

Specialist Learning Partnership – 24th March 2022.

Curriculum / Subject leaders' discussions with Ofsted inspectors.

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Old Chinese proverb:

- I hear and I forget.
- I see and I remember.
- I do and I understand.

Some updates.

- Inspections delayed for 2 years. “Up to” 6 terms, but “up to” 4 for special schools. (*Availability!*)
- The 3 “I”s won’t be judged separately.
- Curriculum not expected to be “fully operational” until “transitional arrangements” end Sept 2022.
- Ofsted does not specify layout of curriculum, its length, or detail.
- Lessons & teachers not graded, and lesson plans not required (*however...*).
- No requirement around frequency or quantity of work in books.
- No more than 2 or 3 data collection points a year (workload / conclusions from data / informs planning).
- Inspectors will take into account the effect of COVID-19 on the school community (S5 handbook).
- Inspectors will be prepared to follow the school’s safety protocols in a COVID secure way.
- Inspectors want “professional conversations”, not paper (bring your own notes).
- Quality of remote education between March & August 2020 won’t impact on Q of E judgement.
- Pupil attendance between March 2020 and March 2021 won’t impact on Ofsted’s judgement.
- Inspectors won’t use Yr.11 teacher grades from 2020 & 2021 to assess curriculum impact.
- “Inspectors will not compare pupils’ outcomes with other pupils in the school, locally, or nationally.”

- “Top-level view”:

What’s on offer, to whom and when, why these choices were made, and senior and curriculum leaders’ understanding of curriculum intent and sequencing.

- “Deep dive”:

Seeing it in action together. Gathering evidence on the intent, implementation, and impact across a sample of lesson visits, subjects, topics, or aspects (in collaboration with leaders, teachers, and pupils). 6+ pieces of work per subject per year group, across 2+ year groups.

- “Bringing it together”:

Testing for consistency and quality, and whether any issues (e.g. teacher, subject, or year group) identified during deep dives are systemic. This in turn may lead to inspectors having further conversations to gather additional evidence.

Sample of lessons (“visits”), different subjects, and year groups:

- English. Maths? 4 altogether? (HT’s can negotiate when or what).
- Scrutiny of workbooks and other kinds of work produced.
- “Purpose” of the lesson or task, where it fits in to the sequence.

“Inspectors will carry out as many activities as possible jointly with school and curriculum leaders.”

All this is primarily part of “Quality of Education” judgement, but also informs personal development, behaviour and attitudes, and leadership and management.

What inspectors will be looking out for within curriculum intent:

- A framework for setting out the school's aims, which converts into a clear structure.
- Ensuring the curriculum is at least as broad, deep, and ambitious as the NC.
- Identifying what pupils should know and be able to do by the end of each stage (term, year, key stage).
- Identifying the important / “essential” **knowledge** (and **skills**) in each subject or key stage.
- Considering, and then planning, how this knowledge should be sequenced.
- Using **assessment** to address gaps in pupils' knowledge (e.g. baseline, questioning, tests, quizzes, exit tickets, self assessment, peer assessment, etc.).
- Taking on an appropriate and effective way of teaching reading.

..... and all of this to be well implemented through good quality classroom teaching, (so the that “pupils know more, remember more, and are able to do more”).

“Schools will be judged fairly for taking radically different approach as long as there is appropriate coverage, content, structure, and sequencing.”

Remote learning:

Inspectors will be interested in:

- Decisions reached and how it has been implemented.
- How any learning gaps have been identified.
- How the curriculum has been adapted to cater for these gaps.
- Remote learning materials and completed work.
- How pupils' safety has remained effective whilst learning from home.
- What teachers, parents, and pupils feel/felt about remote learning.
- Deployment of tutors??
- ?? Contributions from TA's ("subject/curriculum knowledge" v. communication skills, keeping pupils on task, building confidence, encouraging independence, using intuition, thoughtful deployment for maximum impact, etc.).

“Lines of enquiry.”

