



# Personalised Learning – A Practical Guide



## Foreword



The Children's Plan set out our vision of world class schools providing excellent, personalised teaching and learning, to help all children and young people to progress in their education and wider development.

Personalised learning, putting children and their needs first, is central to that vision. All children should be supported to make good progress and no child should be left behind. This ambition is part of a broader commitment that, at every stage, children and young people have opportunities to grow and develop, and their individual needs will be addressed in the round by the complete range of children's services.

In 2005, our Schools White Paper set out the Government's commitment to transform the support available for every child. Since then, the strength of the Government's commitment has been reflected in the level of investment: over £1 billion made available to schools from 2005-2008, and a further £1.6 billion from 2008 – 2011, for personalised learning and special educational needs. In addition, a further £150m of Government funding has also been committed over the next three years for the professional development of school staff in assessment for learning techniques.

I know that there are many schools who are already taking great strides in tailoring teaching and learning to individual needs. I hope that this document will support schools in evaluating where they are in the development of personalising learning and provide pointers for future development.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah McCarthy-Fry". The signature is written in a cursive style and is located below the main body of text.

**Sarah McCarthy-Fry**  
**Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Schools and Learners**

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## 4 Personalised Learning – A Practical Guide

## Introduction

*“In the best schools in the country, excellent classroom practice has already established a pedagogy and culture of personalised teaching and learning. Our new approach in schools – which looks at progression across stages – means we will focus on every pupil, in every year group, not just those at the end of key stages and in the middle of the ability range.”*

The Children’s Plan

Many schools are now familiar with the vision for personalised teaching and learning, defined by Christine Gilbert in the landmark report of the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review as:

*“taking a highly structured and responsive approach to each child’s and young person’s learning, in order that all are able to progress, achieve and participate. It means strengthening the link between learning and teaching by engaging pupils – and their parents – as partners in learning”.*

Published in January 2007, the report depicted what personalised learning looks like in practice, which we continue to work towards. Since its publication, we have launched the **Assessment for Learning Strategy**, and a series of targeted initiatives – **Every Child a Reader**, **Every Child Counts** and **Every Child a Writer** – are now in train to provide one-to-one support for young children who are falling behind in key subjects. **The Making Good Progress** Pilot, aimed at improving progression rates in English and mathematics at Key Stages 2 and 3, is examining whether there are even better ways to assess, report and stimulate progress in schools in order to develop talent and overcome low expectations.

The Children’s Plan set out a vision of 21st Century Schools, which was expanded upon in the draft guidance on **Schools’ Role in Promoting Pupil Well-being** published in July 2008. The vision is of schools delivering excellent, personalised education, contributing to all aspects of children and young people’s well-being in line with all five Every Child Matters outcomes. A 21st Century School works at the heart of an integrated preventative system designed around the needs of children and young people – in active partnership with parents, other education providers and wider children’s services; and fully engaged with the Children’s Trust. Central to this vision is a workforce focusing on, and responding to, the learning and wider needs of individual children and young people.

Developing personalised learning in schools is critical in working towards a society where a child's chances of success are not limited by their socio-economic background, gender, ethnicity or any disability. We know that children and young people from the most disadvantaged groups are the least likely to achieve well and participate in higher levels of education or training and so it is imperative that we work with schools to develop workable strategies to narrow attainment gaps and raise achievement for all. Personalised learning can be an important strand of action in meeting statutory equalities duties.

**This document is designed to help school leaders, School Improvement Partners and teachers explore key aspects of personalised teaching and learning and to consider their priorities for further development. For each aspect, there is a section on “How to do this well” – and this guidance is firmly based on practice that is being consistently demonstrated in many schools.**

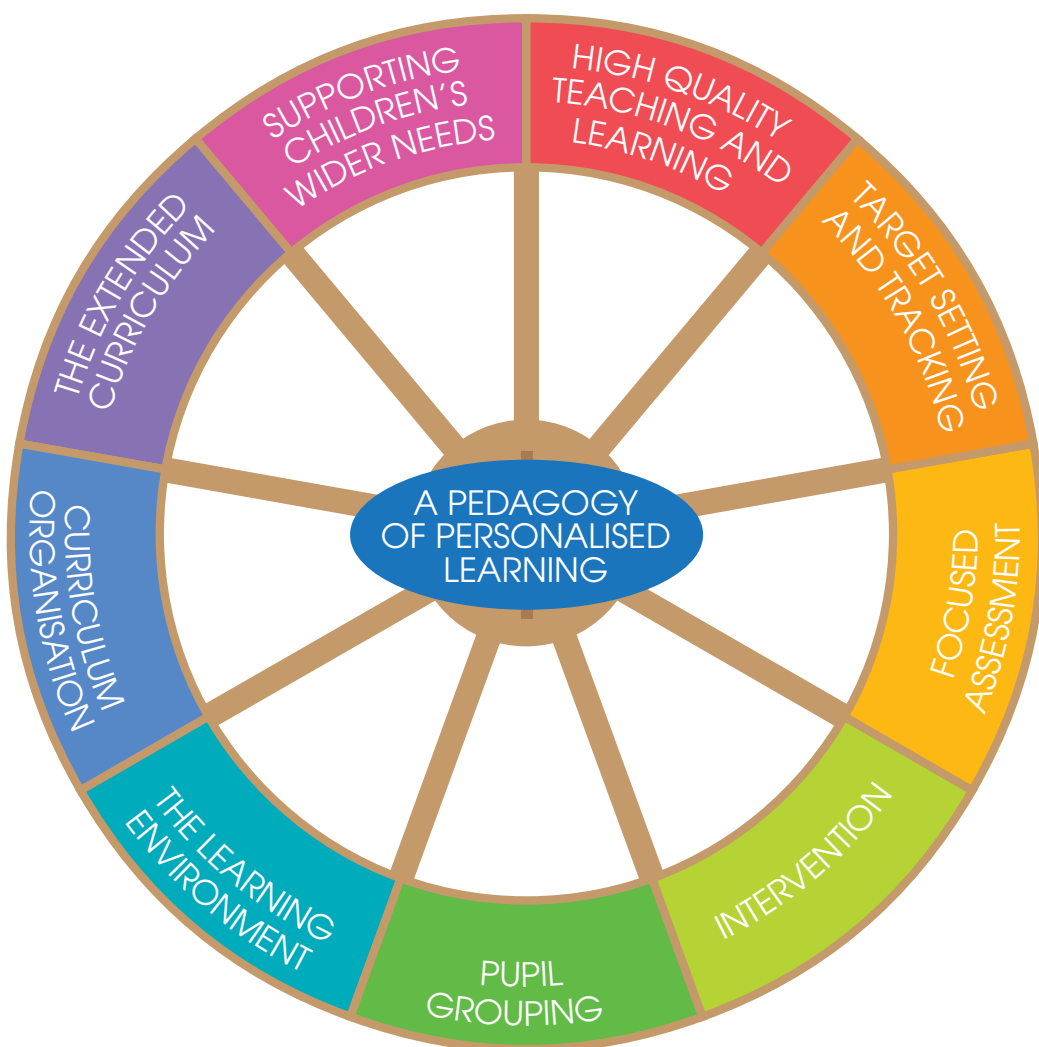
Dynamic leadership will be essential in supporting teachers as they increasingly work in a system based on progression, underpinned by accurate assessment for learning, and with children and young people supported, where necessary, with one-to-one support. This document complements the other resources available to schools – such as the *Assessment for Learning Strategy* – and sets them within a wider context. It provides a single point of reference as schools work towards the 2020 vision and signals where best to direct resources in order to effect change.

For some schools, this vision is already a reality; for most, there are likely to be areas of strength, and other areas in need of further development. Personalised learning will look different in every school, but certain factors of the approach will remain consistent. The challenge is to ensure that the personalised approach becomes the norm across all schools and that we secure better personal development and educational progress for all children. Personalisation is a matter both of moral purpose and social justice.

## **Towards a pedagogy of personalised learning**

Personalised learning is central to a school improvement agenda which has teaching and learning at its heart. The active engagement of staff and other stakeholders in the school's improvement agenda is equally crucial. In many ways, successful schools are those that have been able to personalise the school improvement process by engaging staff, through distributing leadership and responsibility, and other stakeholders (including governors, parents and children and young people) as part of a learning community.

The pedagogy of personalisation is distinguished by the way it expects all children and young people to reach or exceed national expectations, to fulfil their early promise and develop latent potential. Planning for progression and differentiation are fundamental. High expectations of progress apply equally to children and young people working above, at, or below age-related expectations, including those who have been identified as having special educational needs. There is an expectation of participation, fulfilment and success; and teaching and learning is characterised by ambitious objectives, challenging personal targets, rapid intervention to keep pupils on trajectory and rigorous assessment to check and maintain pupil progress. There are clear plans to support those who are struggling to maintain trajectory.



In characterising the key features of personalised learning it is impossible to identify different aspects which are mutually exclusive. Consequently, the nine features that are described in this document naturally link and overlap but nevertheless offer a framework which might provide a focus for schools' future development work. Senior leaders may wish to use the self-evaluation tool in the Annex to help identify their own future development priorities.

Each feature is considered in turn in the subsequent sections. The following structure is used in each section:

1. **Rationale.** This identifies the feature's particular contribution to the development of personalised learning; – that is, why it is important.
2. **How to do this well.** This exemplifies what we are trying to achieve and provides examples of what effective schools and teachers are doing to promote and further the development of this feature of personalised learning.
3. **Developing practice checklist.** This provides some prompts to guide self-evaluation identifying future development priorities, and tracking progress towards these (see the Annex).
4. **Sources of further support.** This identifies some useful links to publications, resources and other sources of support.





## High quality teaching and learning

*“Teaching and learning is most effective where teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and have the confidence to stand back and encourage pupils to become independent learners”*

The Children’s Plan

### Rationale

The day-to-day interactions between teacher and pupil in the classroom provide the bedrock for the effective development of personalised learning. So called ‘quality first’ teaching seeks to engage and support the learning of all children and young people. It builds on the pupils’ prior learning and responds appropriately to the ‘pupil voice’. The key challenge for personalisation in the classroom is how to cater simultaneously for all the different needs in one class.

The priority is to support pupils so that they can keep up with the pace of learning and make good rates of progress. In the past it could be argued that teachers differentiated by task or expectation and accepted different levels of success. Whilst realistic in some instances and with some pupils, this approach ran the risk of lowering expectations. Today effective teachers expect everyone to succeed by offering higher levels of support or extra challenge for those who need it, so that all pupils can access the learning.

First, it’s a good thing to recognise how much children at a similar age have in common. Teachers can meet most needs by planning appealing lessons aimed at the age group: this will meet the needs they have in common. At the same time, it’s sensible to build in room for manoeuvre to respond to groups and individuals, and to challenge them. In one sense, differentiation by age is the most common method of differentiation, closely followed (among older children) by differentiation by ability. But to be more inclusive, modern teaching methods have inclined to differentiation by staging the work by level of support, by open-tasking (i.e. setting mixed-ability tasks that challenge at every level) and by extension or enhancement activities. This approach designs in, at the planning stage, reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people and provision for pupils with SEN. Not every act of differentiation is about need; it can be about interests, preferences or priorities. For this, schools can offer options between topics or texts, such as choosing a novel for group reading or a person to study closely in history.

Quality first teaching builds from the effective planning of learning, or more accurately perhaps, from the skilful design of learning. In the past planning might have been conveyed as getting through topics and assignments. Today it is construed as children and young people progressing in their learning, and the curriculum is methodically

constructed and renewed to deliver small and efficient steps of progression. The National Frameworks support the design of learning by providing clear lines of progression and developing the approach to Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP)<sup>1</sup> which provides a basis for rigorous and focused periodic assessment.

