The Improving Schools Programme Handbook

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Department for Education

The National Strategies
Primary

The Improving Schools Programme Handbook

department for
children, schools and families

The Improving Schools Programme Handbook

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Section 1
Introduction to the handbook

1.1 Introduction

This handbook provides information for schools, school improvement partners (SIPs) and local authorities (LAs) about the core elements of the Improving Schools Programme (ISP). It shares the learning from the ISP and explains what works in supported school improvement, and why. It includes the materials used in the ISP as well as case studies of the programme in action. The aim is that these materials contribute to the school improvement work of LAs and schools, and can be used as a practical guide to the use of school improvement processes for all schools and to the Improving Schools Programme.

The handbook is divided into five sections: Section 1 gives an overview of the ISP and introduces the model of ISP – the key themes and the cycle and core elements. Section 2 is a practical guide to using the core elements. Section 3 gives an overview of the roles of LAs and schools. Section 4 suggests useful publications; the appendices in Section 5 are useful resources. These materials and further support are also reproduced on the accompanying CD-ROM. All these materials, with further substantial support and guidance, plus film clips, are available online at:

www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies by clicking on the 'Primary' tab and selecting 'Improving schools programme'.

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What is the Improving Schools Programme?

The ISP is a supported whole-school improvement programme. It focuses on children's learning and the skills, knowledge and understanding that teachers and headteachers need to enable all children to make good progress and achieve success as learners.

The ISP can be tailored to the specific needs of any school. It has been particularly targeted at schools in which attainment is low and/or groups of children are underperforming or making slow progress. The programme builds on effective school self-evaluation processes and is based on the cycle of audit, target-setting, tracking, planning, action and review. The starting point is pupil attainment data, and the core elements of ISP support the school to enable all children to make expected or accelerated progress so that as many children as possible are working at age-related expectations or above.

Who is it for?

The ways of working used in the ISP are suitable for all schools. The model developed captures the essential elements that need to be in place to support and to sustain whole-school improvement. It is both highly structured and responsive and can be used by schools at very different stages of development, for example, to:

- strengthen leadership and governance, supporting headteachers new to a school or developing more distributed leadership across a school;
- develop a whole-school focus on learning and accelerating children's progress;
- improve the quality of learning and teaching in a single subject;
- support children to consider, evaluate and be responsible for their learning;
- support curriculum review and the provision of a curriculum that meets the needs and interests of all learners.

The model supports personalising learning to enable all children to make progress.

The aims of the programme are to:

- raise standards and accelerate progress, so more children achieve level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics;
- improve the leadership of learning across the school;
- build the capacity to sustain improvements;
- improve the quality of learning and teaching in English and mathematics to 'good' or 'better'.

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1.2 How ISP works

The ISP began as the *Intensifying Support Pilot* in 2002. As a result of its success, and the clarity of its model for school improvement, it became a national programme in 2004 and was renamed as the Improving Schools Programme in 2008.

Schools that have been part of the ISP have consistently achieved at least twice the national rates of progress in outcomes for Key Stage 2. Evidence from a wide range of sources, including children, schools, Ofsted, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), LAs and independent evaluation, confirms that improved rates of progress are being sustained. The evaluations identify the positive impact on the quality of learning and teaching, the conditions for learning and the development of the whole school as a professional learning community. Schools involved in the programme have moved on to become good and outstanding schools.

Schools have been very positive about the impact of the programme:

- *The programme has created a supportive framework to place teaching and learning securely at the heart of whole-school improvement.*
- *Staff feel that conditions for learning are improved, with pupils wanting to learn.*

In LAs, the programme has been most successful when it has been given high priority by LA strategic leadership. In these LAs, the ISP has become the school improvement programme of choice and the cycle and core elements are used extensively across the LA.

The programme is structured around four key themes and the school improvement cycle and core elements.

1. The four key themes, which provide the breadth and depth of focus, are:

- raising standards and accelerating progress;
- improving the quality of teaching and learning;
- improving the conditions for learning;
- leading on learning – developing the school as a professional learning community.

2. The school improvement cycle and core elements provide the model for school improvement. They are the means by which schools can develop accurate and robust self-evaluation, clear identification of priorities and practical ways forward to ensure that actions taken address the priorities and have impact on pupils' progress.

The core elements of ISP are:

- the termly school improvement cycle;
- tracking progress at whole-school and classroom level;
- a single plan;
- whole-school systematic continuing professional development (CPD);
- an explicit focus on the quality of learning and teaching;
- arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress meetings.

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The four key themes

The four key themes arose out of research into school improvement and practice in raising achievement in successful schools. They provide the framework that underpins the programme.

From the schools' perspective, organising the work under four key themes has helped them to see how the ISP provides the focus for school improvement and brings together all the work in school. This has been particularly beneficial in many schools that have, in the past, been on the receiving end of a large number of projects and initiatives that have meant that they have lost clarity of focus. It also helps to link the LA consultant, advisory and SIP support and challenge in the schools.

At the centre of the ISP are the children, their learning and progress, and how teachers can best support this. As one teacher said:

> *In previous years I felt that we were being told what to do all the time: this year I really feel that we have been able to see how all our work in school fits together so that children do their best.*

Key theme 1: Raising standards and accelerating progress – leading on learning

This theme explicitly focuses on the leadership of learning through:

- using the school improvement cycle and the core elements to identify priorities for improvement;
- the intelligent use of data, both to track attainment and progress and to plan strategic interventions to ensure that all children reach national expectations in English and mathematics and make at least two levels of progress though a key stage (the exception is those children who have been identified as having special educational needs that preclude them from working at age-related expectations);
- building the capacity of the school to lead on learning.

Key theme 2: Improving the quality of teaching and learning

For children to make accelerated progress, particularly in previously low-attaining schools, the quality of teaching must be good. This theme improves the quality of the teaching through:

- focusing on specific teaching and learning strategies, linked to teachers' own professional development;
- supporting teachers as they try out and refine their use of the teaching and learning strategies and monitor and evaluate the impact on pupils' progress;
- using layered curricular targets, based on key strands of the Primary Framework, as a tool to strengthen quality-first teaching (QFT) in the classroom;
- tracking pupils' progress within the class, which provides the basis for professional dialogue about the learning of each child, linked to the curricular target.

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Key theme 3: Improving the conditions for learning

This key theme focuses on the development of the conditions needed to support learning. In the ISP these promote:

- a secure and rich learning environment;
- positive learning behaviours and social and emotional aspects of learning;
- the targeted deployment of other adults to meet children's learning needs.

The development of the environment for learning through the use of working walls, steps to success, learning prompts and interactive displays has been an area of visible and early success for the ISP schools.

As part of the evaluation of the programme, most schools noted improvements in the involvement of additional adults in the classroom and their impact on attainment and improvements in the learning environment.

Key theme 4: Leading on learning – developing the school as a professional learning community

This key theme focuses on the processes that effective leadership in school use to lead on learning and to develop the school as a learning community. Leadership of learning runs through all the key themes but this one, in particular, goes beyond the systems to the school ethos and culture.

Effective school leaders ensure schools are effective learning communities in which:

- expectations are high and children are fully engaged in learning and are confident they can achieve;
- key features of learning and expectations are shared with the children, their parents and carers;
- the school sees itself as a learning institution with opportunities for the whole community to continue to learn.

The ISP supports the development of the school as a learning community through:

- providing opportunities for staff discussion and reflection as an integral part of the programme;
- identifying opportunities to engage all children more fully in their learning;
- encouraging the involvement of parents in their children's learning through sharing their targets, and ways for parents to support their children's progress;
- engaging governors in the school improvement process. The ISP improvement cycle provides a clear mechanism to present to governors the school priorities, actions and impact;
- supporting the engagement of the key players linked to the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda.

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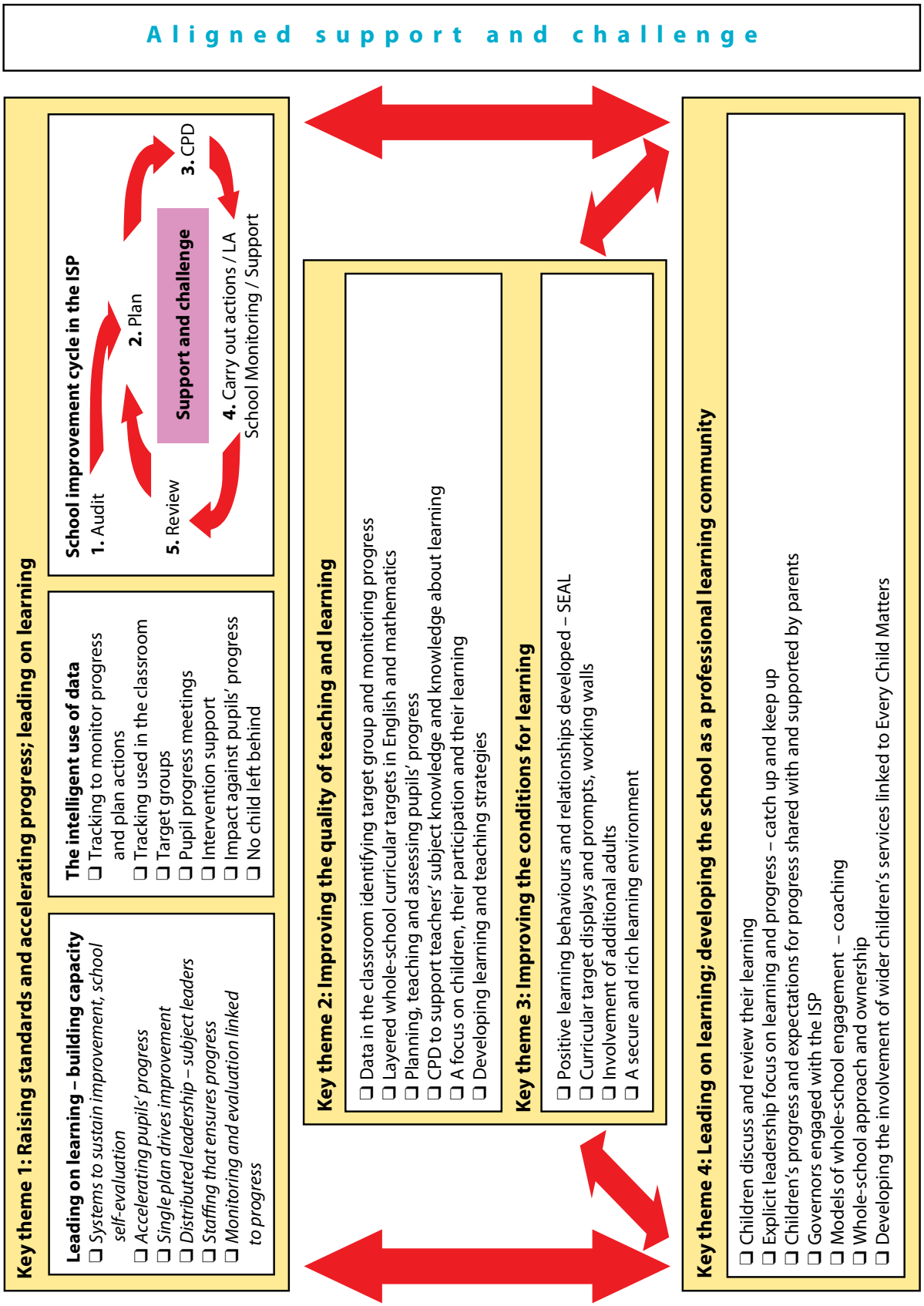
The four key themes of the ISP



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Section 2 Using the ISP cycle and core elements

2.1 The school improvement cycle and the core elements of the ISP

The Improving Schools Programme (ISP) acknowledges that schools are responsible for their own improvement. The cycle and core elements provide the model for school improvement.

