



# Key Stage 3 *National Strategy*

## Managing the second year

**Headteachers and Heads  
of Department**

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### *About the Key Stage 3 National Strategy*

The National Strategy for Key Stage 3 aims to raise standards by strengthening teaching and learning across the curriculum for all 11- to 14-year-olds. Its goal is to meet the Government's ambitious targets for Key Stage 3 by the years 2004 and 2007.

The Strategy began in schools in September 2001 with the introduction of two of its strands, English and mathematics. Three other strands will be introduced in 2002–03: science, information and communication technology (ICT), and teaching and learning in the foundation subjects (TLF).

The Strategy is a flexible programme of continuing professional development that can be adapted to fit the circumstances of any school. It provides training and materials to support teaching and learning and to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge, backed up by in-school support from consultants. Frameworks for teaching English and mathematics set out teaching objectives for each year, with extension objectives for pupils who need them. In the next school year, Frameworks for teaching science and ICT will be published. For TLF, a Framework for modern foreign languages will be piloted, and others may follow in due course.

The Key Stage 3 pilot involved over 200 schools in 17 different LEAs. Case studies illustrating how these schools have tackled aspects of the Strategy are on the DfES Standards website: [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3).

### *About this guide*

This guidance is for senior leadership teams and subject leaders in secondary schools as they manage the implementation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. It is addressed particularly to the senior member of staff who coordinates the implementation of the Strategy, and who is referred to here as the school's Key Stage 3 strategy manager.

This guide gives advice based on experiences of the first year of the Strategy. It looks ahead to what might be needed to embed the Strategy in the everyday life of the school. It offers information, advice and practical suggestions in six sections:

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For the purpose of this guide, the phrase 'secondary schools' should be interpreted as 'secondary and middle schools, and special schools with secondary aged pupils'.

Headteachers had expressed their confidence in the Strategy before it began in all secondary schools. In July 2001, at the end of its first year, a telephone survey was conducted of the views of 149 headteachers whose schools were taking part in the pilot:

- 97% of them felt that the Strategy would fulfil its aim of raising standards in Key Stage 3;
- 70% thought that it had already started to do so in their schools;
- 90% said that teaching was generally better in English and mathematics lessons;
- 93% felt that lesson pace had increased;
- 79% thought that pupils were more motivated.

Nine out of every ten of the schools said that the Frameworks for teaching English and mathematics were useful, and that they helped teachers to set objectives and to plan lessons.

Ofsted has been evaluating progress in a sample of pilot schools. *The Key Stage 3 Strategy: evaluation of the first year of the pilot* was published in January 2002 and can be found on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). The findings reflect the positive views of the pilot headteachers but also highlighted the emerging issues. The key messages in the report are:

- Schools have responded well to the Strategy, and it is making a difference.
- The training has been valuable. Consultants have made an important contribution.
- Teaching has improved in most schools and significantly so in about one third. There has been a positive but variable impact on pupils' achievements.
- The teaching Frameworks have promoted higher expectations, and the setting and communication of objectives for lessons has improved.
- Structured lessons, often in three parts, have improved planning, organisation and pace. Plenary sessions have been less successful.
- The use of the subject audit has been generally weak, with the result that action plans have not been tailored well enough to schools' needs.
- The availability and use in Year 7 of Key Stage 2 data has been uneven.
- The organisation of Year 7 catch-up provision has been unsatisfactory in many schools. In general, the teaching has not taken enough account of pupils' particular weaknesses.
- Some summer schools have had serious problems with recruitment, and most had no clear plans to follow up pupils' progress when they entered Year 7.

You will know the extent to which the first year of the Strategy is having an impact in your own school. Some schools have embraced the English and mathematics strands with whole-hearted enthusiasm and are looking forward to the extension to other strands. Some schools have decided to focus mainly on Year 7 in the first year of the Strategy and intend to extend developments to Years 8 and 9 in the next phase. Some schools have had a slower start, sometimes because of acute staffing difficulties, or because teachers have been more cautious about taking on new ideas.

Whatever position you have reached, it is now time to take stock and consider what is needed in your own school in the second year of the Strategy to make it work better and extend its impact.

*Developments in the five strands*

Support from the Standards Fund for the English and mathematics strands will continue in 2002–03 with more focus on Years 8 and 9 and on the issues identified by Ofsted in its evaluation of the pilot. There will be some further training for all schools, building on last summer's training, including a day for the heads of English and mathematics departments.

In each strand, a group of schools will again be eligible for additional support. This involves:

- school-based consultancy;
- a further entitlement to training, supported by extra days of supply cover;
- an extra grant for developments in the subject.

Science will begin in the summer term of 2002, and will follow a similar pattern of training and support to that for English and mathematics. ICT and TLF will begin in the autumn of 2002, again with some core training for all schools plus additional support for some schools. Separate leaflets are available describing the roll-out of these strands.

**Core training for the five strands: 2002–03**

The days of training to which all schools will have access are shown in the table below. All supply cover will be funded at £145 per day.

	Middle deemed primary (Y7)	Middle deemed secondary (Y7, Y8)	Secondary starting in Y7, Y8 or Y9	Special with KS3 pupils	Pupil referral unit (PRU) with KS3 pupils
English	2 days	4 days	4 days	2 days	2 days
Maths	2 days	4 days	4 days	2 days	2 days
Science	2 days	4 days	4 days	2 days	2 days
ICT	2 days	4 days	4 days	2 days	2 days
TLF	1 day	1 day	1 day	1 day	1 day
<b>Total days</b>	<b>9 days</b>	<b>17 days</b>	<b>17 days</b>	<b>9 days</b>	<b>9 days</b>
<b>Total £</b>	<b>£1305</b>	<b>£2465</b>	<b>£2465</b>	<b>£1305</b>	<b>£1305</b>

### Additional support for the five strands: 2002–03

The LEA will determine the exact amount given to each school getting additional support in each strand, but typically the grant will be as follows.

	English	Maths	Science	ICT	TLF (for two depts)
Supply days	12 days	12 days	6 days	4 days	8 days per dept
Grant for supply cover	£1740	£1740	£870	£580	£2320
Subject development grant	£600	£600	£600	£450	£450 per dept: £900
<b>Total £</b>	<b>£2340</b>	<b>£2340</b>	<b>£1470</b>	<b>£1030</b>	<b>£3220</b>

A school getting additional support in all five strands, with two departments participating in TLF, will typically receive a total of £10 400, plus a further grant for other Key Stage 3 priorities (see page 5).

Make sure that you have the time you need for teaching science and ICT in place for September. The English, mathematics and science Frameworks are based on 3 hours teaching time per week for each subject, while ICT is based on one hour each week for the teaching of ICT as a discrete subject. You may also need to adjust timetable arrangements for Year 7 catch-up classes (see page 7) and to plan time for Year 9 booster classes (see page 11). Advice on *Designing the Key Stage 3 curriculum* is published in a separate guide.

### General priorities across the strands

**Transition** is a continuing priority for the Key Stage 3 Strategy in 2002–03. It focuses particularly but not exclusively on pupils who did not achieve level 4 in the Key Stage 2 tests. It broadens this year to include:

- initiatives that start in the summer of Year 6 (e.g. jointly agreed use of transition teaching units, observations of primary lessons by secondary teachers, joint discussions of pupils' performance in the Key Stage 2 tests);
- school holiday initiatives and study support, such as summer schools, Saturday classes, Easter schools (see also the information on study support on pages 12–13);
- Year 7 catch-up provision based on the *Literacy Progress Units* and *Springboard 7*.