- COVID-19: Impact / response / protocols / plans, etc.
- Safeguarding.
- Progress since the last inspection.
- CPD (for subject knowledge - what’s provided, how people keep up to date in their specialist subjects).
- Staff wellbeing (*seen in their lunch hour!*).
- Sequencing - curriculum planning (answers to why teaching one RE topic in Yr.7 and another in Yr.8 – Sikhism / Judaism example).
- Consistency of delivery as a team.

Beware: *Inspectors who aren’t able to get all the information down in time while meeting with staff!*

Curriculum/Subject/Middle leaders' meetings *(with senior leaders present?)*:

- Be concise (30 mins).
- Be convincing (passionate, knowledgeable, mention the 3 “I’s”).
- Be confident (able to describe subject knowledge, development, and impact of CPD – read book/s, seen colleague, been on course, etc.).
- Be capable (leading others within the department, decision-making, holding to account, etc.).
- Be creative (describe how the curriculum is sequenced, explain how any adaptations are inclusive of all pupil needs, evidence of meeting elements of the EHCP).
- Be knowledgeable about how the curriculum plan is addressed for individual pupils (one may be watched for several mins – *know your pupils!*).

As part of these conversations, keep in mind the need to *(if necessary)*:

- Explain the school / subject context, and any challenges faced (past or present).
- Present a rationale for content choices and curriculum sequencing (*to support learning*).
- Celebrate progress made since the last inspection.
- Show how the school maximises pupil access and engagement.
- Explain how education “flows” from intention, to implementation, to impact within school.
- Outline strengths and possible areas for further development (*medium/long term plan?*) gathered through monitoring and regular reviews.

Examples of questions / conversations.

(A possible basis for a template with spaces for responses & notes?)

- Describe the curriculum design for your subject. (Needs of pupils, school's values, staff expertise.)
- How are you making sure it's broad and balanced? (Range of material & contexts, study of different topics, range of skills, first hand experiences, links to wider curriculum, etc.)
- How is your subject timetabled? (Enough time? Impact on disadvantaged?)
- Do you follow any published schemes of work? (If so, why did you choose that or them?)
- What other resources do you use? Why have you chosen them? (Trips? Visitors? Expected impact?)
- Explain how the curriculum is sequenced to build knowledge and skills (e.g. between Yr.7 and Yr.8).
- What do you want the pupils to know, understand, and do, by the time they leave?
- How have you ensured that this breadth can be delivered remotely, if necessary?
- How did you decide on the best approach for remote learning?
- How are any concerns about remote engagement communicated between school and families?

Examples of questions / conversations.

- How have you factored in responses to the impact of the pandemic? (Tutors? Booster classes?)
- What are the areas you are most pleased with (or think might need improvement)?
- How do you enable pupils to study in greater depth and gain accreditations?
- How do you make sure you and your colleagues' subject knowledge is sufficient / up to date? (CPD, etc.)
- How do you ensure that the curriculum is being properly implemented? Is the teaching effective?
- How do you make sure others' expectations are high for all pupils? (Quality of feedback to pupils?)
- Are any of these teachers working outside their specialist subject area?
- How have you and your colleagues identified and addressed gaps in pupils' knowledge recently?
- What are your curriculum priorities in the current year (and beyond)?
- Does the school's curriculum lead to good results in all subjects and key stages? (What does data say?)

Some other points (to mention to the inspector??):

- Everyone knows the school's curriculum objectives (and why they've been chosen).
- Adequacy of teaching time, staff, and resources.
- Up to date with national policy (e.g. SEND Review).
- Which subjects are not being taught or combined.
- Catering for minority groups and disadvantaged.
- Different learning styles adequately taken into account.
- Adjustments made to latest SDP.
- "Destination" data showing how well pupils are being prepared for the next stage.
- Evidence from pupils' learning being used to inform **adaptations** / future planning.
- Clear behaviour policy (strategies) being consistently-applied across the school.
- Importance placed on pupils' personal development and building of **character** traits.