Quality first teaching draws on a repertoire of teaching strategies and techniques that are closely matched to the specified learning objectives and the particular needs of the children and young people in the class. It demands 100% participation from the pupils and sets high and realistic challenges. It does not 'spoon feed', it is challenging and demanding; it expects pupils to be able to articulate their ideas, understanding and thinking by actively promoting pupil talk. Lesson organisation is fit for purpose; for example, it may involve direct whole-class teaching or alternatively may have significant elements of enquiry-based individual or group work. Behavioural issues are addressed initially through teaching and learning considerations with *behaviour for learning* as the focus rather than *behaviour management*.

### How to do this well

Most teachers have a natural instinct for supporting pupils with different needs. They differentiate. In discussion, teachers will often start with inclusive questions which establish a common understanding in the class, then ramp up the level of challenge to draw on able pupils who can help them to reach a higher level of challenge. In forward-looking schools, a novel variation on this is to reverse the process by pre-teaching children who might struggle with the key ideas so they arrive at the lesson more prepared and more able to contribute. Once a teacher is familiar with a class, it's easier to target questions sensitively to pupils to draw them in at the right level and help them to an answer.

An old practice in individualised help was to circulate during the 'heads down' period of the lesson to help pupils by exception when they were stuck. This emergency model still has applications, but it does spread the teacher very thinly and focuses efforts on a small number of children. Guided work (considered later in the "Pupil grouping" chapter) offers an alternative approach and a fair distribution of time for all children. Working systematically with groups makes good use of teacher time, and those who have a teaching assistant to deploy can delegate the 'surveillance' of the other pupils. It is important that teacher time is distributed fairly and that groups of pupils are not disproportionately delegated to a teaching assistant.

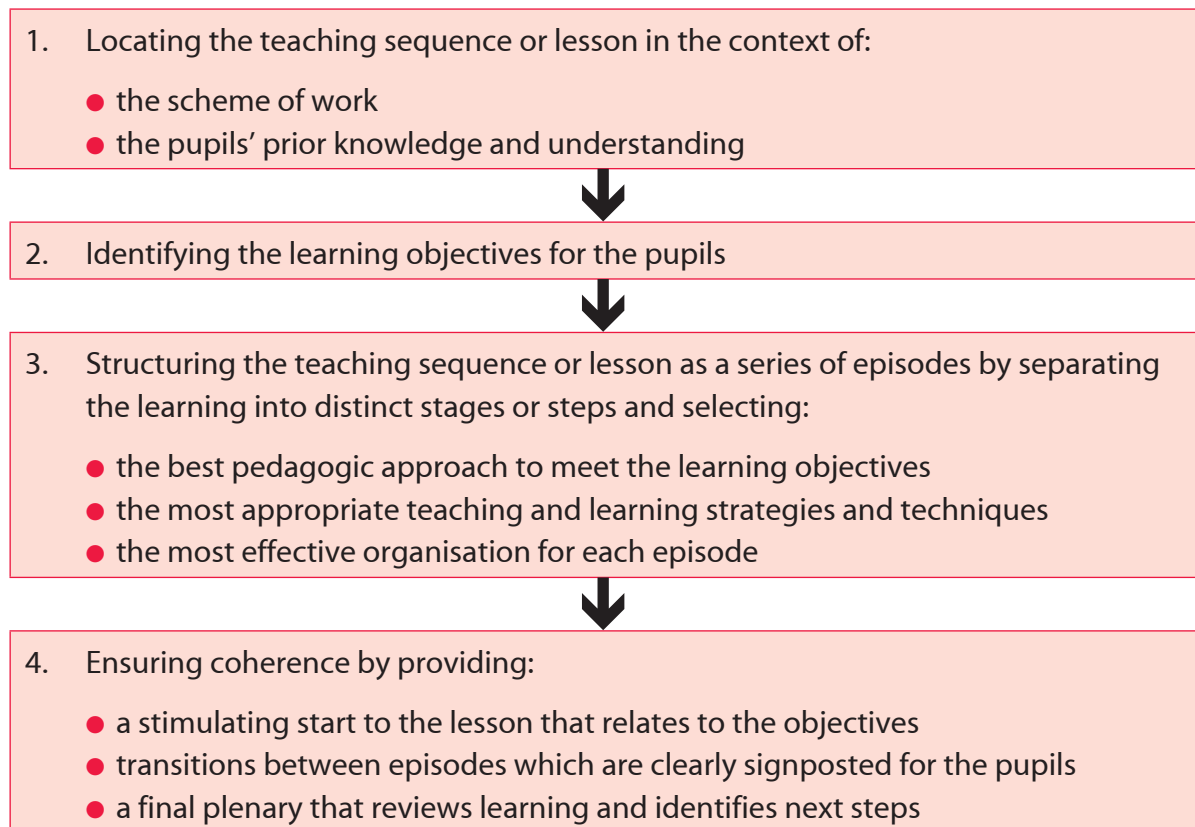
The pupils who most obviously call for individualised support are those who are furthest behind in their learning. In times gone past the preferred method was to give them separate, easier work. Unfortunately, this can have the effect of driving down expectations and outcomes. More recently, teachers are able to offer catch-up classes and one-to-one tuition. But classroom teachers have other resources for supporting

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<sup>1</sup> The APP approach uses assessment criteria to guide teachers in making their periodic assessment in terms of levels and sub-levels (see chapter on "Focused assessment")

individuals: the help of teaching assistants, simplified resources and giving a head start on tasks. They can give personal advice as part of marking and feedback systems, or by introducing peer and self-assessment, or by inviting pupils to work on tasks together to show how they go about it. Many aspects of personalised learning are individualised, but many needs can be met in the classroom context without resorting to one-to-one remediation.

Effective planning and lesson design is the starting point for quality first teaching and learning. In schools that excel in this, it is viewed as a series of decisions which build a planned series of learning episodes (see flow chart). The choice of appropriate learning objectives is supported using the Primary or Secondary Frameworks or subject specifications.



In developing quality first teaching, schools often pay particular attention to the development of the strategies of questioning, modelling and explaining. These strategies are seen as being particularly important in advancing pupils' learning; all need to be adjusted to recognise the skills, interests and prior learning of individual pupils.

Strategy	Importance
Modelling	This is more than demonstrating. Through the teacher ‘thinking aloud’ it helps pupils to understand underlying structures, processes and conventions.
Explaining	Explaining is crucial in helping pupils understand abstract concepts and events that are outside their own experiences.
Questioning	When planned and correctly sequenced, questioning can promote higher order thinking skills and structure the development of knowledge and understanding.

The key characteristics of quality first teaching can be summarised as:

- Highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives;
- High demands of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning;
- High levels of interaction for all pupils;
- Appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining;
- An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk both individually and in groups;
- An expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently;
- Regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate pupils.



## Developing practice checklist

How effective is current practice in:

- Designing highly focused teaching sequence/lesson plans with high demands of pupil engagement?
- Designing reasonable adjustments and special educational provision into lesson plans?
- Focusing on questioning, modelling and explaining?
- Promoting pupil talk, both individually and in groups?
- Supporting pupil independence in their learning?

### Sources of further support

**The Primary Framework.** The Primary Framework has been designed to support teachers and schools to deliver high quality learning and teaching for all children. It contains detailed guidance and materials to support literacy and mathematics in primary schools and settings.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primaryframeworks>

**Secondary Frameworks.** The renewed Frameworks build on the original Frameworks for teaching English, mathematics, science and ICT, which were produced in 2001 and 2002 and are based on the programmes of study for the new secondary curriculum. The Frameworks are designed to increase pupils' access to excellent teaching and engaging, purposeful learning that will enable them to make good progress through Key Stages 3 and 4.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/framework>

**Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools** (0423-2004G).

This reference set contains a leadership guide and 20 self-study guides covering all aspects of pedagogy. Seven units are devoted to developing teachers' skills and techniques.

[http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/sec\\_pptl0](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/sec_pptl0)

**Pedagogy and personalisation** (00126-2007DOM-EN) is a booklet for leaders and teachers and other practitioners in schools and settings who wish to develop further the knowledge, skills and expertise of those who support children's and young people's learning.

[http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/learning\\_and\\_teaching/pedagogy\\_personalisation](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/learning_and_teaching/pedagogy_personalisation)

**Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and early years settings**

(0106-2006DOC-EN) was published by the then DfES and the Disability Rights Commission in 2006. These materials illustrate how schools build reasonable adjustments into their planning.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/disabilityandthedda/ddapart0>

The **National College for School Leadership: Leadership for Personalising Learning website** includes case studies, videos and practical tools. Central to the website is a new Leadership for Personalising Learning Framework, which brings together the key research and thinking into how school leaders can embed personalisation and high quality learning within every aspect of their school.

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/personalisinglearning>

## Target setting and tracking

*“The targets for 2011 will ensure that expected progress is maintained for all children and young people, including those who have previously fallen behind the most able”*

The Children’s Plan

### Rationale

A clear knowledge of the attainment of each pupil and the progress they are making acts as a spur to the development of personalised learning. Precise target setting and rigorous and regular tracking of progress towards these targets can be seen as underpinning personalised learning. Particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage parents and carers can play a vital role in this process. More generally it is the translation of curricular targets into teaching strategies that will drive individual progression. Schools have increasing access to rich and varied types of data on which they can draw as part of their target setting process. Examples are included in the table below.

- Prior attainment data showing levels and grades achieved in national tests and examinations
- Teacher assessment data, for example from Assessing Pupils’ Progress periodic assessment or from the P Scales for pupils with SEN working below National Curriculum Level 1
- National and local data showing proportions of pupils making 2 levels of progress
- Comparative data indicating the most likely levels or grades for individual pupils based upon progress in the top 25% and top 50% of similar schools nationally and locally (from RAISEonline)
- Other pupil and school level estimates, such as from the Fischer Family Trust via LAs
- Other data likely to impact on pupil outcomes, such as attendance, exclusions, gifted and talented comparative data, pupil and parent perceptions surveys

It may seem on occasions that there is more than enough data to draw on and there is a real danger that all the efforts go into gathering and organising the data rather than making constructive use of it. Careful selection of relevant data is one of the keys to success.

Ambitious target setting is critical if pupils are to achieve the educational outcomes of which they are capable. However, this longer term target setting needs to be underpinned by an on-going target setting process which involves specific learning or curricular targets. Curricular targets are typically derived from a specific aspect of the

curriculum as a focus for improvement and can apply to a whole class, a group or an individual pupil.

For disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs, consideration of how well barriers to their learning have been identified and removed and what further adjustments can be made to promote progress can be especially important. Guidance on the progress of pupils working below age-related expectations at each Key Stage is being developed by the DCSF and the National Strategies and will be published in 2009.

Another key ingredient in an effective tracking process is rigorous and accurate teacher assessment. The Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) approach provides this rigour giving an ongoing profile of achievement and providing strengths and areas for improvement (see chapter on "Focused assessment"). Where targets are appropriately challenging and teacher assessments are accurate, these become powerful drivers for improvement. In contrast, targets set too low can enshrine low expectations resulting in poor progress, even though the school's support and guidance process is well-structured. Equally, where teacher assessment data are inadequate or unreliable, underperformance is likely to go unnoticed and resources can be misdirected, such as to inappropriate groups of pupils and poorly targeted intervention programmes.

