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The National Strategies
Primary

Leading improvement through the challenges and opportunities in school and across schools

department for
children, schools and families

Leading improvement through the challenges and opportunities in school and across schools

First published in 2010
Ref: 00012-2010BKT-EN

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BELMONT PRESS 01-2010

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Section 1: Introduction

Leading Improvement through the challenges and opportunities in school and across schools

This booklet is the fifth in a series of professional development materials entitled 'Leading Improvement'. It is intended to inform ongoing discussions between the National Strategies, local authorities, School Improvement Partners (SIPS) and headteachers which focus on the leadership of improvement at national, local and school level.

The advances made by primary schools during the past ten years in pupil progress, attainment and narrowing gaps have been significant. During the next three years there will be a further shift towards a self-sustaining system as groups of schools take on the responsibility for leading improvement locally – and also the resource to make it happen. There will be a reduction in centrally-led school improvement and by April 2011, when the National Strategies cease, schools will be leading improvement by systematically helping each other.

Developing the models needed to make this happen presents a fantastic opportunity to build local capacity. It also creates real challenges. Knowing what approach works best, and in what circumstances, is going to be critically important. Easy access to this knowledge base for school leaders will be essential. We will all need clarity about what elements of current models are effective and what, in a locally driven world, may be less effective and require adaptation.

And of course the accountability system is changing as well with the new Ofsted framework, the report card for schools and the pupil and parent guarantees.

In the midst of these changes, there are also the opportunities created for all schools by the Rose Independent review of the National Curriculum scheduled to be taught from September 2011. These will have implications for all schools.

The Leading Improvement programme in 2010

There will be two stages to the 'Leading Improvement' programme' in 2010 and this booklet forms the first. Both are aimed at helping headteachers and SIPs to address the challenges outlined above during 2010. The materials distil key knowledge and evidence gained nationally in recent years through extensive evaluation of school and pedagogic improvement work. The aim is to make this evidence accessible and familiar to headteachers so that they can identify and address the specific challenges faced by their schools.

This first booklet focuses on whole-school leadership of improvement for headteachers and SIPs. A guide to each section is provided overleaf.

The second set of materials, due later in 2010, will take this work a stage further. It will bring together the best evidence we have to help schools to make the right decisions about the pedagogic approaches and interventions which have the best impact for specific groups of pupils in particular areas of the school or curriculum. It will introduce web-based guides to inform these questions and, importantly, it will place all this in the context of schools planning for the new Primary Curriculum in 2011.

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What this booklet does

This booklet focuses on the methods of managing learning across a school which have proved successful, transferable and which have secured the sustained improvements in schools in recent years. As such they are core school improvement knowledge. This booklet will help you to assess how your school measures up against two of the management practices which comprise the 'core elements' of successful improvement practice. It will examine how schools working with different school improvement priorities have tackled these. And it sets out some of the key resources they and other schools have used to make the difference they need to. These resources are elements of the National Strategies core offer.

National identification of school improvement priorities

Schools are at many different stages of development and they have different improvement priorities as a result. They also have different roles to play locally in the world where schools are increasingly and systematically helping each other to improve.

The focus for these 'Leading Improvement' discussions is likely to be particularly fruitful where the discussions are shared between headteachers who face similar improvement priorities – or who have recently tackled them successfully. To help schools to prioritise and to work in this way the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has identified five groups of schools for which data suggests that they share similar improvement priorities. They are schools who need to:

- raise attainment in both English and mathematics to be well above 55%
- make further gains on an improving profile
- maximise the progress of pupils in English and mathematics
- improve consistency in performance
- move from being good to being 'great'
- help impact on improvement locally – as an outstanding school.

These segments are explored in more detail in Section 4. Until 2011, local resources such as leading teachers (LTs), and School Improvement programme consultancy will be centrally funded to support schools with the first three priorities. SIP time, activity and training will also be customised in order to help schools manage a focus on their overall school improvement priority. Beyond 2011 it will be for groups of schools to use well-evidenced approaches in order to help each other to improve. Well evidenced approaches such as those set out in this booklet will provide a good starting point for this work as schools move forward beyond 2011.

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Section 2: Primary self-evaluation and improvement toolkit

The use of the toolkit

The primary school self-evaluation and improvement toolkit has been developed from the experience gained in working with primary school leadership teams on the Improving Schools Programme (ISP). The toolkit also reflects the materials developed as part of Stronger Management Systems in secondary schools and the 'Golden Thread' approach to ensuring that groups at risk of underperforming do not do so.

Self-evaluation is only useful if it leads to the identification of priorities and related actions for improvement. This toolkit introduces a range of suggested quality standards that are intended to support this process. There are six core elements that make up the complete toolkit and around which the standards are organised. The standard is set out and exemplified to help determine those features that contribute to it and to help leadership teams to determine which aspects within the standard are well established in the school and which require further development. The toolkit has a 4 point scale as part of the self-evaluation and space to record supporting evidence and future actions. The overall aim is that the toolkit will support you in the process of primary school improvement.

School self-evaluation has become a key tool for the leadership and management of primary schools and the completion of the self-evaluation form (SEF) is part of that process. The quality standards have been selected to support you in gathering evidence to help you complete the SEF and there is space to record the linkage between the quality standard within the toolkit and the judgement required for completion of the SEF.

Further information, continuing professional development (CPD) materials and case studies relating to each of the core elements can be found in the *Improving Schools Programme Handbook* ref: 00314-2009BKT-EN and on the National Strategies web area **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** by clicking on the 'Primary' tab and selecting 'Improving Schools Programme'.

The six core elements

The school improvement cycle, which determines the six core elements, underpins the model for school improvement and provides the means by which the school identifies and addresses its priorities and actions which are to impact on children's progress and attainment. The six core elements are:

1. Self-evaluation using the school improvement cycle
2. Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level
3. A single plan or Raising Attainment Plan (RAP)
4. Whole-school systematic CPD
5. An explicit focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching
6. Monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress

