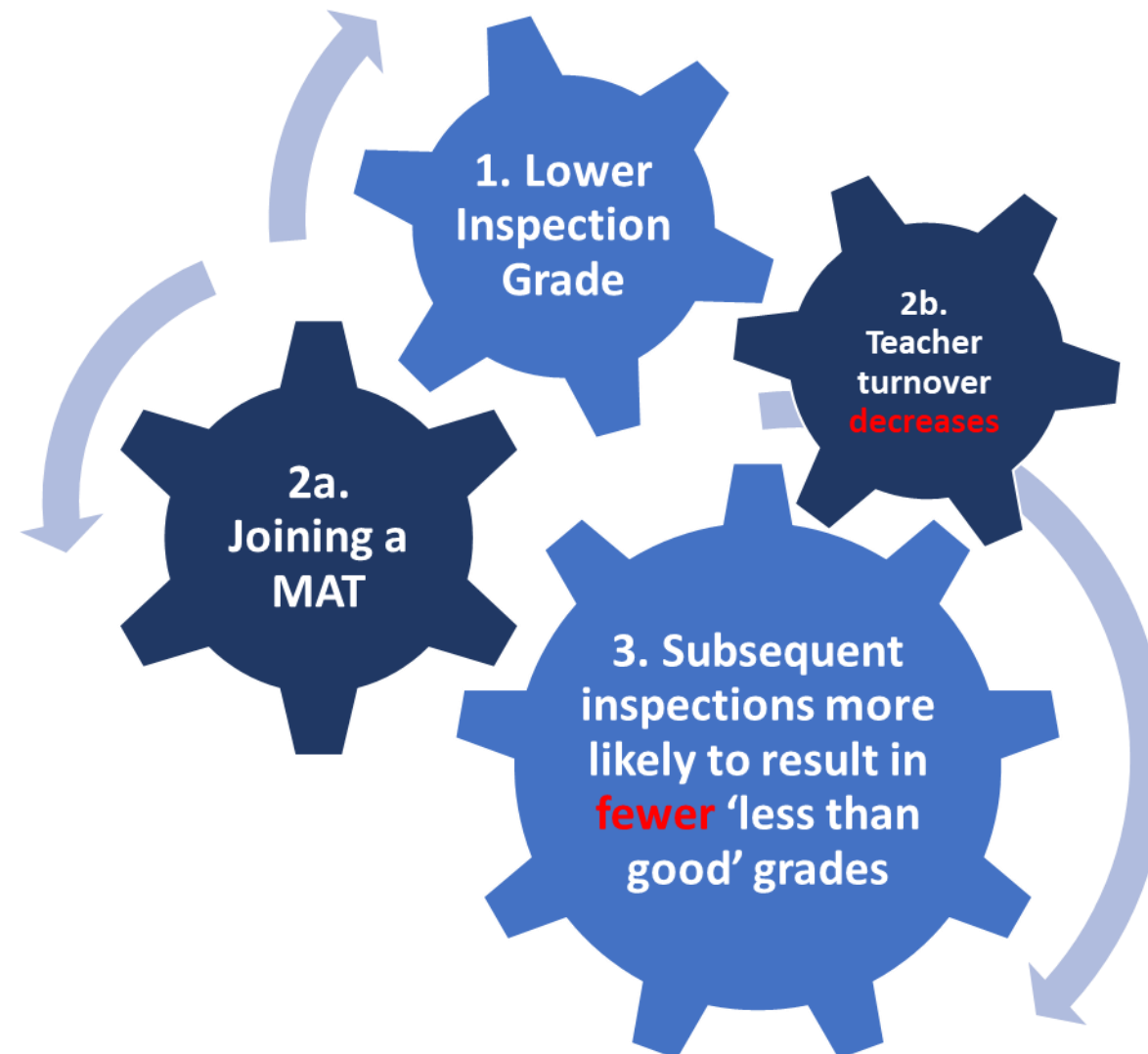
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# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS: PATH ANALYSIS REVEALED POSITIVE CYCLES THAT INDIRECTLY DECREASE TEACHER TURNOVER IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS : JOINING A MAT



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- 'Stuck' case study schools have been **re-organized** up to three times into different schools, with different headteachers, teachers and governors. This made difficult for stakeholders to **feel accountable** for what they described as the 'legacy' inspection results.
- 'Stuck' case study schools have received **too frequent** Section 5 full inspections and Section 8 monitoring inspections, **varying** from 3 full inspections, to 16 full and monitoring inspections over the analyzed time.

*'As Ofsted is coming in every term, it's hard to, like, **totally change the ship all at once**. It is a morale, it's a vision, it's a consistency in teaching and learning within the school, within assessment, that you've got to kind of, like, over time develop'* ('Stuck' school H, decreasing, primary, maintained, North West, Head teacher).

- Receiving negative Ofsted grades carry a **reputational damage** that makes more difficult to improve. This reputational damage works as a slippery slope, as case study schools described low staff and student morale, weak professional identity, difficult teacher recruitment, lack of parental trust, among other challenges.

*‘I’ve actually been in an ‘outstanding’ school, and I’m now working in this one, and let me tell you, this one’s pretty good, and it’s capable of being really great. But if you keep telling us that they’re this, and this, and this, this is not going to help anyone. And it has gone on for a long time. I think we’ve overcome a lot of the damage that was done, but a lot of damage has been done, for sure, in the history of this school. A lot of pain that didn’t need to happen (...) they’re **crushing morale** at the school, by just being so pernicky about things’* (‘Stuck’ school L, mixed, secondary, academy, South East, Head teacher).



Ensure that **inspectors are properly trained** to understand the significance and implications of schools working in very challenging circumstances, and the positive role they can play to support schools in their improvement journey.

Consider what other **positive support** can be given to ‘stuck’ schools to assist in their improvement journey, including linking them with schools that have become ‘un-stuck’ or those that have specific expertise in areas that are core challenges, such as supporting children with EAL and/or refugee backgrounds.

**Revise the cycles of full section 5 inspections and monitoring section 8 inspections** in order to give time to implement improvements. Avoid: a) transforming monitoring into too frequent inspections and over-surveillance; b) too much variation in the number of inspections and across inspectors; and c) providing false hope in monitoring inspections.

Consider **removing overall grades**- to avoid the detrimental effect that a series of negative Ofsted grades is having on school improvement, especially for schools working in challenging circumstances such as ‘stuck’ schools.



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Thanks for your attention!

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Final report:

<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10149556/>