### How to do this well

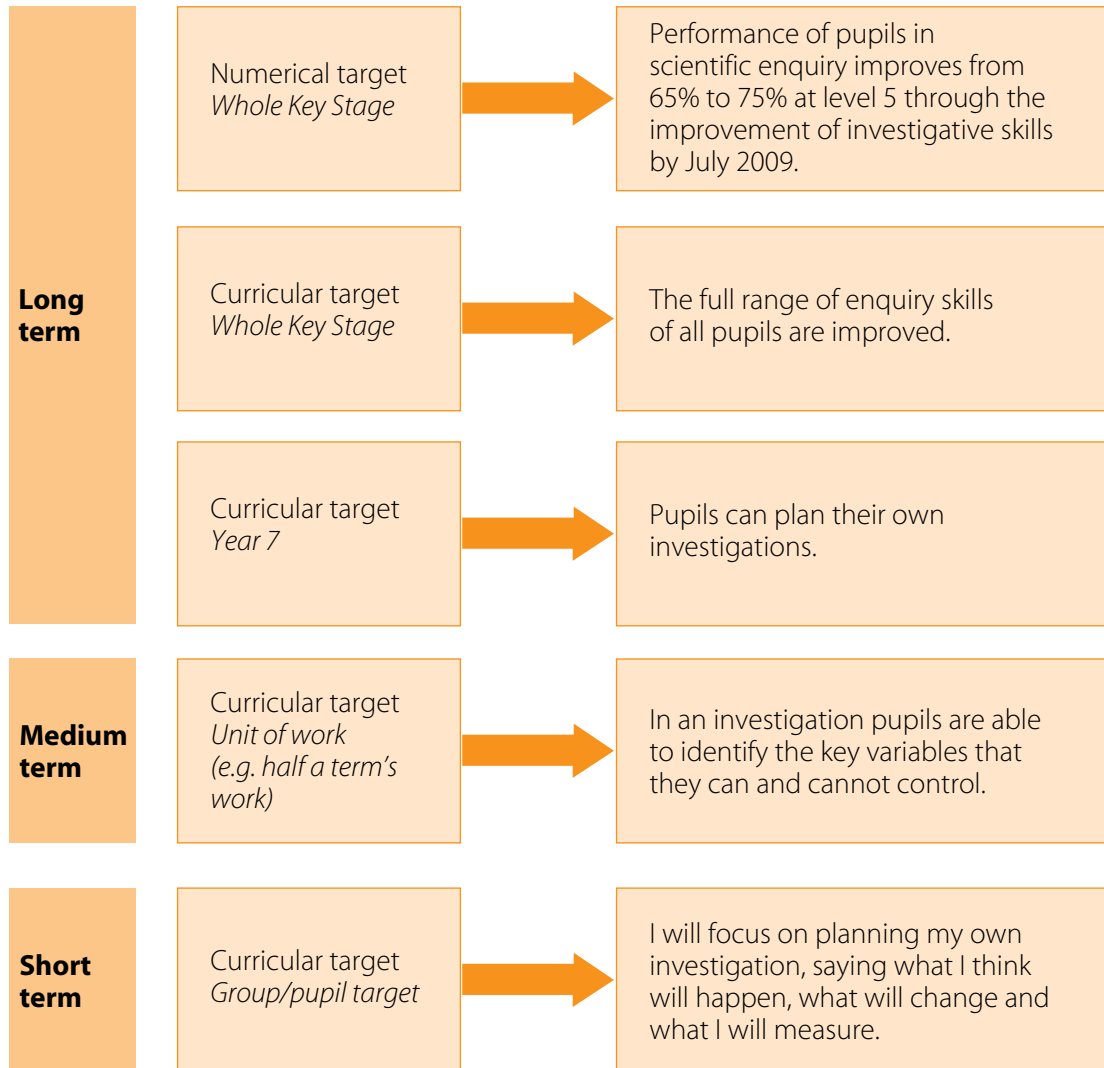
Setting end of key stage or annual pupil targets is now a well-established part of every school's practice. Schools which do this particularly well are selective in the data sets they draw on, concentrating on prior attainment, rates of progression and interventions or other factors likely to impact on pupil outcomes. They translate these long-term targets, usually expressed in terms of National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades, and translate them into the pupils' next steps in learning or curricular targets.

Successful practice sees that this crucial part of the target setting process operates and is secure across the whole school. To ensure continuity and manageability these curricular targets are often 'layered' as linked short, medium and long-term targets. The short-term curricular targets relate to work in a lesson or a short series of lessons, medium-term curricular targets relate to a whole unit of work and longer-term curricular targets relate to a whole year's work.

So, for example, a primary school may draw a whole school curricular target for improving writing from the Primary Framework such as the strand 'sentence structure and punctuation'. Different year groups and teachers then select curricular targets according to the needs of their class from this strand. In Year 3 the focus might be 'compose sentences using adjectives, verbs and nouns for precision, clarity and impact' and a Year 3 teacher might select from the Framework a pupil writing target for a particular group such as 'use a range of verbs, nouns and adjectives for *impact*'. An example of the layering of curricular targets in a secondary context is shown on the next page.

## Layering of targets

The key to manageability is 'layering' the targets in order to provide a clear route from the numerical target to the curricular target for a group or an individual pupil. An example is shown below.



Efficient and effective tracking systems are fundamental if the needs of all pupils are to be met. The characteristics of effective tracking systems can be summarised as follows:

- Individual pupils' progress is tracked, together with that of cohorts and specific groups, using a range of performance measures including a combination of periodic teacher assessments (such as those obtained using APP) and test results;
- Strengths and weaknesses are identified so supporting planning and intervention;
- Data is collected on a regular basis, typically termly, and shared with staff and the pupils themselves;
- Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss their progress. Teachers actively involve pupils in setting and reviewing their progress towards their targets;
- Teaching programmes, intervention programmes and revision programmes are adjusted in the light of the progress the pupils are making;



- Parents and carers receive regular updates on their child’s progress so that they can provide additional support and encouragement if necessary;
- Pupil progress data are managed through a school-wide system that all teachers can access;
- The process operates across the whole school to ensure consistency and is regularly evaluated by senior and middle leaders to ensure that the needs of all pupils are being met.

### Developing practice checklist

How effective is current practice in:

- Translating National Curriculum or GCSE targets into curricular targets?
- Using progress data to identify individuals and groups who are off trajectory?
- Adjusting teaching and intervention programmes in the light of tracking information?
- Providing regular feedback to pupils and their parents/carers?

### Sources of further support

**RAISEonline** provides interactive analysis of school and pupil performance data. It replaces the Ofsted Performance and Assessment (PANDA) reports and DCSF’s Pupil Achievement Tracker (PAT).  
<https://www.raiseonline.org>

**2010 Target Setting Guidance for Local Authorities (LAs)** covers arrangements for setting LA and school targets for 2010. In particular the statutory targets at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, children in care, minority ethnic groups, attendance and early years’ outcomes.  
<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/ts/publications/list>

The **Data Enabler Toolkit** is a subscription online resource designed to support secondary schools with specialist status in making better use of examination data. The toolkit includes the Jesson framework tutorial with personalised results alongside Fischer Family Trust, Raise on-line and a range of resources.  
<https://secure.ssatrust.org.uk/eshop/default.aspx?mcid=22&scid=34&productid=627>

The **“Using data, improving schools”** (Ofsted 2008, HMI: 070260) report considers the different types of school performance data available to people working with schools, from teachers and headteachers to inspectors, local authorities and national policy makers. It shows how these data, if used intelligently, can inform judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of schools and help to secure the improvements needed for the children attending them.  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home>

**Performance – P level-attainment targets:** For pupils with special educational needs who are working below level 1 of the National Curriculum.  
[http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_12795.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_12795.aspx)

Part 1 of **Learning and teaching in the primary years: Professional development resources; Planning and assessment for learning – Assessment for Learning** (DfES0518-2004G). These six units and video are professional development resources on improving learning and teaching across the primary curriculum. They are for trainees and NQTs, Key Stage 2 teachers, Key Stage 1 teachers, heads and deputies, and foundation stage practitioners.

[http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/learning\\_and\\_teaching/1041163](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/learning_and_teaching/1041163)

**The Primary Framework – whole school section** contains an example pupil tracking grid to support schools to identify children who are at risk of underachievement against national standards.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primaryframework/library/wholeschool>

The Assessment area of the primary framework contains information about the use and purpose of curricular targets

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primaryframework/assessment/dafl/ppl/uct>

**The National Register of Gifted and Talented Learners** enables schools to access national and regional breakdowns of gifted and talented learners to sub-group level, and make comparisons with their own school breakdown.

<http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk>

**Management Information Systems (MIS) and pupil tracking: users' guidance**

(00756-2008PDF-EN-02) describes how MIS can be used to support pupil attainment tracking.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk>

**Tracking for Success** (DFES-1545-2005) describes the whole-school tracking process and sets out the responsibilities of senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers, giving examples of some elements of a whole-school tracking system. In addition, it provides guidance on curricular target setting.

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk>



## Focused assessment

*“Effective teachers are continually updating what they know about each child’s progress and using the information to plan next steps with precision.”*

The Children’s Plan

### Rationale

Secure knowledge of each pupil’s current progress is a core element of personalised learning. Only with this security can targets and support be accurately tailored to individual needs. Every period of learning should be based on the extent of relevant prior learning and throughout the learning process active assessment is required to ensure that the expected progress is being made.

Rigorous assessment and tracking of pupil performance in order to inform classroom practice is one of the most common features of schools where pupils make good progress and close attainment gaps. However recent evidence suggests that effective assessment practice is not yet sufficiently widespread.

The Government is investing £150 million over 2008 – 2011 to embed **Assessment for Learning** (AfL) practice in schools. The aims of AfL are that:

- **Every child** knows how they are doing and understands what they need to do to improve and how to get there. They get the support they need to be motivated, independent learners on an ambitious trajectory of improvement;
- **Every teacher** is equipped to make well-founded judgements about pupils’ attainment, understands the concepts and principles of progression, and knows how to use their assessment judgements to forward plan, particularly for pupils who are not fulfilling their potential;
- **Every school** has in place structured and systematic assessment systems for making regular, useful, manageable and accurate assessments of pupils, and for tracking their progress;
- **Every parent and carer** knows how their child is doing, what they need to do to improve, and how they can support the child and their teachers.

There are three linked aspects of assessment that can be consistently applied across curriculum areas and phases. These aspects are shown overleaf.

Aspect	Key features
Day to day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Learning objectives are made explicit and shared with pupils</li> <li>■ Peer and self assessment is used</li> <li>■ Pupils are engaged in their learning and receive immediate feedback on their progress</li> </ul>
Periodic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A broader view of progress is provided across a subject for teacher and learner</li> <li>■ national standards are used in the classroom</li> <li>■ improvements are made to medium-term curriculum planning</li> </ul>
Transitional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pupils receive formal recognition of their achievements</li> <li>■ Achievement is reported to parents/carers and the next teacher(s)</li> <li>■ External tests or tasks may be used</li> </ul>

For pupils on a slower learning journey, finer grain objectives and assessments are needed in each aspect. The development of the **Assessing Pupils' Progress** (APP) approach is crucial in improving assessment practice in schools and, in particular, strengthening the periodic aspect of assessment. For pupils with SEN working below the National Curriculum Level 1, the P-scales fulfil a similar function.

### How to do this well

For assessment to be genuinely personalised, all pupils need to understand how they are doing, including what they are doing well, and what they need to do to make progress. However, it is rarely enough to simply set a pupil a numeric or curricular target and expect that to fix their problem. They need to understand not just **what** to improve but **how** to improve, and that is where tailored teaching, delivered by a teacher who has accurately assessed their learning needs, makes the difference.