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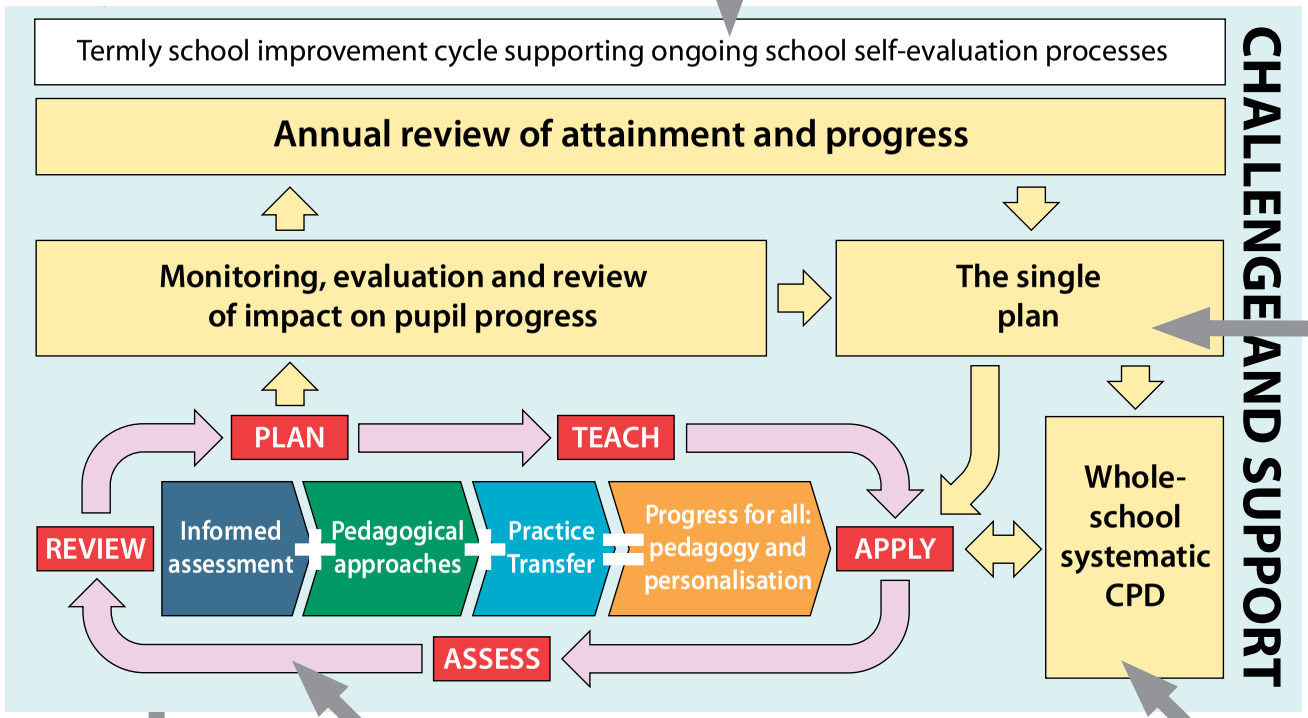
Overview of self-evaluation and improvement quality framework

Self-evaluation using the school improvement cycle

- School self-evaluation processes identify strengths and specific areas for development
- The school uses all available data to set ambitious targets for improvement
- Headteacher and senior leaders have a shared overview of the school's improvement priorities which they share effectively with all stakeholders
- School improvement activity builds capacity to ensure sustainable improvement over time
- Continuous school self-evaluation leads to focused action(s) governed by the needs of the children, families and the community

Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level

- Senior leaders use data and termly tracking information to inform the school's improvement activity
- Pupils' individual end-of-year expectations are set taking account of prior attainment, and national age-related expectations + membership of groups at risk of underperforming, e.g. free school meals (FSM)
- All staff have a shared knowledge and understanding of age-related expectations and good progress across a key stage
- Senior leaders and staff track and monitor individual children's progress towards their end-of-year targets
- Quality First Teaching is informed by termly tracking of individual children's progress
- Class teachers discuss individual progress, attainment and planned next steps with children and their parents/carers



A single plan or Raising Attainment Plan (RAP)

- The single plan focuses the work of the school and external support upon the same school improvement priorities identified through school self-evaluation
- The single plan defines the expected termly outcomes against pupil progress and is informed by all available and relevant data and termly tracking information
- The single plan has clearly defined success criteria and termly milestones which are reviewed and acted upon
- The single plan identifies clear lines of accountability and secure school systems ensure activities are carried out on time and monitored and evaluated effectively
- The single plan creates a sense of urgency for achieving positive impact on learning, progress and attainment

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Whole-school systematic CPD

- Whole-school, planned CPD is directly related to improving quality first teaching
- There is a clear link between schools' priorities for improvement, CPD provision and individual performance management objectives
- Senior leaders ensure adequate time and resources are made available for all staff to practice, apply and learn collaboratively
- Senior leaders monitor and evaluate impact of planned CPD and ensure the capture and transfer of effective practice within school and across schools

An explicit focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching

- Within a broad and rich curriculum, all class teachers make effective use of the Primary Framework to plan and teach sequences of lessons/units of work in literacy and mathematics that meets the needs and interests of their children
- All teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of progression across all core subjects
- All staff have a shared knowledge and understanding of the essential characteristics of effective learning and teaching and make use of a wide range of strategies that impact on children's progress and attainment
- All children have a clear understanding of what they are trying to learn, what they need to do next and can reflect positively on their achievements
- Each child's progress, what they need to do to improve and how they can be supported is shared and discussed with parents/carers each term

Monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress

- The school's planned monitoring and evaluation ensures the school's planned actions lead to sustainable improvements in identified priorities
- Senior leaders use a range of evidence to make judgements about pupil progress and the quality of learning and teaching
- Evaluation of the monitoring outcomes leads to the revision and refinement of actions that are recorded in the school's single plan/RAP
- Outcomes from pupil progress meetings lead to specific actions to improve outcomes for children
- Senior leaders ensure professional accountability for progress and attainment
- Senior leaders discuss and agree the main features that emerge from termly monitoring and evaluation activities and share outcomes and actions with all stakeholders
- Pupil conferencing is used to engage children in their learning and improve provision and outcomes

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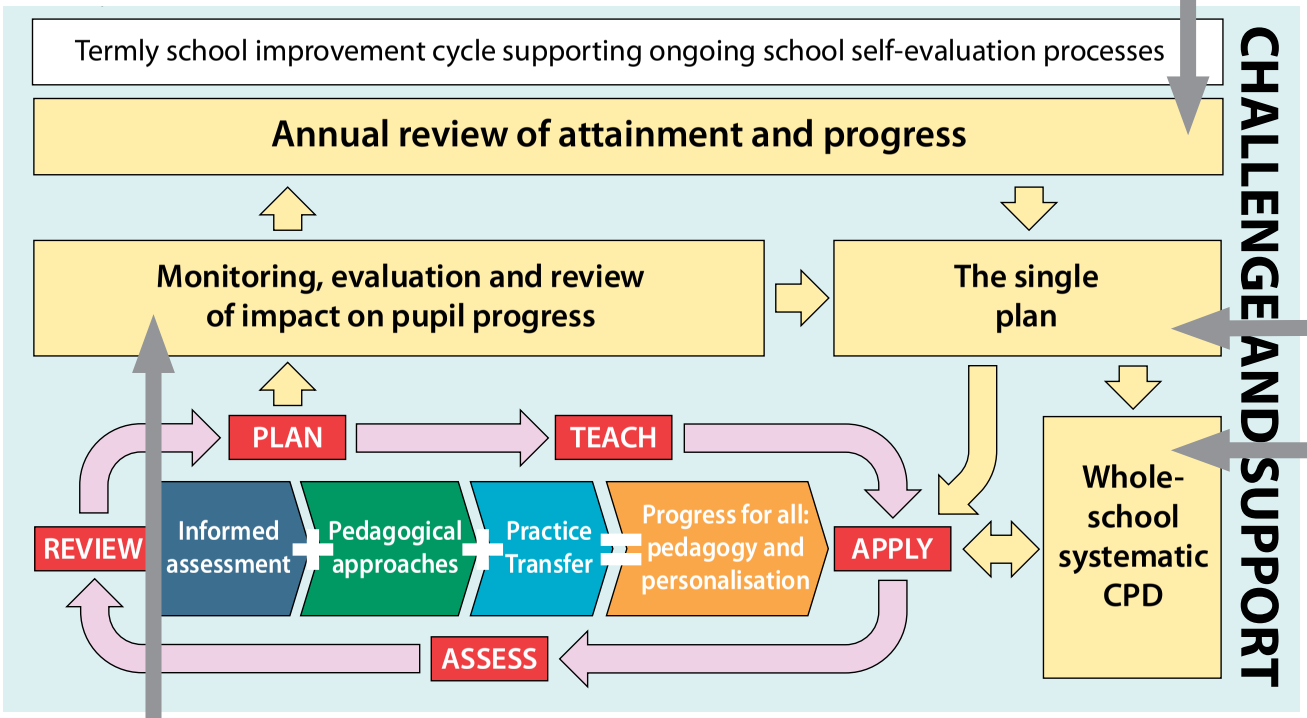
Key questions for discussion

Self-evaluation using the school improvement cycle

- Do the school's self-evaluation processes identify strengths and specific areas for improvement?
- What evidence is there that the headteacher and senior leaders have a shared overview of the school's improvement priorities?

Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level

- Do pupils' individual targets take account of prior attainment and national age-related expectations?
- What evidence is there that quality first teaching is informed by termly tracking of individual children's progress?
- Do senior leaders use data and termly tracking information to inform the school's improvement activity?
- Does the school know where members of underperforming groups are and have high expectations for them?



A single plan or Raising Attainment Plan* (RAP)

- Are termly outcomes of pupil progress identified in the single plan?
- Does the single plan identify clear lines of accountability and ensure that activities are carried out on time?
- Does the single plan create a sense of urgency for achieving improvement?

Whole-school systematic CPD

- Is whole-school planned CPD designed to improve quality first teaching?
- How do senior leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of planned CPD and ensure the effective capture and transfer of practice across the school?

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An explicit focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching

- Do all class teachers make effective use of the Primary Framework to plan and teach sequences of lessons/units of work in literacy and mathematics that meet the needs and interests of children?
- Do children have a clear understanding of what they are trying to learn and what they need to do next?

Monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress

- How does the school's planned monitoring and evaluation help to ensure that planned actions lead to sustainable improvements in performance?
- How do senior leaders ensure professional accountability for progress and attainment?
- Do outcomes from pupil progress meetings lead to specific actions to improve outcomes for children?
- What systems are in place to ensure that key priorities for improvement are agreed by senior leaders?

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Section 3: The role of leadership in school improvement

The fundamental purpose of any school improvement activity is to improve outcomes for children. Self-evaluation should focus specifically on the impact provision makes on these outcomes and should be informed by the views and perceptions of a wide range of stakeholders.

Establishing an effective school improvement cycle as an ongoing, regular and time-limited process to move improvement forward is essential. Schools have found that keeping to a cycle of improvement has supported them to stay on track, working with the key things that will make the difference to outcomes for children. The implementation of the cycle helps to keep the focus on children's progress, giving a framework for improvement.

Effective leadership of learning is an essential element in making a primary school an outstanding school. Some of the key features that best describe effective leadership in successful schools are set out below.

- They have dynamic leaders, who lead from the front, set the tone and establish a 'can do' culture.
- They are passionate about the quality of the classroom experience, about teaching and learning.
- They are highly committed to regular tracking of the progress of pupils and intervening immediately if anyone falls off trajectory.
- They have strong systems for quality assuring the curriculum, teaching and learning and have a tight grip on the progress the pupils make.

The Extra Mile (Primary) Achieving success with pupils from deprived backgrounds DCSF – 00501-2009

The emphasis on the progress that pupils make is reflected in the quality standards set out in the toolkit. In this booklet, two of the six core elements are included. These are:

2. Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level

6. Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress

These two elements are particularly important and evidence from ISP and Ofsted inspections has highlighted these as aspects that still require particular attention in securing improvements in the quality of learning and teaching.

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Core element 2: Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level

Primary school improvement quality standards

1 = Strong feature of the school, with proven impact, that could be replicated and shared with others – how would you articulate this?

2 = Developing feature of the school yet to be fully embedded and still requiring maintenance and monitoring

3 = An aspect in need of some improvement requiring future action(s)

4 = An aspect in need of significant development requiring immediate action(s)

Core element 2: Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level Quality standards		SEF ref	1	2	3	4	**Notes to support self-evaluation** What is the evidence for school's judgement, including staff and community perceptions?	**Notes to support action planning** What specific actions are required? Who is responsible? When?
A	**Senior leaders use data and termly tracking information to inform the school's improvement activity** Senior leaders: • map attainment and progress over time in all core subjects, including the combined attainment measure • identify areas for whole-school development • identify underperforming children • plan and map appropriate intervention(s), including the use of one-to-one tuition • set ambitious but realistic targets for improvement across all year groups for the combined attainment measure and in each core subject.							

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	Core element 2: Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level Quality standards	SEF ref	1	2	3	4	**Notes to support self-evaluation** What is the evidence for school's judgement, including staff and community perceptions?	**Notes to support action planning** What specific actions are required? Who is responsible? When?
B	**Pupils' individual end-of-year expectations are set taking account of prior attainment, and national age-related expectations** Attainment and progress are benchmarked against national data with regard to gender, ethnicity and free school meal (FSM) entitlement with appropriate actions taken to close gaps between underperforming individuals/groups and any in-school variations between subjects.							
C	**All staff have a shared knowledge and understanding of age-related expectations and good progress across a key stage** Class teachers make accurate, periodic teacher assessments in all the core subjects using the assessing pupils' progress (APP) materials and standardised test outcomes, when appropriate. All staff identify children that are falling behind, slow moving or stuck, taking account of prior attainment and baseline assessments, and plan appropriate support to ensure accelerated progress to achieve or exceed national age-related expectations in all the core subjects, including the combined attainment measure.							

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	Core element 2: Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level Quality standards	SEF ref	1	2	3	4	**Notes to support self-evaluation** What is the evidence for school's judgement, including staff and community perceptions?	**Notes to support action planning** What specific actions are required? Who is responsible? When?
D	**Senior leaders and staff track and monitor individual children's progress towards their end-of-year expectations** Each term the quality assured outcomes from the school's tracking system are analysed and acted upon by senior leaders and staff. Leadership enables all staff to take the appropriate action(s) necessary to ensure as many children as possible make good progress and achieve or exceed age-related expectations. Attainment and progress of underperforming children, and subsequent school actions, are reported and discussed at senior leadership team meetings, governor meetings and key stage/phase/year group meetings, as appropriate.							
E	**Quality First Teaching is informed by termly tracking of individual children's progress** Curriculum provision, planning and focused teaching are regularly refined and adjusted by class teachers to meet the specific needs and interests of the whole class, group and individual child to ensure appropriate rates of progress are maintained.							

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Core element 2: Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level Quality standards		SEF ref	1	2	3	4	**Notes to support self-evaluation** What is the evidence for school's judgement, including staff and community perceptions?	**Notes to support action planning** What specific actions are required? Who is responsible? When?
F	**Class teachers discuss individual progress, attainment and planned next steps with children and their parents/carers** At regular consultation meetings, teachers, parents/carers and children discuss current attainment, progress and attitudes to learning and plan possible next steps to support further progress, including the planned use of additional intervention(s), one-to-one tuition and the engagement of wider children's support services for children not making good or expected progress, as appropriate.							