Workshop (working in pairs)

- Listen carefully to your colleague's answer to the following question/s.

- Feed back to them on how well they came across, and what (if any) adjustments might be needed.

- 1. Describe the curriculum design for your subject (or area of learning), and why you decided upon it.**
- 2. What knowledge and skills would you expect to see developed in your subject between the end of KS1 & KS2 (KS3 & KS4)?**
- 3. How did you decide on the best approach for remote learning?**
- 4. How do you know that the curriculum is being properly implemented (and that the teaching is effective)?**
- 5. How do you adapt your teaching to meet differing pupil needs in the class groups?**
- 6. What are the priorities for your subject/s in the current year (and beyond)?**
- 7. How does your choice of resources support the teaching of the curriculum?**
- 8. How do you assess learning?**

Deep Dive (or “subject review”?)

- Inspectors told not to expect teachers to lead on more than one DD (“Try to avoid”).
- Inspectors directed by Ofsted not to provide “mocksted-type consultancy services” to schools.
- Inspectors told to understand that in some schools, there will not be a separate lead for each subject (“We do not expect or require schools to adopt a particular staffing structure or curriculum approach.”).
- Ofsted believes that there are probably better ways to drill down to the quality of the curriculum yourself (but nothing stopping you doing a DD!).
- In the Dec. 21 HMI’s blog, they said

“How to do your own subject deep dive” – *The Key: 31.1.22.*

“Keep it simple.”

- **Aim:** To find out if **curriculum plan** is robust & being delivered in practice (*not to grade someone’s performance or prepare for an inspection*).
- **Who:** Subject/Department leaders with staff members who teach that subject (*not to feel like an inspection, more about working with colleagues to further improve*).
- **When:** In team meetings, PPA time, leadership time, over a 4 week period.

Week 1: Identify any areas of weakness in your plan during a team meeting with staff.

(a) Think about what you plan to teach (breadth, depth content choices), why you teach it (rationale), when you teach it (how the topics are sequenced, where on the timetable, how it’s being delivered), & who you teach it to (how accessible to individuals or groups).

(b) Discuss together the areas which staff feel less confident teaching (subject knowledge, resources). Agree on any areas of weakness that you as subject leader will investigate over the following 2 weeks.

Weeks 2 and 3: Collect evidence.

(c) Decide which year groups to collect evidence from – choose 2 or 3 (e.g. Yrs.2 and 6). Collect evidence from multiple staff members, not one in particular. Ease any anxieties by getting broader view across school.

(d) Observe lessons. Select 2 or 3 connected lessons to look at. If more than 1 teacher in a year group, split observations between them. You may already be the person who assesses their performance (PM), but these observations are not for judging performance but to gain a better understanding of the curriculum. Try to avoid these lesson observations overlapping with PM.

Observation or learning walk? Subject knowledge = lesson observation. Resources = learning walk. How well pupils complete the tasks set = learning walk.

(e) Speak to a couple of pupils during or after the lesson. Find out whether they're taking in the knowledge they've been taught in that lesson you observed. Scrutinise their books later - together in a team meeting - to align the evidence, and then focus on any learning points.

Week 4: Review evidence & agree next steps.

(f) Discuss your findings with staff so that you can consider whether your conclusions match up. Identify common strengths and weaknesses.

(g) At this (or the following) team meeting, highlight what you believe are the strengths and weaknesses from the evidence you've collected. Ask them if they agree – if not, can they justify why?

(h) As a team, agree on the next short or long term steps you're going to take. Prioritise any changes based on available resources (staff, time, finance), and potential impact on pupils (including any “quick wins”).

(i) Decide who will make the changes and by when.

(j) Gather up appropriate resources to help deliver the plan (training & support, books & resources, creating extra time in the timetable).

In the next DD (next year or sooner, depending on your findings), look to see what progress has been made against those areas of weakness.

Thank you for listening.

Good luck, and

I wish you well for the remainder of 2022.