Effective teachers are constantly making judgements about their pupils' learning, whether they are marking work, responding to questions in class or evaluating pupils' prior learning at the beginning of a new topic. When teachers use this assessment information to tailor their teaching to the needs of their pupils and to engage in a dialogue with pupils about their progress and learning, assessment becomes a key element of personalised learning.

## Day-to-day assessment

When done well, pupils understand what they are learning because the learning objectives or intentions have been shared with and explained to them. Learning outcomes and success criteria are also made explicit so that the pupils know not only what they are intended to learn but also how they will demonstrate their achievement. Teachers share both the big picture and the small steps, for example, “Over the next few lessons, we are going to be learning how to structure a story that engages the reader”. “In today’s lesson, we are going to be learning how to ‘hook’ the reader with an effective opening.” They plan opportunities to revisit the learning objectives during the course of the lesson through targeted questioning and mini-plenaries which provide pupils with vital opportunities to reflect on their own learning and progress.

Teachers might provide a combination of both oral and written feedback to pupils and know that it is important to build in time for them to reflect on the feedback, act on the advice and ask questions for clarification. Oral and written feedback can serve a range of purposes, for example:

- To praise or build confidence
- To pose questions
- To establish a dialogue
- To correct an error
- To challenge and extend thinking
- To clarify thinking or suggest a new approach

Day to day assessment supports pupils to become independent learners who are able to assess and evaluate their own learning. Many successful teachers choose to build the foundations for this by using peer assessment. Teachers who model peer assessment themselves by, for example, thinking aloud whilst critiquing a piece of work, provide invaluable support for pupils who often find peer assessment difficult.

## Periodic assessment

At regular intervals, perhaps termly, teachers find it helpful to step back and review pupils’ achievements. By reviewing a range of a pupil’s work, it is possible to see whether they have consolidated what they have been taught and are able to apply their learning with a degree of independence.

The Assessing Pupils' Progress approach provides teachers with assessment criteria that can help them not only to make judgements about levels and sub levels (described as high, secure and low) but also to understand progression within a level and from one level to the next. By highlighting the assessment criteria on the assessment guidelines, teachers are able to see a pupil's relative strengths and weaknesses and it is this diagnostic potential of APP, linked to clear routes for progression through the levels that enables teachers to personalise assessment for their pupils. Indeed many pupils exhibit a 'spiky profile', demonstrating that pupils judged to be working at the same sub-level may have arrived there with different patterns of strengths and weaknesses and may therefore need different support in order to make progress.

## Making Good Progress

Assessing Pupils' Progress Guide to assessment criteria: Writing						
Name .....						
	AFS - vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect.	AFB - write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation...	AF3 - organise and present whole texts effectively...	AF4 - construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs.	AF1 - write imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts.	AF2 - produce texts which are appropriate to task, reader and occasion.
<b>Level 7</b>	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• variety of sentence types deployed judiciously across the text to achieve purpose and overall effect, with rare loss of control</li> <li>• a range of features employed to shape/craft sentences that have individual merit and contribute to overall development of the text, eg embedded phrases and clauses that support succinct explanation; secure control of complex verb forms; anaphora, repetition or balance in sentence structure</li> </ul>	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information, ideas and events skilfully managed and shaped to achieve intended purpose and effect, eg introduction and development of character, plot, events, or the terms of an argument, are paced across the text</li> <li>• a variety of devices position the reader, eg skilful control of information flow to reader; leading the reader by drawing attention to how the narrative or argument is being handled?</li> </ul>	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paragraphing across the text is skilful to meaning and purpose, eg paragraph length and complexity varied to match narrative pace or development of argument; varied devices to link or juxtapose paragraphs; paragraph structure repeated for effect</li> <li>• individual paragraphs shaped or crafted for imaginative or rhetorical effect, eg list sentence echoing the first, lengthy single sentence paragraph to convey inner monologue</li> </ul>	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• imaginative and generally successful adoption of a range of forms and conventions to suit varied purposes and audiences, eg deliberate reference to textual conventions for effect or emphasis</li> <li>• well judged, distinctive individual voice or persona established and sustained throughout, eg consistent handling of narrator's persona in fiction; well use of original turns of phrase in formal discursive writing</li> <li>• generally successful and consistent control of level of formality and varied range of stylistic devices to achieve intended effect, eg varying the level within a piece for effect; direct address to the reader; taking the reader into their confidence</li> </ul>		
<b>Level 6</b>	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• controlled use of a variety of simple and complex sentences to achieve purpose and contribute to overall effect</li> <li>• confident use of a range of sentence features to clarify or emphasise meaning, eg fronted</li> </ul>	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• syntax and full range of punctuation are consistently accurate in a variety of sentence structures, with occasional errors in ambitious structures, eg only occasional comma splices; some use of</li> </ul>	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• material is clearly controlled and sequenced, taking account of the reader's likely reaction, eg paragraphs of differing lengths, use of flashback in narrative, anticipating reader's questions</li> </ul>	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• construction of paragraphs clearly supports meaning and purpose, eg paragraph topic signalled and then developed; withholding of information for effect; thematic links between paragraphs</li> </ul>	<p>Across a range of writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• imaginative treatment of appropriate material with conventions of a variety of forms, adapted when needed to suit purpose and audience; successfully, eg deliberate use of metaphor for humour; clear emphasis on narrator role</li> <li>• across a range of writing, connecting, evident point of view established and mostly sustained throughout, eg authoritative expert view, characterisation, adopting a role</li> </ul>	

Assessment for learning which is tied to assessment criteria by level

(APP)

Where there are areas of underperformance in particular assessment focuses, teachers find it helpful to consider their most appropriate course of action, depending on whether a weakness applies to just one pupil in the class, to a small group of pupils or to a larger number of pupils. If a whole class or cohort is affected, it is often necessary to review the long and medium term plans for that year group.

## A teacher's perspective of using APP materials

Initially, setting up rigorous routines and processes at **Knowle Church of England Primary School, Solihull** proved challenging.

"We wanted to involve both children and parents as much as possible in the target setting and assessment processes, and this meant there needed to be a period of induction not only for the teachers involved in the Making Good Progress<sup>2</sup> pilot but also for pupils and their parents.

With the pupils, curriculum time has been given to "Reflection" each week. In this 'Reflective Session', the teachers and the pupils spend time reflecting on previous learning; on what has been achieved, how that learning was achieved and what targets need to be set for future learning. This is done by both individuals about their own learning and by the teacher about group or class targets.

This time is used to inform pupils about the different types of learning styles there are and the qualities a good learner will employ to move their learning forward. This time is also used to explain the language and concepts used in individual targets so that the children fully understand what is being asked of them in a target. Group targets and individual targets are firmly based upon the curriculum objectives.

With parents a process of induction has begun using the traditional times of contact, Introductory Parents' Meetings and Parental Consultation Evenings, to inform parents about APP, and using the APP records for individuals to report to parents about their child's learning, progress and future targets. Engaging the parents in this way has meant that children are better able to discuss with their parents their learning and the targets they are hoping to achieve.

One of the most positive aspects of using APP has been an increased confidence and understanding by all involved as to what constitutes secure learning within particular levels. Pupils have greater involvement in their own target setting and self-assessment and they are far more informed as to "where they are" and "where they need to go next" ensuring that progress is not only being made but is also being recorded – not only by the teacher but also by the pupils themselves.

My own role in this whole process has also changed and developed. Rather than being the driving force in assessment and target setting my role has become more one in partnership with the child and their parents and of facilitator for these processes to work effectively."

<sup>2</sup> The *Making Good Progress* pilot is testing new ways to measure, assess, report and stimulate progress in schools, including through one-to-one tuition.

## Developing practice checklist

How effective is current practice in:

- Incorporating learning objectives, learning outcomes and success criteria into day to day practice?
- Supporting pupils in assessing and evaluating their learning through peer and self-assessment?
- Using Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) as a central part of periodic assessment?

### Sources of further support

**The Assessment for Learning Strategy** (DCSF-00341-2008) is aimed primarily at teachers and school leaders, and outlines how schools can make use of the resources available to them. It is designed to support schools in using assessment information to improve and plan provision, as well as improving the quality of the assessment process itself.

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk>

**Assessing Pupils' Progress** (APP) is a structured approach to teacher assessment, developed by the QCA in partnership with the National Strategies. APP provides clear criteria against which judgements can be made about levels and sub-levels. APP materials for key stages 2 and 3 are available on the Primary and Secondary Frameworks. Further materials in other subjects and at other Key Stages are in development and will be added to the Frameworks over time.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/framework/english/fwg/efwapp>

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/framework/maths/fwg/mfwapp>

This section of the Primary Framework also has information about day to day assessment and periodic assessment. It contains all the materials needed for the APP process as well as extensive support for developing AfL practice.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primaryframework/assessment>

**Assessment for learning – Whole-school and subject specific training materials** (DCSF 0043-2004 G). This assessment for learning (AfL) training has been developed as part of the Secondary National Strategy's support for whole-school improvement. It builds upon existing Key Stage 3 Strategy training materials and subject development materials. The units are designed to support whole-school training and lead to more subject-focused development work in individual departments.

[http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/afl\\_ws](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/afl_ws)

**Assessment for learning (AfL) 8 schools project** was an action research project (July 2005 – October 2006) which sought to identify what helps pupils develop as motivated and effective learners (through professional dialogue and collaborative working with teachers, school leaders and LAs). It also sought to identify how AfL can be successfully developed across the whole school

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/afl8>

Unit 12 of **Pedagogy and practice: Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools** (DfES 0435-2004 G) offers some practical strategies that teachers can use to improve their understanding and practice of assessment for learning. The techniques suggested are tried and tested; they draw on both academic research and the experience of practising teachers. By working through this guide teachers can build their teaching repertoire step by step, starting with strategies that are easy to implement and moving on to those that will help pupils develop their skills still further.

[http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/sec\\_pptl0](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/sec_pptl0)



**Using the P scales** – DVD material from the QCA to support the moderation of P Scale assessments.

[http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_5973.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_5973.aspx)

The **National College for School Leadership: Leadership for Personalising Learning website** includes case studies, videos and practical tools. Central to the website is a new Leadership for Personalising Learning Framework, which brings together the key research and thinking into how school leaders can embed personalisation and high quality learning within every aspect of their school.

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/personalisinglearning>

**Working inside the black box** provides advice for improving classroom assessment, based on findings from a review commissioned by the Assessment Reform Group

<http://www.assessment-reform-group.org>



## Intervention

*“A personalised approach also enables us to identify and intervene quickly where pupils are not progressing as they should.”*

The Children’s Plan

## Rationale

The great majority of pupils can succeed through quality first, class-based, teaching (wave 1). However, even in a classroom where personalised learning is effective, for some pupils this approach will not be sufficient. These pupils will benefit, at key moments, from additional small group or one-to-one interventions to enable them to make the progress needed to achieve their full potential. Intervention is therefore a key component of personalised learning.

Additional, time-limited, small group intervention support programmes (wave 2) are in common usage in schools and are designed to target pupils according to need, accelerate their rates of progress and secure their learning. Critically, this ‘catch up’ intervention support must help pupils apply their learning when they return to mainstream lessons to ensure that any progress is sustained. Intervention approaches therefore are most successful when they are fully compatible with mainstream practice.