The core elements of the ISP are:

- the termly school improvement cycle;
- the tracking of progress at whole-school and classroom level;
- a single plan;
- whole-school systematic continuing professional development (CPD);
- an explicit focus on the quality of learning and teaching;
- arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, including pupil progress meetings.

Together they provide a strong framework to support and maintain school improvement. The elements all need to be in place; leaving any one of them out undermines the impact and the strength of the model. The current model is one that is robust, tried and tested, and is also flexible enough to be responsive to schools' individual needs. The model is simple and provides a common language for discussing improvement. There is more information about the use of the ISP in LAs and schools in Section 3.

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CASE STUDY:
The effective use of ISP to strengthen leadership and management

Greyfriars Primary School is a larger than average one and a half form entry school in King's Lynn in Norfolk. In July 2004, the school was invited by the local authority to become part of the ISP.

The school needed to improve and the ISP presented a clear way forward.

> *We were a new senior management team (SMT) and we needed something to help us develop as a team together. The key issues for the school were that we were below floor targets and had low expectations of the pupils – a blame culture that they came in low and would leave low. We needed to raise the quality of learning and teaching and expectations to achieve at least the floor targets.* ***Headteacher***

To support the school to make these changes the local authority identified regular dedicated time from the ISP consultant, and the LA adviser.

> *When we started in ISP we looked at the tracking and it gave us a shock – the tracking showed us that we weren't as good as we thought we were. The children weren't where we thought they were. Using the tracking and the single plan gave us a clear focus for development.* ***Headteacher***

Introducing the single plan provided the sharp focus that the leadership team needed to ensure that the priority areas identified were seen to impact on pupils' progress.

> *…the cycle and single plan really galvanised us as a leadership team. We all have clear leadership responsibility and share the load. We are all responsible through performance management of the staff and ISP is part of performance management throughout the school.* ***Headteacher***

Four years on: the impact of ISP on standards, leadership and governance

> *We have seen a year-on-year rise in our results in KS2 – writing in particular has really moved forward and we expect to see a further rise this year. The quality of learning and teaching is 85% good or better and we need to continue to move forward on that.* ***Headteacher***

When the school moved on from the intensive LA support they continued to use the core elements. This has also supported governors:

> *The role of governors has become more that of a critical friend. They understand the standards in the school; they understand what we are trying to do as a school community and, more importantly, where to go; and if we don't achieve our goals they will come back to us and ask us why we have not and challenge us more.* ***Headteacher***

The strength of the school has been acknowledged. It is now a lead school in the ISP leadership and governance pilot.

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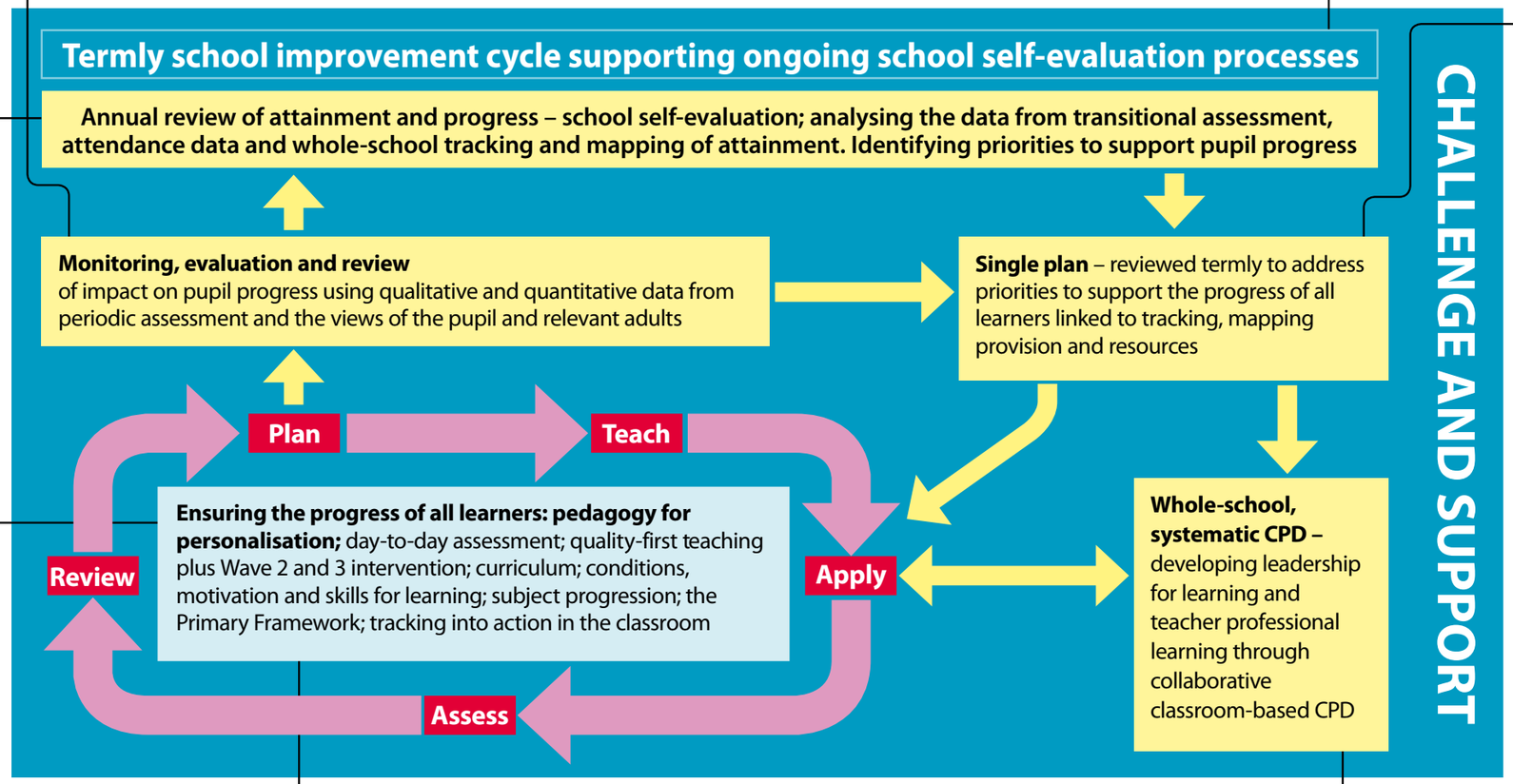
The school improvement cycle

Schools are responsible for their own improvement. The diagram below illustrates the termly ISP cycle that supports school improvement and school self-evaluation, with pupil progress at its centre. All of the core elements within the cycle need to be in place to ensure improvement. The school leadership of these core elements is essential to the leadership of learning, the strengthening of school self-evaluation and to the school as a sustainable improving institution.

Pupil progress meetings:
- provide a regular timetabled forum for analysis and discussion of the factors that have supported progress and identifies collaborative actions to overcome barriers to progress
- require teachers to share evidence of pupil progress with members of the leadership team and be accountable for progress
- provide a forum to answer questions which tracking poses and moves tracking off the page and into actions for learning
- support the development of pupil conferencing, enabling children to reflect on, control and improve their learning
- demonstrate and celebrate success
- provide a forum to support teachers and their professional development.

The school improvement cycle
The cycle of analysis, action, evaluation and review is the key to building sustainable improvement. This model demonstrates that the cycle is ongoing and provides the means to build capacity for leadership, drawing upon and contributing to school self-evaluation.

Tracking:
- provides a picture of pupil progress whole-school and at class level
- provides a focus for professional dialogue to support assessment for learning and personalised learning
- at whole-school level enables targeted mapping of intervention to support pupil learning, identifying the progress of individual children who are slow-moving, stuck, in need of support to accelerate progress, achieving or exceeding age-related expectations
- provides evidence of the impact of actions on progress and strengthens the accountability of teachers and headteachers.



The single plan drives the improvement against school priorities and is informed by self-evaluation and linked to the school improvement plan. It:
- provides a detailed, time-limited map translating priorities into action
- aligns the work of the school (and any external support) around the agreed priorities and maintains a sharp focus on these
- identifies clear lines of accountability for actions and outcomes and supports all stakeholders in understanding their responsibilities linked to the priorities
- The plan is:
  - monitored and evaluated against pupil progress
  - challenging and achievable
  - a means of communicating planned actions and expected outcomes to the whole-school community

An explicit focus on learning and teaching:
- establishes the context from which school leaders can lead improvement through a focus on learning
- identifies the key areas of learning and teaching, including the use of whole-school curricular targets, that are priorities and ensures a common language for adult learners to talk about children's learning
- identifies the focus around which teacher knowledge and understanding is to be secured and supports increased pupil involvement in this key area of learning
- identifies quality-first teaching as an entitlement for all children.

