



**Carmel
College**

Appliance of Science

A NATIONAL pilot aimed at cutting workload and stopping science teachers abandoning the profession is being spearheaded by a North-East school.

CARMEl College, Darlington, will be working alongside teams of experts from the Royal Society of Chemistry and leading universities in a four year trial addressing the issue of staff recruitment and retention. Research has revealed that too many teachers work between 50 and 60 hours a week to ensure students receive the best quality learning, almost twice what they are contracted to do.

Three trials looking at retention and five to improve science education have been funded by the Education Endowment Foundation, a grant-making charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, supported by the Wellcome Trust.

At Carmel College the project, Leadership Lite, will look at issues that could reduce teachers' workload by eliminating common practices that are unsupported by evidence, as part of a £1.2m package to improve education, benefitting thousands of pupils in the North.

Carmel Education Trust director of research and development David Bailey said: "It is clear that many science teachers are leaving the profession and we are looking to build evidence as to what can be done to prevent this. We are training plenty but they remain the most likely subject teacher to leave, leading to hundreds of vacancies across the country.

"Few professions have the relentless and stressful workload of teachers which currently last throughout their careers. During the first five years teachers are especially

vulnerable and are most likely to leave, which is a worry. "Unnecessary lesson observations, for instance, can be disheartening and counter-productive, so we are addressing that. If we get the training right we know we can trust them as professionals to do their job."

Carmel College is also looking at Deeper Thinking, an initiative that aims to address the challenges pupils face with more rigorous exams, helping them develop enhanced revision skills for GCSE science. This could also be rolled out nationally to raise standards.

Carmel Education Trust is also supporting other schools striving to improve science and maths.

Carmel Education Trust chief executive Maura Regan said: "Working at such a high level to help teachers across the country is a wonderful endorsement of the expertise that exists within our trust.

"Teaching is an incredible profession, a vocation and a huge responsibility – who else has the futures of so many children in their hands – and anything we can do to help teachers deliver the very best quality education can only be good for the country."

Sir Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), said: "Getting teachers, especially those at the early stages of their career, to stay in the profession is one of the biggest challenges our schools face today.

"Our new trials will give us much needed insight about what schools and policymakers can do to get more science teachers to stay in the profession."