Questions to support whole-school discussion and debate around Core Element 2

- How accurate are the judgements that inform the school's tracking of pupil progress? How does the school know they are accurate?
- Are **all** teachers engaging with the assessing pupils' progress (APP) processes and does this inform the school's pupil tracking system?
- How does the school use pupil tracking to identify children that are making insufficient progress?
- How does the school use pupil tracking to plan and map appropriate interventions for underachieving groups? Which children are making insufficient progress? Are there any underachieving groups, e.g. by year group, gender, FSM entitlement, minority ethnic group?
- Does pupil tracking lead to explicit actions in classrooms that improves teaching and learning? What is the impact of this action on pupil progress and attainment? How does the school know?

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Core element 6: Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress

Primary school improvement quality standards

1 = Strong feature of the school, **with proven impact**, that could be replicated and shared with others – how would you articulate this?

2 = Developing feature of the school yet to be fully embedded and still requiring maintenance and monitoring

3 = An aspect in need of some improvement requiring future action(s)

4 = An aspect in need of significant development requiring immediate action(s)

Core element 6: Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress Quality standards		SEF ref	1	2	3	4	**Notes to support self-evaluation** What is the evidence for school's judgement, including staff and community perceptions?	**Notes to support action planning** What specific actions are required? Who is responsible? When?
A	**The school's planned monitoring and evaluation ensures the school's planned actions lead to sustainable improvements in its identified priorities** This should focus on ensuring: • improvements in outcomes for all children, particularly the accelerated progress of children identified as making slow progress, stuck or falling behind • improvements in the overall quality of learning and teaching to ensure it is at least judged good or better • improvements in the curriculum provision to ensure it meets the specific needs and interests of all learners • improvements in children's attitudes to learning and/or school							

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	Core element 6: Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress Quality standards	SEF ref	1	2	3	4	**Notes to support self-evaluation** What is the evidence for school's judgement, including staff and community perceptions?	**Notes to support action planning** What specific actions are required? Who is responsible? When?
B	**Senior leaders use a range of evidence to make judgements about pupil progress and the quality of learning and teaching** Overall judgements about the quality of learning and teaching, the appropriateness of the curriculum provision and children's attitudes to learning are based on a range of evidence including progress and attainment data, outcomes from pupil progress meetings, focused observations of learning, scrutiny of children's work and discussions with children.							
C	**Evaluation of the monitoring outcomes leads to the revision and refinement of actions that are recorded in the school's single plan/RAP** Following monitoring activity, senior leaders evaluate the impact against the intended impact of planned actions on pupil progress, attainment and learning. As a result planned actions are reviewed and refined and the success criteria and milestones are clearly defined within the school's single plan/RAP.							

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Core element 6: Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress Quality standards		SEF ref	1	2	3	4	**Notes to support self-evaluation** What is the evidence for school's judgement, including staff and community perceptions?	**Notes to support action planning** What specific actions are required? Who is responsible? When?
D	**Outcomes from pupil progress meetings lead to specific actions to improve outcomes for children** Pupil tracking information and related evidence is used effectively in termly pupil progress meetings by senior leaders and staff to discuss individual pupil progress, to demonstrate and celebrate success and pose and answer questions relating to children identified as not making adequate progress. This then leads to specific actions to ensure the necessary improvements.							
E	**Senior leaders ensure professional accountability for progress and attainment** Performance management procedures and pupil progress meetings are used effectively by senior leaders to set appropriate targets for improvement, discuss possible barriers and plan next steps to ensure all children make good progress to achieve or exceed their end-of-year expectations.							

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Core element 6: Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress Quality standards		SEF ref	1	2	3	4	**Notes to support self-evaluation** What is the evidence for school's judgement, including staff and community perceptions?	**Notes to support action planning** What specific actions are required? Who is responsible? When?
F	**Senior leaders discuss and agree the main features that emerge from termly monitoring and evaluation activities and share outcomes and actions with all stakeholders** Outcomes and actions that have come out of pupil progress meetings, scrutiny of children's work, observations of learning and discussions with children are discussed and shared with all staff and stakeholders, including governance and the SIP each term.							
G	**Pupil conferencing is used to engage children in their learning and improve provision and outcomes** All children are able to reflect on, control and improve their learning through effective classroom assessment for learning (AfL) practices and regular pupil conferences/ pupil progress meetings with their class teacher, particularly children identified as not making good progress. Outcomes from pupil conferences support the development of the curriculum, improvements in learning and teaching and improved behaviour or attitudes to learning and/or school that in turn supports improved outcomes for children.							

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Questions to support whole-school discussion and debate around Core Element 6

- How does the school ensure outcomes from pupil progress discussions lead to explicit actions in classrooms?
- How does the school monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning? Does this take account of the impact on pupil progress and attainment?
- How does the school ensure professional accountability for progress and attainment through performance management systems?
- How does the school evaluate the impact of intervention on pupil progress and attainment? What happens as a result of this?

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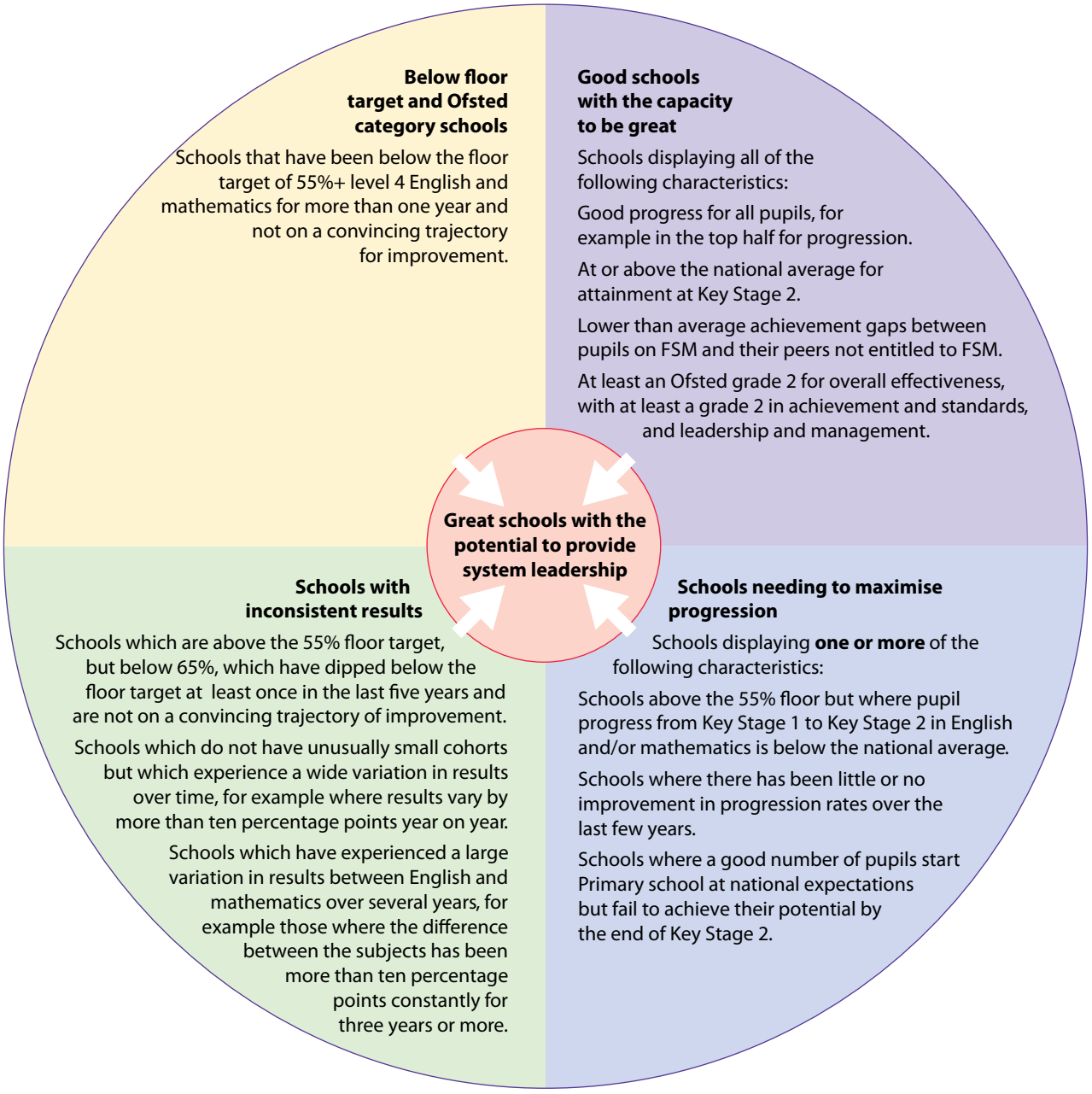
Section 4: Improvement Priority Groups