There is up to £10 500 for every secondary school to support transition. The exact amount to be devolved to each school will depend on its type. The grant has three elements: £1000 for general transition activities, £6500 for a summer school, and £3000 to support catch-up programmes in Year 7, with the flexibility to vire between these three elements. The grant is focused mainly on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, but where schools decide to focus on transition activities beginning in Year 6 the grant extends also to science.

Two other priorities, each of which is supported by a grant of a maximum of £4500, again depending on school type, are:

- **a new mentoring programme for Year 8 pupils** who are falling behind and becoming disaffected in their core subject work;
- **booster classes for pupils in Year 9** to maximise their success in the Year 9 tests for English, mathematics and science.

A general development grant can be used to support any school priority for Key Stage 3.



## Cross-strand priorities: 2002–03

	Middle deemed primary (Y7)	Middle deemed secondary (Y7, Y8)	Secondary starting in Y7	Secondary starting in Y8	Secondary starting in Y9	Special with KS3 pupils	PRU with KS3 pupils
<b>English, maths</b>							
Transition	n/a	n/a	£1000	£1000	£1000	n/a	n/a
Summer school	n/a	n/a	£6500	£6500	£6500	n/a	n/a
Year 7 catch-up	£3000	£3000	£3000	n/a	n/a	£3000	n/a
<b>English, maths, science</b>							
Year 8 mentoring	n/a	£4500	£4500	£4500	n/a	£2000	£2000
Year 9 booster	n/a	n/a	£4500	£4500	£4500	n/a	n/a
<b>All strands</b>							
General grant	£1250	£2500	£2500	£2500	£2500	£1250	£1250
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4250</b>	<b>£10 000</b>	<b>£22 000</b>	<b>£19 000</b>	<b>£14 500</b>	<b>£6250</b>	<b>£3250</b>

### General transition activities

The expectation is that the £1000 grant for general transition activities will cover some or all of the following:

- release of Key Stage 3 teachers to visit primary schools and observe primary teaching, or to discuss the transfer and use of information about pupils' attainment;
- release of invited Key Stage 2 teachers to observe teaching in Key Stage 3 in the autumn term of 2002, or to join training on transition issues;
- some reprographic costs associated with the new transition units (see below);
- funding towards the development of locally produced transition units or study support activities (for study support see pages 12–13).

### New transition units for English and mathematics

Two new units of work for pupils have been developed in each of English and mathematics, for optional use near the end of Year 6 and early in Year 7. Each unit can be taught as a 'stand alone' – it does not depend on the other. The themes in English are 'Authors' and 'Text'. The themes in mathematics are 'Number' and 'Problem solving'. The units will be available on the Standards website from March 2002. They will also be advertised in *Spectrum* and will be available from Prolog in print form after Easter 2002.

### Training for transition

English, mathematics and science teachers will have the opportunity to discuss transition issues from a secondary perspective in the Key Stage 3 training programmes for 2002–03. In science, at least one Year 7 teacher will have a chance to discuss transition issues in the autumn training programme, after observation of science teaching in Year 5 or 6 in the summer of 2002. In English and mathematics, the transition training will take account of previous training for heads of department and Year 7 teachers, for example, on primary teaching styles and the structuring of lessons. It will build on the lesson observations in primary schools made by English and mathematics teachers as part of their preparations for the Key Stage 3 Strategy.

## Summer schools

£6500 has been allocated to extend to all eligible schools the possibility of running a literacy or numeracy summer school in 2002. Comprehensive packs of materials to support summer schools are provided by the Strategy.

You may be contemplating running a summer school for the first time. If so, this section is for you. It is also for schools that would like to strengthen their summer-school arrangements.

Some summer schools have been extremely successful, but not all. Recruitment and attendance have sometimes been less than 100%, in spite of everyone's best efforts. Sometimes the availability of information from primary schools on the summer-school pupils has been patchy, and the follow-through from the summer school to the catch-up programmes in Year 7 has not always happened or been as effective as it could be.

The best summer schools:

- designated a senior member of staff to coordinate arrangements (e.g. the head of Year 7, the head of lower school, or the Key Stage 3 strategy manager);
- made early contact with the primary schools who will contribute pupils;
- ensured that the selected pupils were borderline level 4 and the most likely to benefit.

Some of the issues to think about well in advance are:

- recruitment strategies;
- attracting appropriate staff;
- addressing pupils' 'sticking points';
- ensuring lively teaching;
- tracking pupils' progress in summer school and into Year 7.

There is greater flexibility this year for running summer schools in different ways. If you work in a school that has recruited well and developed effective provision for the 'traditional' 10-day summer school, you should aim to continue to offer it. On the other hand, if you have not managed to recruit well, or attendance has proved significantly less than expected, you could run a different type of summer school or use the money to support more productive transition activities. Here are some examples of what you might do.

- Run a shorter summer school for one week, or provide an Easter school in the spring of Year 7 to prepare for Year 7 tests, or organise a series of Saturday morning schools.
- Run a series of shorter, issue-focused summer schools, for example, on spelling or on written calculations.
- Where potential numbers of pupils for summer schools are low, run an ICT-based Internet summer school, which has been tried successfully in Kent and Somerset.
- By agreement with primary schools and pupils' parents, run the summer school in the last fortnight of the summer term.
- Encourage newly qualified teachers who will be joining the school in September to contribute to the teaching of the summer school.
- Include more than 30 pupils if you have the space for them.

Your LEA might be able to support recruitment and provide some training for new providers of summer schools, using the Strategy's materials. Here are some other ideas to try.

- Work with your partner primary schools to recruit summer-school pupils and identify their particular weaknesses in English/literacy or mathematics/numeracy.
- Give summer-school pupils specific targets to achieve and make sure that they understand them. Base the targets on information you get from primary schools.
- In conjunction with the primary schools, design a promotional leaflet for parents, highlighting the importance of a pupil's full attendance at the summer school. Complement this with a leaflet for pupils, stressing a two-way 'contract', including a commitment on attendance.
- Give your summer-school plans a realistic focus – don't target too many objectives.
- When you plan the summer school, consider how the work will be followed up in the Year 7 programme for the autumn term.
- Conclude the summer school with a presentation of pupils' work to show what they have achieved. Keep some samples for Year 7 teachers. Provide a certificate for those who complete the course.
- Don't forget to tell form tutors and those who teach English and mathematics in Year 7 who the summer-school pupils are!

### *Year 7 catch-up programmes*

The £3000 grant to support Year 7 catch-up programmes from April 2002 is equivalent to the funding in the Standards Fund for 2001–02. The suggested expenditure of £3000 is for extra staffing to support catch-up groups, or perhaps for a technician to prepare resources.

Some schools have arranged in-house training for the teaching assistants who support the programmes. The DfES has also provided funding and training materials to support the training of teaching assistants by LEAs. Two of the elements of the training focus on the role of teaching assistants in supporting the Year 7 English and mathematics catch-up programmes. The other elements are on the general role of teaching assistants, on behaviour management and on special educational needs.

Each set of catch-up materials (*Literacy Progress Units* and *Springboard 7*) has its own guidance. There is also some general guidance for strategy managers included in the *Key Stage 3 National Strategy: management guide* issued in April 2001 and in the recent guide on *Designing the Key Stage 3 curriculum*.