While current ‘catch up’ arrangements are effective for many, some pupils need a further level of support which cannot be delivered in the context of whole class or small groups. Without an individualised approach (wave 3) it is very hard for these pupils to make the progress needed to fulfil their potential. An intensive burst of individual tuition, for example focused on a skill or understanding that has been taught in the classroom but the pupil has failed to secure, can be highly effective in getting the pupil back on track. It is important that learning gains made in one-to-one tuition, as with other interventions, are followed up through what the pupil experiences in the classroom so that they can be linked to what happens next. In this intervention, individual tuition supplements existing learning – it can never replace it. This approach also builds in the necessary adjustments for disabled pupils and pupils with SEN.<sup>3</sup>

Arranged at the right time for the right pupils, small group and one-to-one interventions can help prevent children falling significantly behind in particular subjects. The same broad three-level approach can be applied to schools’ support for their gifted and talented learners, to ensure that they are achieving at least two levels of progress per key stage. The onus is on class teachers and subject leaders to know what to look for and which sources of information to use in identifying those children in need of intervention.

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<sup>3</sup> The SEN Code of Practice advises schools on using their best endeavours to make the necessary provision for pupils with special educational needs, and on promoting their progress.

## How to do this well

Central to the effective planning of intervention is the knowledge that the teacher has of a particular pupil or group of pupils. When considering pupils for either wave 2 or wave 3 interventions, teachers doing this well draw on a wide range of assessment evidence to support judgements made about pupil progress. These include results from day to day assessment, pupil observation and interview, evaluation of progress made through class-based targeted support and knowledge of the pupil's capacity to be able to engage in either small group or one-to-one situations.



When planning their intervention programmes many schools aim to ensure that:

- Effective pupil tracking systems are in place which:
  - Identify individuals and groups of children who are not making sufficient progress;
  - Map the provision for intervention against need rather than established practice;
  - Support the planning of the appropriate and effective use of wave 2 and wave 3 interventions;
  - Enable learners to progress beyond the norms expected for their year group where appropriate;
  - Assist in the evaluation of the progress pupils make as a result of particular interventions, including the evaluation of adjustments and interventions for pupils with SEN or a disability.

- Progress meetings involving senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers regularly review and evaluate pupil progress by:
  - Engaging all staff in an ongoing dialogue around the impact intervention is having on an individual pupil’s progress;
  - Identifying successes and barriers to learning, such as a speech, language and communication needs, which – if not addressed – will potentially delay progress and require future intervention;
  - Identifying further actions required to support the progress of all children, i.e. beyond the intervention approach.

Emerging evidence from the *Making Good Progress* pilot and other developing programmes (e.g. *Every Child a Writer*) suggests a teaching sequence initially developed for small group intervention is equally successful in one-to-one tuition. The sequence has **remember → model → try → apply → secure** at its heart.

Stage	Focus
Introduce	An overview, learning objectives and outcomes
Remember	Focus on prior knowledge and skills; identification of the knowledge and skills to be developed
Model	Tutor demonstration of the process (thinking aloud)
Try	Independent pupil activity
Apply	Identification of misconceptions; new learning put into practice
Secure	Consolidation of learning through further practice and discussion
Review	Reflection on learning; application back in the classroom



## One to one tuition

**Etchingam Primary School** decided to use its own teachers as tutors. This allowed staff to support each other and offered a different and rewarding alternative to classroom teaching. This model readily facilitated liaison between tutor, class teacher and parent. The pupils were encouraged to work at their own pace and the sessions were structured flexibly to cater for individual needs. Specific targets were revisited once they had been achieved to ensure the ideas had been embedded. Throughout the sessions the pupils were encouraged to explain what they were doing and the sessions were often fun and entertaining. As Sam, a Year 4 pupil, said after his a period of mathematics tuition:

*"I am much better at maths in class now – sometimes I know the answer straight away."*

**Seaford Head Secondary School** opted to use a combination of methods to recruit tutors. They used some of their own teachers. This had the advantage of drawing on the immediate knowledge of the pupils and their obstacles to progress. A very positive spin off from this approach was that tracking procedures were refined to ensure that obstacles to progress could be identified more quickly. In addition the school also used independent teachers and agency tutors which increased the flexibility of the support by providing opportunities for home tuition and making use of weekends and holiday periods.

## Developing practice checklist

How effective is current practice in:

- Linking the learning developed in intervention programmes into mainstream lessons?
- Incorporating individual tuition into the overall approach to intervention?
- Evaluating the quality and impact of current intervention programmes?

## Sources of further support

**Secondary intervention** is an online series of training modules to introduce the support and guidance available to help plan and deliver intervention strategies at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in English and mathematics.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/intervention>

**Targeting support: Managing NLS/NNS intervention programmes.**

This management guide addresses the effective coordination of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies' intervention programmes. It places the intervention programmes within the wider context of additional support in schools. It also gives examples of how to manage intervention programmes.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/features/literacy/67757>

**The Every Child a Reader** programme provides a suite of early literacy interventions to support five- and six-year-old children (Year 1) who are struggling to learn to read. The approach is based on three waves of teaching. Children most in need receive intensive one to one support (using the proven Reading Recovery programme). The programme is being rolled out nationally from September 2008. By 2010/11, 30,000 children a year will benefit from Every Child a Reader.

[http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/pri\\_every\\_chld\\_rdr0003408](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/pri_every_chld_rdr0003408)

**Every Child a Writer** is an intensive support programme for children in Years 3 and 4 at primary school that focuses on the areas of writing children find the hardest to master. Every Child a Writer aims to ensure faster progress at the beginning of Key Stage 2 with expectations of: securing level 3 at the end of Year 4; putting children on the path to make two levels of progress across the Key Stage. The programme focuses on improving quality first teaching for the whole class; improving guided writing to meet group needs and one-to-one intervention for those children that need it most. The programme is currently being piloted in 9 local authorities from September 2008 and will be rolled out nationally by 2010/11. Further information will become available in 2009 from the National Strategies Online website.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies>

**Every Child Counts** is a primary mathematics intervention programme to help those children that have fallen behind to catch up with their peers. It provides teachers with specialist training to enable them to work on a one to one basis with those children that require additional support with early numeracy skills. The programme will be in its development phase until 2010.

<http://www.everychildachancetrust.org/counts>

**Leading on Inclusion** (DfES1183-2005G). Professional development materials and CDROM designed to encourage schools to take a more strategic approach to managing inclusion by focusing on whole school development.

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/1146355>

From September 2009, every school will be required to have a teacher as a special educational needs coordinator (**SENCO**) who takes day-to-day responsibility for the operation of special educational needs policy and the coordination of provision.

All schools will have a **leading teacher for Gifted and Talented**, with some primary schools share a leading teacher.

## Pupil grouping

*“Using setting and groups to teach children of similar abilities and interests can bring real educational benefits. Grouping can also be used more effectively in the classroom – in particular, through proven approaches to in-class grouping by need, and guided group work when the teacher coaches a small group to apply immediately what they have been learning in the main part of the lesson”*

The Children’s Plan

### Rationale

Classes can be organised to cater for a wide variety of pupil strengths and weaknesses. In addition there are numerous other ways of grouping or pairing learners according to the task in hand, for example by age, ability, friendship groups or gender. Research evidence suggests that effective grouping is carefully planned and flexible and that in-class grouping is the best way of all to ensure effective learning. Pupil grouping is one of the many tools teachers use to deliver the most appropriate curriculum to each individual and is therefore an important feature of personalised learning. Co-operative learning also plays a crucial role in building teams and developing community cohesion.

Guided learning is an instructional sequence for small groups which is integrated into lessons to provide a bridge between whole-class teaching and independent work. It is a powerful procedure for pitching work at appropriate levels for differing groups within the class, so that all children and young people make good progress. It enables pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or learning English as an additional language (EAL) to be taught in inclusive settings and helps to ensure that all learners, including the highest attainers, get close attention from the teacher on a systematic basis. Guided learning enables teachers to support and challenge pupils by intervening in a sustained and proactive way at the point of learning. It helps to develop personalised learning since it:

- is a means of tailoring teaching and learning to the needs of individual pupils;
- groups pupils to provide structured support and challenge inside normal lessons to address aspects of progress and specific needs;
- encourages pupils to become active participants in discussions;
- develops independent learning and reduces pupil dependency on the teacher.

## How to do this well

All classes will contain children and young people with varied learning needs which change over time. Effective teachers identify these changing needs through assessment for learning approaches and are able to tailor their teaching accordingly, for example, through targeted ‘no hands up’ questioning, differentiated tasks and activities, and approaches such as pre-reading or research which help pupils to be prepared for learning in advance.

### Class grouping

Whether pupils are taught in ability sets or mixed ability they are likely to have a range of diverse needs that need to be addressed through personalised learning. In order to meet the learning objectives and learning needs and provide appropriate challenge and support for all pupils, teachers can use a range of grouping options within their classes, such as:

- Short term ‘within class’ grouping according to need. For example, in a Year 8 reading unit, pupils might be grouped according to the specific reading skills and strategies they need to strengthen, such as visualising, predicting, questioning and commenting or empathising.
- Structured or random remixing to ensure that pupils have access to a range of views and opinions beyond their friendship groups. “Jigsawing”, “rainbow groups” and “envoys”<sup>4</sup> are all short term ways of restructuring the class in order to share a range of views and feedback.
- Paired working to facilitate discussion. All pupils are required to make a contribution in a non-threatening way that is easy to facilitate.
- Short term regrouping across a year group to allow choice and increase motivation. For example, in English, Year 10 classes might be regrouped for half a term to study a GCSE coursework literature text.

### Guided learning

In effective classrooms guided learning is used to support small groups of approximately six pupils to apply their learning in context in the mainstream classroom. It makes good use of teacher expertise as its use enables teachers to tailor their teaching to target the learning needs of individuals and small groups of learners. Guided sessions are usually planned over a sequence of lessons in order to ensure that all pupils, whatever their ability or needs, benefit from the approach. However teachers who are effective at this practice deliver guided learning sessions in response to more immediate needs by

<sup>4</sup> See Pedagogy and Practice Unit 10 Group Work.

In ‘jigsawing’ pupils in the ‘home group’ take on an ‘expert’ role and then form with others in a specific expert group. Having researched their role together, the pupils return to the home group better equipped to make use of the new found expertise.

‘Rainbow’ groups are used after an initial group task is completed. Members of the initial group are given different colours, the pupils then reform in their colour groups and each reports back on the work undertaken in the original group.

The ‘envoy’ strategy is similar to the ‘rainbow’ with the additional requirement that the pupils return to their original group and provide feedback on what others thought about their work.



intervening at the point of learning, for example, if day to day assessment for learning reveals that a small group of pupils has a particular barrier to learning that needs to be addressed.

For a guided session to have maximum impact on pupils' learning, teachers often follow a series of planned stages which include:

- Explanation of the objective and clarification of the strategies to be used;
- Application by the pupils, typically with the pupils working on their own or in pairs;
- A group review with the teacher of the work the pupils have been engaged in;
- Reflections on progress and next steps.



In successful practice teachers provide pupils not in the guided group with work that is appropriately pitched to provide sufficient challenge. The pupils need a range of self help strategies and resources in the classroom to help them if they get stuck. The use of displays of key vocabulary, reference books and peer 'buddies' are strategies that teachers use successfully to develop pupils' independent learning skills and reduce their dependence on the teacher.

Advice from teachers who are successfully using guided learning in both primary and secondary classrooms includes:

- Spending about fifteen to twenty minutes with a guided group, generally after the main teaching so that the focus is on the application of learning;
- Establishing routines and ensuring that all pupils understand their roles and responsibilities;
- Providing appropriately challenging work for pupils not in the guided group and holding them to account for their work through the plenary session.

