
Inspector subject training guidance: primary English

The purpose of this document

This document has been created for training and supporting inspectors to conduct subject deep dives in schools. The training guidance provides a structure to explain variation in subject-level quality of education. It should be used in conjunction with handbooks for section 5, section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools, and section 8 no formal designation (subject-specific) inspections.

Points to consider when examining the evidence:

School leaders may not be able and should not be expected to articulate their intent **as it is outlined** in this document or to provide documents which neatly provide the evidence for these focus areas. Inspectors should always investigate claims that issues affecting quality of subject education are outside of the school's control. It should be evident that the issue has been identified prior to the inspection and that the school has taken steps to mitigate the ill effects. For example, in the case of text books, it should be clear that leaders have previously identified the issue and raised it with senior leadership, investigated funding, identified texts they would prefer, identified the specific weaknesses of the current text and taken specific action to mitigate against those weaknesses.

The structure of this training guidance

The six focus areas	
These provide a structure to explain reasons for the quality of subject education as identified by inspection activities. Inspection activities are likely to be an iterative process as inspectors consider evidence. Under each focus area there is one row and two columns.	
Column 1: This is an outline of potentially stronger practice in the area each question explores. It also provides likely responses and other evidence inspectors may encounter and gives explicit guidance on how to interpret these responses.	Column 2: This is an outline of weaker practice in the area each question explores. It also provides likely responses and other evidence inspectors may encounter and gives explicit guidance on how to interpret these responses.
Inspector Questions: These are organising questions which, together, cover the relevant points inspectors need to investigate under each focus area. These questions serve as headings and are not designed to be asked of school leaders. There are examples of useful school-friendly questions inspectors might ask of people or the evidence to explain reasons for the quality of subject education. This is not a comprehensive list of questions which may be asked. Inspectors should use their own judgement but will find the school-friendly question suggestions useful.	

Six focus areas

1. The school's understanding of progress in English and how that informs its approach to the curriculum
2. The extent to which teaching supports the goals of the English curriculum
3. The effectiveness of assessment in English
4. The extent to which there is a climate of high subject expectations where a love of English can flourish
5. The quality of systems and support for staff development
6. The extent to which whole-school policies affect the capacity for effective English education

Inspectors are likely to use the following sources of evidence in making their judgements:

Inspectors will generally use:

- interviews with subject lead (if there is one) and/or the appropriate senior leader
- curriculum plans
- pupils' work
- discussions with pupils
- interviews with teachers
- lesson visits, including conversation with teachers, if possible.

Where appropriate, inspectors may use:

- the school's own records of lesson visits in the subject
- the resources available for teaching the subject (incl. school library, ICT facilities)
- the school's assessment policy
- assessment instruments, including mark schemes if there are any (not internal data)
- how the school provides pupils with feedback on their work
- how the school promotes the value of the subject, including via enrichment activities
- forms of support for inexperienced, non-specialist or struggling staff
- any support provided for the subject lead
- performance management's role in improving subject provision
- details of the timetable and staffing (including details of experience and qualifications of staff)
- school policies on teaching, assessment, homework, behaviour

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- documents analysing strengths and weaknesses of the subject and any associated improvement plans.

The English deep dive and early reading deep dive

- The English deep dive should be conducted by the same inspector who undertakes the early reading deep dive. The content of this guidance closely matches early reading guidance.
- Careful consideration should be given to the circumstances in which an English deep dive might be undertaken, for example when the curriculum in KS2 reading or writing are very different in quality from the curriculum in KS1 (further examples given in training slides).
- The English deep dive includes reading (beyond what is evaluated in the early reading deep dive), writing, spoken language and grammar. NB: Inspectors will need to use their professional judgment to establish whether the writing they see is part of the English curriculum or belongs to other subjects. For example, writing to explain the role of Fair Trade in ensuring that standards of living improve in least developed countries, would not be considered as part of the curriculum in English. This is because its purpose is to demonstrate geographical knowledge.

Focus area 1: The school's understanding of progress in English and how that informs its approach to the curriculum

The curriculum for novices in English enables pupils to gain fluency in key practices which are essential for later success.

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Inspector question 1:

Scope: How does the school understand what it means 'to get better' (progression) in the subject and does the school give meaningful attention to all categories of progression in English? Is the scope commensurate with that outlined in the National Curriculum?

School-friendly questions:

- Does the curriculum enable pupils in early stages of learning to become fluent in key practices in R,W,SL?

In primary, the curriculum should enable pupils to develop expertise in reading, writing and spoken language. These are the pillars of progression. Grammar and vocabulary knowledge are interwoven through these pillars.

In EY, KS1 and lower KS2, the curriculum plan should identify the key foundational knowledge that children need to learn which allow successful reading comprehension and written and oral composition.

The curriculum should show what key knowledge, such as phonics for reading and spelling, needs to be automatic.

As pupils move into upper KS2, the curriculum should build readiness for the acquisition of more specific knowledge found in KS3 and beyond (e.g. in literary studies and linguistics). The curriculum at this point may be structured in a less-linear fashion.

- Key foundational knowledge is initially generally learned through what children in EY see and hear (particularly hear from the teacher) and once proficient, through what they read.

Leaders/teachers see progression in terms of additional tasks and/or pedagogical approaches. Therefore, they place too little emphasis on the development of the curriculum. The following might describe how this presents:

- leaders and teachers are unclear about what constitutes the core knowledge needed for progress in reading, writing and spoken language
- they cannot define component knowledge; the curriculum consists of practice for the test and watered-down objectives from statutory assessment framework criteria
- there is no coherence in the curriculum, e.g. appreciation that the same knowledge can underpin successful reading, writing and spoken language and/or connections made between knowledge
- leaders and teachers don't understand that in different domains, progression works differently. For example, in learning to decode it might be a straight line model, but when it comes to aspects of

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The curriculum should ensure that pupils gain a broad knowledge of the world, describable through a wide vocabulary. ▪ It should emphasise knowledge of story structures, genres and writing styles as well as other linguistic knowledge, e.g. of grammar, punctuation and syntax. <p>Reading</p> <p>The curriculum in reading should (where appropriate) enable pupils to gain expertise and confidence in all facets of being a skilled reader, i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ progress from blending individual sounds to speedy decoding/recognition of unfamiliar words ▪ broaden and deepen the range of books they read and the books they have read to them ▪ draw upon knowledge acquired through studying a broad range of subjects and from being exposed to a wide range of books. <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transcription i.e. unlaboured handwriting, accurate spelling, accurate and effective application of punctuation. ▪ Successful composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in writing). ▪ Knowledge of formality and how to control their writing consciously using standard English. <p>Spoken language</p> <p>The content of the curriculum that enables pupils to learn competent and confident spoken language includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ knowledge of a variety of high-quality language (this will happen through what pupils hear and read) ▪ knowledge of how to use this in speech 	<p>composition and reading for meaning, pupils' progression includes deepening and consolidating.</p> <p>Subject leaders do not plan coherently in writing and make vague statements, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'We focus on creativity in KS1 and analysis in KS2.' ▪ 'We don't link spelling to phonics in KS1 and focus on spelling rules.' ▪ 'We do all our writing in English through topic.' ▪ 'For us the most important thing is setting scenarios for writing activities.' <p>There is too little emphasis on ensuring what is taught is remembered and used consistently.</p> <p>Pupils should not be taught the same content each year with the presumption that it will have to be taught again in the future. Once learned, pupils should be expected to consistently use what they have learned.</p>
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- knowledge of conventions of different spoken forms: explanation, discussion and debate.

The curriculum should identify the knowledge and skills associated with drama. These are briefly outlined within the spoken language section in the NC and are included in section 2c below.

Inspector question 2a:

Scope: Does the school ensure pupils have the expanding knowledge they need to decode what they read?

School-friendly questions:

- Is reading fluency understood & prioritised?

This is covered in the compulsory early reading deep dive using the early reading aide-memoire.

Inspector question 2b:

Scope: Does the school ensure pupils have the wide-ranging knowledge they need to comprehend what they read?

School-friendly questions:

- Do pupils gain the vocabulary knowledge they need to comprehend what they read?

Teachers and leaders should understand that comprehension arises from some key components that need to be built over time: fluency, vocabulary knowledge and background knowledge.

Fluency in reading

- Leaders should ensure pupils can read accurately and at a speed that is sufficient for them to focus on understanding what they read rather than sounding out and blending to read unfamiliar words.
- Fluency enables working memory to focus on interpretation/analysis.

Broad knowledge of the world and our ideas of the world describable through a wide vocabulary

'We teach comprehension skills'

Comprehension is not a set of skills that pupils become increasingly expert at through practising comprehension exercises or through interventions focused on comprehension skills.

Some approaches, like self-questioning can tell you what to think about as you try to understand the text. But they cannot work without pupils' being fluent readers and having vocabulary knowledge, content knowledge and literary knowledge.

Teaching and modelling strategies such as what to think about when trying to understand a text, are helpful. However, they are quickly taught and should not be the main focus.

'We always start a new class novel with knowledge organisers and then a test on background knowledge. E.g. we start our reading of Sherlock Holmes in Year 6 by learning about Queen Victoria.'

- Teachers should make meaningful connections between prior learning in foundation subjects and a text's content and/or its context (including poems and plays).
- The curriculum in English should ensure that pupils gain the specific additional background knowledge they need in order to access the books they study.

Background Knowledge

- Background/contextual knowledge is carefully selected so that it can be processed on a deep level and supports better comprehension. For example, understanding of the extended schema relating to The British Empire and how it viewed the indigenous populations, might support understanding of the novel 'The Secret Garden', but knowing the facts about the life of Queen Victoria in a knowledge organiser would not.

Knowledge of literary features

- Older primary pupils should begin to access more sophisticated prototypes for narrative. They should read books that use figurative language for artistic effect. They should start to recognise archetypes/common themes, e.g. triumph of good over evil, the idea that plot and characters are a construct, the way genre relates to themes and content, the way themes are threaded through the content, the way form and structure can mirror content, such as non-linear time sequencing.