The White Paper, *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*, identified five groups of improving schools which each share an overriding improvement priority.

Which set of criteria best fits your current circumstances?



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Section 5: Case studies

Pages 19 to 26 provide examples of actions taken by schools with different improvement priorities. Two headteachers leading schools in each priority group were asked to complete sections 2 and 6 of the primary self-evaluation and improvement toolkit and to identify the actions they took to move their schools forward. This section identifies common priorities for these schools and the actions they took. More detail is available through the pull-out sheets at the back of this booklet.

Below floor target and Ofsted category schools

The following two pages refer to key features of two schools that have been in Special Measures (Case studies 1 and 2). One of the schools had also been below the floor target for four years. The schools serve different communities, one in a city and one in a market town, and one includes a resource unit for pupils on the autistic spectrum. Both headteachers identified the need to develop robust tracking systems as a key priority for improvement and both introduced pupil progress meetings which now involve all staff in tracking progress. The detailed case studies can be found packaged with this booklet.

Core element 2: Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level	
a. Senior leaders use data and termly tracking information to inform the school's improvement strategy.	• Although data was collected it was not used to evaluate progress or to set targets. • The school only set statutory targets for the end of Key Stage 2. • There was a need to consolidate the school's strategies for assessment of pupils' learning and further improve analysis of pupil performance data.
Core element 6: Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress	
d. Outcomes from pupil progress meetings lead to specific actions to improve outcomes for children.	• Children needed to feel they could succeed and know what to do to improve. • There was a need to involve all staff in tracking the progress of pupils and then to identify specific actions to ensure improvement.

What did the school do to improve?

The pupil performance tracking system was broadened to ensure ownership by all members of staff. The local authority (LA) tracking system was adopted and this helped with setting targets across the school, and comprehensive provision mapping. Accurate data was used to challenge expectations and to target effective pedagogical approaches and appropriate intervention to meet the needs of all pupils.

Perhaps the most powerful lever for change was pupil progress meetings. These meetings enabled staff and the senior leadership team to work together to celebrate improvement and to look for solutions to teaching and learning issues.

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Barriers and solutions

There was a need to consolidate the school's strategies for assessment of pupils' learning.

Teachers attended National Strategies' training which included the use of APP to identify next steps in learning.

The review tables from the AfL strategy were used to audit provision and to write an action plan to develop AfL across the school.

Links to resources

AfL review tables: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the reference: 00650-2008CDO-EN.

ISP tracking sheets: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: tracking pupil progress grids.

Quality First Teaching was not informed by termly tracking of pupils' progress.

The school introduced regular pupil progress meetings which informed Quality First Teaching and led to specific actions to improve outcomes for pupils.

The literacy and mathematics subject leaders attended training on tracking pupil progress, and used the National Strategies' ISP tracking sheets to evaluate the performance of all pupils.

What has been the impact? Standards and progression across the core subjects have improved very significantly. In 2009 86% of pupils attained level 4+ in mathematics (45% in 2007), 86% attained level 4+ in English (64% in 2007). Overall contextual value added (CVA) was 101.2. Better assessment led to better Quality First Teaching. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs fell by almost 20%.

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Schools with inconsistent results

Case studies 3 and 4 are both schools that were vulnerable with inconsistent results. One of the schools is very small and was under threat of closure, and the other is very large, and recently formed from an amalgamation of an infant and junior school. Both headteachers identified inconsistencies in practice as key barriers to improvement.

Core element 2: Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level	
d. Senior leaders and staff track and monitor individual children's progress towards their end of year expectations.	• The school had inconsistent approaches to tracking progress and approaches varied from class to class. No whole-school pupil tracking systems were in place and this led to ineffective grouping and teaching for some groups of pupils. Progress rates varied both within classes and across year groups. Teaching was not always appropriately focused on next steps in learning. • The senior leadership team (SLT) did not have an accurate and robust system of monitoring progress across the school.
Core element 6: Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress	
a. The school's planned monitoring and evaluation ensures the school's planned actions lead to sustainable improvements in the school's identified priorities.	• The school needed to develop systems for supporting underperforming groups and challenge across a range of abilities. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching meant that this was not effective. Many children made limited progress and curriculum provision did not always engage and stimulate all learners.

What did the school do to improve?

The school joined the ISP and replaced traditional staff meetings with focused professional development meetings. These meetings focused on staff learning, curricular targets and developing assessment for learning.

An ISP RAP was produced with a new tighter focus on monitoring and evaluating pupil progress. Year group termly pupil progress meetings were established across the school to ensure the leadership team were informed of progress and to address curriculum provision for all pupils.

This renewed focus and awareness of rates of progress led to support for quality first teaching for both mathematics and literacy, with an emphasis on guided group work to support the key issue of focused teaching for underperforming groups of pupils. The Primary Framework website was used heavily to support teachers' planning and ensure progression in key skills.

Teachers were encouraged to participate in shared observations and collaborative feedback. This enabled the development of good teaching and supported development of staff in recognising elements of good lessons which impact directly on pupil learning.

The school was supported by a local consultant to develop effective use of the newly established tracking system and develop work scrutiny, pupil conferencing and lesson observation. This was linked with the introduction of APP across the school to ensure secure and robust assessment to underpin the tracking data.

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Barriers and solutions

No consistent tracking systems were in place.

APP was used to periodically assess the progress of all pupils and to identify those pupils requiring additional support including one-to-one tuition.

Implemented ISP tracking tools across the whole school.

Instigated termly pupil progress review meetings.