## Guided learning

In a Year 3 class of 30, the children are organised into four guided groups for writing, although there is some flexibility in the groupings. The teacher is focusing on narrative, with the children writing adventure stories using the Aztecs as a source of information for creating settings and characters. The children have already looked at the features of adventure stories, discussed their ideas and planned their stories. They have been concentrating on using strong verbs and adverbs to describe the actions. The children have reached the stage where they are writing their stories.

In this lesson the pupils have been organised into three groups. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher shares the objectives with the class: to improve how sentences start and to use more powerful verbs and adverbs in order to engage the reader. The teacher recaps earlier work, including some drama from the previous lesson, and then the children work in pairs on whiteboards on improving their sentences. The teacher then gives instructions to the two independent groups before working with the guided group.

In the first independent group the children have all completed their stories. They are asked to work with a response partner and use a school drafting code and checklist to redraft their own writing. The children in the other independent group are in the middle of their story. They are asked to review their work looking at the use of verbs and adverbs to support character description, drawing on the drama activity and by using a thesaurus.

The guided group is made up of secure, independent writers but their openings to sentences are repetitive, often beginning with 'The' or the main character's name. The session is structured as follows:

- The teacher explains the structure of the session and then chooses a sentence from one of the pupils' work that can be improved and then with help from the pupils models the improvement;
- The children then work in pairs to discuss improvements in sentences the teacher has highlighted in their own work;
- The teacher finally sums up the work and shares examples of the sentences that have been improved with the whole guided group.

In the whole-class plenary the teacher reviews the work of the three groups, drawing on the work done by one pupil from each of the groups. The lesson objectives are then repeated and the pupils asked to reflect on whether they have made progress towards the objectives.

## Developing practice checklist

How effective is current practice in:

- Evaluating the impact of class/teaching groupings (sets, bands, mixed ability, gender)?
- Incorporating a range of pupil grouping options (whole class, small groups, pairs) in lessons?
- Developing guided learning as an integral part of lesson organisation?

## Sources of further support

**Grouping Pupils for Success** (DfES03945-2006DWO-EN) is a set of research findings and guidance notes designed to raise awareness of the implications of different approaches to pupil grouping and setting, so that schools can review their current policies and develop their own approaches.

[http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/group\\_pup\\_succ](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/group_pup_succ)

Unit 9 of **Pedagogy and Practice: Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools** (DfES 0423 2004G), is a study unit offering some practical strategies that teachers can use to guide pupils' learning. The techniques suggested are tried and tested; they draw on both academic research and the experience of practising teachers.

[http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/sec\\_ppt10](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/sec_ppt10)

The **Gifted and Talented Classroom Quality Standards** provide a basis for schools to review and, if necessary, strengthen the challenge they provide to all learners, but especially gifted and talented learners, in classroom settings. Amplification of the generic standards in each of the core subjects will be available from Autumn 2008.

<http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/Content.aspx?contentId=332&contentType=3>

**Improving Writing with a Focus on Guided Writing** (DCSF-00618-2007) is a booklet to support headteachers, teachers and practitioners in improving the teaching of writing across all primary year groups. It is part of the overall Primary Framework Continuing Professional Development (CPD) package.

[http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/imp\\_writ](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/imp_writ)

## The learning environment

*“Children need the right environment to be able to learn and thrive.”*

The Children’s Plan

### Rationale

Where the learning environment is well organised and used flexibly to support a range of different interactive teaching and learning approaches, personalised learning can be considerably enhanced. The school and classroom environment, and the organisation of resources within it, can have a very significant impact on the quality of children and young people’s learning.

The initial considerations for assessing the quality of any learning space are self-evident. Good lighting, heating, ventilation, acoustics, access for disabled pupils, and a sense of wellbeing will enhance levels of pupils’ concentration. Good decorative order, the appropriate use of colour and visual displays are also key pre-requisites for accessibility and an effective learning environment.

Another consideration is the access to resources to support learning. These include visual resources which may be on display, for example learning walls, ICT resources and the ‘outdoor classroom’ provided within the school grounds and immediate locality. Particular thought needs to be given to the organisation of ICT resources where a range of options are available, including dedicated ICT areas and ‘anywhere’ support via portable systems such as laptops and palm tops.

Perhaps the most essential consideration is the flexibility of use the learning environment offers and its ability to facilitate a wide range of different teaching and learning activities. The extent to which the furniture can be rearranged to create and facilitate different pupil groupings and organisation; the potential for utilising the surrounding areas to provide additional working space for either independent work or supported intervention; and the need for ready access to learning resources become the key factors.

Through current programmes, including Building Schools for the Future, Academies, and the Primary Capital Programme, the Government is committing £21.9bn over the years 2008-09 to 2010-11. New schools and re-modelled areas within a school offer excellent opportunities for the design of learning spaces to meet the requirements for personalised learning.

## How to do this well

Developing personalised teaching and learning makes different, and possibly more diverse, demands on space. Schools are adept at adapting the learning environment to suit a range of learning activities. Often this involves creative and flexible approaches to timetabling. Other common adaptations include:

- rearrangement of furniture within the classroom to facilitate whole-class or small group teaching and learning approaches, taking account of any access requirements;
- maximising the use of shared spaces for large group activities, such as team teaching or providing a common stimulus for a number of groups or classes;
- providing suitable small spaces for small group intervention work or one to one tuition, or calm withdrawal areas.

Highly visual and interactive displays can be used to engage pupils and encourage self help strategies. Pupils are very aware that many clues to support learning can be found on the classroom wall. These 'working walls' are often used to demonstrate the processes needed to support current learning. These link to lesson objectives, units of work or curricular targets, for example by providing step by step instructions for calculations or to the effective punctuation of sentences.

## Flexible approaches: ICT in primary schools

A recent DCSF study of the use of ICT in primary schools (*Beyond Engagement*) indicates that schools are adopting a range of approaches to reduce the potential inflexibility of siting computers in a computer suite. These include:

- Timetabling classes into the computer suite for a whole week each half-term.
- Using laptops supported by a wireless network. Typically these are stored on a trolley and are moved from room to room. In some schools all the pupils in a particular year group or class now have their own laptop which they keep in their classroom.
- Providing pupils with individual hand held computers or Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs).
- Incorporating class groups of networked computers into the normal work space in classrooms so that each pupil has his or her own dedicated access.

Creative use of external spaces, both within the school grounds and beyond is also a feature of many schools' practice. The 'outdoor classroom' now often encompasses areas and facilities well beyond the school gates and is being increasingly used as a resource to support activities far more diverse than those traditionally found which focused on science and environmental aspects of the curriculum.

Extended schools also view the learning environment from a broader perspective and are constantly looking for approaches which will support and enhance the effectiveness of wider community involvement.

## Supporting the curriculum through creative use of the environment

At **St Mary's Church of England Primary School in Banbury**, imaginative use is made of both the indoor and the outdoor environment to stimulate children's thinking. For example, new vocabulary is introduced in exciting and imaginative ways by displaying the alphabet on the school itself, E for eaves, G for gable, etc.

A whole school writing project was initiated by the sudden and mysterious overnight appearance of words on the playground wall: *"The north wind did blow and we once had snow."* Later in the week, another word appeared, this time written in tinsel in the hedge: *"SANCTUARY"*.



As the unit of work unravelled, it was charted in the form of a collaborative narrative on the school website:

*"Stephanie had been thinking about 'Sanctuary'. It was a strange word. It came from an old language called Latin – the kind of thing that ancient Romans spoke. The 'sanctu' bit meant 'holy' and she had read how in the old days criminals on the run could get into a church and hang on to the altar and claim 'sanctuary' and that meant nobody could touch them. Great! Still you were stuck in a church and the law would probably just wait for you outside. These days it meant a safe place, not holy anymore. You could have sanctuaries for wild life, for snakes or squirrels or snails even, but who was the sanctuary at the bottom of the playground for?"*

This approach instilled a whole spirit of enquiry in the children. The school buzzed with children talking about language, about words and their meaning and the way we make sense of our world through narrative.

## Developing practice checklist

How effective is current practice in:

- Adapting the organisation of the classroom/ learning environment to the pupils' learning needs?
- Developing the use of learning resources and particularly ICT?
- Ensuring ICT is used to support access for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs?
- Making effective use of the 'outdoor classroom'?

## Sources of further support

The **DCSF Curriculum Model** is a computer-based model for the assessment of secondary school accommodation requirements on the basis of pupil numbers and ages, curriculum details, timetabling arrangements and space area standards. It can be used in the development of any significant secondary school building project and secondary school suitability assessments.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/curriculumanalysis>

Becta has developed a **self-review framework (SRF)** to help schools make the most of their investment in ICT. The SRF offers a straightforward process for schools to identify their strengths and weaknesses in current ICT deployment and use, as well as alerting them to key priorities for future investment.

<http://www.becta.org.uk/schools/selfreviewframework>

Further guidance on **Parental Engagement through ICT** is available through the Becta website. **Developing a vision for ICT** can be found in the leadership and management section of the site.

<http://schools.becta.org.uk>

Guidance on **designing for pupils with special educational needs** will be published in the autumn of 2008.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolbuildings>

The RIBA **Client Guide to Developing School Buildings** (third edition of Guide for School Governors) is intended to help school governors and others in the client group appreciate what is involved in looking after and developing school buildings.

The **National College for School Leadership: Leadership for Personalising Learning website** includes case studies, videos and practical tools. Central to the website is a new Leadership for Personalising Learning Framework, which brings together the key research and thinking into how school leaders can embed personalisation and high quality learning within every aspect of their school.

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/personalisinglearning>

### Other useful sources of information are:

The Sorrell Foundation: [www.thesorrellfoundation.com](http://www.thesorrellfoundation.com)

British Council for School Environments: [www.bcse.uk.net](http://www.bcse.uk.net)

Learning through Landscapes: [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)

Sport England: [www.sportengland.org.uk](http://www.sportengland.org.uk)

## Curriculum organisation

*“The curriculum of the past was dominated by content coverage led by the teacher. Today we are building a curriculum around optimum progression for individual pupil learning. This means improving the way we tailor the curriculum for individual needs, and increasing choice”*

The Children’s Plan

### Rationale

The National Curriculum safeguards every child’s entitlement to a number of areas of learning. However, whilst there is a core of prescribed knowledge, skills and understanding, organised by subject, it is not a ‘one size fits all’ model and schools have freedom to personalise the curriculum which they offer. In essence personalising the curriculum means finding the right challenges for pupils and addressing their particular needs so all have an equal opportunity to succeed.

An effective curriculum caters for the needs and interests of the full range of learners, including:

- the gifted and talented;
- learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with speech, language and communication needs;
- learners who are learning English as an additional language;
- boys and girls;
- children who are in care;
- learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

A review of the primary curriculum is currently underway. The review is addressing primary teachers’ concerns about overcrowding by reducing unnecessary prescription, duplication and overlap. The intention is to enable schools to have greater flexibility to meet individual pupils’ needs and strengths and to reduce prescription where possible, whilst retaining the introduction to a broad range of subjects, including languages, in a way that is manageable for schools.

The new secondary curriculum contains less prescribed content, allowing more time to support those who have fallen behind at Key Stage 2, particularly in the key areas of English and mathematics. The Diploma forms part of the whole curriculum and provides specific pathways that learners can choose alongside their entitlement to the National Curriculum, offering a wider range of choices for learners. As a result of collaboration between schools and colleges on the delivery of the 14-19 curriculum, young people can benefit from an increasingly personalised curriculum.



## How to do this well

Many schools are now developing and extending their approaches to the curriculum and offering a curriculum that is more closely matched to their pupils' aptitudes and interests. 'Stage' not 'age' approaches, in which knowledge, skills and understanding are selected from earlier or later key stages, are becoming much more common. Schools are adept at adjusting their curriculum organisation to ensure that disabled pupils are not put at a disadvantage compared with their peers. Similarly modifications are made to provide full access to the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs or pupils learning English as an additional language.