Vocabulary

- The school should be aware that depth of vocabulary as well as breadth is important in reading comprehension. Some seemingly simple words have complex schema, like the word 'class'.
- NB: Pupils typically cannot access texts with fewer than 98% known words.

Teachers do not make well-informed decisions about the background knowledge/information that they introduce.

'Our guided reading sessions and similar activities enable pupils to work out words from their context and other comprehension strategies.'

Pupils should not be encouraged to guess words from their context. Teaching should build knowledge of vocabulary and the ideas of the book.

'We make sure children are practising reading comprehension skills from the start.'

Pupils are moved too quickly from phonics to reading comprehension activities without the time and attention needed to developing automaticity and accuracy in decoding. Y1 and Y2 pupils who have met the standard in the phonics screening check are sometimes given insufficient time and practice to develop reading accuracy and fluency by re-reading matched books.

'We ensure pupils learn the definitions of complex words found in the thesaurus. Each week they learn a new list of definitions.'

Definitions will not help pupils learn about the complex web of ideas that some words represent nor how to use these words in different grammatical forms and contexts to express ideas.

'By Yr 3 pupils are ready to start exploring ideas in texts and have left phonics behind.'

The curriculum for reading in lower key stage 2 may not be effective for struggling readers; even better readers may need additional practice and overlearning of the more complex phonic code. In many 'reading comprehension' lessons, all pupils are given the same text to read, even if they are unable to decode the words on the page. This results in these pupils developing coping mechanisms that detract from their ability to participate in the lesson.

Reading for pleasure

- Leaders know the more pupils read, the more they are able to learn for themselves.
- The school understands that the process of becoming a habitual reader has component parts that can be developed, for example the start of a novel, i.e. getting to grips with the setting and characters, can be one of the hardest parts of the whole book. For pupils who are not accurate and speedy readers, this is especially the case.
- School leaders are aware of the importance of pupils recommending books that they have read to their peers and giving reasons for their choices.
- Teachers and leaders seek to refine/develop the range of books and broaden pupils' horizons, using their own knowledge of fiction.

There is increasing research about the way writing about a text in a critical mode can strengthen pupils' comprehension, providing pupils have the necessary prior knowledge.

It is specifically improved when they respond to a text in writing, e.g. writing:

- summaries of a text and notes about a text
- writing answers to considered questions about a text.

Reading builds pupils' knowledge of grammar as well as knowledge of stylistic features, genre and structure.

'Pupils love guided reading sessions because they can learn from each other.'

Guided reading sessions can consist of time-filling activities which lack purpose and rigour (for example, designing book covers). Struggling readers who are not able to read accurately and speedily are often expected to read books that are not matched to their phonics knowledge.

'We use a banded reading scheme throughout the school to support reading for pleasure.'

After pupils can decode accurately and read fluently, book bands become less effective because the only requirement is for pupils to read age-appropriate material. This is not best determined by a colour band for which there are no agreed criteria. NB: We know that difficulty is not determined by sentence length or word length, but the background knowledge needed to understand the text.

Using colour-banded books means teachers tend to abdicate their responsibility for guiding pupils' book selection. Ploughing through book bands makes for a less pleasurable experience than choosing books which are more likely to interest pupils.

Research is very mixed on the benefits of online programmes to develop reading for pleasure. Teachers should be keenly aware of the pros and cons of commercial online schemes. They are not effective with pupils who cannot read and can lead to a performative responses with pupils trying to 'cheat' the system. Note that online systems use existing book in the school's library, so they are only as good as the collection.

Inspector question 2c:

Scope: Does the school ensure wide-ranging and expanding knowledge of transcription in writing?

School-friendly questions:

- How do pupils gain expertise in key transcription elements such as handwriting and spelling, so they are increasingly accurate writers?
- How do you ensure transcriptional errors are not repeated?
- How is punctuation taught?

Over time, the curriculum enables pupils to become fluent in the key transcriptional aspects of writing: i.e. spelling, handwriting and many aspects of punctuation.

- Spelling and letter formation (including pen grip) are taught alongside phonics in the early stages.
- Pupils in the early stages practise writing, through dictation, using the knowledge already acquired through phonics. Additional spellings (as set out in the National Curriculum English appendix 1) are introduced alongside the use of taught GPCs.
- If pupils are fluent in transcription, they are able to pay more attention to the content of their writing so it becomes deeper, more mature, more varied and more sophisticated.
- To achieve fluency, dictation continues in lower key stage 2, including words and punctuation taught so far.

Editing, drafting and proof reading

- Pupils also bring to bear their expertise in transcription when editing/developing/drafting their own writing.
- Pupils have the knowledge they need to identify and correct errors accurately. As they move through the school, teachers insist on levels of accuracy consistent with taught content.
- Handwriting is seen as a key component of being able to write fluently. Writing at speed enables pupils to clarify/express their thoughts. Pupils begin with letters which start in the right place and move in the right direction.
- By the end of key stage 1, letters' relative size and orientation on the page are appropriate. Most handwriting programmes expect joins to be introduced by this stage.
- Knowledge of orthography (incl. morphology) is seen as a crucial aspect in the development of pupils' writing capabilities. It is

'We are passionate about creativity so pupils in KS1 get to write about exciting topics like visits to the seaside.'

There is a danger that in the early stages, pupils may not have the knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences to do this accurately. Sufficient dictation practice is needed so that pupils use taught GPCs to spell correctly. Oral composition should be the focus of creativity, encouraging language development, until transcription knowledge is sufficient.

'We don't really correct pupils' mistakes in Year R and Year 1 because we believe this is the best way to build confidence.'

Pupils need to develop fluency in the grapheme-phoneme correspondences they have learnt. Misspellings of graphemes/words that pupils have been taught to spell should be corrected. Incorrect but phonically plausible attempts provide teaching points about alternative ways of representing the same phoneme.

'We ensure pupils build their technical skills through writing hot and cold tasks.'

Writing is seen purely in terms of composite skills, which are placed on an artificial hierarchy with insufficient focus on the components to be mastered.

'We don't like pupils to do exercises on components as it takes them away from writing imaginatively and limits creativity/flair. We limit technical exercises to once per term.'

This might show that the school has not managed to synthesise practice and exercise in writing components with their broader aims of developing pupils confidence/expertise in extended writing in different styles and genres.

White boards and fat felt pens? Lack of focus on transcription accuracy, leading to poor handwriting and inaccurate letter formation in later years.

<p>important to remember that reading improves pupils' knowledge of spelling, punctuation and also key grammatical structures.</p>	
<p>Inspector question 2d: Scope and components: Does the planned curriculum ensure wide-ranging and expanding knowledge of composition in writing, including grammar and vocabulary?</p> <p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do older pupils compose writing in different forms/genres/styles and for a range of purposes/audiences? ▪ Does the KS2 curriculum enable pupils to get better at analysing texts and making connections between and within the texts they read? ▪ How do you encourage pupils to read as writers and write as readers? 	
<p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The curriculum should enable pupils to build, over time, the knowledge needed to express, shape and craft ideas meaningfully and with increasing confidence. ▪ Pupils benefit from using experience and knowledge gained from reading other books/studying a broad curriculum when composing written texts. For example, pupils gain insight into genre, form and structure, as well as how language choices can make meaning. <p>To achieve this the curriculum should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure fluency in key transcriptional knowledge. This enables pupils to focus on the content, form and structure of their writing ▪ provide opportunities for writing in a wide range of both fictional and non-fictional extended forms, in different genres and for a variety of audiences/purposes ▪ enable pupils to gain expertise in a wide range of informal and formal critical/analytical writing modes ▪ develop pupils' ability to think clearly and organise their thoughts in writing ▪ develop metacognitive processes involved in crafting writing systematically, ensuring they are practised, refined and their 	<p>'We teach writing very separately from reading so we can focus on composition and transcription skills.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leaders and teachers do not make connections between reading and writing and, therefore, pupils do not take from the reading. ▪ This can also lead to styles and forms of writing being introduced merely for the purpose of applying grammatical knowledge or for targets like using fronted adverbials. This scenario does not support expertise in writing a range of purposes and audiences. <p>'We believe that the only way to get good at grammar is by using it in extended pieces of writing, i.e. in context.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This comment assumes grammar can be picked up without explicit instruction or discrete instruction. Most pupils will not learn grammar by osmosis with insufficient focus on memorisation. ▪ Expert outcomes do not tend to resemble the means of their nurture, i.e. you don't get better at using grammar to shape meaning by writing in extended forms. In the first place, pupils need to embed knowledge through exercise, repetitious practice and overlearning. If this practice stage is missed out then pupils will never get better at writing sophisticatedly, no matter how many extended pieces of writing they do.

efficacy evaluated: planning, editing/proof reading, drafting, reviewing etc.

The curriculum should enable pupils to embed and be fluent in the component grammatical knowledge that is required for effective writing.

- Sentence construction and combining, and syntactical expertise are prioritised along with other carefully selected grammatical knowledge. NB: Sentences play a major role in building logical arguments.
- The NC outlines the sequence in which this knowledge should be introduced in the statutory English appendix 2.
- Pupils undertake grammar-based tasks. Practice and exercises do not resemble the desired outcome, e.g. exploring how to combine sentences does not look like a mystery story.
- Having mastered key components, pupils can deepen grammatical knowledge in increasingly diverse ways, e.g. through trial and error in their own writing.

Vocabulary

The curriculum enables links to be made between the vocabulary pupils have embedded (found in the books they read or have read to them) and the language choices pupils make in their own writing.

Metacognitive approaches

- The curriculum may include different meta-cognitive approaches which can help struggling writers to develop their expertise in the writing processes, including pupils with SEND. This is not a usual feature in primaries.
- These approaches need to be explicitly taught and modelled before they can be used. If this happens then they can provide a clear structure to help pupils who struggle with planning, monitoring and evaluating their writing as they go along.

'Our curriculum in grammar involves practising mock papers from GaPS tests - our scores are very high in this test.'

- Teaching to the GaPS test will not provide the context pupils need to appreciate how grammar is used, especially the role that grammar plays in literary texts. Sometimes the grammar test can become the de facto grammar curriculum.