The best use of the catch-up materials is when they support particular pupils' needs, not when they are followed routinely. The Ofsted evaluation of the Key Stage 3 pilot stressed that schools should pay more attention to the standards achieved by individual pupils across the attainment targets and select the catch-up units that will help to remedy weaknesses.

Detailed information from primary schools and summer-school staff is crucial since it will identify pupils who will benefit from the programmes. It can also be used to highlight pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to set them specific targets for improvement. You might also:

- adapt the catch-up materials to fit pupils' needs – don't follow them slavishly but maintain the pace and challenge if you want them to work;
- adapt the catch-up materials to support Year 7 pupils working at level 2 and help them meet targets in their individual education plans;
- make further use of the materials provided for literacy and numeracy summer schools as part of your catch-up provision.



In Key Stage 2, pupils have benefited from daily English and mathematics lessons. The principle of 'little and often' is a key to the success of the catch-up programmes in Year 7. Good organisational arrangements will ensure regular systematic teaching and allow pupils to attend both programmes if necessary.

The *Springboard 7* mathematics programme can be organised in various ways. It can:

- form a complete course of about three hours each week for a whole class of pupils;
- supplement the main programme for Year 7 mathematics at particular points;
- be used selectively to form an intensive extra course of about 60 minutes a week, taken as a weekly extra lesson, or taught in three 20-minute extra slots spread over the week.

Similarly, the *Literacy Progress Units* are best taught in three 20-minute slots each week, in addition to normal English lessons for Year 7. Whole-class versions of the units are available but the best arrangement is small targeted groups. It is, of course, not intended that every level 3 pupil should follow every progress unit. Reading and writing test scores, in particular, need to be separated to ensure that pupils are not studying units needlessly.

school  
examples

- *Literacy catch-up sessions are scheduled in 20-minute tutorials in tutor time on three days each week. For mathematics, pupils work in ability sets. The two lower sets follow a programme based largely on the Springboard 7 materials. A supplementary tutorial is provided in an after-school mathematics club that is held once a week.*
- *Year 7 pupils are withdrawn for three literacy support sessions each week from the last 20 minutes of lessons. The subjects chosen change each half term and exclude the core subjects. A literacy support teacher teaches the sessions. For mathematics, the lowest two groups of pupils have one extra lesson per week for mathematics, with the time taken from French.*
- *In the six mixed-ability classes in Year 7, there are on average ten pupils below level 4 in each class, seven of whom are at level 3. English and mathematics are each taught for three hours a week in Year 7. In each subject, pairs of classes are timetabled simultaneously. Teaching assistants give 25 minutes of support during group work in each lesson, supporting two classes in a one-hour teaching period. Catch-up materials are used in these sessions.*
- *A grammar school with a few Year 7 pupils with specific weaknesses in English or mathematics provides extra-curricular sessions once a week at lunchtime during the autumn and spring terms of Year 7, using the materials selectively.*
- *A school with a high proportion of entrants at level 3 bases its timetable on 35-minute teaching periods. It allocates six lessons each week to both English and mathematics. Every week, two lessons in each subject are used for Literacy Progress Units or Springboard 7, or for enrichment for the minority of pupils at levels 4 and 5.*

### *Year 8 mentoring programme*

£4500 is allocated to each school to support pupils in Year 8 who are not achieving the levels expected for their year group. The target group of pupils will be underachieving across a range of subjects. The length, quality and commitment of their work will be poor.

And yet teachers will say of these pupils that they are capable of so much more. The pupils will probably:

- be well known to staff as pupils not fulfilling their potential;
- be seemingly bored or even disruptive in lessons, suffering from loss of motivation and falling into disaffection;
- have been in catch-up programmes in Year 7, but not made progress to the next level.

Three key features distinguish these pupils from others who are lagging behind.

- They are underachieving across several subjects – it is not simply the case that they have become disaffected with one subject or one teacher.
- Their needs are not primarily pastoral but academic.
- There is evidence that they are capable of doing much better.

Identifying the pupils should not be difficult and should not require a formal exercise. A year tutor may already have their names on the tip of the tongue. If not, a review of end-of-year reports or a straw poll of staff would soon yield them. Once the programme is in place, staff will find it easier to suggest which pupils would benefit.

### What to offer

The intention is to offer the pupils a personal learning mentor whom they meet at established intervals. The learning mentor will need to be versatile, flexible and experienced enough to evaluate the pupils' needs and to offer a variety of support activities. The mentor would:

- review performance across all subjects;
- set personal learning targets;
- support progress towards the targets through discussion, tuition and coaching;
- draw in subject-based support as necessary;
- coordinate support, for example, from parents or friends;
- coordinate a whole-staff approach to the individual pupil to ensure a positive result.

You will need to decide the frequency, staffing requirements and scope of this support. Its exact nature might depend on the skills and strengths of the mentor and could even vary from pupil to pupil. The money might, for example, fund fortnightly meetings for a few pupils or half-termly meetings for more pupils.

#### school examples

- *Ten pupils in Year 8 are supported by 30-minute mentor meetings each week for a term. An experienced teacher who has credibility with the pupils and an interest in study skills supports the sessions. There is a particular emphasis on pupils who are disorganised or who lack independent study skills.*
- *Fifteen pupils are supported by hour-long mentoring sessions every half term for a year. The mentor is a retired teacher, who liaises closely with the head of Year 8 and who gives 3 days each half term to the activity. The sessions are supplemented by specific support identified in the sessions.*
- *A team of three staff puts aside 2 days each half term to meet with 30 pupils on three occasions to set, monitor and evaluate progress against personal learning targets.*

The support is intended to provide attention and encouragement and so draw the pupils back into mainstream learning. It should be focused on the pupils' current work so that pupils can see the immediate value. It might include, for example:

- reviewing current work with the pupil;
- coordinating interim reports from staff teaching the pupil;
- advising on organising homework, revision, files, bag and kit;
- coaching on taking notes, researching, better presentation, communication skills;
- debriefing after tests or examination;
- supporting homework.

Where a pupil has very particular academic learning needs, the support could be extended to include other helpers, such as:

- a revision partner from the sixth form or Year 10;
- a subject teacher to help with a particular weakness;
- a volunteer reader to help improve reading;
- a homework 'buddy' – an older pupil, parent or other adult who supports homework activities.

### Mentoring in the Excellence in Cities initiative

Mentoring is not new. It is part of the Excellence in Cities initiative. The Year 8 programme differs in that it is targeted at academic rather than pastoral support and is much smaller in scale. But if you work in or know an EiC school, you will have valuable experience to draw on.

EiC mentors work across Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, but their brief extends to behavioural and pastoral aspects. Their role is to help pupils to overcome barriers to learning both inside and outside the school. They do not usually work with pupils who are covered by the SENCO or the gifted and talented programme coordinator. Their work includes, for example, the management of mid-year entrants, transfer of information between schools, family liaison and volunteer coordination. Their time is largely devoted to individual pupils and often includes in-class support (see the EiC *Good practice guidelines for learning mentors* and the website [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/excellence/policies/mentors](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/excellence/policies/mentors)).