## Personalising the curriculum to meet local needs

At **Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School** a strategy is being developed to celebrate cultural diversity, encourage a feeling of belonging and inclusion among the whole school population and reach out to the local community. Using the new curriculum as a starting point, the school's citizenship department has taken a lead in exploring cultural diversity and identity.

A new citizenship scheme of work for Year 7 pupils introduces the idea of identity.

*'Before the pupils go on to look at things like racism, they have to know that they are not culturally neutral. Around here, if they are not in a minority group they think of themselves as not having a culture.'* (Citizenship teacher)

Pupils explore and present their findings on what it means to be British, the reasons for migration, the changes to Britain over time and positive aspects of the mix of cultures in Britain today.

This understanding is then developed year on year. In Year 8, pupils explore the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers through a citizenship unit linked with drama. They also tackle the theme of bullying, focusing on discrimination and exploring the meaning and effects of racism through the case study of Stephen Lawrence. Year 9 learners look at discrimination and stereotyping as part of a careers focus in life skills. In Year 10, students go out into the local community to encourage communication between different ethnic groups.

Other subjects have also made changes to their curriculum to increase the emphasis on identity and cultural diversity. Learners study poetry from other cultures in English and global terrorism as part of GCSE history. In religious studies they research different faiths. During an annual multicultural week, all departments focus on cultural diversity and include work to develop learning about different cultures.

Keen to build on work to date, the school is now planning to:

- promote local culture by involving the local community in local history and building up a bank of historical experiences;
- make more links with the local community, including setting up a multicultural group, making links with the local library service, working with the university, working with representatives from community groups and putting on dance and drama performances;
- install a video-conferencing suite to enable closer links with schools in Ghana and India for which the school raises funds.

The Primary and Secondary Frameworks provide a strong focus on progression and the new programmes of study encourage children and young people to make connections across events and activities, as well as subjects. Using this approach, the curriculum no longer needs to be viewed as a set of compartmentalised subject content to be covered in formal lesson time, but instead an entire planned learning experience for young people, including lessons, events, routines of the school, the extended school day and activities that take place out of school. Schools are using this flexibility in a range of ways: for example, pupils don't study all National Curriculum subjects each week, term or year and the aspects of the curriculum chosen to be covered in depth are tailored to the needs and aspirations of the pupils. Similarly, in some schools the curriculum is, in part, being organised by theme and in cross-curricular blocks of time. The use of extended tasks in secondary schools, within or across subjects, is also becoming increasingly common.

Schools and colleges are increasingly developing a wider range of progression routes for young people in the 14-19 age group through apprenticeships, general qualifications, or the new diplomas.

### Developing practice checklist

How effective is current practice in:

- Choosing an overall curriculum model/structure that caters for the needs of all pupils?
- Providing specific support for certain groups of pupils including pupils with SEN, EAL and gifted and talented learners?
- Incorporating flexibility into curriculum organisation and delivery to ensure greater coherence from the pupils' perspectives?

## Sources of further support

The **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) website** is the main online resource for the new secondary curriculum, information sharing, guidance, case studies and a bigger picture of the curriculum.

<http://curriculum.qca.org.uk>

**CfBT Education Trust** is working with ten subject associations to offer subject specific support to schools on foundation subjects and to assist them in delivering the new secondary curriculum in imaginative and inspirational ways. The CfBT website offers a range of features including an online Curriculum Planning Wizard hosting a toolkit of activities, video case studies, downloadable subject-specific support resources, online support material, links to other key resources, web casts and recorded presentations.

<http://www.newsecondarycurriculum.org>

CfBT Education Trust is also the provider of the **Young Gifted and Talented (YG&T) Learner Academy**, supporting all learners identified as gifted and talented by their schools and colleges through online learning and a wide range of face-to-face learning opportunities.

<http://www.ygt.dcsf.gov.uk>

The National College for School Leadership and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust are developing a practitioner-led **secondary curriculum support programme** to help schools respond to the opportunities of the new secondary curriculum and 14-19 reforms.

<http://www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk/Article.aspa?NodId=0&PageId=238593>

Through the renewed **Primary and Secondary Frameworks**, the National Strategies can support schools in planning; evaluating current schemes of work and teaching sequences; developing a curriculum to suit a school's circumstances and the needs of children and young people; designing teaching approaches and learning opportunities in the context of whole-school curriculum planning; using Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) resources for periodic assessment and to track pupils' progress; providing intervention for those who struggle or stall; and making direct and explicit links to National Strategies guidance.

Primary – <http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primaryframeworks>

Secondary – <http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/framework>

**Learning difficulties: Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum.** A series of booklets produced by the QCA providing the curriculum context for the P level attainment targets.

[http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_11583.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_11583.aspx)

The **National College for School Leadership: Leadership for Personalising Learning website** includes case studies, videos and practical tools. Central to the website is a new Leadership for Personalising Learning Framework, which brings together the key research and thinking into how school leaders can embed personalisation and high quality learning within every aspect of their school.

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/personalisinglearning>

## The extended curriculum

*“Beyond the classroom, children and young people need to experience a wide range of activities. The Expert Groups and the Time to Talk consultation both emphasised to us how important it is for children to enjoy their childhood and develop their own talents”*

The Children’s Plan

### Rationale

Helping children and young people to discover or develop new interests and talents is an important aspect of personalised learning. Extended schools can do this, and much more, by offering a range of cultural and social opportunities and are a key way of delivering the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda. By working with a range of local providers, agencies and other schools a ‘core offer’ of extended services can be provided. The ‘core offer’ is composed of:

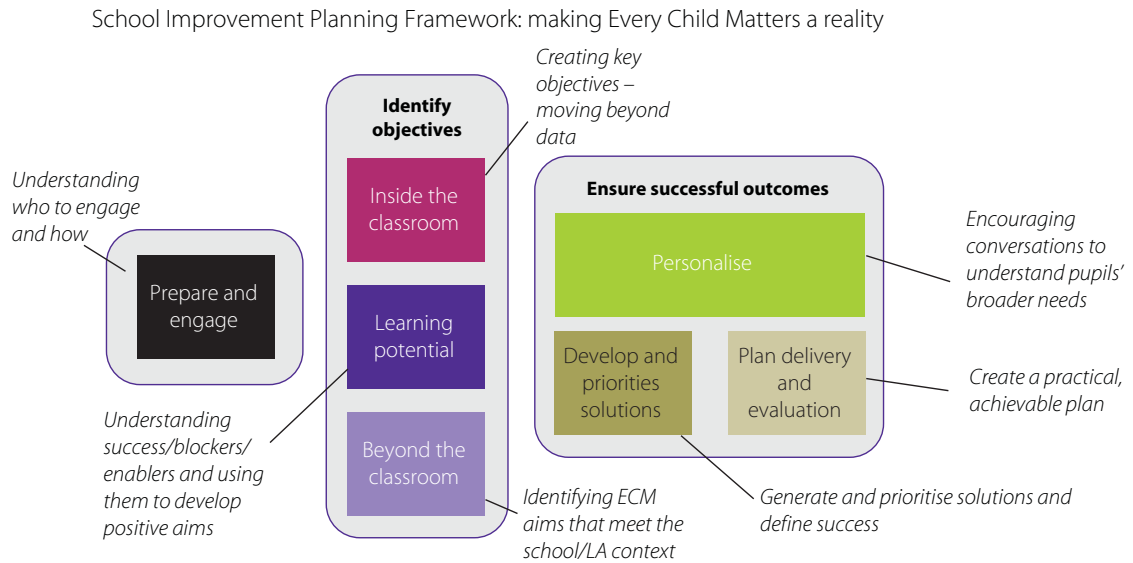
- a varied menu of activities (including study support and play) and childcare. In primary schools this means access to a variety of choices of activities combined with childcare 8am-6pm, 48 weeks a year; in secondary schools access to a wide range of activities which offer young people a safe place to be from 8am to 6pm;
- parenting and family support;
- swift and easy access to specialist services such as speech and language therapy;
- community use of facilities including adult and family learning and ICT.

These will often be provided beyond the school day but not necessarily by teachers or on the school site. By August 2008 there were already over 13,600 schools (around 2 in 5) providing access to extended services in partnership with local providers, and the aim is for all schools to be doing this by 2010. It is important that the facilities provided are accessible to disabled pupils and that all groups of children and young people have equal access.

Extended services can have very positive effects on pupil attainment and exclusion rates, as well as enhancing self-confidence, improving relationships, raising aspirations and leading to better attitudes to learning. Providing swift and easy access to integrated health and social care enables early intervention to address problems which could impact negatively on children’s wellbeing and ultimately their attainment.

One of the challenges facing schools is to integrate pupils’ learning within and beyond the classroom. The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and National College for School Leadership (NCSL) have worked with schools to develop the School Improvement Planning Framework (SIPF). The aim of the SIPF is to help schools to design and deliver the goals of ECM inside and beyond the classroom.

## The SIPF Model



### Using the SIPF in extending services

**John O'Gaunt Community College** has developed a personalised learning programme for year 9 pupils through a structured consultation process with parents, staff and pupils – in small groups and individually. The College worked out what the characteristics of a successful learner were and what the common 'blockers' and 'enablers' preventing pupils' from reaching their full potential.

The school used the School Improvement Planning Framework, a suite of tools developed by the TDA and NCSL, to facilitate these consultations. The output from these processes were used as evidence to support its school improvement. Based on these consultations, the school has implemented a personalised approach to learning for year 9 pupils, including using a learning journal and weekly meetings with a staff mentor to review progress towards an agreed view of successful learning.

The College is adapting its extended activities to support this approach and is already seeing improvements in achievement and behaviour in class. The Extended Schools Coordinator is working in conjunction with primary schools in planning a "Family Learning Week" to further develop its relationship with parents and carers. In addition to after-school activities, such as dance and drama clubs, and music and sports activities, there is also a homework club for vulnerable pupils and children with SEN.

*"The impact is that pupils are much more engaged with their learning and they're getting fewer referrals in school and their self-esteem is increasing incredibly. The parents are very happy with what's happening in the College and pleased that their child is happy, engaged, and that their self esteem is improving."* **(Senior Assistant Headteacher)**

## How to do this well

Successful practice in extended schools leads to children and young people benefiting from the enhanced provision in a number of ways. Their levels of motivation, aspiration and achievement are raised where they are involved in activities such as after school clubs which respond very directly to pupils' interests. Where families are involved in activities such as family learning, sports and adult education, not only do they become more involved in their children's education and embrace new learning opportunities, they also act as positive role models, encouraging their children to learn.

Schools are highly creative in overcoming the barriers to the participation of particular groups of children in extended services. Many successful schools are aware of the pattern of use of extended services by disabled children and take steps to consider how to promote take-up.

## Emerging good primary practice

DCSF School Standards Advisers have conducted a series of visits to 40 primary schools serving deprived communities.

In the schools visited two underlying principles were very apparent: to open pupils' eyes to new opportunities and experiences beyond the immediate and to help pupils to see what surrounded them in new and enriching ways.

Plentiful trips to museums, galleries, theatres and outdoor activity centres were the norm in these schools. In one school, fifty children regularly attended a monthly Sunday nature walk. Every opportunity was taken to link new experiences back to pupils' learning in order to embed the experiences fully rather than regarding them as 'one-off treats'.

Visitors were regularly welcomed to these schools in order to share their experiences with pupils. Local professionals such as doctors, vets, hairstylists, opticians and estate agents were invited to run workshops for pupils and to speak about their work whilst visits by artists, theatre groups and storytellers also enriched pupils' experiences.