Whole-school systematic CPD:
- focuses professional learning around the agreed priorities
- provides an opportunity for people to learn collaboratively and to develop systems as well as knowledge
- is directly related to quality-first teaching and leads to changes that have a positive impact on pupil progress
- establishes whole-school community responsibility and accountability for improvement.

The termly school improvement cycle

The school improvement cycle

The cycle of analysis, action, evaluation and review is the key to building sustainable improvement. This model demonstrates that the cycle is ongoing and provides the means to build capacity for leadership, drawing upon and contributing to school self-evaluation.

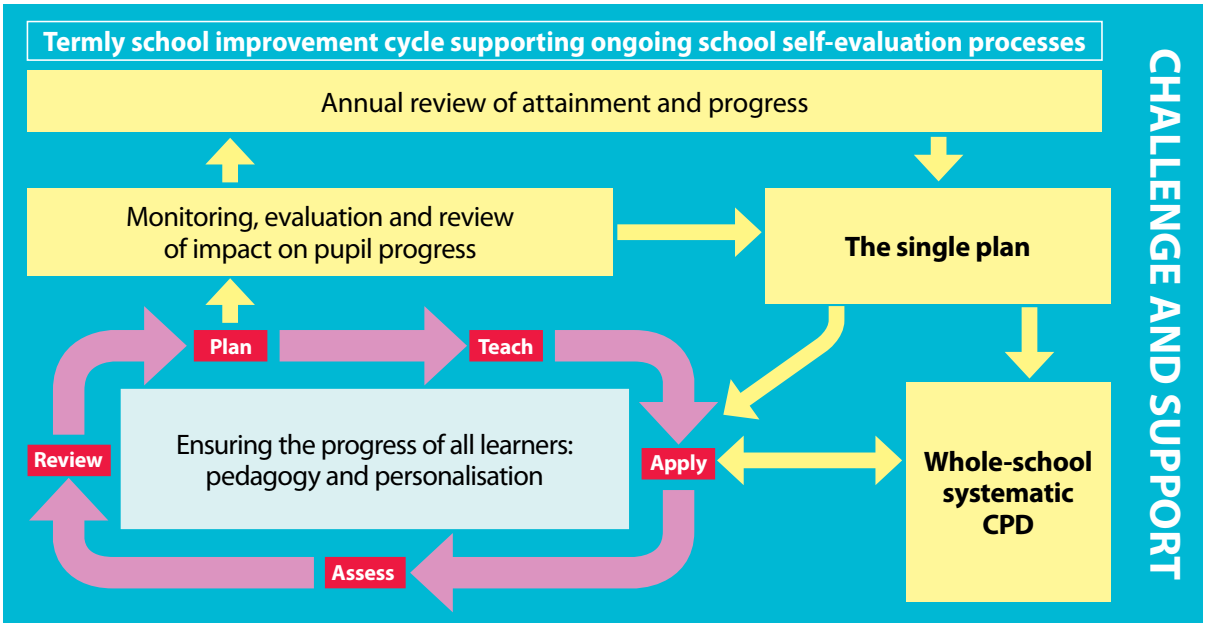
The school improvement cycle is familiar to schools, but often it is used as an annual cycle. In the ISP the cycle is used termly. The termly cycle is a sharper instrument. It keeps up the pace of improvement and allows the school to identify short-term improvements that lead to the longer-term whole-school goals. It builds on effective school self-evaluation processes and the cycle is one of audit, target setting, tracking, planning, action and review.

Using the cycle in ISP

Establishing the cycle as the ongoing, regular and time-limited process to move improvement forward in the schools has been key in ISP. Many schools, particularly those with a number of issues, difficulties and barriers, find themselves overwhelmed by the enormity of the task and the great range of support on offer. Schools in the ISP have found that keeping to the cycle has really helped them to stay on track to work with the important things that will make the difference to outcomes for children. Many headteachers have commented that establishing the cycle helped them to keep their focus on children's progress, giving them the framework for improvement and permission not to take up every initiative on offer.

In many ISP schools, children have come into school well below the national level and, in order to reach national expectations, progress has to be very good throughout the school. The cycle gives the school the organisational device to do this and is now well-established as a model of good practice.

The school improvement cycle



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How the cycle works

- The cycle starts with the school audit and self-evaluation and the review of the tracking and other pupil attainment data (quantitative and qualitative) to evaluate the children's progress and to identify the priorities for improvements in achievement and attainment.
- The single plan or raising attainment plan (RAP) establishes the termly school improvement cycle of the ISP through identifying targets and key actions for the school. It sets out the monitoring processes needed to determine whether the targets have been met and to identify the next steps needed. The planned CPD for all staff is linked to improving learning and teaching.
- The termly review uses the evidence from the school monitoring and pupil progress meetings to evaluate the impact of the school's actions on pupils' progress over that term.

The cycle is the process but, for every school, the focuses are linked to the priorities.

Starting off in ISP– the audit

The initial analysis of which systems and structures are in place to support school improvement is important in setting up the ISP with schools. Schools come into the ISP at many different starting points, so the ISP audit is used as a way of establishing a common baseline against each of the four key themes in schools.

Much of the initial evidence of the systems in place can be found in the school self-evaluation and the self-evaluation form (SEF) but schools and LAs continue to find an audit useful at the start of the ISP. The audit establishes which of the core elements are in place and how effective they are. It also informs the first single plan or RAP.

IDENTIFYING THE BASELINE	
Prompts to support analysis of current school situation The criteria support identification of the school's starting point and possible actions necessary to ensure that the 'bottom line' plan is in place by the end of the initial phase of the programme.	
Improving the achievement and personal development of learners	**Comments/school evidence**
Knowing about standards What data is collected, how and by whom? What assessments are currently in place in the school? How are they analysed and used? What is the data telling you about progress and attainment in all year groups?	
Target setting What systems are in place for setting numerical and/or curricular targets? Do they inform teaching and learning? How are they monitored and evaluated?	
Pupil tracking Are there school systems for tracking pupils' progress – across a key stage, a year group? If so what does the tracking look like? [illegible] the tracking data used?	

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CASE STUDY:
Sustaining success and continuing to raise standards

Atlas Primary School is an average-sized primary school serving an inner-city area of Bradford. Almost all children speak English as an additional language and a very high proportion of them are eligible for free school meals. In April 2007 the school was given a notice to improve. Before this, the school had never reached floor targets in mathematics or English. In June 2008 the school was judged to be good.

> *…I believed in the children and the staff came to see that they could make the difference.*
>
> ***Headteacher***

How the school used the cycle and core elements to raise standards

In January 2007, a new headteacher was appointed. The senior staff and LA showed great determination in ensuring that efforts were focused clearly on raising standards above floor targets and improving the quality of learning and teaching. Robust self-evaluation now informs the well thought-out plans for improvement. The cycle for improvement provides a reliable framework for ensuring that the ISP's key themes remain at the forefront of the increasingly effective leadership team.

Close working relationships between the school and the LA have been a major factor in the school's work. The school has built in external moderation of its judgements as part of the cycle and referenced this in the single plan.

> *…having well thought-out and carefully considered plans for improvement…has given us all, staff, parents and children, the confidence to know that we have a clear path to success… we deserve to do well and we can…* ***Deputy headteacher, January 2008***

> *…the head and deputy form a strong team and make effective use of the opportunities external visitors give rise to. I have always been made very welcome and know that challenging questions spur the school on to find increasingly successful answers…*
>
> ***School improvement partner (SIP), 2008***

How the school used the core elements to strengthen school leadership

The single plan continues to provide a sharp focus on standards. It has evolved as part of the school improvement plan and clearly defines what outcomes are expected for all those involved in the school and how the impact of actions is going to be measured. The review cycle is adhered to strictly so that actions do not lapse.

> *I know that I am not just coming to the school to do a job, I am an integral part of the school's work, I am expected to make a difference and the impact of my work will be measured.*
>
> ***LA consultant, 2007***

The school has made effective use of the ISP tracking models and now all staff are able to identify those children who are underachieving and those who are capable of working at a higher level. Teachers think about their practice first and make adjustments to their approach. All staff have a greater awareness of the needs of individual learners and are increasingly confident in judging what children need to learn next.

continued

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…expectations have risen dramatically, entitlement, accountability and action have become part of the school's fabric… ***LA adviser***

Pupil progress meetings with teachers are an established part of the school's routine, taking place at regular half-termly intervals. They are sharply focused on progress and raising standards and have a clear agenda, with the needs of children firmly established as the priority.

…our progress meetings are hard but it is good to have some time devoted to me to talk about my class. I know that I will be supported when there are problems and challenged to ensure that children receive what they are entitled to… ***Key Stage 2 teacher***

The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly. Teachers make effective use of assessment data, planning well-structured lessons targeted at what children need to learn. Substantial improvements in the learning environment contribute to lively, well-paced lessons. Teachers now have a more thorough understanding of children's needs and make more active use of the space around them.

…once I really started to see a close link between my practice and the rate at which children learnt I became more and more excited about getting better and better… ***Key Stage 1 teacher***

…our lessons are interesting and I always feel like my teacher enjoys being in the classroom… ***Year 5 child***

Four years on: the impact of ISP

Standards have shown steady improvement over recent years, rising above floor targets for the first time in 2007. This improvement was sustained in 2008. From starting points that are low on entry to the Foundation Stage, children achieve well to reach standards close to the national average.

Teaching was judged as good by Ofsted in June 2008. Children are given time to respond to helpful comments that teachers make and they have clear targets. Assessment is used well to target children who need extra help. Parents trust and respect the school and children are well cared for and safe.

All those involved in the school have a clear picture about what the strengths are and what still needs to be done. The school has made such effective use of the key themes that they underpin all the work.