'Writing is linked to topic to enable application and greater coherence, e.g. if we are doing about rivers pupils write poetry about waterfalls.'

- This can mean that the writing curriculum is confused, lacks coherence and is poorly sequenced. It can also lead to an over-emphasis on the six non-fiction text types from the National Strategies, without enough consideration of other forms and hybrids. Despite good intentions, writing development can be disjointed with pupils either focusing too much on one text type or skimming too quickly over a wide range and not mastering them in depth.

'We create our own models for writing so pupils can really see the teaching point in action.'

- Such models are not authentic because they conform to a single text type and do not convey the concept of hybridity.
- The potential for the books pupils read to act as model for their own writing is not realised through this approach.
- If short extracts are used as models this can be problematic because they are not from quality texts and vocabulary is not rich; they are artificial and do not enable pupils to develop an appreciation of quality.

Inspector question 2e:**Scope and components:** Does the planned curriculum ensure wide-ranging and expanding knowledge of composition in spoken language?**School-friendly questions:**

- Is sufficient focus placed on the underpinning SL knowledge required for later expertise in R, W and SL?
- Do plans break down end-of-key-stage spoken language goals into smaller building blocks?
- Does SL curriculum planning focus enough on vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, including knowledge about standard English?

Leaders and teachers build opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills of spoken language over time. They break down complex end-of-key-stage goals into components that are logically sequenced.

- These components enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in the art of communicating effectively through speech¹. **This requires strong vocabulary and grammatical knowledge.**
- Pupils increase their expertise in using speech to debate, justify what they mean and respond to opposing ideas.
- Pupils know and use the appropriate register for effective communication. They should be taught about standard English; how it is a term for correct use of grammar rather than about accent and pronunciation. They should be taught how it is appropriate to use standard English for formal speech.
- Leaders are aware of the particular value of learning poetry and other texts by heart (see references in the NC). This is another dimension of spoken language.
- The primary NC states that pupils should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

'We know spoken language is a curricular goal in the NC but we see spoken language as a combination of communication skills and talk pedagogies.'

- This can lead to spoken language opportunities being lost and confused. It can also mean that formal spoken communication, such as rhetoric, i.e. complex curricular objects, is not broken down into components and planned through the curriculum. Instead they are introduced as pedagogical activities. In such cases, the approach can detract pupils from what they are learning and lead to misconceptions about the form being used e.g. debate.
- There is a 'caught not taught' approach to spoken language. Spoken communication is not emphasised enough in early years. Leaders do not place enough importance on children's receptive language, for example adults do not consciously introduce important subject vocabulary or new words. Neither do they check what taught vocabulary has been learnt.

'Teaching pupils to speak Standard English is not our priority because it is elitist and pupils should not be forced to adopt middle class ways of speaking.'

- This and similar attitudes are not in keeping with the NC which specifies that pupils are taught standard English, a term for accurate grammar use which has nothing to do with accents. If pupils cannot speak grammatically correct language, they are often excluded from

¹ The section on SL at the start of the whole NC framework, (not the English section) is also very useful on SL.

certain jobs and universities. Teaching standard English is a matter of social justice.

Inspector question 3:

Scope, Components, Rigour: Does the school ensure wide-ranging and expanding disciplinary knowledge in reading and writing?

School-friendly questions

- How are less functional aspects of the subject introduced in KS1 and KS2 – are there differences?
- Tell me about how you make sure the curriculum deepens pupils’ understanding of what makes the subject special.

Novices and experts

- Well-developed knowledge and fluency in the functional aspects of R, W and SL form the bedrock that enables pupils to think in disciplinary ways later on. An example is forming new links between knowledge in different pillars of progression.
- Because the curriculum for novice learners is focused on developing accuracy and fluency, the disciplinary in KS1 may look very different from how it looks in upper KS2 (when pupils are moving on from the novice stage). This does not mean the disciplinary is absent in KS1. It’s important to consider how teachers may employ this in the background through modelling, choices of questions, and the texts they choose to share with pupils, including what aspects they emphasise.
- The disciplinary prism means that the ‘English’ class text is not used as a vehicle for teaching another subject/a PSHE topic.
- NC guidance suggests pupils in upper KS2 acquire some specific disciplinary concepts in reading.

Writing

- Pupils need to properly master sound/letter correspondences for spelling in order to gain disciplinary expertise in composition. (They also need to know and understand the meaning of a lot of words. This enables them to become fluent writers in terms of speed, accuracy and technical competency. When pupils are fluent in transcription (and basic compositional aspects such as key grammar) they are able to pay more attention to the content of their writing so it becomes deeper, more mature, more varied and

‘We always connect our class readers to topic in foundations subjects.’

- In such cases, the driving force for the curriculum is the needs of another discipline.

‘We make sure class readers deal with relevant social issues.’

- While acknowledging that much literature, old and new, comments on social issues, leaders ensure that text choices are not used to share the political agenda, themes and preoccupations of particular political perspectives.

<p>more sophisticated. They can, for example, apply their disciplinary knowledge of different types of narrator, such as the unreliable narrator, to their own writing in a conscious way. They can also reflect on how writers create their own original voice and how they might do the same. Pupils may be able to wrestle with ideas about intention, i.e. what they want their audience to feel and think. They also need to know and understand the meaning of a lot of words.</p>	
<p>Inspector question 4: Components, Sequencing: Does planning consider component content and its sequencing to build knowledge over time and create 'readiness for future learning'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ within the year or phase ▪ within the topic ▪ within the lesson sequence <p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Show me a curriculum example where specific English content is sequenced to enable pupils to be 'ready' for something more complex. ▪ When you think about pupils' end points, how do you define them for R, W and SL? ▪ Show me how your curriculum prepares pupils for a particular unit of work through the knowledge that came before it. 	
<p>In sequencing components, leaders should take into account how to build knowledge over time to create readiness for future learning. For example, success in reading and writing relies heavily on understanding of spoken language.</p> <p>The more linear aspects of the English curriculum, such as word reading and transcription, need to be secure and embedded so that pupils have the fluency needed to attend to comprehending what they read and being able to accurately structure their ideas in writing.</p> <p>In the early stages, the curriculum for novice learners places sufficient emphasis on developing fluency in key practices. Phonics is highly structured and sequenced so that pupils quickly build the knowledge they need to read and write independently.</p> <p>The curriculum makes sure that pupils do not move on to more complex content before important pre-requisite knowledge has been</p>	<p>Struggling readers who are not able to read accurately and speedily are often expected to access a curriculum which is not suitable for them and sets them up to fail. They are expected to comprehend texts which they cannot read independently. They are expected to write independently without having the spelling and letter formation knowledge to do so with accuracy.</p> <p>'In our school we make KS1 creative and fun, with lots of writing based on trips and in KS2 pupils start to analyse texts and learn literary studies.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is unhelpful if all pupils are expected to write creatively, even those who have extremely poor phonic knowledge and transcription skills. They practise creative writing rather than what they need to become better at it

secured. For example, pupils who are behind with phonics are given urgent support to help them quickly catch up. They access age-appropriate curriculum content as set out in the NC with regard to the books that are read to them. Plans enable them to develop language and composition orally until they have the necessary knowledge to do so independently in reading and writing.

All teachers are aware of the curriculum requirements/content of the year above and below so they can gauge challenge within the topic and introduce key terms.

Leaders should also be aware of the demands of the key stage 3 curriculum in English (and even requirements beyond that, e.g. that 19th century texts are on the GCSE English language and Lit). The KS2 curriculum should build readiness for these demands. That does not mean teaching the actual content.

Sequencing across a key stage/year

- The curriculum ensures that pupils gradually build up the linguistic knowledge needed to help them cope with the complexity of the syntax in more archaic texts.
- Writing activities can support older pupils' deep level comprehension, say in upper KS2, as long as pupils have the knowledge to access the activities. Making notes and summaries can refine and shape pupils' thoughts about texts, and clarification through writing.
- Texts chosen for class study should provide progressively greater challenge, including through length and subject matter. They should push pupils beyond their comfortable limits. This may mean that they need to be made accessible, e.g. through background teaching and teaching of vocabulary prior to reading.
- The curriculum is sequenced so pupils become more confident in applying and manipulating conventions of less familiar genres, such as detective stories, creating hybrids etc. They also develop

- The school does not conceptualise the curriculum as a whole and sees key stages 1 and 2 in silos with rigour not being built through fluency in R, W and SL.

- Too much emphasis is placed on confessional writing (such as diaries and autobiography). This in part is because of a belief that this is easier for pupils as a form/more appropriate. That is not to say confessional writing does not have a place. A strong curriculum enables pupils to craft their writing so it is more than just emotion or a retelling of the events in a pupil's life.

'We ensure that over the key stage, pupils know the 'tools not rules' to create an effect upon the reader.'

- This sounds positive but this is not a given. Rules can be learned so that they can be expertly applied.

'We use hierarchical models such as Bloom and SOLO.'

- These models are unhelpfully applied, leading to false notions of hierarchy/challenge, e.g. 'just telling' is seen as lower than 'knowledge transforming'. For example, retelling the intricacies of a complex plot or remembering details about the themes in a book can be as complex as analysing a simple image.
- Lack of prior knowledge of the curriculum that pupils access may lead teachers to believe that the level of challenge they provide is greater than it actually is.

'We read a lot of non-fiction texts to support learning in topic because boys like them.'

- Not enough emphasis is placed on story in terms of pupils' reading diet over the key stage. Some pupils/groups do not get the chance to experience and understand the different ways in which a story can be told: literary non-fiction, narrative poetry, plays, novels/short stories/novellas, myths/legends/traditional stories, fiction from our literary heritage etc. They miss out on the new knowledge gained from reading stories as well as the other benefits.

expertise in subverting genre features for effect, e.g. fairy stories that play around with typical gender roles.

- Pupils also become more adept at using their understanding of audience and purpose to refine the choices they make about style, form, structure, vocabulary and content.
- Poetry/drama should not be seen as a vehicle for teaching background knowledge or a bit of fun. Key component Kn, e.g. of rhythm, stanzas, dramatic techniques, etc. is needed so pupils can build their expertise in poetry/drama. Thus pupils should access poetry and plays that are equally as demanding as the novels/class readers they access.