EiC draws its mentors from a range of backgrounds, such as teaching, counselling, the youth service, careers, social services and human resources staff. The personal qualities listed below are based on the person specification in the *Good practice guidelines*; they may well apply to the Year 8 catch-up initiative. A learning mentor has a proven track record of working with young people and is able to:

- engage constructively with and relate to a wide range of young people of varying abilities and from different ethnic and social backgrounds;
- work effectively with and command the confidence of teaching staff and the senior leadership team in the school;
- see a child's needs in the round;
- identify potential barriers to learning and devise strategies to overcome them;
- engage in joint goal setting with the individual child;
- see the mentoring role as a long-term activity designed to achieve the goals in the action plan, not as a quick fix or troubleshooting role;
- network, counsel, facilitate and develop others.

## Year 9 booster classes

A grant of £4500 for 2001–02 for each secondary school with Year 9 pupils, with a further £4500 for 2002–03, is intended to support booster classes in Year 9 for borderline pupils in English, mathematics and science. The aim is to supplement the revision programme in English, mathematics and science lessons and help pupils to attain a 'baseline of skills' so that they start Key Stage 4 confident and better prepared for GCSE and other courses. The classes allow teachers to target work very efficiently.

In many schools the borderline pupils will be between levels 4 and 5, but in schools where high proportions of pupils already achieve level 5 in the Key Stage 3 tests, booster classes can be targeted at borderline pupils at higher levels.

Many schools already provide booster support for borderline pupils, for example:

- in extra classes and study support before school, in the lunch break, or after school;
- by withdrawal from lessons;
- by providing extra teaching assistance in English, mathematics and science lessons.

### school examples

- *A Year 9 booster programme is provided in the form of a 90-minute 'carousel' for English, mathematics and science after school on one day each week. The programme runs from half-term in the autumn term through to April, when revision in normal lessons starts. Thirty or more out of over 100 pupils in Year 9 attend the carousel on a voluntary basis.*
- *'Drop-in' subject surgeries are offered at lunchtime during the spring term, for help with revision and homework. Pupils are encouraged to bring a friend.*
- *A 'revision school' in each core subject is offered during the Easter holidays. The school focuses on individual and small group tuition. It is preceded by a programme focusing on study skills run by Year 9 form tutors in tutor group time.*
- *Booster classes are provided regularly on three days a week at lunchtime, for the first two weeks of every month, beginning in November. They are based on independent revision using ICT, with older pupils on hand for support.*



The most effective booster activities:

- are short and intensive;
- are enjoyable;
- are focused on 'blocks' to learning;
- have elements of reward associated with them.

Extra booster sessions in out-of-school hours depend on voluntary attendance by pupils, which can be uneven. Arranging classes in short bursts, with gaps in between, and using a different teacher from the normal class teacher, can help to retain pupils' motivation.

additional  
support

### Year 9 booster kit

This comprises three ring binders of materials for the core subjects: English, mathematics and science. Each subject binder includes:

- helpful and practical guidance for Year 9 teachers on identifying pupils, analysing their strengths and weaknesses, planning for revision and preparing for the tests;
- 12 lesson plans focusing on specific Year 9 revision objectives to help pupils achieve level 5 and above, with photocopiable masters for OHTs and handouts;
- a leaflet for pupils giving practical advice to help them address weaknesses and prepare for the tests;
- common to all three subjects, a leaflet for parents, with information about test dates, what is in the tests and advice on supporting their children.

The whole kit is available on the DfES Standards website [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3) and can be downloaded and customised. Translations of the parents' leaflet into the main community languages are also on the website, but cannot be customised.

## *Study support and the Key Stage 3 Strategy*

Study support is voluntary and takes place outside normal school hours. This provides opportunities for adults other than teachers to be involved.

Study support covers a range of voluntary activities, including homework and study clubs, mentoring, summer schools, and community work, as well as sports and outdoor activities, the creative arts, and opportunities to pursue particular interests, such as foreign languages. Involvement in these activities often has a positive effect on pupils who are underachieving.

Study support also has the potential to contribute more broadly to the Key Stage 3 Strategy by providing curriculum enrichment, promoting continuity and progression, and supporting transition. For example, it can:

- provide a place to test out different curriculum approaches to learning, which can then be used in more mainstream activity;
- offer a chance for pupils to lead and direct the activities that they undertake, which can greatly improve the motivation of some 11- to 14-year-olds;
- provide opportunities to consolidate pupils' learning – for example, a Key Stage 4 peer tutor could be involved in Key Stage 3 work, or Key Stage 3 pupils could be involved in supporting Key Stage 2 pupils through transition.

### Study support helping transition

The Bright Sparks programme was set up by the Community Education Development Centre (CEDC). It began life in 1998 as a DfEE-funded pilot and was based in three schools in the Walsall area – a community college and two junior schools. The pilot was extended to other areas of the country in 1999. Bright Sparks clubs focus on easing the transition from primary to secondary schools by involving Year 6 and Year 7 pupils in a variety of structured learning activities during twilight study-support time. The clubs aim to increase pupils' confidence and to offer new opportunities for extended learning and skills development in a range of subjects.

An evaluation of the programmes identified the social, educational and personal benefits to the pupils involved, and the benefits of teachers working cooperatively across phases. There is also considerable opportunity for staff development at different levels.

CEDC has produced a guide to setting up Bright Sparks programmes, which is available free from Prolog, tel: 0845 602 2260, quoting ISBN 0 947607 67 6; it can also be downloaded from the DfES Standards website [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/studysupport/res/publications](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/studysupport/res/publications).

Government funding for study support is available for some schools through schemes such as Pupil Learning Credits and Playing for Success.

More information about study support can be obtained from the study support team at the DfES (tel: 020 7925 5256).



### A management or steering group

The Ofsted evaluation of the Key Stage 3 pilot found that:

*'Where management was good, this was based on clear leadership from the key heads of department, the active participation of a member of the senior management team, and a structure for informing and involving other staff.'*

The most successful pilot schools identified a strategy management or steering group, and a member of the senior leadership team to chair it and coordinate its work. A group like this gives status to the Strategy, and collective effort ensures that implementation focuses firmly on improving teaching and learning, is embedded into systems and structures that are already in place, and is consistent and manageable across the school. Informal arrangements, left in the hands of individual teachers, can place too great a burden on them.

school  
example

*In one pilot school, the strategy steering group comprises:*

*the school's Key Stage 3 strategy manager  
the heads of English, mathematics, science and TLF departments  
the ICT coordinator  
the SENCO  
the gifted and talented programme coordinator  
the literacy and numeracy coordinators  
some enthusiastic teachers*

*Regular but brief meetings are held to pursue action plans and review progress. Other heads of departments get progress reports at their usual meetings, since many Key Stage 3 issues are cross-curricular in nature and have links to other initiatives.*

### Remit of the strategy management group

The Key Stage 3 strategy management group has three main functions.