ISP helped us to see how all the aspects of our work could be joined together. So many of the tools and processes that we discussed and learnt have become second nature for all of us at Atlas. ***Headteacher***

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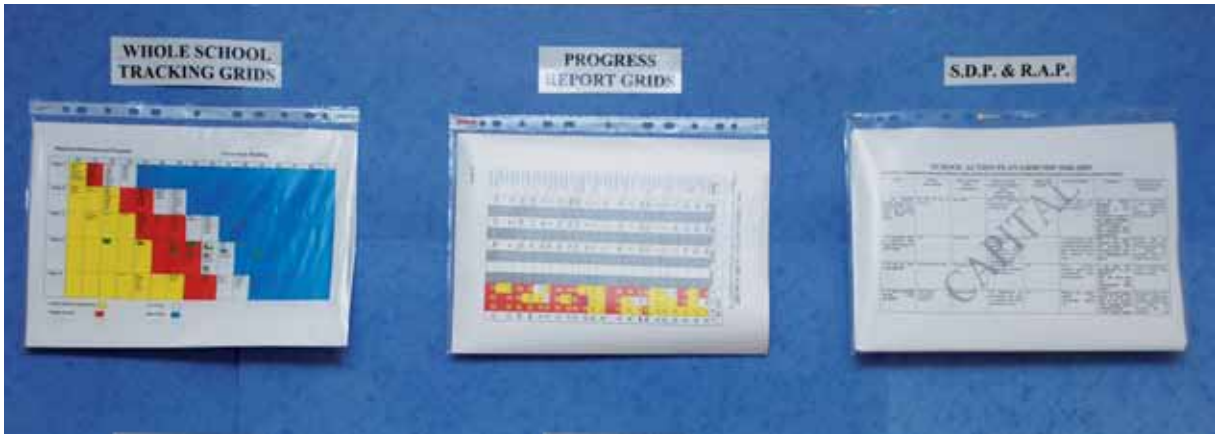
2.2 Tracking

Tracking:

- provides a picture of pupils' progress at whole-school and at class level;
- provides a focus for professional dialogue to support Assessment for Learning (AfL) and personalised learning;
- at whole-school level, enables targeted mapping of intervention to support pupil learning, identifying the progress of individual children who are slow-moving, stuck or in need of support to accelerate progress, achieving or exceeding age-related expectations;
- provides evidence of the impact of actions on progress and strengthens the accountability of teachers and headteachers.



Introduction

The purpose of pupil tracking is to raise standards and ensure that all children make good rates of progress, so that any child falling behind the expectation set for them is identified quickly and appropriate action can be taken.

Within the programme, tracking operates at two levels, providing a picture of children's progress at whole-school and class level. One of the strengths of the ISP model is the use of tracking to provide evidence of the impact of school action on progress. This has raised expectations of what children could and should achieve and has strengthened the accountability of school leaders and teachers.

A strength of the pupil tracking used in ISP is that it is simple, visual and user-friendly. Strategically for leadership teams, it provides a whole-school overview and at classroom level it is used to inform learning and teaching. The specific features are that it:

- brings together prior attainment, progress and age-related expectations;
- highlights vulnerable individuals and groups of children;
- identifies children at risk of becoming stuck, slow-moving or falling behind and ensures that they are supported and enabled to catch up and keep up as early as possible;
- supports the mapping of a range of interventions;
- is based on accurate, informed assessment information;
- is used to monitor an individual child's progress on at least a termly basis;
- includes the SO WHAT? – with progress discussions where specific actions are agreed and followed up.

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Effective pupil tracking systems in ISP

Schools use a range of different systems to track children's progress. Not all tracking systems look the same; the important point is that they are should be fit for purpose. Tracking information does not, in itself, improve progress. For many schools in the ISP an initial focus is to make sure that teachers are interpreting the information provided by their pupil tracking system and translating this into actions in the classroom that make a difference to children's progress and attainment.

Tracking whole-school attainment

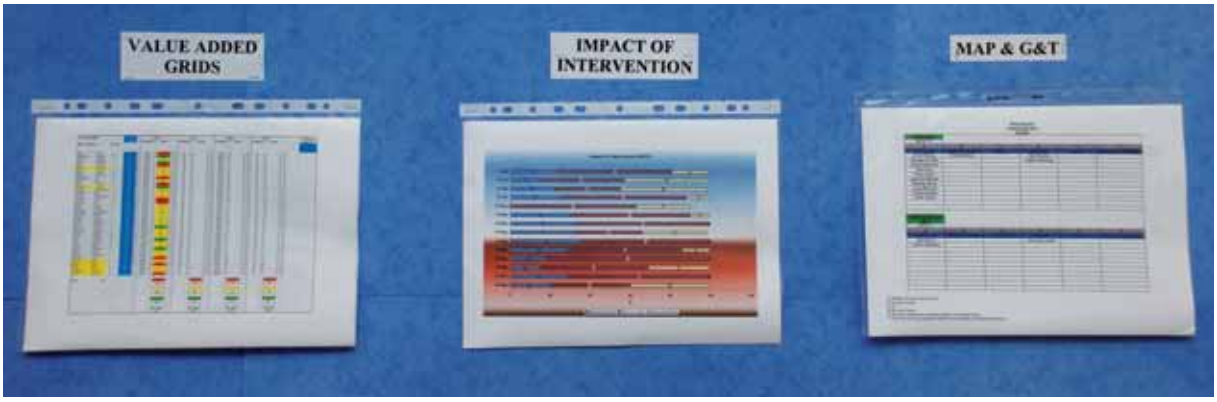
Leadership teams use the whole-school tracker to:

- create an overview of the attainment and progress profile across the school, including combined attainment;
- provide evidence to support self-evaluation and the identification of priorities for the school in the single plan;
- identify individuals and groups of children who are underachieving and need to make accelerated progress to catch up and keep up with their peers;
- make decisions about the deployment of additional adults and resources according to need;
- review children's progress over a term and evaluate the impact of interventions;
- identify classes or cohorts in which progress is particularly good so that this can be shared across the school;
- identify where progress is not as good and provide the basis for professional dialogue about these areas;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the school for discussion with the school improvement partner and the governing body.

Planning for effective intervention

In any school where groups of children are underachieving and/or not making expected rates of progress, it is essential to use pupil tracking to identify target groups of children. The number of children in these groups will vary from school to school. Their accelerated progress towards and beyond age-related expectations is a key outcome on the single plan. The specific actions planned to support progress include improving the quality of learning and teaching, the use of precise interventions and support to meet their specific needs.

Planning effective, precise and timely additional interventions to support the accelerated progress goes alongside improvements in the quality of learning and teaching at whole-class, guided-group and one-to-one support level.



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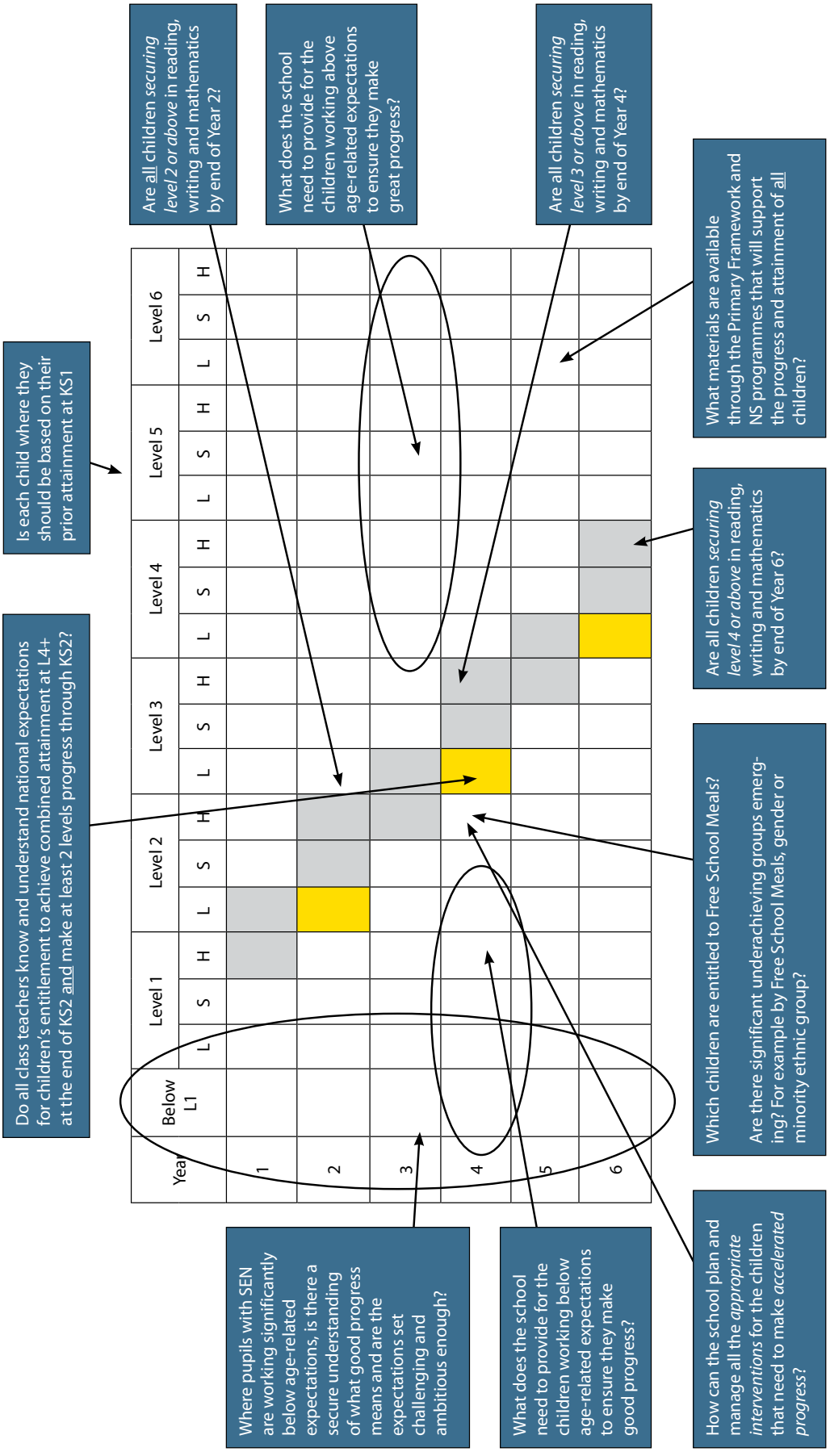
Example: Whole-School Mapping Attainment



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When planning their interventions, many schools aim to ensure that effective pupil tracking systems are in place that:

- *identify individuals and groups of children who are not making sufficient progress;*
- *map the provision for intervention against need rather than established practice;*
- *support planning of the appropriate and effective use of Wave 2 and Wave 3 interventions;*
- *enable children to progress beyond the norms expected for their year group where appropriate;*
- *assist in the evaluation of the progress pupils make as a result of particular interventions, including the evaluation of adjustments and interventions for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or a disability.*

Personalised Learning – a practical guide (Ref: 00844-2008DOM-EN)

Class or cohort tracking into action

For the teacher, and those additional adults who work with children on a daily basis, effective class or cohort tracking is part of AfL. It identifies expected progress over the term and the year, based on prior attainment and age-related expectations. It helps the teacher to plan for the identified target group to make accelerated progress towards and beyond age-related expectations. Class teachers use tracking to:

- celebrate the progress children make and share this with children and families;
- ensure that no child falls through the net and that barriers to progress are identified and addressed swiftly;
- focus on the progress and attainment of all children;
- identify where wider expertise in the school needs to be sought, for example, a learning mentor if there are social and emotional aspects of learning that need to be addressed;
- identify where wider children's services may need to be involved with the progress of individual children, for example, relating to punctuality, attendance, speech therapy, family learning, social and emotional aspects of learning;
- discuss each child's progress with the family and how they can best support the next steps in learning;
- have a professional dialogue with the leadership team and other class teachers about the progress of individuals and groups of children.