Links to resources

Pupil progress meetings: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: Pupil progress meetings.

Leading and managing APP: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: Leading and managing APP.

Progress by groups of pupils varied and was inconsistent.

Engaged fully with Primary Framework progression materials, such as Support for Writing and guided group work.

SLT took responsibility for underperforming groups of pupils and tracked their progress across the school and specific planning took place to address next steps in learning.

What has been the impact? Achievement has risen significantly with 78% of children making expected progress or better last year and in some year groups this was as high as 90%.

Key Stage 2 results improved with the school achieving 78% for mathematics and 92% for English and the school CVA has risen from 99.1 in 2006 to 100.4 in 2009.

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Schools needing to maximise progression

Case studies 5 and 6 are both schools that needed to maximise progress of all pupils. One is a very large school situated near a city centre in the North of England. The second school is a small Voluntary Aided primary school serving a diverse community in the East of England. Both headteachers focused on improving consistency of practice through the use of the Primary Framework and raising expectations of learning through strengthening teacher assessment and whole-school tracking systems.

Core element 2: Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level	
c. All staff have a shared knowledge and understanding of age-related expectations and good progress across a key stage.	• The school was reluctant to use the Primary Framework as standards were historically high even though progress was inconsistent across the school as expectations were too low and subject knowledge was weak. • Mathematics and English were not well led and there was little focused training for staff on the curriculum expectations and progression or pedagogy. • Assessment and tracking were inconsistent and target setting was not well informed by data.
Core element 6: Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress	
e. Senior leaders ensure professional accountability for progress and attainment.	• The school had new management and needed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff in the SLT. • Too many staff carried management points with little expectation of providing leadership of improvement. • There was little ownership of standards across the school and progression was not monitored or evaluated.

What did the school do to improve?

The school restructured its leadership team, setting out 'real' responsibilities and expectations. There was wide-scale consultation with staff and the governors to inform the decisions taken about the structure and to facilitate the reorganisation of the curriculum. In particular, responsibility for the subjects and the standards in the school were clearly demarcated. A standards team was set up to share practice and to be responsible for monitoring and reporting to the SLT.

The middle management had support from the LA to revise the curriculum and to carry out an assessment of teaching and learning. There was a whole-school review of expectations and a new process introduced that involved half-termly review of the class and individual pupil's progress and attainment data. These related to and informed the targets set and led to recommendations about in-class intervention approaches by teachers.

The introduction of APP was informed by high-quality INSET led by the inclusion coordinator and the deputy headteacher who had attended LA events. Use of APP was an objective for all staff in performance management and evidence of impact was to be identified from tracking of pupils' progress. Using the Primary Framework alongside the APP guidelines ensured that whole-school expectations were shared, consistent and raised across all classes. The introduction of the LA's tracking pupil progress policy and an aligned management information tool provided rigorous tools for identifying progress supported by a drop-in approach to observing lessons.

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Barriers and solutions

Reorganised roles and responsibilities for leadership of subjects with increased accountability for standards and more rigorous monitoring procedures in place.

No consistent tracking systems were in place.

Establish use of the Primary Framework to identify yearly expectations and progression across the key stages.

Links to resources

Leading improvement using the Primary Framework: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: Headteachers' and Senior Leaders' continuing professional development (CPD).

Introduced improved tracking tools based on the APP guidelines with greater involvement and responsibility of senior staff in training and monitoring.

Progress by groups of pupils varied and was inconsistent.

Included use of APP as an objective in the performance review for all staff, introduced sharper lesson observation to evaluate classroom practice and shared good practice through peer coaching.

What has been the impact? Progress is better understood by all staff and the assessment judgements are secure. There is consistent progress made by pupils and an informed intervention process in place to 'catch' pupils who make slow or no progress. There is ownership of standards and AfL practices are continuing to develop. There are now lower than average achievement gaps between pupils on FSM and their non-FSM peers. The school is working with other schools and sharing practice. It has been identified as a lead assessment school.

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Good schools with the capacity to be great

Case studies 7 and 8 are both schools that have moved from being good to 'great' with the potential to provide system leadership. One is a medium sized rural school and the other is a very large primary school situated on a new housing estate. Staff in both schools have developed skills in coaching and lesson study, and one headteacher is now working with a local school as a Local Leader of Education (LLE). A major feature of the work of both schools has been developing a curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils which retains the rigour of progression within the Primary Framework while applying core learning in other subjects.

Core element 2: Tracking pupil progress at whole-school and classroom level	
e. Quality first teaching is informed by termly tracking of individual children's progress.	• Tracking of pupil progress became more precise with a clear focus on narrowing the gaps between pupils on free school meals and their peers.
Core element 6: Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress	
b. Senior leaders use a range of evidence to make judgements about pupil progress and the quality of teaching and learning.	• Our children were achieving well but could do better, particularly in writing. Writing wasn't being used effectively in other subjects as the curriculum was segmented into individual subjects. Links between subjects and opportunities for purposeful writing weren't being identified.

What did the school do to improve?

Over three years, the curriculum was developed to remove the reliance on commercial schemes and to match the needs and interest of the children. Instead of being segmented into subjects the curriculum was developed as 'units' around a theme which incorporated most subjects. The units were developed to ensure progression from Early Years to Year 6 with a clear emphasis on writing. A 'writing pathway' was identified for each class that was developed around the units of work using National Strategies' materials such as the Primary Framework and *Letters and Sounds*. Good practice was shared and transferred, with the headteacher and deputy headteacher modelling pedagogy across the school.

In order to facilitate all this, the school underwent remodelling of work spaces to create learning areas that provided bright and open spaces that are conducive to learning.

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Barriers and solutions

Developed curriculum units that incorporated most subjects but that showed progression from Early Years to Year 6.

Curriculum segmented and staff reliant on commercial schemes.

Staff worked together on developing the curriculum units over three years so their subject knowledge and confidence improved.

Links to resources

Personalised learning **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: Personalised learning: Curriculum organisation.

Lesson study **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: Improving practice and progression through Lesson Study.

Headteacher and deputy headteacher modelled pedagogy across the school.

Staff were 'comfortable' with teaching individual subjects but weren't identifying opportunities for extending writing across other subjects.

Staff developed practice transfer techniques and supported each other, especially those new to a year group.

What has been the impact? Writing standards improved at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to well above average.

Outstanding Ofsted grade. Improved quality of teaching and learning. Proactive and supportive leadership and management team.