- 1 **To coordinate communications** and keep other staff informed about the Strategy. Sometimes this is through a regular newsletter, sometimes a bulletin board is used, and some schools use their own website. For example, the group might:
  - ensure that the school's senior leadership team is fully informed;
  - promote the importance of the Strategy with staff, governors, parents and pupils;
  - make sure that all staff are clear about the timetable of events, especially training dates;
  - help to disseminate good news and practice;
  - help to publicise the main findings of evaluations of the Strategy, such as reports from Ofsted.
- 2 **To coordinate Key Stage 3 action planning, including plans for professional development.** For example, the group might:
  - integrate departmental action plans for Key Stage 3 with whole-school or cross-curricular actions on Key Stage 3, making sure that they focus on raising standards and improving teaching and learning, that they form a coherent whole and are located within the school's improvement plan;

- ensure that Key Stage 3 developments and issues are considered when plans are made for the school's five annual INSET days;
- plan and monitor the expenditure of the Standards Fund for Key Stage 3, and extra grants such as the Year 9 booster funding, integrating them where possible with other funding that is focused partly on Key Stage 3, such as Excellence in Cities;
- establish principles and criteria for the release of staff for training so that the school does not have too many teachers absent on the same day;
- keep track of staff attendance at Strategy training, particularly at the opt-in sessions in English, science, ICT and TLF;
- ensure that opportunities exist in each department to cascade training to other teachers;
- make sure that all new staff are up to speed about the Strategy when they start in September, particularly teachers of science and ICT.

**3 To consider issues arising from the Key Stage 3 Strategy and make recommendations.** During the first year of the Strategy, management groups have typically discussed:

- how best to use information from primary schools;
- how best to identify pupils for and organise Year 7 catch-up programmes;
- what roles special educational needs staff and teaching assistants might play in supporting the Strategy;
- the overall needs for staff development arising from the Strategy and how best to meet them across the school, including how to disseminate ideas gained on training;
- which teachers take priority for Strategy training when only a limited amount of supply cover is available;
- how to monitor implementation of the Strategy and follow up monitoring outcomes;
- the organisation, running and follow-up of the literacy and numeracy INSET days;
- how best to coordinate action on Key Stage 3 in different subject departments.

### *The role of the Key Stage 3 strategy manager*

The strategy manager has to be an effective leader and manager to ensure that the Strategy is implemented effectively and that the positive steps made by individual teachers and departments are secured and embedded in the practice of the school.

The strategy manager will be identified with the Strategy as a whole, and there will be occasions when he or she will be used as a sounding board for staff, particularly when things go well or go badly. It is important to maintain confidence and positive thinking on all these occasions. As new strands are introduced, staff will weigh up the challenges that face them. Change does, after all, require time and effort before the benefits arrive. Not everyone will be pleased at the prospect. People need time to adjust, express views and accommodate the initiative. Some will need more encouragement and support. But once things have started moving among most staff, it is the strategy manager's job to persuade the rest. This is the time to seek the support of the headteacher and the school's strategy management group to plan how any issues may be resolved.

The strategy manager's role has a strategic element and a coordinating element. For example, as chair of the management group, the strategy manager can encourage some long-term thinking about progress towards the target dates of 2004 and 2007, as well as



priorities for the coming year. As coordinator of communications about the Strategy, the strategy manager will represent the school at LEA briefings and network meetings for school strategy managers, and disseminate information from them.

Three key aspects of the strategy manager's role are:

**1 To coordinate auditing, planning and monitoring** in relation to the Strategy.

For example, the strategy manager might:

- involve all subject leaders in reviewing judgements about standards in the context of the whole curriculum;
- support each subject audit by observing one or two lessons and looking at a sample of pupils' work;
- ensure that each department's action plan is manageable and focused on a few, achievable priorities that will have the greatest impact on teaching and learning;
- ensure that resources are delegated to subject leaders;
- ensure that the school has a clear policy for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy, including observing teaching, and that subject leaders are enabled through training and allocation of time to carry it out;
- ensure that the outcomes of monitoring are followed up.

**2 To coordinate curriculum developments in Key Stage 3.** For example, the strategy manager might:

- with the head of Year 7, secure arrangements for the transfer and use by all departments of Key Stage 2 curriculum and attainment data;
- support subject leaders by ensuring that pupil performance data is used effectively;
- ensure that subject leaders lead their departments in regular discussion of the teaching of the subject in Key Stage 3 and the sharing of effective practice;
- involve the whole team of subject leaders in the consistent development of cross-curricular aspects of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, initially focusing on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, then assessment for learning and the use of ICT in subjects.

**3 To coordinate the school-based consultancy.** For example, the strategy manager might, in partnership with subject leaders, agree with consultants:

- a protocol for consultants' work in the school, including the feedback to be given on the visits made to the school;
- the balance of time that the consultant should spend in class coaching teachers, in meetings and in leading training;
- the priorities for support, and a timetable for when the support should be given;
- the way in which training will be disseminated and cascaded to other staff.



## *Subject leaders*

All subject leaders need to play a significant role in implementing the Strategy. Broadly, these responsibilities are:

- to identify strengths and areas for development in the subject;
- to lead improvements and support implementation of the Strategy.

### **1 Identifying strengths and areas for development** will involve:

- leading an audit to evaluate the standards of pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching in the subject;
- identifying targets to be achieved and an outline action plan for achieving them;
- working with staff in the department to identify their professional development needs in relation to the Strategy.

The audit of standards and the quality of teaching should be based on the Strategy's audit guide and criteria in the teaching Frameworks. The purpose of the audit is to identify:

- what (if any) changes are needed to the department's work in order to raise standards;
- which teachers could benefit most from the training offered through the Strategy.

Action points are then needed for incorporation in departmental and whole-school improvement plans to make sure that the identified changes are tackled in order of priority, at a pace that is manageable with the resources available, and in a way that ensures that the changes can be sustained.

### **2 Leading improvements and supporting implementation of the Strategy**

will involve:

- providing curriculum leadership and assuring the quality of the curriculum;
- leading and disseminating Strategy training and supporting teachers;
- monitoring implementation.

A major responsibility of the subject leader is to inspire and enthuse colleagues so that all staff teaching the subject regularly discuss how to teach certain topics or particular groups of pupils, and try out new approaches to teaching and learning. Such discussions help to assure the quality of the curriculum by developing teamwork, common understanding and consistent approaches. They can lead to refinements of a scheme of work to embed successful practice and the preparation of teaching materials that all teachers of the subject can use.

The subject leader must also be aware of the quality of teaching among staff in the department and the teaching styles and methods they are using, and advise and support teachers accordingly. In a thriving department, the subject leader occasionally observes lessons in the subject taught by other members of staff. In turn, they are given an opportunity to observe the subject leader teaching and to see each other at work.

A further part of the role is to review regularly with departmental staff the written work of pupils in different classes in order to monitor the progress of each class and to check that marking and other assessments are being carried out satisfactorily. These observations are best when they are followed up with feedback and collective discussion, and can be of particular help to newly qualified and non-specialist teachers.



### Securing improvement at Key Stage 3: the role of subject leaders

This publication is available for strategy managers and subject leaders about their roles. The booklet helps to identify strengths and areas for professional development, and links to the publication *Leading from the middle*, from the National College for School Leadership. The booklet supports two half-day training sessions for strategy managers, giving practical advice about enhancing the skills of subject leaders in four areas:

- judging the standards of pupils' achievement;
- identifying targets for improvement and developing and leading strategies to achieve these targets;
- evaluating and supporting improvement in the quality of teaching;
- assuring the quality of the curriculum by reviewing, planning, writing and resourcing it to ensure optimum progression.

### *The role of the literacy and numeracy coordinators*

Besides subject developments, the Strategy promotes literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. The cross-curricular work involves all staff, and its management is a key responsibility of senior leadership teams. The success of the Key Stage 3 Strategy hinges on it, since raising standards in literacy and numeracy helps to raise standards in all subjects, not just in English and mathematics.