Improved tracking has raised our expectations and helped us to realise that progress and attainment isn't just a Year 6 issue. ***Class teacher***

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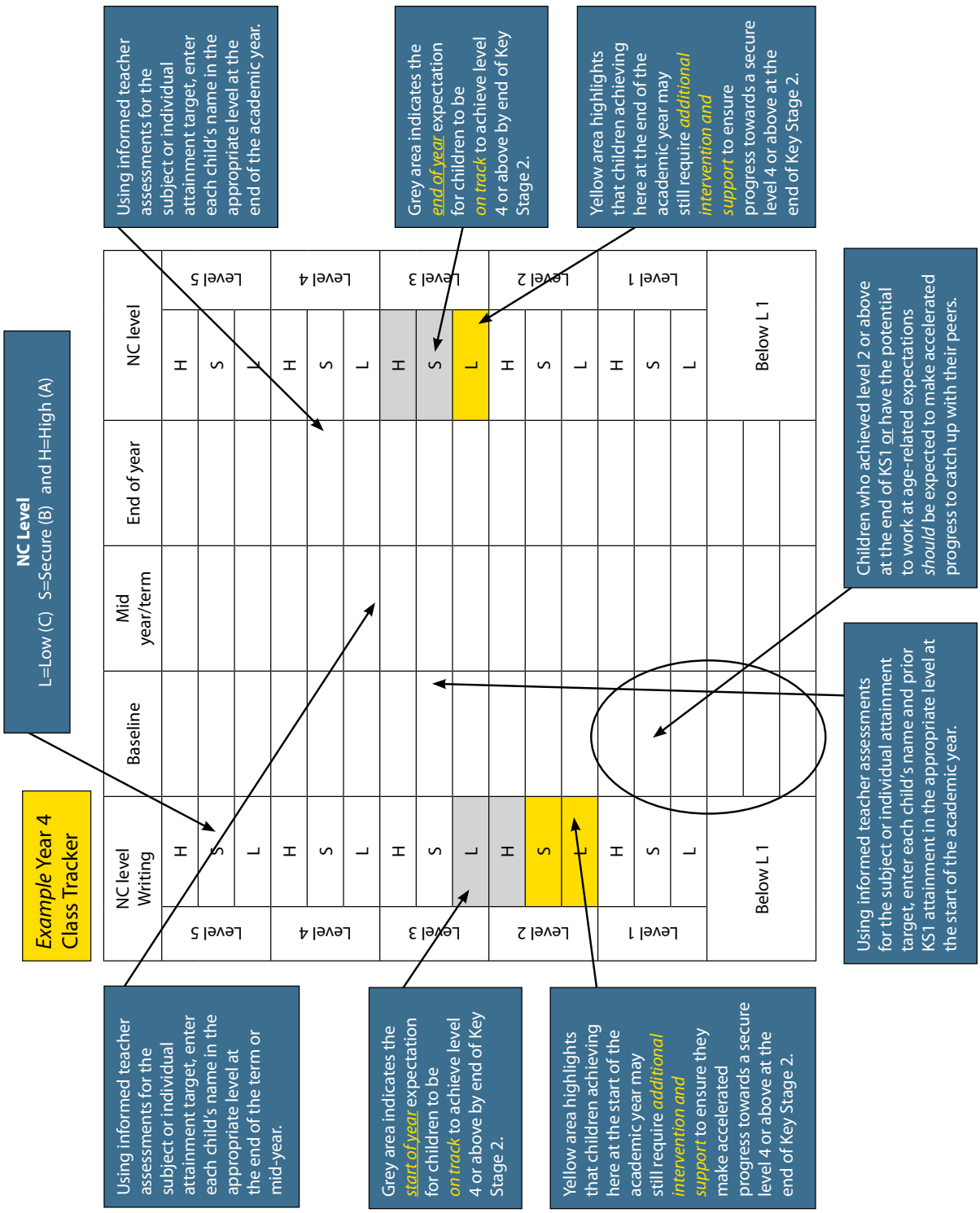
Example: Year 4 Class Tracker



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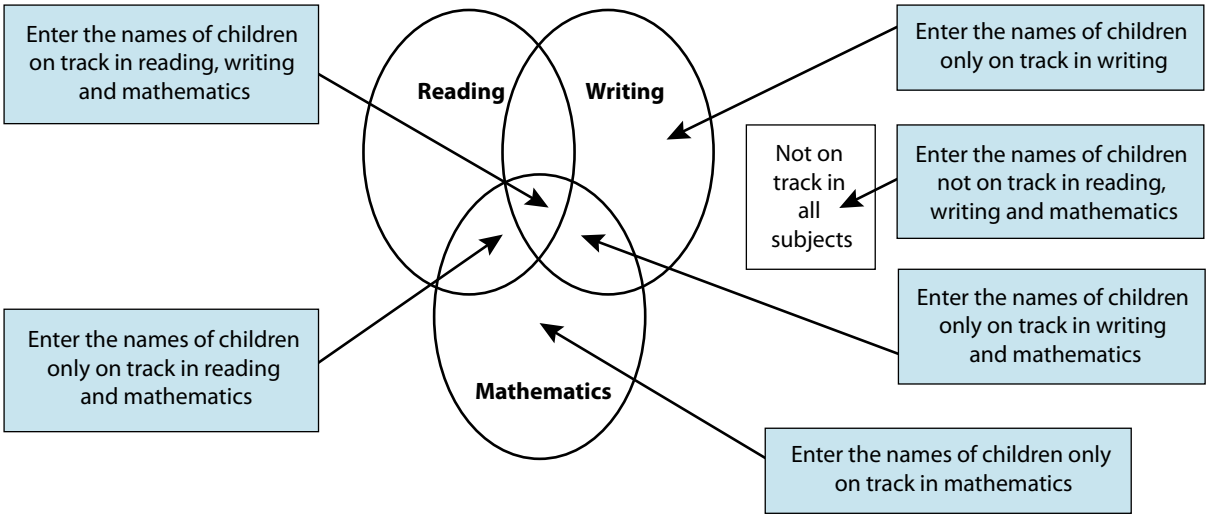
Example mapping of combined attainment for a cohort



See Appendices 2–4 for examples of whole-school and class tracking documents.

Linking tracking to the other core elements of ISP

The data from pupil tracking is the starting point for the School Improvement (SI) cycle of analysis, action, evaluation and review:

- the single plan identifies the expected outcomes for pupils' progress and how the tracking will be used to evaluate impact;
- in the classroom, pupil tracking informs the focus for improving learning and teaching and for whole-school CPD;
- pupil progress meetings draw on the tracking information to analyse and discuss the factors that have supported progress and the next steps for those children who have not made expected progress.

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2.3 The single plan

The **single plan** drives the improvement against school priorities and is informed by self-evaluation and linked to the school improvement plan. It:

- provides a detailed, time-limited map that translates priorities into action;
- aligns the work of the school (and any external support) around the agreed priorities and maintains a sharp focus on these;
- identifies clear lines of accountability for actions and outcomes, and supports all stakeholders in understanding their responsibilities linked to the priorities.

The plan is:

- monitored and evaluated against pupils' progress;
- challenging and achievable;
- a means of communicating planned actions and expected outcomes to the entire school community.

Introduction

Single plans are known variously as school improvement plans or school development plans. They usually run for a year or longer but within these plans will be a section linked to the short-term priorities for children's progress and attainment that is reviewed termly. The impact of this is reported back to the school improvement partner (SIP). In this handbook the term raising attainment plan (RAP) is used to denote the termly plan. Schools and LAs may refer to these as RAPs or they may form the raising attainment section of the single plan that is reviewed termly.

The RAP establishes the termly school improvement cycle of ISP through identifying targets and key actions for the school, and any additional brokered support, to raise standards and accelerate progress of all learners. It sets out the monitoring processes needed to determine whether the success criteria have been met in relation to the targets and to determine the next steps needed. The RAP review uses the evidence from the school monitoring to evaluate the impact against the success criteria and therefore the impact of the school's actions over that term.

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The importance of the RAP in ISP

External evaluations of ISP have identified the RAP and review process as being key to strengthening school leadership, by ensuring that the school focuses on the priorities that are most pressing and that will make a difference to pupils' outcomes.

The RAP is:

- the single, focused short-term plan that maps the school and LA actions;
- targeted to the key priorities that are going to make the difference to children's learning and progress;
- specific to the school's individual priorities and will be owned by the school.

The RAP needs to:

- make clear the expected improvement in attainment to address two levels of progress and attainment in combined English and mathematics by the end of the year;
- address the core issue of underperforming groups such as those receiving free school meals (FSM), those with English as an additional language (EAL) and looked-after children;
- link to the SEF and meet the priorities of the school, as agreed with the SIP.

The RAP needs to have:

- specific, unambiguous outcomes for children's learning and progress;
- limited achievable actions that impact on children's learning and progress;
- quantitative and qualitative success criteria that set out the impact of what the school is trying to achieve;
- clear timelines and expectations to ensure that the pace of improvement is maintained and speedy;
- clearly defined monitoring and evaluation.

The RAP review needs to:

- be a rigorous review by the school, challenged by the LA, of the impact of actions on children's progress and learning;
- be owned by the school and led by the headteacher;
- provide evidence of impact of strengthened school self-review to share with SIPs;
- support the joint identification of priorities with SIPs;
- be on a timeline that ensures it is completed before SIP and LA evaluation of progress.