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Section 6: National Strategies' materials to support school improvement priorities

Example school improvement priorities

'To improve rates of progress through Key Stage 2 in writing, particularly for boys.'	Primary Framework: headteacher, class teacher/practitioner CPD, including the use of APP *Support for Writing* **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** and search for 'support for writing' *Talk for Writing* ref: 00607-2008PCK-EN *Helping children achieve age-related expectations* ref: 00014-2007LEF-EN *Year 3 Literacy Support* ref: 00042-2007FLR-EN *Year 5 Further Literacy Support (FLS)* ref: 00390-2007CDO-EN *What works for pupils with literacy difficulties?* ref: 00688-2007BKT-EN *Support for Spelling* ref: 00171-2009 See also Every Child a Writer (ECaW) **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** and search for 'every child a writer'
'To improve the social and emotional skills of children to impact on children's progress and attainment, engaging children, families and the wider community.'	Primary Framework including links to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) *Social, Emotional Aspects of Development (EYFS)/Learning (primary) (SEAD/SEAL)* ref: 00707-2008/1378-2005 *Promoting and supporting positive behaviour in primary schools* ref: 00153-2009FLY-EN *Helping children with mathematics: Year 5 to Year 6* ref: 00142-2008 See also: 'Behaviour and Attendance' (BA) and 'Inclusion Development Programme' (IDP) **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**
'To close the gap in achievement between identified underperforming group and their peers, e.g. by gender, FSM entitlement, minority ethnic group, English as an additional language, social class and/or specific learning difficulty.'	Primary Framework: headteacher, class teacher/practitioner CPD, including the use of APP Every Child a Reader (ECaR) ref: 00034-2008CDO-EN Every Child Counts (ECC) **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** and search for 'ECC' Excellence and Enjoyment: Learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years ref: 00143-2007PCK-EN English as an Additional Language (EAL) ref: 00143-2007 New Arrivals Excellence programme (NAEP) ref: 00650-2007BKT-EN Narrowing the Gaps Black Children's Achievement Programme (BCAP) ref: 00058-2008 Raising the achievement of Gypsy, Roma Traveller Pupils (GRT) ref: 00102-2008 Gifted and Talented (G&T) education: Guidance on addressing underachievement – Planning a whole-school approach ref: 00378-2009BKT-EN See also Minority Ethnic Achievement Programme (MEAP) See also Inclusion Development Programme (IDP): Dyslexia and speech, language and communication needs ref: 00070-2008 Primary and secondary Inclusion Development programme – Supporting pupils on the autistic spectrum ref: 00041-2009

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'To improve school improvement processes including the cycle of: audit, target setting, pupil tracking, planning, action and review.'	*Improving Schools Programme (ISP) Handbook* ref: 00314-2009BKT-EN *Improving Schools Programme (ISP) Strengthening governance: knowing your school* ref: 00353-2009LEF-EN Primary Framework: Headteacher seminars and class teacher/ practitioner CPD, including the use of APP **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** and search within the CPD Primary section for resources in literacy, mathematics and senior leadership. *See also e-learning modules and resources available at* **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**
'To improve children's early language skills in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.'	Primary Framework including links to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) *Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD)* ref: 00576-2008 *Letters and Sounds* ref: 00281-2007BKT-EN *Every Child a Talker (ECaT)* ref: 00854-2008DOM-EN *Support for Writing* **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** and search for 'support for writing' *Early Literacy Support (ELS)* ref: 00767-2007 Talk for Writing ref: 00607-2008PCK-EN *Every Child a Reader (ECaR)* ref: 00034-2008CDO-EN
'To improve rates of progress through Key Stage 2 in mathematics, particularly for girls.'	Primary Framework: Headteacher, class teacher/ practitioner CPD, including the use of APP **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** and search within the CPD Primary section for resources in literacy, mathematics and senior leadership. *Overcoming barriers in mathematics: level 1 to level 2* ref: 00021-2009 *Overcoming barriers in mathematics: level 2 to level 3* ref: 00149-2008 *Overcoming barriers in mathematics: level 3 to level 4* ref: 00695-2007 *Overcoming barriers in mathematics: level 4 to level 5* ref: 00904-2009 *Securing level 5 in mathematics* ref: 00866-2009BKT-EN *Securing level 4 in mathematics* ref: 00065-2009BKT-EN *Securing level 3 in mathematics* ref: 00388-2009BKT-EN *Securing level 2 in mathematics* ref: 00687-2009BKT-EN *Children who attain level 4 in English but not mathematics at Key Stage 2* ref: 00317-2009 *What works for children with mathematical difficulties?* ref: 00086-2009BKT-EN *Moving on with assessment in mathematics – developing classroom practice* ref: 00009-2009

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Section 7: Background to the 'Leading Improvement' materials and how they can support in the new school-to-school improvement context

Background

Much has been done by LAs and schools to help to build local improvement capacity in readiness for a school-led improvement system and the National Strategies' Leading Improvement materials support this. The programme is designed to promote an informed, ongoing discussion about improvement of teaching, learning and leadership of learning – among headteachers (as the leaders of improvement in their schools), and among their SLTs in order to promote school-led improvement.

Following the renewal of the Primary Framework the programme has focused particularly on leading whole-school improvement in:

- Planning – the Primary Framework (2007)
- Assessment – using the APP materials (2008)
- Progression – using APP and effective tracking to inform decisions about teaching and learning (2008/9)
- Pedagogy – examining the extent to which the pedagogic approaches used within the school are 'fit for purpose' (2009)
- Securing Improvement (2010) – this latest booklet builds upon these and helps schools to secure improvement – whatever their current priorities

'Leading Improvement' and other National Strategies primary work between 2007–09:

i. Has shifted the balance of professional development much more towards school-led, collaborative, professional learning. Together teachers try out well-evidenced and purpose-specific pedagogic approaches – such as AfL and strengthening the use of mathematical language, Talk for Writing and Guided Writing. They tailor and hone these approaches in order to best meet the needs of the children they are teaching, and do so through close, joint observation of the way their children learn using the new pedagogy. The lesson study coaching cycle has been used as a pedagogic improvement in hundreds of schools and 2000 LTs have used it with a nationally visible effect on achievement.