Many schools have identified a literacy coordinator – usually a teacher from a subject other than English in order to stress the cross-curricular importance of literacy. For numeracy, an experienced teacher in the mathematics department usually takes the lead. In some cases, these teachers lead the overall coordination of the Year 7 catch-up programmes as well.

### *The role of the SENCO*

The SENCO is uniquely placed to support the Strategy. It is not simply that the SENCO is skilled in dealing with pupils with special educational needs, but he or she will have expertise in cross-curricular support. Here is one person in school who will have a good view of classroom practice, and who will understand the challenges of consolidating literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.

It is likely that a SENCO will already advise departments about the best way to support pupils with special educational needs, and monitor the pupils' progress and the effectiveness of their classroom support. Some of the things that SENCOs have been asked to do as the Strategy has unfolded have been:

- to be part of the school's strategy management team;
- to brief SEN assistants and other support staff about the Strategy and its implications;
- to contribute to a subject department's audit of provision for special educational needs;
- to advise teaching assistants who are supporting groups of Year 7 pupils using the *Literacy Progress Units* and the *Springboard 7* materials for mathematics;
- to ensure that individual education plans (IEPs) focus on English and mathematics Framework key objectives wherever possible, to help match teaching with support.

### *The role of the gifted and talented programme coordinator*

The role of the gifted and talented programme coordinator complements the role of the SENCO. He or she will already advise departments about the best way to identify, challenge and support gifted and talented pupils and will be monitoring the pupils' progress. In relation to the Key Stage 3 Strategy, the coordinator is likely to be asked:

- to be part of the school's strategy management group;
- to ensure that the school's policy on gifted and talented education and the Key Stage 3 Strategy cohere and complement each other;
- to support the development of teaching and learning programmes and complementary study support to meet the identified needs of gifted and talented pupils;
- to help identify staff development needs in relation to gifted and talented education and to develop provision to meet those needs.

### *The role of the librarian*

The librarian also has important contributions to make to the Key Stage 3 Strategy, such as:

- reviewing library stock and software to support the teaching Frameworks;
- offering practical or management support for cross-curricular initiatives prompted by the Strategy, such as reading groups, spelling logs, statistical enquiries;
- helping with whole-school training, for example, on reading;
- teaching and supporting the research and study strand of the English Framework and the literacy progress unit on information retrieval;
- helping to monitor reading patterns and private reading targets for particular groups of pupils;
- supporting searches for information, for example, on CD-ROM or the Internet;
- promoting the use of the library in all subject teaching.



The work in English and mathematics has focused mainly on Year 7 in the first year of the Strategy. It will soon be time to review the first year, to see what can be learned from it and to extend developments into Years 8 and 9. Science and ICT departments, and the departments involved in TLF, will be establishing what they too might need to do to raise standards and improve teaching and learning.

The Strategy's subject audit, with a separate version for special schools, can be found on the Standards website: [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3).

With its focus on standards of pupils' attainment, planning, teaching and assessment, the audit guide helps a department to:

- review its work, identify priorities for development, and plan action over the next few terms;
- decide which training opportunities would be of most benefit, which staff should attend, and how to disseminate information and ideas from the training to other colleagues;
- determine how to use any in-school support from a Key Stage 3 consultant.

The audit guide is for any subject. It is designed to help a department to carry out an effective review without spending too long on it. The resulting action points show what the department will concentrate on as it implements and monitors the Strategy. Together, the audit and action points ought to give both senior leadership teams and departmental staff a clear view of where work is going well and where action needs to be focused. Omitting the audit, or not doing it well, can lead to extra work or unnecessary training.

The audit can be used at any time of the year to fit into the school's development cycle. In many schools, a member of the senior leadership team and the relevant subject leader lead the audit, involving members of the department in discussions and contributing to gathering evidence.

Collecting the views of departmental staff is relatively easy to achieve in one or two departmental meetings. The best audits go beyond impressions and draw on first-hand evidence. Gathering first-hand evidence, especially lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, usually needs more careful planning and to be spread over a few weeks. It makes sense to use information from lessons that have already been observed as part of the school's normal routines, including performance management, sometimes supplemented by observation of a further small sample of lessons across Key Stage 3.

You can if you wish invite your local consultant to take part in a subject audit, or help to refine it, and to feed back evaluative comments. This gives you a more thorough analysis and helps to make the consultant's in-school work better informed.

For the second year of the Strategy, try to make sure that all departments include follow-up to the cross-curricular INSET days on literacy and numeracy in their plans, alongside the actions that are specific to their subjects. They should also incorporate their use of any days of consultant support that the department has been allocated. For example, you may want your consultant to help with short-term planning in science or ICT in the autumn term.



### Monitoring

The most effective monitoring is from the vantage point of pupils – how close they are to achieving the curricular targets set for them, or whether expectations of them in different subjects are consistent. Of course, monitoring is only useful if it is followed up when weaknesses are found and if the best practice is disseminated. The outcomes of monitoring will therefore need to be considered by the school's Key Stage 3 management group.

The monitoring programme is likely to be a partnership between senior staff, subject leaders and teachers, and to be based on the monitoring programme that a school already has in place, including performance management. It will probably include:

- periodic sampling of pupils' work;
- talking to pupils about their perceptions, for example, whether the work is too easy, too hard or about right, whether marking is helpful or not helpful, and why;
- scrutinising teachers' planning;
- observing teaching;
- talking to teachers about their work;
- attending departmental meetings.

school  
examples

- *In a pilot school where staff had agreed to pursue a particular marking policy, subject leaders monitored this briefly each month by looking at the books of three very different pupils in each year.*
- *In another pilot school, a head of department asked staff to introduce a starter activity. She then observed lesson openings in a range of classes and offered teachers constructive feedback. After a month, the head of department looked at the books of one or two pupils in each class to judge the impact of the starter activity.*

### What does a Key Stage 3 Strategy lesson look like?

Not everyone attends the Strategy's training or has a chance to see the Strategy's videos of lessons. A typical lesson in a core subject is described overleaf to help those who might be monitoring to know what to look out for. Of course, not all lessons will look like this but many of the principles will often apply to lessons in other subjects.

## A typical lesson

Pupils come into the classroom and there's **something to do right away**. There's a puzzle on the board, a challenge on the desk, something to think about. Right away, the teacher has the attention of the class. The lesson is off to a flying start.

The first ten minutes are spent on a brisk mini-activity to catch the imagination. This is the **starter activity**. In English, pupils might think of ten alternatives to the words 'said', 'asked' or 'exclaimed' to use when they write a dialogue; in mathematics, they might work out and explain the pattern in a sequence of numbers written on the board; in science, they might play a loop card game on cells and cell functions. Very often, this starter will be picked up later, in the main part of the lesson. But even ten minutes into the lesson, the pupils already feel as though they've learned something.

The main part of the lesson is introduced by the teacher **telling the pupils what they are going to learn**, rather than what they are going to do. They won't just be 'carrying out experiments'. They will focus on the learning: 'Today we're going to look into the factors that affect how quickly enzymes work', or '... learn how to substitute an integer into a simple formula', or '... consider how the writer builds suspense'. Lessons have focus. The objectives are drawn from the teaching Frameworks or the QCA schemes of work. If you asked some pupils coming out of a lesson what they had learned, they could tell you.