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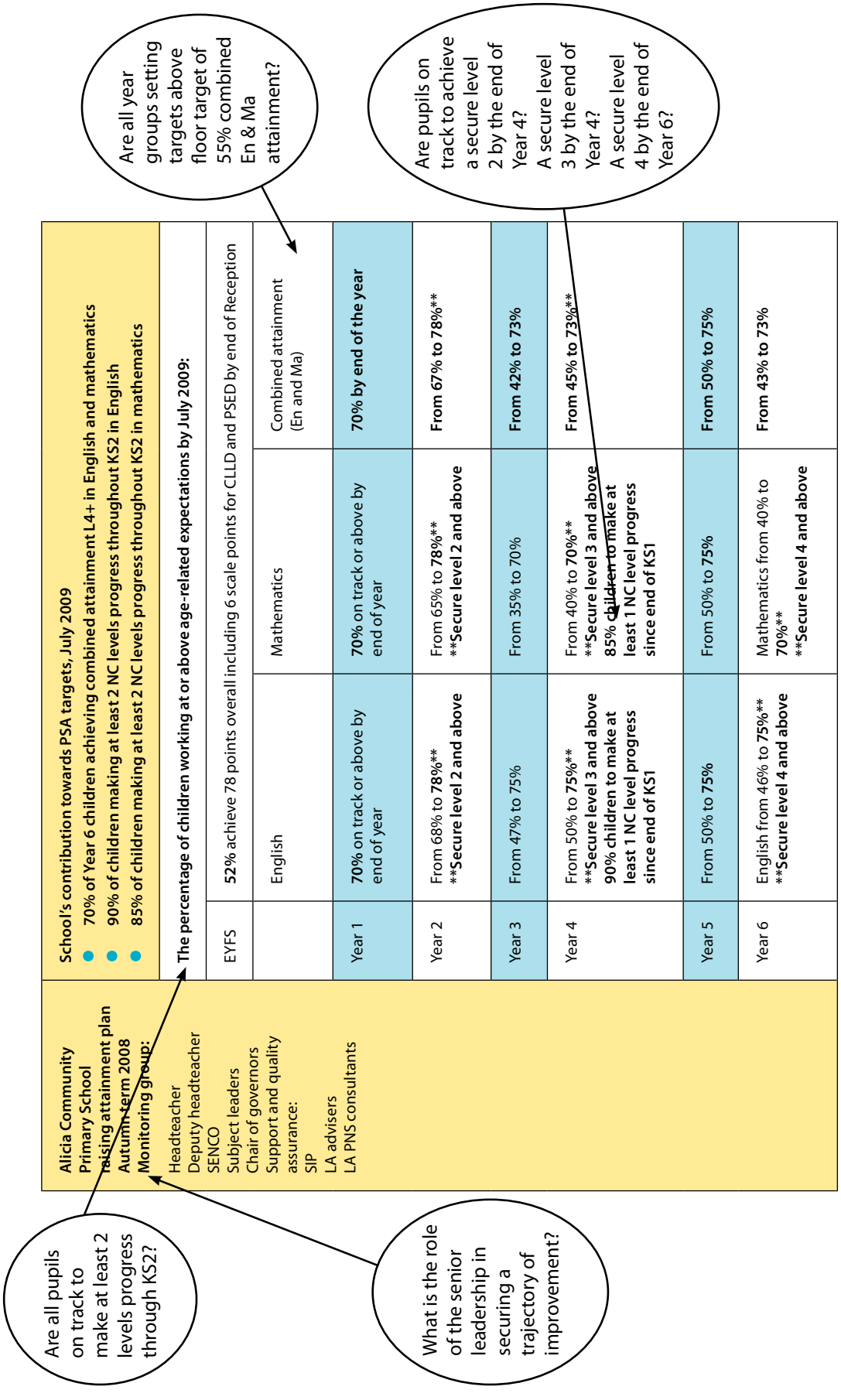
Example RAPs: outcomes and success criteria



Alicia Community Primary School
Raising attainment plan
Autumn term 2008
Monitoring group:
Headteacher
Deputy headteacher
SENCO
Subject leaders
Chair of governors
Support and quality assurance:
SIP
LA advisers
LA PNS consultants

School's contribution towards PSA targets, July 2009

- **70% of Year 6 children achieving combined attainment L4+ in English and mathematics**
- **90% of children making at least 2 NC levels progress throughout KS2 in English**
- **85% of children making at least 2 NC levels progress throughout KS2 in mathematics**

The percentage of children working at or above age-related expectations by July 2009:

EYFS	**52%** achieve 78 points overall including 6 scale points for CLLD and PSED by end of Reception			
	English	Mathematics	Combined attainment (En and Ma)	
Year 1	**70%** on track or above by end of year	**70%** on track or above by end of year	**70% by end of the year**	
Year 2	From 68% to **78%**** ****Secure level 2 and above**	From 65% to **78%**** ****Secure level 2 and above**	**From 67% to 78%****	
Year 3	From 47% to 75%	From 35% to 70%	**From 42% to 73%**	
Year 4	From 50% to **75%**** ****Secure level 3 and above 90% children to make at least 1 NC level progress since end of KS1**	From 40% to **70%**** ****Secure level 3 and above 85% children to make at least 1 NC level progress since end of KS1**	**From 45% to 73%****	
Year 5	From 50% to **75%**	From 50% to **75%**	**From 50% to 75%**	
Year 6	English from 46% to **75%**** ****Secure level 4 and above**	Mathematics from 40% to **70%**** ****Secure level 4 and above**	**From 43% to 73%**	

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Example RAPs: outcomes and success criteria

Are the success criteria strong enough to measure the intended impact?

Are the success criteria clearly linked to pupil outcomes?

Is quality of teaching judged by impact on outcomes for pupils?

Criteria to be reviewed by leadership team at each RAP or single plan review meeting

1. ***Key entitlement is to ensure children progress at least 2 NC levels throughout Key Stage 2 and secure level 4+ in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2***
   a) Accelerated progress of all children in identified target groups in Year 1 to Year 6 to show an increase of at least one NC level by July 2009
   b) Progress of children currently working at or above age-related expectations:
      - to achieve at least a secure NC level 2+ by the end of Year 2
      - to achieve at least a secure NC level 3+ by the end of Year 4
      - to achieve at least a secure NC level 4+ by the end of Year 6
   c) 52% of children in EYFS to achieve 78 points overall including 6 scale points for CLLD and PSED by end of Reception Year
   d) Children working well below (or well above) age-related expectations to make expected progress (negotiated pupil by pupil, based on knowledge of the child and prior attainment)

2. ***Key entitlement to high-quality teaching and learning which enables pupils to reach national expectations or beyond***
   a) The proportion of literacy and mathematics teaching judged good or better' improves from 50% to 80%, based on impact on pupil progress and attainment.
   b) CPD is impacting on changed classroom practice and improved pupil progress.
   c) Targeted support for individual teachers is moving teaching from satisfactory to good.

3. ***School leadership promotes the progression agenda and leadership for learning***
   a) School leadership and management moves from a self-evaluation judgement of 'satisfactory' to 'good'.
   b) **All** staff understand the entitlement of a minimum of two levels of progress and individual pupil and cohort targets and performance management goals reflect this ambition.
   c) **All** pupil progress meetings promote the accountability for pupil progress and use of tracking information to inform teaching and learning in the classroom.
   d) School leadership identifies **all** pupils at risk of falling behind, making slow progress or stuck and plans appropriate additional interventions (including quality first teaching and guided group work).
   e) Governors use the core elements of the Improving Schools Programme to support them in their role.