'Our pupils are vulnerable and disadvantaged so they have not got the vocabulary to access pre-20th Century texts or challenging subject matter.'

- Pupils are not encouraged to be word conscious; they do not build a store of knowledge about words which they can use, such as knowledge about the etymology of the Greek/Latin roots of many words.
- There is a lack of strategy in the way vocabulary knowledge is planned through the curriculum.
- There may be no coherent plan to develop teachers' subject knowledge. Some teachers' subject knowledge is not well developed enough to give definitions of less usual words and examples of narrative structure and techniques.

'We try to do a classic novel in Year 6 but the children vote with their feet and hate it.'

- Insufficient consideration is given to the key knowledge required, such as learning about the times when books were written or the key interest/views of authors/knowledge of the subject/vocabulary.
- Without sufficient attention to knowledge of the subject matter, and vocabulary and syntax in a text, pupils can be set up to fail, finding complex texts unapproachable and unfathomable, and the worlds of those texts too alien for them to enter.

'After Year 6 SATs we will be introduce challenging texts.'

- For example, if ambitious texts, like plays by Shakespeare, are to be introduced in Year 6, an understanding of comedy, history and tragedy, the language, as well as an understanding of the conventions of drama, is needed. This is not built into the curriculum.

'We create challenge through additional tasks that pupils choose.'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenge is misunderstood as a series of additional tasks, or in terms of differentiation, this means that some groups access a more challenging curriculum than others. ▪ When teachers talk about challenge in terms of applying new strategies in different contexts, this can cause cognitive overload and not lead to the desired outcomes.
<p>Inspector question 5: Memory: Do teachers identify, emphasise and repeat crucial content so that pupils know more and remember more (i.e. make progress)?</p> <p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Show me which bits of your curriculum (like concepts, ideas, vocabulary, etc.) are really crucial to re-visit so that they are able to build further knowledge. ▪ How do you as a school go about agreeing which specific knowledge (ideas, concepts, vocabulary, etc) pupils absolutely need to know within each topic you teach? ▪ Which particular knowledge within your curriculum is emphasised to build pupils’ conceptual understanding over time? ▪ How does curriculum enable memorisation, e.g. through revisiting topics/chunking/retrieval/low-stakes quizzes? ▪ How does the curriculum enable pupils who have gaps to memorise the knowledge they need to catch up quickly, e.g. phonics knowledge? 	
<p>The curriculum is planned so that essential knowledge is prioritised. For instance, more time may be spent on it, including time checking it has been embedded. This knowledge is introduced sequentially and revisited so it can be memorised. See 2a to 2d for details of this component knowledge.</p> <p>This requires pupils to receive information in manageable chunks. For example, in phonics sessions, pupils are given daily opportunities to practise using and applying their learning. They may be asked to read and write graphemes, words or sentences using taught GPCs.</p> <p>NB: In upper KS2, knowledge is built more cumulatively (less linear) through links and connects. It does not always need automatising in the same way as reading and writing knowledge in KS1. For example,</p>	<p>‘The phonics readers that are decodable can be very unstimulating so pupils also read books that are more challenging in terms of vocabulary and story.’</p> <p>Books are not matched to pupils’ phonic knowledge and so do not provide sufficient practice in reading taught GPCs. In fact, rather than stimulating pupils in the early stages of reading, they encourage guessing/misconceptions and delay pupils moving to books that are more interesting. The most effective way of getting pupils into books which are more varied in style and content is through ensuring pupils are able to decode fluently.</p> <p>Pupils do not re-read beginner reading books. This means they are less likely to build up their reading speed and accuracy.</p>

concepts can be gradually deepened through the curriculum hinterland.² See reference below and glossary.

The curriculum ensures that pupils have **mastered** all the different components required for complex composites. In English, this includes fluency in key practices through repeated repetition, overlearning and memorising key knowledge, e.g. when to use a semicolon.

Memorising key knowledge also helps pupils apply knowledge to complex concepts, e.g. applying ideas about the way themes, such as loss, are structured in texts.

Additional practice in phonics does not always focus on reinforcing the intended learning, for example playing with letters in the sand tray or unsupervised phonic games where mistakes go uncorrected.

Teachers and leaders are unfamiliar with the accepted findings of cognitive science. They regard memorisation as an outdated and pointless exercise.

Inspector question 6a:

Early years: How well does the curriculum identify the knowledge children need to secure the early learning goals in communication and language?

School-friendly questions:

- How do adults use their interactions with children to develop children’s communication and language?
- What books (and rhymes/songs) have you planned to read to children to give them a good understanding of vocabulary, language structures and knowledge of the world?
- Have you identified vocabulary you want children to understand and is it used repeatedly in different contexts?
- How is the curriculum designed to address the needs of children with weaker language acquisition on entry?

Leaders prioritise children’s communication and language development as it is the bedrock of future success in reading, writing and the acquisition of knowledge in a range of subjects.

Leaders/teachers/adults have a well-developed understanding of how to develop children’s expressive and receptive language (see glossary). For instance, ensuring high-quality interactions between adults and children; explicit teaching of vocabulary; modelling

Adults are unaware how to support children’s language through their interactions.

Schools may say they have a language-rich environment when this is not the case. A common misconception is that the phrase refers to words on the walls and vocabulary and questions stuck to resources/play activities. **However, it is primarily about the spoken interactions between adults and children.**

Some practice results in the language gap widening between children from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds. For instance, staff

² See <https://achemicalorthodoxy.wordpress.com/2019/02/01/core-and-hinterland-whats-what-and-why-it-matters> for a great definition of core and hinterland

language structures; and extending vocabulary through discussions, including about the books which are shared.

Spoken language is central to the curriculum. Adults help children to talk about what they are doing and learning throughout the day, in each area of learning. They use structured conversations where they build in responses. This also strongly supports children's listening and attention.

Language is crucial for children's wider development. The ways in which teachers talk to children can influence learning, memory, understanding and the motivation to learn.

Staff understand that sharing stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction forms the foundation of children's language comprehension.

Adults help children to listen attentively and become familiar with traditional and modern stories, recognising and joining in with predictable phrases and reciting some poems by heart.

Adults encourage children to use new vocabulary in a range of contexts. Reading also allows children to encounter more demanding sentence structures and themes. Adults model reading with fluency, expression and enjoyment and encourage discussion to support children in becoming comfortable with a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Leaders know that the stark differences between some children's early language acquisition can be dramatically influenced through an effective early years curriculum.

Staff are aware of those within the cohort whose spoken language knowledge places them at a disadvantage. They focus on ensuring these children catch up so they are no longer disadvantaged by this.

Leaders consider how learning in Nursery supports future learning for Reception and beyond.

Leaders understand that phonological awareness, and particularly phonemic awareness, supports the teaching of phonics when children

spend more time supervising children (or carrying out observations of learning) than talking with them; many children spend much of their day playing alone (e.g. boys on the bikes all day), leading to some not benefitting from working alongside adults who could extend their language through their interactions.

Leaders have not identified a wide range of stories and books which should be shared with children.

Leaders do not recognise that in order that children can gain fluency in the different modes in which stories are told, they need to access story in the broadest sense i.e. songs, ditties, rhymes, picture books, shared reading books. There is not a comprehensive plan to enable this to happen or this is not considered important.

There is not enough focus in telling and talking about different stories. Children are not immersed in story.

School leaders make assumptions about how different groups, such as boys, engage with story, which means that this group does not access as wide a range of narratives as other children.

<p>begin Reception. However, the ability to hear individual phonemes is not a pre-requisite to teaching phonics. Teaching children about GPCs in phonics helps them to distinguish individual phonemes and improves their phonemic awareness.</p>	
<p>Inspector question 6b: Early years: How well does the curriculum ensure that children in the early years secure the early learning goals in reading and writing?</p> <p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When do you start to teach children phonics? Is phonics taught daily, and directly from the start of Reception? Do approaches include teaching pupils to write what they decode? ▪ What is your plan to teach pen grip and letter formation? ▪ How do you ensure that children practise using the phonics they have been taught? ▪ How do you manage the transition from oral composition to written composition? 	
<p>See early reading aide-memoire and additional early reading guidance.</p> <p>There is no requirement to formally teach reading and writing before children begin Reception when the teaching of phonics begins. Therefore, this section refers mainly to Reception.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>Language comprehension - This is covered in the row above.</p> <p>Word reading</p> <p>Leaders have ensured that there is an effective phonics programme which is used throughout school and begins at the start of Reception.</p> <p>Children who fall behind the pace of the phonics curriculum are given urgent support to make sure they quickly catch up.</p> <p>Writing:</p> <p>Transcription</p> <p>Adults teach children an appropriate pen grip (such as the tripod grip). Letter formation is taught when letters are introduced in</p>	<p>Children with limited knowledge of spelling and handwriting are asked to write compositions that are beyond their current knowledge, resulting in frustration and dislike of writing.</p>

phonics. This means children can practise writing the graphemes they have been taught.

Adults dictate sounds, words, captions and eventually sentences that help children practise spelling using the phoneme-grapheme correspondences they have been taught in phonics lessons.

Composition

Adults make sure that children learn to articulate their ideas and structure them in speech, before writing. There is a focus on oral composition in the earliest stages. For example, children express their ideas and say them aloud in a well-constructed sentence/s. When children have sufficient transcriptional knowledge, they can put their ideas in writing.

Inspector question 7:

SEND: How do you ensure those pupils who find it most difficult to learn English (e.g. some pupils with specific SEND) are given the best chance to keep up?

NB: Inspectors will always include a sample of pupils with SEND in their subject deep dives.

School-friendly questions:

- Which pupils in this class are finding the subject most difficult? Why do they find the subject hard?
- How do you ensure that pupils with SEND access the curriculum? What additional support do they receive to do this?
- How do you ensure pupils with SEND secure the knowledge they need to access learning in English and other subjects?
- Which bits of content are absolutely key that all pupils, including those with SEND, need to take away from this specific unit?