Another feature is the **active teaching**. For example, the teacher will demonstrate on the board how to compose a particular type of writing, and the pupils will be drawn in to contribute. Homework from the previous day may play a part. Pupils are looking up, being engaged and thinking. **The teacher is not afraid to be an expert.**

From the pupils' point of view, lessons are **active and engaging**. They are expected to participate. They are frequently asked to stop, think, suggest and explain themselves. They might have a moment to talk to a partner and come up with a suggestion. They might have to work on a problem and hold up answers on individual whiteboards.

A key feature is asking pupils to explain their thinking or working out: 'You're right. Tell the class how you worked it out.' Pupils sometimes come to the front of the class to do so. There is an **emphasis on explaining good ways of working, showing how good learners operate, suggesting how the same method can be used in other subjects.**

The teacher moves quickly to get the pupils to **apply what they've learned**, in group work or paired work, or an individual exercise. This part of the lesson may last around 15 to 20 minutes. In the past, teachers might have waited for pupils who get 'stuck' to put their hands up. Now, they are more likely to sit with one group for several minutes and guide them through the work, helping them to apply new skills.

**Any teaching assistant in the classroom is well prepared, has helped the teacher to plan the lesson and is familiar with their special role.** They may have attended training about it. The assistant may be sitting with a group of pupils to help them keep up with the work, or making notes for the teacher on how pupils are setting about a task.

The lesson closes with a **plenary session** in which the teacher draws out the key points. Pupils do most of the work. They are encouraged to explain what they've learned and how it can be used in the future, perhaps in other lessons. Regular homework helps individuals to consolidate what they have learned in the lesson or to prepare for the next one.

## *The plenary*

Lesson starters are usually very successful; pupils are fresh, and they and teachers enjoy the brisk activity. The final plenary of a lesson tends to be the least successful. Sometimes teachers have not planned it sufficiently thoroughly or don't allow enough time for it. Sometimes the teacher does all the work instead of making sure that the pupils are as active in this part of the lesson as they are in the starter, perhaps summing up without giving the pupils an opportunity to articulate what they have learned.

The final plenary is an opportunity to round off and summarise the lesson, to underline what has been accomplished. It helps pupils to focus on the most important rather than the most recent points, what they have learned and the progress they have made. It should aim to refocus pupils on the objectives that have featured in the lesson. It is also a time to look back and look forward, and to relate work in the lesson to other work.

Plenaries are also useful part way through a lesson: staging posts when the teacher draws the class together, crystallises understanding and directs the class to the next phase of work.

Plenaries will vary in length, two minutes on one day, 20 minutes on another, depending on the style and format of what the teacher has planned. To provide the necessary variety, they can be used to:

- draw together what has been learned, to highlight the most important rather than the most recent points, to summarise key facts, ideas and vocabulary, and stress what needs to be remembered;
- generalise from examples generated earlier in the lesson;
- go through an exercise, question pupils and rectify any remaining misunderstandings;
- make links to other work and what the class will go on to do next;
- highlight the progress pupils have made and remind them about their personal targets;
- set homework to extend or consolidate class work and prepare for future lessons.

In drawing the lesson together, the vital part is helping pupils to think about what they may have learned by getting them to work briefly on or to summarise the ideas in the lesson. There are many different ways to do this but the essential common feature is that pupils create their own summaries. The teacher will need to lead discussion of the pupils' contributions but a summary by the teacher alone rarely helps active learning.



The panel below illustrates some suggestions to make to staff who want to involve pupils actively in the final plenary.

### Suggestions for involving pupils in plenaries

Give a **hint at the start of the lesson** of how the plenary will go. For example:

- tell two pupils at the start of the lesson that they will be responsible for reporting back at the end of the lesson on what was important about it – other pupils can then say whether they agree or disagree and why;
- put the questions you will ask in the plenary on the board at the start of the lesson.

In the plenary, ask **individuals** to:

- write down three facts they have learned in the lesson, then share these with a partner and add to the list;
- write a sentence that summarises the lesson, then share with a partner;
- write key words and definitions in a subject dictionary;
- use writing or talking frames designed for the plenary, such as 'What I found difficult or easy was ...', 'The most important part was ...', 'I need to improve on ...'.

Ask pupils in **pairs or small groups** to:

- make sets of cards for the technical vocabulary used in a lessons, putting words on one set and definitions on another, then use the cards to play Pelmanism;
- compose two sentences that describe the main ideas of the lesson;
- identify three ways in which ideas in the lesson might be used in other subjects;
- design one page for a PowerPoint presentation, with a heading and three bullet points summarising an aspect of the lesson.

Occasionally use **drama strategies**. For example:

- put a pupil in a 'hot seat' as an expert or character, and invite the rest of the class to ask questions;
- ask a group of four pupils to create a 'still frame' to show a key idea from the lesson.

For **homework**, ask pupils to:

- prepare a quiz on the theme of the lesson to try out on the rest of the class;
- write a description of the lesson, what they most liked about it (and least), what they found easiest about it, and what was most difficult;
- design an exercise for a textbook to follow up work done in the lesson;
- design a web page to help remember one aspect of the lesson – when you review the homework, ask why the pupils thought the aspect was important.

### *Attending the Strategy's training*

Teachers have generally responded very positively to their training in the first year of the Strategy and have benefited from it, in spite of the difficulties that some schools had in releasing them to attend. There has already been an impact on teaching in English and mathematics departments, notably through the use of a three-part structure for lessons and in setting lesson objectives. Expectations are beginning to be raised, with staff pitching work at a higher level and covering material at a faster pace.

As the training programmes in English and mathematics unfold and extend to science, TLF and ICT, LEAs continue to have a significant role to play in providing training at times that will suit their schools. Your LEA should:

- give you early information about the dates of local training and target groups of teachers so that you can plan how best to release teachers;
- coordinate local training events so that you don't have teachers from different subject departments absent on the same day;
- use opportunities to repeat training in out-of-school hours, giving staff a degree of choice about when to attend.

There are sometimes extreme cases – for example, when there are acute staffing problems in a department – that make it unreasonable to expect teachers to attend any out-of-school training. In this case, the first priority must be to establish a stable curriculum and to support teachers' short-term planning through consultants' visits.

### *Getting the best out of your consultants*

Teachers will meet the LEA's Key Stage 3 consultants in training and many will have the opportunity to work with them in school. Consultants are a valuable resource. They bring enthusiasm and credibility and are up-to-date with Strategy development. They also bring fresh expertise into the school and move staff beyond just training. Importantly, they help to drive home the training into the classroom.

It makes sense to think very carefully at the outset how best to use consultants' time in school. Don't book them for services until you have established your priorities, specific targets and needs. Get your consultants to do the things you can't do – use internal expertise for the other things. Above all, help to get consultants into classrooms where they can influence and develop actual practice.

There are many ways to use consultants. For example, consultants can:

- contribute to a subject audit, perhaps by sampling pupils' work or observing teaching;
- help to analyse the audit, develop an action plan and negotiate their role in it;
- support a group of teachers revising their scheme of work;
- co-plan and co-teach lessons with individual teachers;
- coach teachers by observing specific features of lessons and giving developmental feedback;
- offer demonstration lessons or parts of lessons, such as a starter, working intensively with one group, running a final plenary;
- spend consultancy time with a subject leader, librarian or Key Stage 3 management group to assist planning;



- attend and advise departmental meetings;
- give telephone support.