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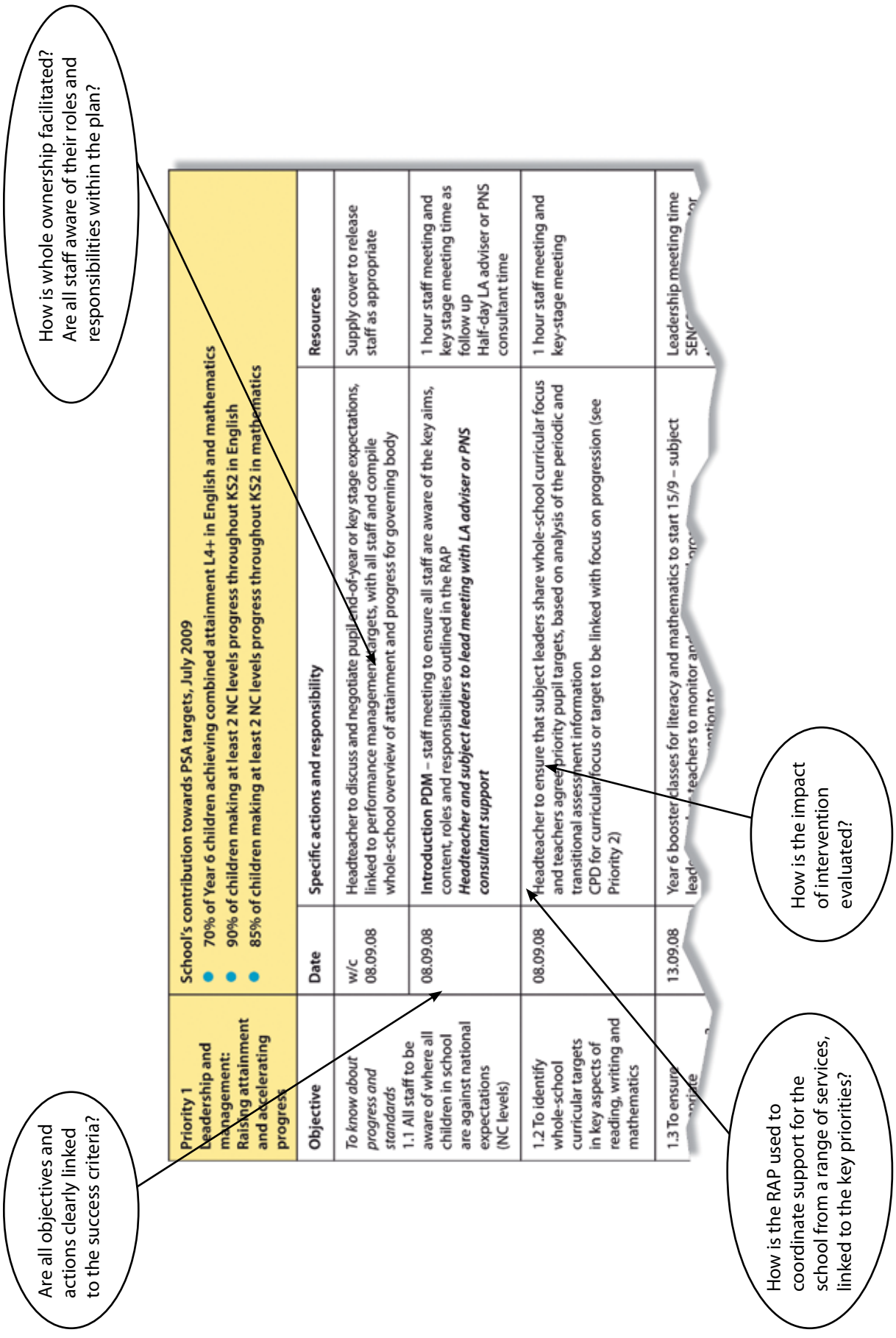
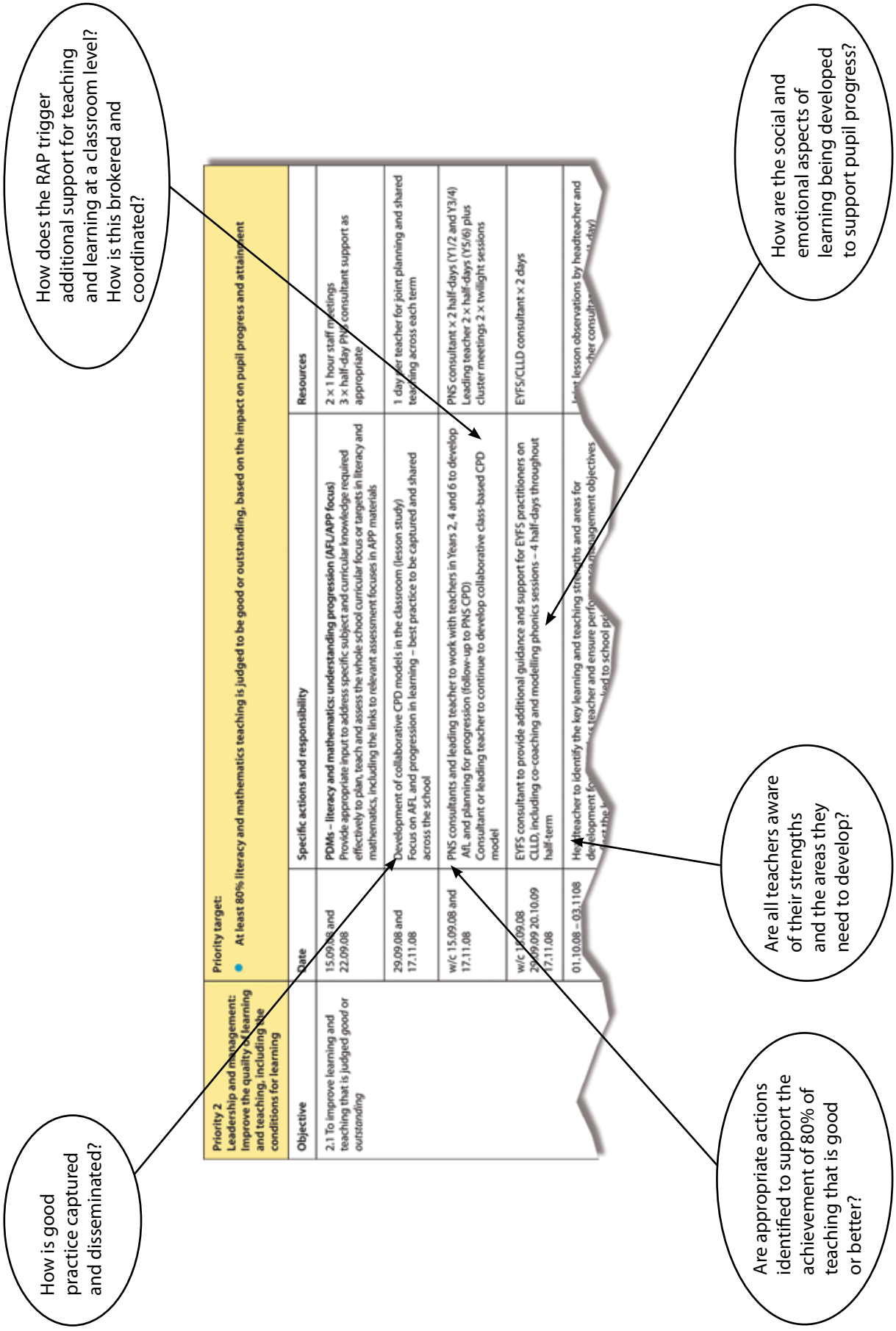
Example RAPs: priorities, actions, monitoring and evaluation



Priority 1 Leadership and management: Raising attainment and accelerating progress	School's contribution towards PSA targets, July 2009 ● 70% of Year 6 children achieving combined attainment L4+ in English and mathematics ● 90% of children making at least 2 NC levels progress throughout KS2 in English ● 85% of children making at least 2 NC levels progress throughout KS2 in mathematics		
Objective	**Date**	**Specific actions and responsibility**	**Resources**
To know about progress and standards 1.1 All staff to be aware of where all children in school are against national expectations (NC levels)	w/c 08.09.08	Headteacher to discuss and negotiate pupil end-of-year or key stage expectations, linked to performance management targets, with all staff and compile whole-school overview of attainment and progress for governing body	Supply cover to release staff as appropriate
	08.09.08	**Introduction PDM** – staff meeting to ensure all staff are aware of the key aims, content, roles and responsibilities outlined in the RAP ***Headteacher and subject leaders to lead meeting with LA adviser or PNS consultant support***	1 hour staff meeting and key stage meeting time as follow up Half-day LA adviser or PNS consultant time
1.2 To identify whole-school curricular targets in key aspects of reading, writing and mathematics	08.09.08	Headteacher to ensure that subject leaders share whole-school curricular focus and teachers agree priority pupil targets, based on analysis of the periodic and transitional assessment information CPD for curricular focus or target to be linked with focus on progression (see Priority 2)	1 hour staff meeting and key-stage meeting
1.3 To ensure [illegible]	13.09.08	Year 6 booster classes for literacy and mathematics to start 15/9 – subject lead[illegible] teachers to monitor an[illegible]	Leadership meeting time SEN[illegible]

Example RAPs: priorities, actions, monitoring and evaluation



Priority 2
Leadership and management: Improve the quality of learning and teaching, including the conditions for learning

Priority target:
- **At least 80% literacy and mathematics teaching is judged to be good or outstanding, based on the impact on pupil progress and attainment**

Objective	Date	Specific actions and responsibility	Resources
2.1 To improve learning and teaching that is judged *good* or *outstanding*	15.09.08 and 22.09.08	**PDMs – literacy and mathematics: understanding progression (AFL/APP focus)** Provide appropriate input to address specific subject and curricular knowledge required effectively to plan, teach and assess the whole school curricular focus or targets in literacy and mathematics, including the links to relevant assessment focuses in APP materials	2 × 1 hour staff meetings 3 × half-day PNS consultant support as appropriate
	29.09.08 and 17.11.08	Development of collaborative CPD models in the classroom (lesson study) Focus on AFL and progression in learning – best practice to be captured and shared across the school	1 day per teacher for joint planning and shared teaching across each term
	w/c 15.09.08 and 17.11.08	PNS consultants and leading teacher to work with teachers in Years 2, 4 and 6 to develop AfL and planning for progression (follow-up to PNS CPD) Consultant or leading teacher to continue to develop collaborative class-based CPD model	PNS consultant × 2 half-days (Y1/2 and Y3/4) Leading teacher 2 × half-days (Y5/6) plus cluster meetings 2 × twilight sessions
	w/c 15.09.08 29.09.09 20.10.09 17.11.08	EYFS consultant to provide additional guidance and support for EYFS practitioners on CLLD, including co-coaching and modelling phonics sessions – 4 half-days throughout half-term	EYFS/CLLD consultant × 2 days
	01.10.08 – 03.11.08	Headteacher to identify the key learning and teaching strengths and areas for development for [illegible] teacher and ensure performance management objectives [illegible] to school priorities	Joint lesson observations by headteacher and [illegible] teacher consultant (1 day)

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Example RAPs: priorities, actions, monitoring and evaluation

Date	Monitoring cycle arrangements and responsibility (against agreed success criteria)	Date	Evaluation of impact on pupil progress mechanisms (against agreed success criteria)
Pupil progress meetings in phases 13.10.08 Pupil progress meeting with headteacher 01.12.08	All staff to attend termly pupil progress meeting with headteacher to discuss individual children's achievements and identify barriers to progress, leading to clear outcomes for further improvements Class teachers and TAs to record progress and achievement and attitudes to learning to refer to in pupil progress meetings. Staff to make termly NC level judgements using APP with identified children, including those identified in target groups	22.10.08 and 10.12.08	**Single plan (RAP) review** Leadership team to use evidence gathered from monitoring activities to report on the impact and progress of all children, including the accelerated progress of the target groups The SIP formally to evaluate the impact of the RAP against the success criteria LA adviser and PNS consultant to quality-assure, model and support as appropriate
Monitoring weeks w/c 13.10.08 and 01.12.08 1.11.08 01.12.08	LA advisers and PNS consultants to support headteacher and subject leaders to gather evidence of impact on standards and progress using a combination of: • quality assurance and analysis of periodic teacher assessment NC level judgements (APP), learning walk, scrutiny of teachers' planning, analysis of selected children's work and discussions with selected target group children • mid-term progress review – SLT to review RAP and evidence from M&E Headteacher and LA adviser jointly sample lessons (including guided sessions with target groups), to look for evidence of impact of PDMs on children's learning and the achievement of the age-related curricular focus to feed into RAP review	**Reporting and accountability mechanisms**	Outcomes from single plan (RAP) review to feed into school SEF and development of next term's single plan (RAP). Headteacher's termly report to governors to reflect on impact of school and LA actions on pupil attainment and progress. Annual SIP report to LA and governing body to reflect the impact of school and LA actions on pupil attainment and progress. Performance management processes and outcomes reflect the impact on pupil attainment and progress.