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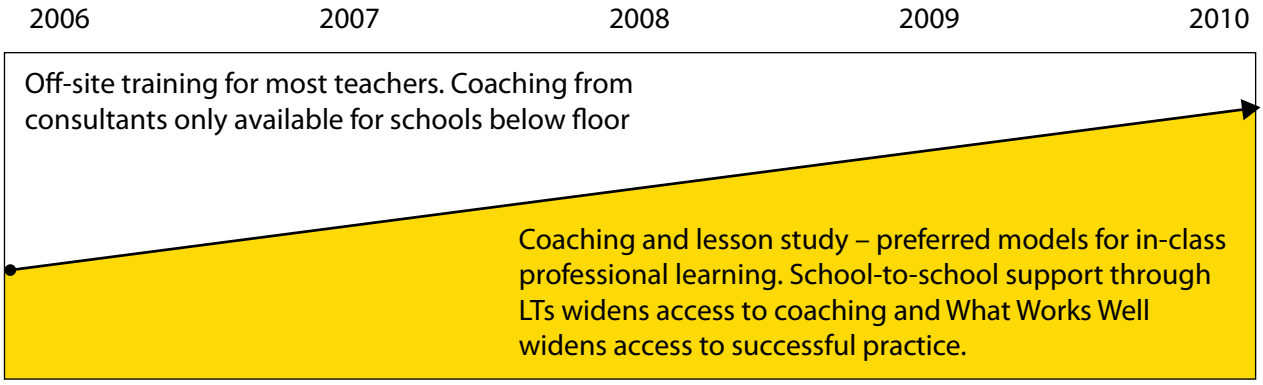
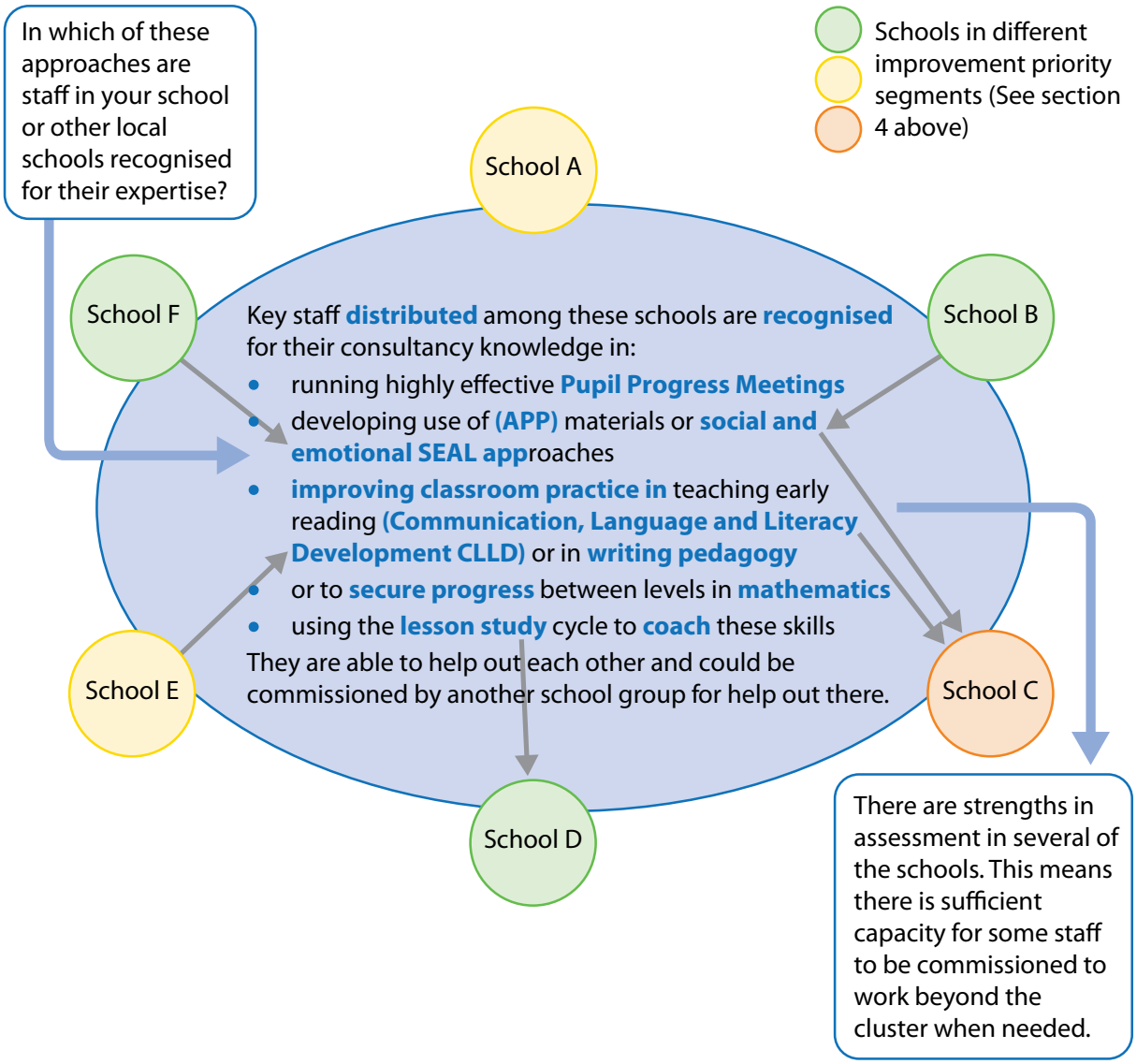


Videos showing lesson study in action can be found at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies. Search using the term: Lesson study headteacher CPD.

A handbook to support the work of Leading Teachers will be available from the National Strategies in September 2010.

How a group of schools can pool recognised improvement expertise and build capacity for self- improvement within and beyond the cluster



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ii. There has been a consistent focus on sharing what has worked with other schools. Many schools have presented detailed case studies of their improvement work with others at local events – including 'Leading Improvement' events. Many have also made the fruits of their hard work and learning available to others through 'What Works Well' website case studies **www.whatworkswell.standards.dcsf.gov.uk**.

iii. There has also been a shift towards creating local subject expertise in the primary teaching force. This is through the training of **LTs** for literacy, mathematics, G&T and SEAL, **CLLD** lead practitioners, as well as **Reading Recovery teachers** and teacher leaders, **Numbers Count teachers** and from 2010 – **Mathematics Specialist teachers**.

All of these people will be able to contribute to the provision of local specialist help in an increasingly school-to-school world of local improvement (see diagram on the previous page).

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Annex 1. The stages of focus of the leading improvement programme and links to more information

Planning
- There has been a review of the whole-school CPD provision
- Primary Framework is used to inform school improvement planning
- Leadership team is encouraging and supporting staff in their use of the Primary Framework and the implementation of collaborative, classroom-based CPD **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: Headteachers' and Senior Leaders' continuing professional development – Day 1

Assessment
- All teachers are using the Primary Framework to plan their quality first teaching in literacy and mathematics
- APP processes are being introduced into school and whole-school CPD supports teachers to manage the processes and inform the tracking of pupil progress
- Collaborative classroom-based CPD continues to be introduced in school
- Teachers are using lesson study to review the impact of their planning and teaching on groups and individual pupils' learning **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: Headteachers' and Senior Leaders' continuing professional development – Day 2

Progression
- The Primary Framework is recognised and used as a school improvement tool to review learning expectations in all year groups
- Leadership team are using Primary Framework resources to assess the quality of the provision in classrooms and its impact on progress and attainment
- Headteacher and SLT are using the progression ready audit to determine the extent to which the school is already addressing the progression and personalised learning agenda
- Support for collaborative classroom–based CPD, through lesson study, is being sustained and the benefits and impact on children's progress and attainment are being shared across the whole school **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: Headteachers' and Senior Leaders' continuing professional development – Day 3

Pedagogy
- In response to the progression and personalisation agenda, the headteacher is reviewing the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching approaches used to teach mathematics and literacy in the school
- There is an increasing use of well-focused, timely, guided group work in the classroom, informed by the collaborative professional learning activities. This in turn supports and develops AfL practices that impact on pupil progress and attainment
- The use of APP has led to sharper teacher assessment judgements that inform more accurate termly tracking of pupil progress and attainment
- Identified underachieving groups of pupils receive well-focused, timely intervention support that helps them to 'keep up and catch up' and to make the progress expected of them **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies**. Search using the term: Headteachers' and Senior Leaders' continuing professional development – Day 4

Securing improvement
- Senior leaders use data and termly tracking information to inform the school's improvement activity
- All staff have a shared knowledge and understanding of age-related expectations and good progress across a key stage
- The school's monitoring and evaluation ensures the school's planned actions lead to sustainable improvements
- Headteachers and senior leaders use tried and tested pedagogical approaches to secure improvement – Day 5.

00012-2010BKT-EN
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Audience: headteachers, leading teachers and subject leaders.
Date of issue: 01-2010
Ref: **00012-2010BKT-EN**

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