All pupils follow the same phonics curriculum for early reading and writing. They must learn the phonic code to become fluent decoders and spellers. Pupils with SEND who are struggling to read and write (often those with poor visual memory and/or weak auditory skills) may take longer to secure some of the components of early reading and writing. The curriculum components need to be broken down into smaller steps and are repeated more often until they are automatic.

Additional support to become fluent in reading and writing may be required and should be prioritised to prevent pupils

'Phonics doesn't work for pupils with SEND.'

Learning whole words by sight is an ineffective method. Systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective method. Using a mixture of the two reduces the impact of phonics, particularly for those who struggle. It is much better to teach the decoding process from the beginning, rather than teaching in a way that encourages unhelpful techniques that have to be altered at a later stage.

Intervention follows a different curriculum.

Reading recovery or other programmes which are in conflict with systematic synthetic phonics teach pupils to memorise whole words or

<p>from becoming further behind and struggling to access the age-appropriate curriculum.</p> <p>Any additional intervention is not a different curriculum. It follows the same curriculum progression but provides sufficient practice so that pupils secure their understanding of the essential components.</p>	<p>guess using the pictures. This means pupils don't learn the necessary building blocks which will ensure success. Unhelpful techniques have to be altered at a later stage.</p> <p>Pupils who are struggling to learn are moved on through the curriculum before key components are given sufficient emphasis so that they are understood. This leads to the gap widening between them and their peers. It is sometimes described as a 'coverage' approach.</p> <p>Schools talk about pedagogical adjustments for those with SEND but are not aware of the impact of 'cumulative dysfluency' created as pupils have gaps in key knowledge they need for subsequent learning, such as phonics.</p>
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Focus area 2: The extent to which teaching supports the goals of the English curriculum

Lesson visits may or may not highlight possible issues. Further investigation will be necessary to ascertain if such issues illustrate something typical about the teaching in the school, through triangulation.

<p>Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact</p> <p>NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for</p>	<p>Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact</p> <p>NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for</p>
<p>Inspector question 8: Is the rationale for the teaching approaches chosen primarily to achieve the curriculum intent? What is the rationale for the teaching approaches chosen in the sequence of lessons?</p> <p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell me a bit about the teaching approaches you have chosen in this sequence of lessons – what made them suitable for the content that you were teaching? 	

- Can you give me some examples of how the content that pupils study shapes the activity you have chosen to teach it (might consider inclusion of explicit explanations, guided practice and worked examples)?
- How does teaching ensure pupils learn the necessary subject-specific components like grammar?
- What use is made of models/exemplars in writing? Do pupils have enough underpinning knowledge to learn from them? Are they ambitious/challenging enough?
- Are carefully chosen subject-specific pedagogies used to teach reading, writing and spoken language? What are they and how have they been chosen?

Reading

EY before Reception

- The focus before Reception should be on language and communication. There is no requirement to formally teach reading and writing before children begin phonics instruction in Reception.
- Therefore, teaching activities before Reception are more likely to be incidental teaching when children ask about how to write a letter in their name, for example, as well as more direct teaching, through stories, for instance.

Reception and KS1

- As shown in the simple view of reading, word recognition and language comprehension are different elements of reading. Therefore, they need different kinds of teaching and activities.
- Phonics is taught daily and directly in a settled environment where distractions are kept to a minimum. Lessons are focused and keep pupils engaged and involved.
- Common exception words are introduced sparingly when children begin learning phonics. **Phonics is still the method used to read these words.**
- Adults make sure that in phonics sessions, and later the same day, children have lots of practice sounding out, blending and reading graphemes, words and sentences.

Reading

EY before Reception

Unless activities to support children's, reading and writing are in line with the school's phonic programme, they may do more harm than good: for example, being encouraged to look at the picture and guess a word or being shown whole words and told to memorise them.

'We teach phonics in continuous provision.'

Trying to teach children about phonics incidentally, for example by putting letters in the sand tray, will not usually be successful as children are unlikely to focus on the intended learning. Teaching of phonics is best achieved through direct instruction.

Phonics does not begin at the start of Reception and teachers wait until children are secure with phonological awareness.

While phonemic awareness (an aspect of phonological awareness) is an important part of phonics, it is not a pre-requisite. It can be taught effectively while teaching children about letter-sound correspondences. The teaching of phonological awareness continues throughout EY and KS1 as part of effective phonics teaching.

Reception and KS1

'We make sure that pupils practise phonics using fun activities.'

Activities aimed to be fun are not often designed with the intended learning in mind. For example, drawing pictures of words containing the GPC being taught will not provide enough additional practice to help pupils secure their new learning.

- Activities for children to apply their phonic knowledge take account of the sounds children are currently focusing on and the ones they learned previously.
- The choice of reading books will differ depending on the intended learning. For example, to practise decoding, children need books matched to phonic knowledge. However, to develop language comprehension, they need to be read books by an adult because in the early stages of phonics teaching, they will not have the phonic knowledge to read them accurately.
- Pupils read 'decodable' books that closely match known GPCs, both at home and school. Teachers continue giving pupils practice in reading sounds and 'decodable' books beyond the PSC until they can read familiar words effortlessly and work out new words speedily.
- Adults monitor reading habits closely. They are quick to spot pupils who are not practising reading at home and give them additional practice in school.
- Adults know that pupils can only access the meaning of a text if they can read it accurately and speedily. When reading is stilted, adults re-read the sentence to support with understanding.

Key Stage 2

Effective well-chosen pedagogical approaches enable:

- pupils to both store subject-specific knowledge in long-term memory and apply this knowledge to draw increasingly sophisticated conclusions (as they encounter more challenging texts)
- deep process complex ideas/concepts, e.g. deep processing implicates semantic processing which occurs when we determine the meaning of a word and associate it with similar words with related meaning
- NB: Considered decisions are made about what pupils do when the teacher reads aloud; pupils should listen to the teacher when

'We teach guided reading to help pupils develop their reading comprehension.'

Until pupils are reading accurately and speedily, they will not be able to attend to the meaning of the text. Comprehension should be developed when listening to the teacher read. Beginner reading books should provide decoding practice. Re-reading them will support their understanding of what they read.

Key Stage 2

Guided reading may be a one size fits all approach.

Guided reading where pupils are expected to read independently may not be suitable for those who are still not fluent readers. The focus on their time should be on phonics until they are fluent. Comprehension should be developed through listening to adults read age-appropriate texts.

'Pupils learn comprehension skills from each other in group discussion sessions.'

If pupils' own knowledge is limited they will not learn from each other. This also implies that comprehension is purely about skills practise.

'We teach active reading approaches which enable pupils to engage fully with the text.'

Teachers may select drama activities in order to do this. However, it is also important to make sure that disciplinary concepts, such as the notion that characters are constructs created by the writer, are made clear. Some drama activities such as role plays and hot-seating (although useful), can give the impression that this is not the case.

From what we know about episodic and semantic memory, it can be the case that pupils remember the role play activity, rather than the knowledge/ideas that were being taught or pupils do not have the drama knowledge and skills to undertake the activity in a meaningful way.

they read aloud and not follow it in the text as this frees working memory.

Teachers expertly introduce complex background knowledge/literary knowledge through:

- direct exposition/explanation and questioning
- analogies
- comparisons
- zooming out/zooming in
- framing devices.

Questioning enables pupils to gain increasing confidence in applying disciplinary concepts through:

- activating relevant prior knowledge
- making links between their own experiences, which may be culturally defined, and the experiences of those in the texts they read
- making links within texts and between texts they have already read.

Modelling and scaffolding are used effectively in reading, for example modelling how to read with prosody (i.e. expression and tone as well as varying speed and emphasis).

Writing

Reception and KS1

There is a strong link between reading and writing. In phonics sessions, pupils learn to use phoneme-grapheme correspondences to segment words and spell. They have lots of practice at doing this, both in phonics sessions and at other times of the day.

Writing

EY before Reception

Children may choose to play write (often called emergent writing or mark making) but this is not a necessary stage in learning to write. If children choose to write, it is important they do not develop bad habits which are difficult to break later on. They should be expected to sit at a table and hold their pencil appropriately. If they begin to write letters, they should be shown how to form them correctly, starting in the right place and moving in the right direction. Size and orientation are not as important at this stage.

Letter formation is linked to pupils' learning in phonics so they have the skills to write words using the graphemes they have been taught.

Early writing activities should be designed to engineer success. Pupils are not expected to complete composition tasks which involve them writing words containing phoneme-grapheme correspondences they have not been taught. Just as children in the early stages of learning to read should only read books containing the sounds they know, the same applies to the early stages of writing. They should only write using the knowledge already acquired. This requires careful planning on the part of the teacher and is usually achieved through dictation activities.

Children are able to develop their understanding of composition before and during the teaching of spelling and letter formation. They may do this through, for example, oral retelling of stories and repeating the words in a sentence they want to write. Once children have fluency in spelling and handwriting, their working memory is freed to focus on the compositional aspects of their writing. Pupils who 'choose' to write independently should be allowed to do so and some incidental teaching may occur for these children as it comes up naturally (e.g. unusual GPCs in their name).

KS2

Teachers are very clear about the curricular goal when using texts as models for pupils' writing. E.g. the specific compositional element is being taught.

Teachers directly explain the writing process to pupils. They also demonstrate this process and explain the rationale behind different stages.

Exemplification of writing can support approaches such as comparative marking and provide ambitious goals for pupils to work towards.

In Reception, copying their name on a name card may not be appropriate if children have not learned to hold a pencil correctly or form the letters in their name.

Reception and KS1

Writing activities do not give pupils chance to practise what they know.

Instead, free writing is favoured as it is seen to develop children's creativity and composition but in fact it does not achieve these aims. Rather than engineering success, it sets children up to fail. Staff are treating the novice as an expert. The focus is on providing 'interesting' activities rather than ensuring that children have the necessary building blocks for success. For instance, before children have learned at least one way of writing each phoneme (at the earliest by the end of Reception), they will struggle with free writing because they do not have the knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences they need to write. Writing becomes an unpleasurable experience.