### *Maximising the support of teaching assistants*

Teaching assistants who support catch-up programmes and other aspects of the Strategy will do a better job if they have some preliminary training to familiarise them with the materials and their role in teaching them. Here are some possible topics for training of this kind:

- how and when to intervene when pupils are struggling;
- how to structure questions to provide prompts for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs;
- how to use closed and open questions;
- how to help pupils to use specific subject vocabulary;
- how to help pupils with common errors and misunderstandings;
- the range of resources that can support pupils when they answer questions;
- when and how pupils should use resources such as a dictionary or a calculator.

### *Following up the literacy and numeracy INSET days*

Most schools seem to have welcomed the cross-curricular training and have found that staff were willing to have a go at what was suggested. In the second year of the Strategy, the key ideas from the cross-curricular training need to be made to stick and some light-touch monitoring will be necessary to make sure that this is happening.

The best chance of success is to ask three things:

- Are all departments acting on a small number of priorities that are easy to remember and highly relevant to the school as a whole?
- Are all departments incorporating the agreed priority literacy and numeracy objectives into their teaching plans?
- Is every member of staff trying out specific actions, such as introducing a new teaching technique recommended in the literacy and numeracy INSET days?

### *Embedding the English and mathematics strands*

Real and long-lasting change is best achieved if people want to make the changes. The Strategy hopes to make long-term and substantial improvements, but because senior leadership teams and their staff see them as valuable and want to make them, not because they are asked to make them.

The English and mathematics training has provided a good start. Teachers' evaluations of its usefulness have generally been very positive across the country as a whole. The challenge now is to translate the training into practice back in school.

What helps to carry a school beyond the first phase of the Strategy? Here are some suggestions.

- **Encourage and praise.** There will always be people who are inspired by new ideas – committed teachers who take the ideas and make them work. They adopt them and adapt them, and make them their own. More than that, they push out the boundaries, find new and better ways to do things. But not all teachers find it easy to do this. Most go back from their training and make a sincere effort to try out what has been suggested, but not all of them sustain it. They run across problems, perhaps, and get put off. They may lack resources, encouragement or support. Senior leadership teams in schools, and particularly Key Stage 3 strategy managers, have to provide that support, with the help of their LEAs consultants.



- **Target and tailor support.** Not all teachers need the same amount of support. Some are already excellent teachers; some will be willing to adjust to new ways of working but need more time; some may lack confidence in their own ability and need encouragement and praise; some may be working in very challenging environments and need practical help and resources; some may be teaching outside their own specialism and need training in new subject knowledge and opportunities to study. There may also be those who are working in departments without a full complement of teachers; for them, the direct help of a consultant in their own classroom may be what is needed. The steps that each teacher is asked to make must be relevant to their circumstances and manageable for the teacher.
- **Persuade everyone.** Some teachers may be more reluctant to change. Perhaps they feel that they are already doing what is required and cannot see the difference between this and what you are asking. Or they may be committed to a different pedagogy. It's not enough any more to improvise lessons or build on purely personal expectations. If every mainstream school converted its level 4 entrants to level 5 over three years, the 2004 national targets for Key Stage 3 would be met. Surely this is achievable? Make sure that staff know your expectations and praise the smallest steps forward.
- **Create a critical mass.** Once a few teachers in each department have the idea, the next step is to create a critical mass of support in each department, a gathering sense of commitment, a climate in which it becomes rewarding to be part of the action. People gravitate to things that work.
- **Consolidate the practice.** Make sure that teachers have new practice under their belts before they move on to the next horizon. Making the catch-up programmes work, for example, takes time. It may take a few mistakes before a teacher gets it right. But help is available. Consultants can share their expertise and bring examples that have worked particularly well in other schools – a major part of their classroom-based work is to coach teachers and help them to experience success in new teaching approaches. Teaching assistants can contribute to planning and support the teaching of lessons. Technicians can help to prepare resources.



- **Spread the practice.** How does the best practice spread in your school, both within a department and across departments? Most teachers don't attend the Strategy's training but are dependent on an internal cascade. And the cascade is only as good as the last person to deliver it. Consultants can help schools to apply what they get in training, to reach beyond heads of department and regular attendees. Senior leaders and the Key Stage 3 strategy manager can also create opportunities for staff to exchange ideas and describe what is working well, both in informal ways and in more formal meetings. One of the most persuasive influences is the chance to observe a lesson taught by a good practitioner.
- **Extend the practice.** The training provides specific examples of lessons, perhaps a way of helping pupils to plan a scientific investigation, a context for some ICT work with PowerPoint, a geography lesson following up fieldwork. Teachers often try out the sample lessons when they are back in school. But what happens when the examples run out? Teachers have to be able to generalise from examples and apply the ideas afresh in their own activities. Discussion with other teachers is an enormous help in this respect.
- **Systematise the practice.** To last, the Strategy has to be embedded in the systems that shape the curriculum and built into school's management systems: into performance management, into departmental reviews of schemes of work and lesson plans, into assessment policies and practices, so that it is developed, monitored, evaluated and improved as part of the everyday life of the school.
- **Own the practice.** For the Strategy to work, staff at every level need to have a sense of ownership. The Strategy has to be part of their tacit knowledge, their skill set, not just a set of behaviours. The aim is thoughtful, quality practice; the exercise of professional skill; knowledgeable interaction. Without ownership, the Strategy will not be a strategy at all. To achieve ownership, staff have to understand the recommended practices, the thinking behind them, and the reasons why they work. They must feel that they own it. Only then will the practices become a part of that deep professional understanding that underpins everyday teaching.



This guide tries to give advice based on experiences of the first year of the Strategy. It also looks ahead to what might be needed to embed the Strategy in the everyday life of the school. Not all the advice will be applicable to your school. Almost certainly, you will already have some systems in place to get you off to a good start with implementation. But as a final checklist, here is a summary.

- Do you have an overall management or steering group so that the implementation of the Strategy is not over-reliant on individual members of staff?
- Is the use of the Standards Fund for Key Stage 3 identified clearly and properly targeted on the Strategy's priorities?
- Have all teachers of core subjects in Year 7 had a chance to view a good primary school lesson in their subject, with priority given to science?
- Do you have good systems in place to monitor pupils' progress and sample the quality of their work during Key Stage 3 to help judge the impact of the Strategy over time?
- Are you aiming to shift the focus in the second year of the English and mathematics strands to the curriculum in Years 8 and 9? Have you encouraged teachers in science and ICT departments to think of Years 7, 8 and 9 together? Do you have the time you need for teaching science and ICT in place for September 2002?
- Are there things you could do to strengthen the teaching of plenary sessions to help pupils crystallise what they have learned?
- Have you provided good follow-up to the days on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum? Are you aware of the extent to which literacy and numeracy teaching objectives are now evident in lessons in other subjects?
- Do you have effective arrangements in place for your summer school and Year 7 catch-up programmes? Are there ways you could make better use of data from primary schools to help focus on pupils' weaknesses? Do teachers select and use those parts of the catch-up materials that will help to remedy the weaknesses? Do teaching assistants support these programmes and have they had adequate training to do so?
- Do you need to give greater attention across the curriculum to identifying, communicating and pursuing curricular targets for individuals and groups of pupils?
- Do you think short-term and long-term? What will maximise the impact of the Strategy now? And what will be needed now and in the longer term to embed the Strategy and make it part of the everyday life of the school?



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