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INSPECTOR CURRICULUM

Primary languages aide-memoire

Language learning provides the foundation for further study, celebrates difference and opens doors.

Contents

- ⇒ This document has been created to support inspectors undertaking a deep dive in languages.
- ⇒ It provides a high-level summary of stage two training and wider guidance.
- ⇒ The six focus areas provide a structure to explain subject level outcomes as identified by inspection activities.
- ⇒ School leaders may not be able and should not be expected to articulate their intent **as it is outlined** in this aide-memoire or to provide documents which neatly provide the evidence for the focus areas

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1. Curriculum

(Q1-4)

Pillars of progression

Language exists in spoken and written forms. It is both produced and understood (listening, speaking, reading, writing).

Progress in languages is along three pillars:

Phonics: the relationship between sounds and spelling

Vocabulary: words, their meaning, and how to use them

Grammar: how words are put together into sentences.

Pupils' knowledge of phonics, vocabulary and grammar must increase step-by-step.

Pupils must focus on how phonics, grammar and vocabulary combine so that they can understand and produce ever more complex language. With more vocabulary, grammar and phonics, pupils will produce and understand more complex and more lengthy texts.

New structures should be met and practised when listening, speaking, reading and writing. These are vehicles to combine phonics, vocabulary and grammar — they are not in themselves pillars of progression. Ever more vocabulary alone is not progression.

Components & Sequencing

Ask the school 'Show me how you have planned for progression in phonics, vocabulary and grammar'.

'Show me how you have thought about this in depth. For example, when considering vocabulary, are all of the words expected to be learnt productively, or are some receptive only (for example, target language commands used by the teacher)? When considering verbs at the beginning of language learning, do you introduce the whole paradigm (I, you, he, she, we, you, they), or do you introduce different forms at different times?'

'Talk to me about a specific linguistic feature, for example, adjectives. How do you build up knowledge about these and in which order? When do you introduce agreement (number and gender) and position?'

When pupils produce more extended language, either spoken or written, how much is pre-learnt as chunks and how much do they manipulate language themselves? Do pupils only learn 'sequences of language'? How much opportunity is there for pupils to generate their own language using their linguistic knowledge (at a basic level)?

Memory

Sensitively, check that pupils are keeping up with the SOW. What language can they produce? Do they know the very basics? When they speak, is the pronunciation correct? Ask pupils what language they were producing this lesson. What was the teacher hoping you would say? Show me a piece of writing – how did you do that? What high frequency (or topic) vocabulary can they remember from last year? Can they say 'I have' and 'Do you have ...?' or can they only produce nouns?

Ask teachers if they identify crucial components, emphasise and repeat these and ensure they are remembered long term. Ask the school, 'Give me an example of key vocabulary and grammar and show me how this is revisited in the SOW'. When pupils leave Y6, what is 'left in the sieve' for them to take to secondary?

Scope: The curriculum should meet the minimum expectations set out in the National Curriculum. It should be increasingly demanding and broaden and deepen pupils' linguistic knowledge.

Ask the school: 'Can I see the scheme of work (SOW) or equivalent? If I take one of the aims from the KS2 NC, for example, 'describe people, places, things and actions orally and in writing', can you show me how this is covered?'

'Can you show me where we will be in the SOW in the lessons that I will be visiting? What exact language will you be expecting pupils to produce or understand in this lesson? (i.e. tell me exactly in Spanish). How does this build upon vocabulary, grammar and phonics from previous learning?' What is new, what is recycled?

'Explain to me how the language that is being covered in the lessons I will visit is ambitious. How is it building towards proficiency similar to expectations in KS2 NC? Show me that the content in these exercise books matches the ambition of the SOW. Show me how it is ambitious on the level of phonics, vocabulary and grammar (and how these are combined when listening, speaking, reading and writing)'.

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(Q5-8)

2. Pedagogy

Do activities support the curriculum intent? (Building phonics, grammar and vocabulary to create and understand more complex and lengthy language?)

Is new material met and practised when reading, listening, speaking and writing?

How do teachers ensure that key content is remembered long term? How do they make sure that activities do not overload working memory (including SEND)?

Are activities planned to revisit previously learned content and build up pupils' fluency? Does target language use help learning?

(Q9)

3. Assessment

Do assessments check the content of the SOW? Do they check what they are designed to check?

Is formative assessment timely and well focused? Does it inform curriculum design and adaptation?

(Q10-12)

4. Culture

Do teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can do (including SEND and LPAs)? Are all included in lessons?

Does the school foster a love of the subject (e.g. through clubs, taster days for other languages etc.)? What is the rationale for international links?

How does the value and profile of the subject whole-school compare to other subjects?

(Q13-14)

5. Systems

What mechanisms are there for curriculum construction and renewal? Do school leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the subject? How?

How well are staff supported in developing their own subject and subject-specific pedagogical knowledge? What support are non-specialists given?

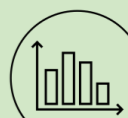
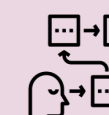
(Q15-19)

6. Policy

Big picture questions for leaders: 'Which languages are studied, when and why this choice? How much time is spent on languages? Do all pupils access languages? Do you aim to make progress in one language across time? And second languages? Do you celebrate community languages?'

How do school-wide policies impact languages? Do any whole-school policies, such as assessment models, support and enable high-quality languages-specific assessment?

How is transition handled in languages? Does this influence the curriculum?



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Secondary languages aide-memoire

Language learning provides the foundation for further study, celebrates difference and opens doors.

Consider content from primary aide-memoire initially if a language is started from scratch*

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1. Curriculum

(Q1-7)

Pillars of progression (see over also)

Language exists in spoken and written forms. It is both produced and understood (listening, speaking, reading, writing). New language may be met through topic areas.