The issue is exacerbated further by the resulting lack of specific practice in the transcriptional skills children have learned because most writing time is devoted to free writing. This leaves children little chance to develop the automaticity in spelling and handwriting.

The use of thick felt-tip pens prevents pupils from mastering effective pen grip to support their handwriting. Too often, pupils are expected to sit in positions that make it difficult to write, for example balancing whiteboards on their knee.

Handwriting is not taught directly and/or adults do not observe pupils when they are writing so they can intervene when pupils are not using the correct pen grip or are forming letters incorrectly. Finished handwriting does not reveal inappropriate pen grip or some inaccuracies in starting point or direction of letter formation. Pupils reinforce inaccurate pen grip or letter formation and develop habits which are difficult to correct later on.

As part of the writing, editing and drafting process, pupils need to be taught how to evaluate their own writing. This is an opportunity for pupils to apply their knowledge from their reading.

Teachers and leaders think carefully about the process of self-/peer-review, making sure that pupils are clear about the intended outcome. E.g. some approaches focus on editing and reviewing while the writing is live to make changes as pupils go along. Others focus on pupils editing and re-drafting sections/the whole piece. Where this happens, pupils may need support in making sure they are employing compositional and transcriptional knowledge, especially understanding why sentences are constructed as they are and how to consciously control sentence structure.

Talk and teaching approaches

Talking about characters and themes and ideas in books is carefully planned so it has a clear purpose.

Teachers make sure that pupils have the component knowledge to ensure what they say is meaningful in terms of content, and how they say it in terms of tone and mode of discourse is appropriate.

Teachers ensure discussion protocols are clear and demonstrated for pupils. There is an expectation that everyone takes part.

Pupils should be helped to consider the opinions of others. Teachers recognise that as pupils move through the school they should develop better ways of doing this, e.g. formally through asking for clarification.

Discussion may be used to share ideas about content and for pupils to critique each other's writing (when pupils' own knowledge stores about transcription and composition are developed).

Inspector question 9:

What approaches do teachers use to ensure that key content is remembered long term? How do teachers ensure that pupils remember that which they have been taught?

School-friendly questions:

- Show me some examples of where teaching activities were specifically chosen for pupils to remember things long term, including big ideas/concepts about the subject like what a narrator does?
- Tell me a bit about how teaching enables pupils to develop their capacity to make interesting connections between different areas that illuminate the subject, i.e. apply knowledge meaningfully?
- Some aspects of R, W and SL need to be automatic and done almost without thinking. How do you decide what they are and what are your approaches to automaticity?

- Teachers are aware of the key elements of effective instruction.
- Teachers also use assessment as learning, such as retrieval exercises and quizzes, appropriately, especially for memorisation of basic rules in grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- In particular, they are attuned to breaking content down into smaller chunks that can be more easily processed
- They recognise that some of these elements are a better fit with some topics/domains within the subject than others. For example, spaced learning to enable pupils to learn key grammar features and spellings. In making decisions about which approaches to use, teachers make good use of their subject knowledge and disciplinary understanding.

'We focus on making English exciting and engaging, through, for example, creating interesting stimulus for writing.'

This can mean that other things, rather than what is intended to be learnt, are fixed in long-term memory. Such approaches end up with pupils remembering everything except the intended learning. The methods of engagement become the learning rather than the thing itself. This relates to key differences between episodic and semantic memory that should inform approaches.

'We use enquiry based learning styles.'

This means that pupils are not systematically introduced to new knowledge.

Teachers have a poor understanding of what learning looks like in their subject. They therefore use a range of unhelpful proxies, for example, pupils are busy; lots of work is done (especially written work). Or (At least some) pupils have supplied correct answers (whether or not they really understood them or could reproduce them independently).

In phonics they chant what a grapheme, phoneme and digraph is, they can say a phoneme is a sound etc. - but they can't read the phonemes... it's practising the wrong thing.

Focus area 3: The effectiveness of assessment in English

Assessment in English can be particularly problematic because of issues relating to subjectivity and complexities in assessing reading through reading age tests, online programmes and through writing activities.

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Inspector question 10:

How does the school assess pupils' progress? Does formative assessment identify the curriculum components pupils have not remembered or have forgotten?

Is assessment of learning taking away from valuable teaching time?

Is feedback carefully constructed so it focuses on misconceptions/next steps?

School-friendly questions:

- Tell me a bit about what your school thinks are the most effective ways to assess pupils' progress in English.
- Which bits of the curriculum do you prioritise when you construct assessments for pupils? Why do you prioritise these?
- Does assessment enable teachers to gain a detailed and accurate picture of whether the content intended to be learnt, including in writing and SL?
- Are gaps and misconceptions, including in phonics, identified?
- How are assessments moderated?
- If progress is tracked, is this based on composite skills without reference to component knowledge?

Teachers and leaders are aware of the forms/functions of assessment and their pros/cons, including the validity of the inferences that can be drawn out from different types of assessment i.e.

- Assessment as learning
- Assessment of learning (summative)
- Assessment for learning (formative)

'We use key performance indicators to track pupils' progress and identify if they are at or exceeding age-related expectations.' This is problematic because:

- assessment has become a proxy for curricular progression e.g. key performance indicators that relate only to skills (sometimes found in commercial tracking systems)
- too much emphasis is placed on undefined reading and writing skills and not enough on knowledge

Broadly speaking, the assessment of components are different from composites. Much of the reading and writing curriculum builds towards complex composites such as analytical writing, adding a chapter to a story, writing a letter to the MP. Formative assessment should check understanding of components needed to be successful in a composite. Summative assessments need to be reliable and valid tests of composites.

Leaders recognise the **assessment of learning** e.g. answering open questions on a chapter read in class can enable some misconceptions to be picked up and also help to crystallise and refine the pupils' interpretation so form **part of the learning itself**.

Teachers know that the purpose of assessing formatively is to produce a consequence for the teacher **and** pupil.

Approaches to assessing writing drafts are different from final drafts because they focus on the consequences. They may include giving feedback while pupils are writing or class feedback on misconceptions etc.

Teachers and leaders understand the complexities of assessing reading knowledge and skills. For example, poor writing skills can impact on assessment of reading that is done through writing. They know that different aspects of reading need to be assessed in different ways. No one piece of assessment can supply all the information about the pupils' reading capabilities. Formative assessment needs to check if component knowledge has been remembered, for example whether pupils are able to accurately read taught GPCs with increasing automaticity.

- not enough weight is given to specific threshold concepts, which are complex and take time to be fully developed.

'We use mini-SATS to diagnose gaps.'

- Poor assessment occurs when the purpose is not matched well enough to the activity. For example, mini SATs will not provide teachers with a detailed understanding of the gaps pupils have in the component parts of R&W outlined in this document.
- Similarly, quizzes, mini tests and review activities will not provide teachers with a detailed overview of the extent to which the curriculum has been learnt.

'We use reading ages to measure pupils' progression in reading.'

- Reading ages can be very problematic for measuring reading. They do not give insight into the precise aspect of reading that is weaker e.g. fluency, strategy for reading unfamiliar words, understanding of vocabulary and genre features.
- In addition, some commercial online reading assessments/schemes (designed to encourage reading for pleasure) do not to show where pupils have gaps in component knowledge, nor whether pupils have deepened their disciplinary knowledge or developed their vocabulary.

'We use the DfE assessment frameworks for writing and reading to track progress.'

- In some schools, assessment objectives /end goals from the writing/reading frameworks have become the de facto content of the curriculum, e.g. through repeated SAT papers, or repeated writing assessments of extended writing.

'For each writing task we have success criteria which we share with pupils.'

- Over-use of success criteria creates a checklist approach. It does not develop a pupil's sense of their self as a writer with an individual voice.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although breaking down the qualities of good writing can support assessment for learning, i.e. it can help the identification of components/help pupils to understand the features of effective writing, thinking in this way as you write does not always make for great writing. ▪ If the school does use a quality model to assess marking against criteria, this needs to be carefully reviewed. Writing assessments that require the marker to look at a piece of writing and to decide whether this meets success criteria or objectives can be problematic due to perverse incentives to include stylistic features in a superficial way which undermines disciplinary, e.g. using fronted adverbials even if they do not work 'with the grain' of the writing or are not suitable for the form/purpose. <p>'We assess SL through presentations and speeches.' Spoken language assessment can be problematic because of the variations such as performance on the day and issues relating to assessing one pupil who is involved in a group etc.</p> <p>Teachers have still got a confused view of progress and expected levels of progress.</p> <p>Be alert to whether tracking or other mechanisms cap expectations effectively on any groups of pupils or set inappropriate expectations.</p>
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Focus area 4: The extent to which there is a climate of high expectations where a love of English can flourish

This focus may well help explain the success of some schools, but a lack of evidence for 'climate where a love of the subject could flourish' could NOT reasonably be deployed to explain weakness given the challenge of identifying this during inspection.

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

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Inspector question 11:

How does the school ensure that there are high expectations of children and that they respond to these expectations?

How do you get the best from your pupils?

How would you describe the culture in English classes in the school?

School-friendly questions:

- Tell me how pupils with special educational needs might fare studying your English curriculum.
- How do you ensure that you have high expectations for all children who learn your English curriculum?

The subject/whole-school ethos encourages high expectations of pupils in terms of the quality of the texts pupils read in class and the approaches teachers take to encourage the high quality of pupils' work including its presentation.

There is a genuine interest in:

- the magic of language and literature
- the complex and exciting history of the English language
- words and their meanings etc.

Similarly, there are high expectations as to the way pupils express themselves; there is an expectation that everyone takes part in discussions.

- Teachers and leaders develop mechanisms to act when pupils display low effort.
- High expectations are shared with parents and extend to the level of support for pupils' learning that is expected from parents.
- This is coupled with very well-planned assistance for parents in carrying out this role. This includes the school working alongside parents to assist them in encouraging ambition in what pupils read.

Inspector question 12:

How does the school enrich the curriculum beyond classroom learning?