Several schools focused on raising environmental and ethical awareness, for example, by sponsoring children overseas through overseas aid organisations, providing vicarious experiences for pupils such as 'walking for water' or exploring water conservation. Some schools cultivated a school garden and gave all pupils the opportunity to grow and eat their own food whilst others ensured that every pupil was given the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. International links had been made, for example, through video conferencing and overseas visits.

The local community was not neglected but rather exploited for what it had to offer and, as a result, pupils learnt to perceive it anew. Visitors to the school from the locality provided access to role models and people who had been successful. Visits to explore the local church, museum or superstore were gradually developed into more adventurous outings to more distant gardens or cities and ultimately to residential visits within the UK and abroad. Teachers remained convinced of the power and influence of residential visits, particularly for pupils from more deprived backgrounds.

Typically, schools ensured that all pupils could benefit from such opportunities by supporting them financially, for example, through the use of small but dedicated budgets for cultural enrichment.

## Developing practice checklist

How effective is current practice in:

- Offering a full range of 'out of hours' activities which enhance and extend the basic curriculum?
- Ensuring access for all groups of pupils?
- Involving parents and carers, as well as the wider community, in extended provision?
- Providing access to other services, including health and social services?

## Sources of further support

**The SIPF** is a suite of tools and techniques designed to support schools in their strategic thinking, planning and implementation.

[http://www.tda.gov.uk/leaders/schoolimprovement\\_framework.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/leaders/schoolimprovement_framework.aspx)

The TDA are offering training to LAs so that they can support schools in using the SIPF.

**The National Register of Gifted and Talented Learners.** The new Learner Academy for Gifted and Talented has a searchable database of extended opportunities for gifted and talented pupils –

<http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/Catalogue/CatalogueSearch.aspx>

**Extending Inclusion – Access for disabled children and young people to extended schools and children's centres: a development manual** (00186-2008). Published by the Council for Disabled Children explores some of the barriers and solutions to the participation of disabled children in extended services.

## 9. Supporting children's wider needs

*'As schools become increasingly sophisticated in making judgements about pupils' progress in the classroom, and using assessment data to track pupils, they should be able to use this information to identify where there are barriers beyond the classroom that need to be addressed. Poor educational progress may well be an indicator that a child is experiencing wider difficulties, for example at home or with health conditions.'*

The Children's Plan

### Rationale

Schools that are able to identify barriers to learning beyond the classroom and address them are in a strong position to provide personalised learning for each individual pupil.

The Children's Plan brought the commitment that every child would have the support they need to achieve the five outcomes: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being. Practically, this means that the organisations involved with providing services to children team up, share information and work together to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life.

The Government's vision of the 21st Century School places schools at the heart of a supportive system, with a key role in initially looking for early signs that children might need extra help and then responding quickly if problems emerge, working with other partners as appropriate.

Children of all abilities and backgrounds can experience difficulties which impact on their learning, their attendance, their self esteem or general attitude towards learning more generally. The effective provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project (a longitudinal study of 3,000 children) shows that parents' involvement in home learning activities makes an important difference to children's attainment and social behaviour at age three through to the age of ten. What is happening in a child's home or personal life can have a profound impact on how well they perform at school and it is important that schools and extended services know when, and under what circumstances, to offer help to the pupil or their family. Whilst some children and young people will regain their momentum with little or no assistance from the support services, for other pupils there can be defining moments where disengagement sets in and a sense of purpose is lost.

How to best organise help for children who are facing particular difficulties will depend on how local support arrangements have been organised, for example with relevant



agencies as well as key support roles in schools and local authorities. The Children’s Plan has set out a commitment for every secondary school pupil to have access to a personal tutor who is able to co-ordinate a package of support that best helps that pupil. In this way support for children and young people and their families will tie together with communications on pupils’ progress.

### How to do this well

Best practice is to establish good relationships with all families; identify young people’s individual barriers to learning early on; and refer swiftly those who need more specialised support. Often, schools are in a position to address any identified barriers to learning through their own services, working with the full range of extended services already on offer to children and families. Where a more formal assessment is required to identify the barriers, or where multi-agency services are likely to be required, schools are able to complete a wider assessment using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Co-ordination of this extended support provides senior leadership teams with significant challenges. Effective practice is underpinned by clarity of roles and responsibilities.

Where additional support from other agencies is needed, building a local multi-agency ‘team around the child’ and agreeing a lead professional (LP) with the pupils and their parents can be a very successful approach. Such teams bring together, or provide ready access to, for example: professionals from child health services; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS); behavioural support and education psychology services; speech and language therapy; family support (including parenting); educational welfare; social care; and (for secondary schools) youth services and crime prevention. The LP co-ordinates the delivery of the actions agreed by the practitioners involved and acts as a single point of contact for the pupil and their family. This kind of joined up support can really tackle major barriers to learning, ensuring every child is fulfilling their potential.



The increasing availability of parenting information, support and advice through the roll out of extended schools and Sure Start Children’s Centres and the development of Parent Know-How, make it easier for parents to access help and support when they need it. There is also a range of structured parenting programmes which can be drawn upon to help parents find effective strategies for supporting and managing their child’s behaviour.

Schools are increasingly becoming active partners within Children’s Trusts. Being engaged at this strategic level, they are in a position to agree the support from other services which they need; and to agree what role they should play alongside others in providing the services needed to improve the well-being of all children and young people in the area. Many Children’s Trusts are establishing permanently co-located teams, based in and around schools (serving a cluster of nearby schools) and other community settings. In other areas, use of ‘virtual teams’, who either regularly work together or form ‘teams around the child’ specifically to support individual children, are more common. In successful partnerships local protocols have been established which make clear the roles and responsibilities of schools and other services in meeting children’s needs.

## Personal Tutors

By 2010 every secondary school pupil and their family will have, as their first point of contact with the school, a Personal Tutor who will be a named member of staff (but not necessarily one with Qualified Teacher Status).

Personal Tutors will support children by:

- being familiar with the pupil’s progress across their subject areas;
- agreeing their learning targets across the curriculum;
- identifying and acting on any barriers to success beyond the classroom;
- playing a key role in communicating with parents/carers to report on their child’s progress and discussing any support they need at home and at school;
- helping young people to identify their long-term aspirations and in making the best choice of subjects at 14 and 16;
- supporting them, including by face-to-face meetings, through the transition stages of learning<sup>5</sup>.

Schools will be encouraged to respond to the concept of Personal Tutors in their own way, taking account of the local context of pupils’ needs. In some cases this will involve a ‘light touch’ approach, for example using existing pastoral arrangements, whereas in other cases a more targeted approach for young people with complex needs or social circumstances might be more appropriate. Individual schools will decide which staff are best placed to be Personal Tutors within their own pastoral and academic support systems. Support staff, school counsellors and other professionals working in schools

<sup>5</sup> Currently, this is particularly aimed at primary to secondary transition; in the longer term a role for them to facilitate transition to post-16 provision is also envisaged. This is not intended to substitute expert or independent careers advice, but could help to smooth other aspects of transition, especially where students have particular needs and information needs to be passed on to the next education provider.

might also be appropriate people to undertake the support envisaged, so long as they have the appropriate skills. There is no expectation for schools to employ new members of staff to be Personal Tutors – it is more likely that the role will be implemented in the context of workforce remodelling by reconfiguring the roles of existing staff.

### Cross-agency working

Many pupils start at **Nightingale Junior School** with levels of attainment that are exceptionally low compared with the national average. Keen to address issues linked indirectly to education, which would also benefit pupil attainment, the school developed partnerships with outside agencies with the aim of providing more targeted support for vulnerable children and their families. The school has well-established, regular contact with the police, health, social services, the travellers association, the community GP, the sexual abuse unit, Sure Start and CAHMS.

The learning mentor gradually encouraged the agencies to share information and become involved in multi-agency ‘integrated services meetings’, which provide a platform for discussion about appropriate intervention for a pupil. Later, to improve information sharing and integrated working, the school began to use the common assessment framework (CAF), and the ECM coordinator acts as the lead school-based professional responsible for liaising with the agencies.

Today, the school assesses pupils’ needs every term against the ECM outcomes at multi-agency meetings. Those attending the meetings decide whether a CAF will be necessary and choose the most appropriate professional to undertake the CAF.

The school believes that developing effective relationships with partner agencies can have a significant impact on outcomes for the pupils attending the school. Nightingale has a particularly good relationship with Sure Start and the local children’s centre. Contact with health visitors, family support workers and the infant school make it possible to track a child’s experience from birth, so the school already has a history of child and family when they join the school.

There have been many success stories. For instance, the school recently supported a year three pupil with significant behavioural issues and learning difficulties. The pupil’s mother lacked the confidence to seek help or advice and seldom went out with the children because of the behavioural issues. The school’s strong links with outside agencies, facilitated by the CAF, enabled the rapid identification of the pupil’s complex needs and support was quickly put in place at home and at school. The mother has just completed a successful 12-week parenting programme and has become the school’s ‘CAF champion’. “My whole family life has changed,” she says.

## Developing practice checklist

How effective is current practice in:

- Maintaining close communication with parents and carers?
- Developing multi-agency links to support vulnerable children and active partnerships with Children's Trusts?
- Developing the role of the 'personal tutor' as a first point of contact for parents and carers (secondary context)?

## Sources of further support

The **Every Child Matters** website supports frontline practitioners and managers who are delivering services directly to children and young people. The website includes further information on the Common Assessment Framework, Lead Professional and multi-agency working.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices>

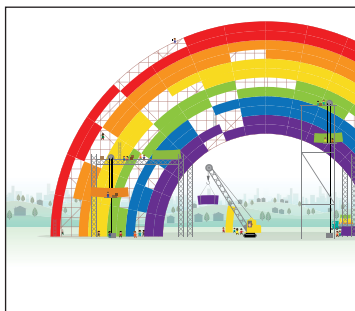
**Every Parent Matters** explains current and emerging activity which enables parents to help their children learn, enjoy and achieve – whether those parents are cohabiting, married, living with their children or not.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/everyparentmatters>

# Notes



Priorities for Development	Phase 1 Date:				Phase 2 Date:				Phase 3 Date:				Notes
<b>Pupil grouping</b>													
a) evaluating the impact of class/teaching groupings (sets, bands, mixed ability, gender)													
b) incorporating a range of pupil grouping options (whole class, small groups, pairs) in lessons													
c) developing guided learning as an integral part of lesson organisation													
<b>The learning environment</b>													
a) adapting the organisation of the classroom/learning environment to the pupils' learning needs													
b) developing the use of learning resources and particularly ICT													
c) ensuring ICT is used to support access for disabled pupils and those with SEN													
d) making effective use of the 'outdoor classroom'													
<b>Curriculum organisation</b>													
a) choosing an overall curriculum model/structure that caters for the needs of all pupils													
b) providing specific support for certain groups of pupils including pupils with SEN, EAL and gifted and talented learners													
c) incorporating flexibility into curriculum organisation and delivery to ensure greater coherence from the pupils' perspectives													
<b>The extended curriculum</b>													
a) offering a full range of 'out of hours' activities which enhance and extend the basic curriculum													
b) ensuring access for all groups of pupils													
c) involving parents/carers as well as the wider community in extended provision													
d) providing access to other services, including health and social services													
<b>Supporting children's wider needs</b>													
a) maintaining close communication with parents/carers													
b) developing multi-agency links to support vulnerable children and active partnerships with Children's Trusts													
c) developing the role of the 'personal tutor' as a first point of contact for parents/carers (secondary context)													



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