However, progress in languages is along three pillars:

Phonics: The relationship between sounds and spelling: note-taking, dictation, reading aloud, focus on phonics when listening to texts?

Vocabulary: Which words and when? Focus on high-frequency words? Rationale for depth (spelling / grammatical category) as well as breadth? Hierarchy and prioritisation? Frequent revisiting?

Grammar: Step-by-step approach? Ambitious coverage? Whole paradigm or smaller steps at beginning?

Pupils must focus on how phonics, grammar and vocabulary combine so that they can understand and produce ever more complex language. With more vocabulary, grammar and phonics, pupils will produce and understand more complex and more lengthy texts.

Only proficient linguists (upper GCSE+) can note patterns and meanings incidentally in a reliable way. Direct instruction avoids pupils developing gaps.

Components & Sequencing

How do you build in learning from primary? How is **transition** helping pupils make progress?

Ask the school, 'Show me how you have planned for progression in phonics, vocabulary and grammar'. Ask some questions from 'pillars of progression above'.

'Talk to me about a specific linguistic feature, for example, adjectives. How do you build up knowledge about these and in which order?' (Agreement (gender, number) position, comparatives, superlatives etc).

When pupils produce more extended language, either spoken or written, how much is pre-learnt as chunks and how much do they manipulate language themselves (when preparing for GCSE, for example)? Do pupils only learn 'sequences of language'? How much opportunity is there for pupils to generate their own language using their linguistic knowledge (at a basic level)?

Memory (you will also have the **IDSR** to refer to here)

Sensitively, check that pupils are keeping up with the SOW. What language can they produce? Do they know the very basics? When they speak, is the pronunciation correct? Ask pupils what language they were producing this lesson. What was the teacher hoping you would say? Show me a piece of writing – how did you do that? What high frequency (or topic) vocabulary can they remember from last year?

Ask teachers if they identify crucial components, emphasise and repeat these and ensure they are remembered long term. Ask the school, 'Give me an example of key vocabulary and grammar and show me how this is revisited in the SOW'.

Sixth form: Students move on from the basics of language — the basics are in place, knowledge more automated demanding less attention and effort and leading to fewer errors. The curriculum would likely contain: complex words and structures; longer written texts (and an increasing ability to use authentic materials); spoken material and normal speed; inference, contextual information across texts; eliciting meaning, etc.

Scope: The curriculum should meet the minimum expectations set out in the National Curriculum and exam specifications.

Ask the school: 'Can I see the scheme of work (SOW) or equivalent? If I take one of the aims from the KS3 NC, for example, 'express and develop ideas clearly and with increasing accuracy, both orally and in writing', can you show me how this is covered?'

'Can you show me where we will be in the SOW in the lessons that I will be visiting? What exact language will you be expecting pupils to produce or understand in this lesson? (i.e. tell me exactly in Spanish.) How does this build upon vocabulary, grammar and phonics from previous learning? What is new, what is recycled?'

'Show me that the content in these exercise books matches the ambition of the SOW. Show me how it is ambitious on the level of phonics, vocabulary and grammar (and how these are combined when listening, speaking, reading and writing)'.

Components & Sequencing

How do you build in learning from primary? How is **transition** helping pupils make progress?

Ask the school, 'Show me how you have planned for progression in phonics, vocabulary and grammar'. Ask some questions from 'pillars of progression above'.

'Talk to me about a specific linguistic feature, for example, adjectives. How do you build up knowledge about these and in which order?' (Agreement (gender, number) position, comparatives, superlatives etc).

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(Q8-12)

2. Pedagogy

Do activities support the curriculum intent? (Building phonics, grammar and vocabulary to create and understand more complex and lengthy language?)

Is new material met and practised when reading, listening, speaking and writing?

How do teachers ensure that key content is remembered long term? Are activities planned to revisit previously learned content and build up pupils' fluency? Do activities overload working memory?

Does target language use help learning? Is it well considered? Does the way grammar is introduced and practised help pupils remember in the long term? What is the rationale for any authentic materials?

(Q13-15)

3. Assessment

What is the rationale for the content assessed? Do assessments check the content of the SOW? Do they check what they are designed to check? Do they build memory and check for gaps?

Is formative assessment timely and well focused? Does it inform curriculum design and adaptation? How are pupils prepared for GCSE?

(Q16-18)

4. Culture

What is the profile of the subject?

Do teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can do (including SEND and LPAs)? Are all pupils included in lessons at KS3?

What opportunities are there for second modern language study? Are these open to all? Is there a popular uptake at KS4? Strong uptake at KS5? Link between languages and CEIAG opportunities?

Proportions at KS4? **Impact of languages on EBACC stats** and DA / LPA / SEND uptake? Is this ambitious?

How do you enrich languages through the wider curriculum? Are pupils willingly engaging in languages after KS3 or is the culture such that they do not like the subject?

(Q19-21)

5. Systems

What mechanisms are there for curriculum construction and renewal? Do school leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the subject? How?

How do leaders ensure consistently strong practice from inexperienced, non-specialist or struggling staff? How are all staff encouraged to develop pedagogical knowledge and maintain linguistic competence?

(Q22-23)

6. Policy

Big picture questions for leaders: 'which languages are studied, when and why this choice? How much time is spent on languages? Do all pupils access languages? Do you aim to make progress in one language across time? And second languages? Do you celebrate community languages (see over)?'

How do school-wide policies impact languages (CPD, assessment, marking, etc.)? How are any curriculum innovations assessed and by whom?

What criteria are used to decide timetabling priorities (setting, choice of teachers, specialisms etc)?