<p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell me a bit about what happens on the English curriculum outside of the classroom. ▪ Are there any English-specific experiences linked to the curriculum that take place outside of the English classroom? How do they link to the curriculum sequence? ▪ How do you ensure pupils get the most out of trips and visits? 	
<p>Theatre trips/visits to hear writers speak are an important part of a school's individual way of adding flavour to the curriculum in English. In both cases, pupils may need to have some prior knowledge for the trip to work, e.g. knowledge about what to expect in a live theatre. The school should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ where these visits are placed in terms of the curriculum plan and sequencing and what they add in terms of knowledge and skills ▪ how a legacy is built after the trip so it has a lasting impact. 	<p>Schools need to consider access to their curricular offer and ensure there are no barriers, e.g. those with siblings accessing clubs after school.</p> <p>It's great if schools run additional reading and writing clubs but they should be additional and not be opportunities for pupils to access a more ambitious curriculum that all should access.</p> <p>Schools also organise visits to places of natural beauty to enable pupils to experience what they write about (if they do they will need the vocabulary to express their response, the experience itself will not manufacture the vocabulary).</p>

Focus area 5: The quality of systems and support for staff development

<p>Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact</p> <p>NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for</p>	<p>Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact</p> <p>NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for</p>
<p>Inspector question 13: What do the strengths and weaknesses already identified indicate about the school's capacity to function effectively?</p>	
<p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell me a bit about how inexperienced or struggling staff are supported. ▪ Do teachers access subject-specific training and guidance, including about subject-specific pedagogies? ▪ Do all teaching staff know about the teaching of phonics and do staff that teach phonics have enough expertise in it? 	
<p>Much of the evidence already gathered will indicate whether the school has strong leadership with functioning systems in place. Check the mechanisms for sharing subject knowledge</p>	

<p>and the type of knowledge that is shared (frequency/sequencing of input/use of external and internal support etc.).</p> <p>There are high expectations as to how informed teachers are about phonics, classic and modern children’s literature, grammar, approaches to editing/drafting, etymology spelling rules and how to support pupils who have SEND/literacy barriers. Teachers have wide-ranging vocabularies. They speak standard English with pupils.</p> <p>The school has a strategic approach to purchasing high-quality resources. Selection of such resources is considered and linked to curricular intent.</p> <p>There are carefully considered schemes of work for inexperienced and/or struggling colleagues. Schemes of work support teachers in making adjustments for pupils with SEND.</p> <p>Shared resources/online resource areas are well managed.</p>	<p>Strengths and weaknesses may or may not be systemic. It is important to apply inspection methodology rigorously to test this out.</p> <p>Sometimes there is not an aspirational culture among staff, as shown by the language staff use to pupils, the way they talk about ambition, especially for disadvantaged pupils, or a lack of interest in their own learning. Feedback may be overgenerous.</p> <p>School/class libraries are neglected or not used. Stock is not renewed, books are damaged and not treasured. Sometimes over-concern for keeping books pristine means pupils do not access the books e.g. cannot take them home.</p>
<p>Inspector question 14: How does the school go about the process of English curriculum construction, debate and renewal?</p> <p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell me a bit about how the curriculum is designed in your school. Is it tweaked? If so, who decides on the changes? ▪ Tell me about opportunities that staff have to feed back to you about whether the sequence of the English curriculum is working. ▪ If there are mixed-age classes, is consideration given to ensuring that younger pupils in the class do not repeat learning and/or can access learning? ▪ Do links with secondary partner schools focus on English (curriculum and assessment)? How do they support effective transition? 	
<p>Leaders and teachers use assessment as an effective means by which they are assured that the curriculum enables pupils’ learning to build over time and extends the breadth of pupils’ knowledge.</p> <p>The school has expertise and understanding of different aspects of curriculum construction such as sequencing, components and composites and coherence.</p>	<p>‘We have mechanisms in place to review and adjust the English curriculum.’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ While there is no virtue in perpetual or wholesale curriculum change for the sake of it, a curriculum should be a living document. There should be evidence of reflection on the schemes of work and clear mechanisms for curricular construction and renewal when necessary, e.g. evidence this has happened after discussion in staff meetings.

<p>Leaders ensure top-level curricular aims are meaningfully incorporated within the subject curriculum and that the overall intent of the curriculum is fully implemented in all year groups.</p> <p>As the school's curriculum needs to be at least as ambitious as the NC, leaders have strong understanding of the PoS, scope and sequencing in the NC against which to benchmark their curriculum. That is not to say that the NC is the only benchmark that a school can use.</p> <p>Where schools have collaborated on curriculum design, there are strong processes in place to ensure it will work in the school's context. It is sufficiently challenging and staff are given the training they need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sometimes schools will have highly developed systems to consult staff about the content/design of the curriculum. It's important that staff feel ownership but the committee approach can lead to a lack of coherence with different/contradictory aims/intents jostling for position.
<p>Inspector question 15: How are all staff in the school encouraged to develop their subject knowledge and knowledge of how to teach that subject knowledge?</p> <p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you think that staff in your school are aware of their subject knowledge areas of expertise and areas for development? ▪ What opportunities do staff have to grow in knowledge and confidence about the topics that they teach? ▪ What place does subject knowledge have within the school's programme for CPD in English? ▪ Are there any barriers that are preventing staff to develop their subject knowledge and teaching expertise? 	
<p>There is an open and aspirational culture in which teachers feel that they can request additional subject knowledge support, e.g. in grammar.</p> <p>Knowledge of learning the best way to teach a difficult subject is applied when developing training and enables teachers to acquire subject knowledge effectively.</p> <p>Teachers are given clear feedback and guidance if they are teaching content that is a) simply wrong, as in grammatical rules, b) inappropriately pitched, c) too task driven and focused on activity rather than intended learning.</p> <p>Teachers and leaders recognise that their own reading habits, enthusiasm and knowledge of texts influence the way they implement the reading curriculum.</p>	<p>The school says there is an induction programme for new staff and support in place for struggling teachers. The key issue for inspectors to judge is whether, under the circumstances, leaders and teachers have taken reasonable steps to improve English teaching or are generic approaches applied?</p>

<p>If the school lacks English-specific expertise, this is found elsewhere through collaborations etc. There are effective mechanism in place to evaluate collaborative work.</p> <p>Leaders are well informed about the external support they choose to use to develop the subject.</p> <p>Leaders are clear about purpose of CPD, e.g. the difference between subject knowledge (i.e. content knowledge) and pedagogical knowledge, although some training can usefully combine both. They may consult subject organisations to ensure subject-specific training is high quality.</p> <p>If the school seeks to foster, reward and use teachers' relationship with the wider English subject communities, this is good practice. The community of English 'subject organisations' is developed and generative in terms of pedagogy and some aspects of curricular theorisation. Teachers benefit from a critical interaction with the academic subject community through ITE providers, for instance.</p>	
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Focus area 6: The extent to which whole-school policies affect the capacity for effective English education

This section is crucial to identify where the quality of education is influenced by the activities of the school and where the quality of education provided can be attributed to senior leadership.

<p>Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for</p>	<p>Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for</p>
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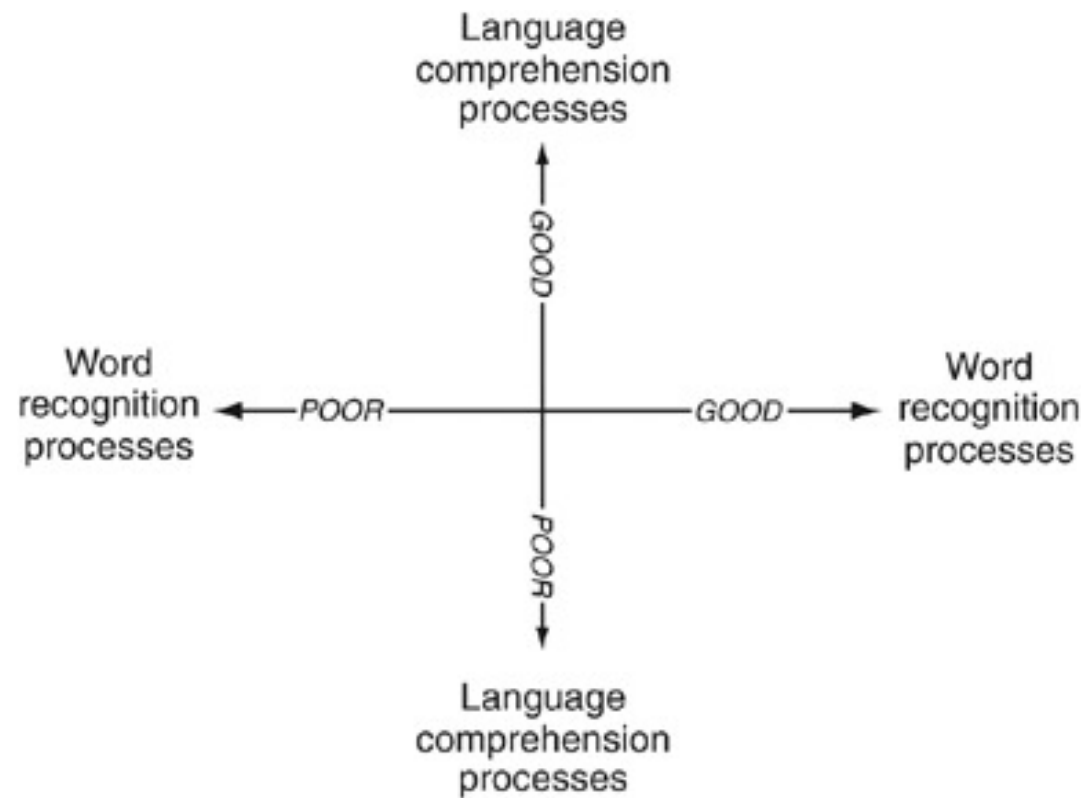
Inspector question 16:
What are the priorities for discussions at line management meetings between subject leaders and SLT?

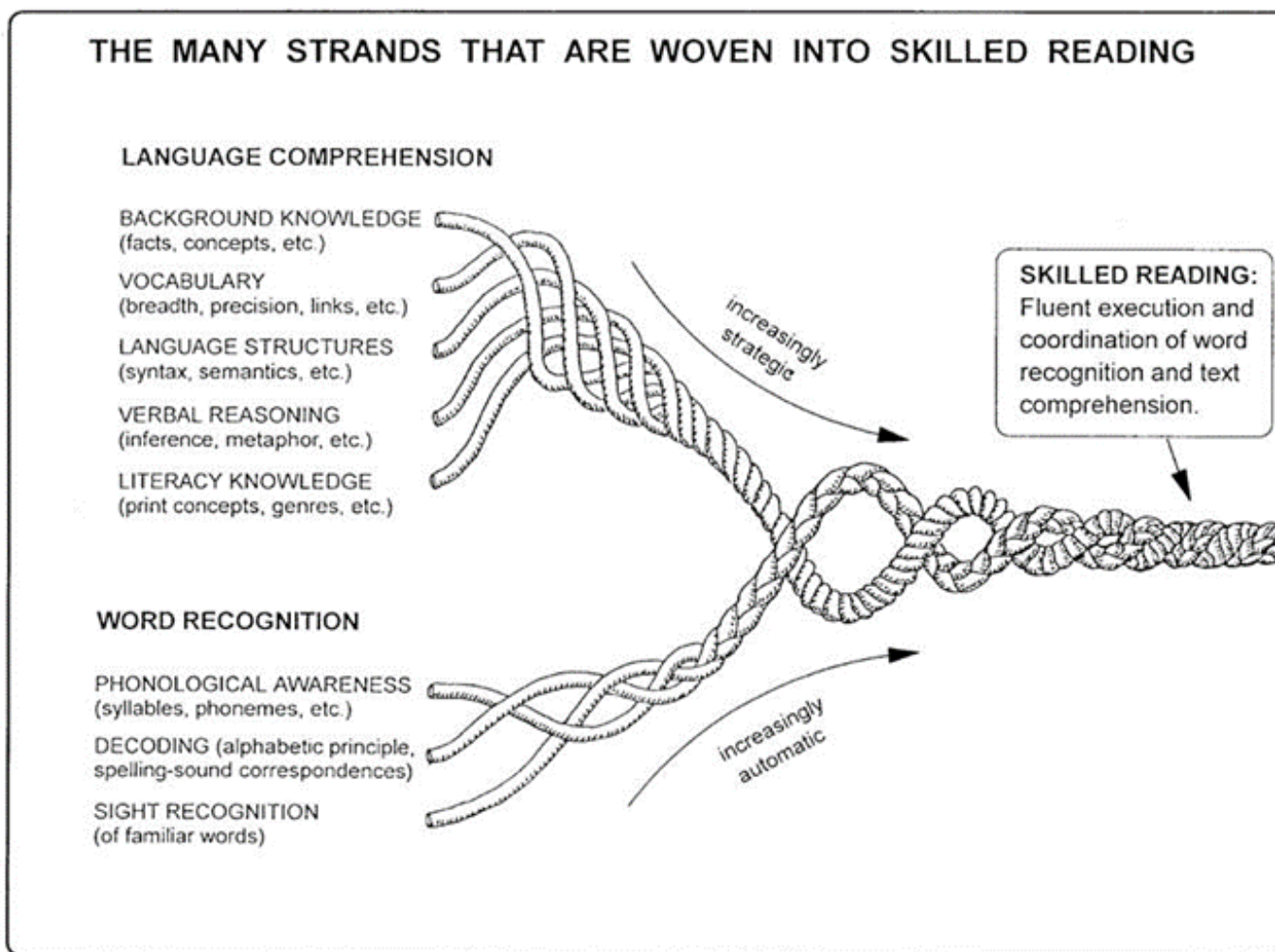
<p>Line management meetings are focused on curriculum, assessment and pedagogy in the subject as well as how agreed generic approaches are being delivered.</p>	<p>'We use book scrutiny and learning walks to ensure all teachers conform to whole-school policies.'</p>
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<p>Line managers recognise that a strong and well-sequenced curriculum is the mechanism for progression and, therefore, focus on this aspect.</p> <p>Line management meetings prioritise issues relating to ensuring staff have the subject knowledge and subject pedagogical knowledge to deliver curriculum content.</p> <p>Consistency of approach does not mean one size fits all, or the application of generic approaches that do not fit well with the subject.</p> <p>Line management meetings enable the subject lead to discuss evidence from their monitoring, up-to-date research and the validity of assessments. QA is carefully considered.</p>	<p>While teachers need to conform to whole-school policies such an answer suggests the leader might not be thinking carefully about when consistency is useful at a subject level.</p> <p>Book scrutinies may be problematic if they encourage leaders to make judgments on poor proxies for progress/insufficient evidence/surface features.</p> <p>Book scrutinies can also focus too much on variations in individual pupils' progress rather than curricular progression.</p>
<p>Inspector question 17: How do school-wide policies, such as marking or CPD, support the school's needs?</p> <p>School-friendly questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell me a bit about how big-picture decisions in school affect English. ▪ Is there anything about whole-school policies that limits or holds back the English curriculum and assessment of it? 	
<p>School-wide policies that seek to develop reading for pleasure recognise that feelings and evaluative beliefs about reading influence the intention to read. They therefore seek to shapes these beliefs.</p> <p>The school has a carefully considered set of policies that are designed to deliver its ambitious educational aims, placing curriculum at the heart, e.g. policies relating to displays are not just about making the place look nice.</p> <p>Policies allow for appropriate variations BOTH in content and how they are implemented, e.g. feedback policies in spoken language is different to writing. Policies that are generic and go across subjects, such as handwriting/spelling, have been carefully developed.</p> <p>Policies relating to support for pupils with SEND take particular account of specific barriers relating to the subject, such as the impact of communication and interactive needs on pupils' progress in English.</p>	<p>Whole-school/MAT-wide policies are not flexible and do not allow for variations between disciplines.</p> <p>Policies on assessment and homework do not take enough account of the different aspects of R, W and SL.</p>

Appendix

Simple View of reading





Glossary

Term	Description
Automaticity	Ability to recall and deploy (facts, concepts, and methods) with accuracy and speed and without using conscious memory; frees the working memory for higher-order processes that require holding a line of thought. Some transcriptional practices need to be automaticised such as handwriting, capitals and full stops.
Components	The building blocks of knowledge or sub-skills that a pupil needs to understand, store and recall from long-term memory in order to be successful in a complex task. See Automaticity.
Composites	The more complex knowledge which can be acquired or more complex tasks which can be undertaken when prior knowledge components are secure in a pupil's memory.
Cumulative dysfluency	Educational failure caused when pupils do not have enough opportunities to recall knowledge to gain automaticity with the use of that knowledge. Over time this may cause many gaps in pupils' knowledge which prevent or limit pupils' acquisition of more complex knowledge.
Cumulative subjects	These are subjects where there are many possible content choices from which teachers can select e.g. English literature or history. In cumulative subjects, progression over time comes in part from the cumulative addition of more content areas being learned by pupils. The notion of cumulative sufficiency is particularly important when considering curriculum quality in cumulative subjects. Cumulative subjects are usually set in contrast to hierarchical subjects.
Cumulative sufficiency	When the sum totality of curriculum content can be considered an adequate subject education. This notion is particularly useful when considering the quality of the curriculum in subjects where there are many possible content options.
Fluency	In this document fluency means: reading with automaticity (rapid word reading without conscious decoding), reading with accuracy (often measured as correct words per minute) and prosody (expressive, phrased reading).
Deep structure (will include subject specific examples)	The different ways a principle can be applied that transcend specific examples. When a principle is first learned, it is used inflexibly as the learner will tie that knowledge to the particulars of the context in which the principle has been learned (the 'surface structure'). As a learner gains expertise through familiarity with the principle and its

	applications, their knowledge is no longer organised around surface forms, but rather around deep structure. This means that experts can see how the deep structure applies to specific examples and that is an important goal of education.
Disciplinary knowledge	Methods and conceptual frameworks used by specialists in a given subject, e.g. knowledge of history or geography as a discipline.
Expressive language	Refers to how your child uses words to express himself/herself.
Hierarchical subjects	Subjects where content has a clear hierarchical structure and there is often less debate about content choices than for cumulative subjects. This is because there are core components of knowledge that you must know in order to be able to progress within the subject. It would be hard to argue for a mathematics curriculum that didn't include algebra or place value. English is both hierarchical and cumulative (non-linear).
Long-term memory	Where knowledge is stored in integrated schema, ready for connecting to and for use without taking up working memory. See schema.
Phonics	The study of the relationship between the spoken and written language. Each letter or combination of letters represent a sound or sounds. The information is codified, as we must be able to recognise which symbols represent which sounds in order to read the language.
Progression model	The planned path from the pupil's current state of competence to the school's intended manifestation of expertise.
Schema/schemata (plural)	A mental structure of preconceived ideas that organises categories of information and the connections between them.
Substantive knowledge	Subject knowledge (SK); often that carries considerable weight in a given subject domain, such as significant concepts.
Understanding	We are using the cognitivist model in which understanding describes pupils' interconnected knowledge e.g. of facts, concepts and procedures in maths. Understanding describes a certain schematic pattern of knowledge and is not qualitatively different from knowledge. Mental schemata can be viewed as network node diagrams, where nodes represent knowledge (facts, concepts, processes, features) and arcs the relationships between them.

	<p>Understanding in this model is a function of the quantity of appropriate nodes and the quantity of appropriate arcs - more knowledge, and more connections between them leads to more understanding. A knowledge schema can always be developed further and this is synonymous with deepening understanding. In this sense a curriculum plan articulates the degree of understanding intended.</p> <p>In everyday life, the question 'do you understand?' invites a binary yes/no response. This implies that understanding is something that is finite and can be possessed absolutely. This is incorrect and leads us into many traps, such as trying to 'teach for understanding' as an absolute when understanding can be viewed as a continuum and the nature and degree of understanding sought should be part of a teacher's articulated curricular intent.</p>
<p>Working (short-term) memory</p>	<p>Where conscious processing or 'thoughts' occur. Limited to holding four to seven items of information for up to around 30 seconds at a time.</p>