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How the school and LA work together to make the RAP effective

The role of the school	The role of the LA
Reviewing the data and identifying the priorities	
Headteacher and leadership team identify priorities for improvement from: • review of attainment and progress • school's self-evaluation • school's development plan • school and pupil-level data and analysis *How well are we doing?* *Where are we and where should we be?* *What are the few key things to do now to make a difference?*	SIP review of data How well is the school performing? SIP works with the school to identify appropriate priorities and action to be taken, communicating a sense of urgency *What does the school need to do next to make a difference?*
Writing the RAP 1– Priorities for the RAP	
Getting the priorities right on the plan *Do they focus on impact on learning and progress?* *Will they lead to rapid improvement?*	LA consultant and adviser: • work with school from SIP report and SEF to support and challenge the writing of the RAP • ensure the RAP identifies key priorities and targets for improvement and what these will achieve.
Writing the RAP 2 – Identifying the support, monitoring and evaluation	
What support and challenge do the school need to achieve these? • Identifying the in-school and out-of-school resources • Mapping LA resources on to plan and identifying impact • Linking in the National Strategies resources and CPD *What do we need to monitor, and how do we measure the difference our actions are making?*	SIP brokers support by: • making recommendations about the nature of support to be provided to address issues • communicating with the LA about proposed support to be provided. LA brokers support to make sure that: • support is linked to the priorities • all LA support for the school is aligned on the plan • outcomes for LA support are clearly linked to the RAP and impact on pupils' progress • National Strategies CPD and resources are included

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RAP into action	
RAP is shared with staff and governors, children and parents. CPD and support for learning and teaching *These are our priorities for this term and what we are all going to do to make sure all children make progress*	LA consultant and adviser support All LA support to school plans for outcomes is related to the RAP success criteria
RAP review	
Collecting the evidence Reviewing the impact Identifying successes and barriers Identifying next steps *How do we know that children are doing better?* *How well are we doing?* *Where are we and where should we be?* *What do we need to do next to make a difference?*	LA adviser or consultant support Support to prepare the evidence Challenging impact LA termly review of impact of support to school based on RAP review
Presenting report of impact to SIP Including evaluation of impact from RAP review in termly report to governors *This is the progress we have made and what we are going to do next*	SIP termly visit: • identifies progress against actions taken on an ongoing basis and reports to school and LA LA termly review of school: • evaluates impact and realigns brokered support or challenge as necessary

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The role of the local authority in supporting RAP and review

- At the start of ISP the RAP provides the mechanism to ensure that these core elements are established and are having impact. The RAP is focused on the key short-term priorities to make the difference to pupils' progress.
- The priority at the start of the first term for the ISP consultants and LA advisers is to establish the purpose and format of the RAP and review in the schools.
- Local authorities have approached the writing and reviewing of RAPs in different ways. Some LAs use a suggested format; some provide CPD for leadership teams on effective RAP writing and/or joint quality assurance of RAPs by LA teams.
- The RAP review is established with the school as part of the key termly strategic meeting to evaluate the impact of the work over the term. Again, with some schools, a significant amount of work has been done by the ISP consultant and LA adviser to support and challenge the school to establish effective monitoring systems that enable them to have the evidence at hand, so that the impact of the RAP can be evaluated at the review.
- The LA adviser ensures that the RAP review is a tightly focused meeting, led by the headteacher, but where the school is challenged to evaluate thoroughly the impact on children's progress. The evidence from the RAP review will be fed back to the SIP and will also identify the priorities for the next RAP.
- Effective RAP reviews indicate that the school is able to provide the evidence of impact against the success criteria, and evaluate this impact, and are instrumental in strengthening schools' self-evaluation and their capacity to sustain improvements.

See Appendices 5 and 6 for further guidance on possible questions at the RAP review and on strengthening the RAP review. The CD-ROM accompanying this handbook contains a sample completed RAP and two possible formats for RAPs developed by local authorities.

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2.4 Whole-school systematic CPD

Whole-school systematic CPD:

- focuses professional learning on the agreed priorities;
- provides opportunities for people to learn collaboratively and to develop systems as well as knowledge;
- is directly related to quality-first teaching and leads to changes that have a positive impact on pupils' progress;
- establishes whole-school community responsibility and accountability for improvement.

Supporting teachers' learning in ISP

Continuing professional development for teachers is a core element of the ISP. Within the ISP, children's learning and teachers' learning go hand in hand. Children's learning is at the heart of the programme; a key feature of the improvement process is the identification of significant areas of children's learning that need to be addressed across the whole school. To be able to support this learning, to identify gaps, accelerate progress and assess and plan next steps, teachers need to be secure in their own skills, knowledge and understanding in the areas identified. Continuing professional development within ISP supports teachers in making changes that are necessary in their practice to improve children's progress.

What makes the CPD so successful and effective in ISP is that it is explicitly linked to the priorities for improvement identified by the school. It is school-based with an immediate impact on practice and the quality of learning and teaching. The CPD is designed to support the whole-school priority for improvement and focus the learning of all staff upon this priority. In addition, the range of opportunities provided means that the individual needs of teachers can also be met. The CPD is based on what we know works well.

What works well?

We know from research that the headteacher and the leadership team play a key role in leading effective whole-school CPD. Some key features of effective CPD are that it:

- has a direct relationship with what teachers are doing in their own classrooms;
- involves observation and feedback, especially teachers observing and learning from each other and expert colleagues;
- provides scope for participants to identify the focus of their development in the context of the school's priorities;
- enables staff to be reflective and to focus on their contribution to children's learning and attainment;
- provides opportunities to work with other colleagues and share practice;
- includes opportunities for regular professional discussion;
- is sustained over time;
- includes opportunities for independent study;
- provides opportunities for the sharing of what has worked well.

Headteacher CPD Leading on Learning, Ref: 00484-2007BKT-EN

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CASE STUDY:
Using the learning walk as whole-school CPD in ISP

North Grecian Primary School is a larger-than-average school serving an inner city area. 65% of pupils are entitled to free school meals (FSM). The number of pupils with English as an additional language is above average and rising.

A priority for the school had been to develop the focus on learning. The headteacher recognised how learning walks, modelled in the school by the ISP consultant to build a picture of the strengths and weaknesses in learning and teaching, could be adapted to develop professional skills in ways that enabled teachers to take ownership of the process.

I saw the model as a way to address three concerns: How could the school develop staff as reflective learners? How could we move to deepen teachers' knowledge about learning? How could we ensure that our self-evaluation impacts on change in the classroom? ***Headteacher***

The model introduced works to develop teaching and learning and also feeds back into the monitoring and evaluation process. it involves all staff in focused learning walks three times a year in the first half of each term. Six to eight members of staff take part in each session and, where possible, teachers are paired with teaching assistants (TAs), and across phases.

The sessions involve one hour of classroom visits, followed by one hour of group discussion with a core focus, such as pace. Each pair of staff samples a small number of classes so that, if possible, all classes are visited in each session. They should include age ranges and stages outside their normal sphere of work. Staff focus on the learning, noting the planned learning intention, talking with children and looking in books to see what is being achieved.

Directly after the classroom visits, staff meet with the headteacher for a group discussion about what has been observed. The discussion is supported by linked reading material, which has been provided a week before the learning walk. Crucial to the success of the model is that the agreed etiquette is supportive of development rather than judgmental.

Two years on: the impact on teaching and learning

> *It has shifted the focus from the teacher to the learner; it provides a forum to reflect on current issues in more depth, enables the spread of good practice, has helped to develop much greater consistency and is contributing to the year-on-year raising of attainment at Year 6.* ***Headteacher***

Teachers have taken ownership of the development of their practice, for example, by noticing different approaches to marking in the school and adopting approaches that were more effective. There is a far greater consistency now across the school in working walls, planning, pupils being on task and in behaviour. Teaching assistants have begun to develop awareness of levelling and standards in a way that did not exist before.

> *For the approach to be successful it has to be led from the top – the culture needs to be right.* ***Teacher***

> *Children have found it a really positive experience and enjoy explaining their learning.* ***Teaching assistant***

> *It gives you a feel for whole-school practice. It is very interesting to see how other teachers and TAs work together; I use ideas from what I have seen.* ***Teacher***

The headteacher sees the approach as a route to sharing good practice and developing professional dialogue within the local network of schools.

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Systematic whole-school CPD including professional development meetings

Whole-school CPD addresses those areas of learning the school has identified as priorities for whole-school improvement. Whole-school CPD involves all staff learning about and focusing on the agreed area (for example, an aspect of calculation in mathematics or creating and shaping texts in English) and then applying the strategies agreed upon in their day-to-day work with children. Examples of strategies may include the use of curricular targets; an agreement to trial aspects of assessment for learning (such as focused marking); broadening the use of questioning techniques; developing understanding about periodic assessment or the use of working walls.

In ISP, regular half-termly professional development meetings (PDMs) are the forum for whole-school CPD. The focus for each meeting or series of meetings, and follow-up in-class support, monitoring and evaluation, is linked to the school's priorities detailed in the termly single plan or raising attainment plan (RAP). Professional development meetings have proved to be an effective mechanism for improving the quality of learning and teaching because:

- their regularity maintains the high profile of the priority for improvement and all staff are expected to attend;
- the subject of each meeting is identified on the single plan and linked to clear arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of impact;
- the meetings have a clear structure that addresses pupils' progress in the priority areas and the agreed teaching and learning focus;
- there are opportunities for teachers to identify the next steps in their teaching, related to the focus, and record their progress on a learning log;
- the emphasis on professional discussion enables staff to reflect on progress since the previous meeting, develop current learning and teaching and to review the impact of changes to current practice linked to the PDM theme.

PDMs are tailored to meet the needs of a school. A number of examples have been published and can be adapted. These are available on:

www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies by clicking on the 'Primary' tab and selecting 'Improving schools programme'.

See Appendix 7 for an example of a PDM.

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Structure of professional development meeting	
1	**Review progress** This section of each PDM includes: • a review of progress to date • notes for the senior leadership team to support preparation for the meeting • a review of progress linked to the curricular targets set
2	**Improving learning and teaching – planning and pedagogy** This section includes: • notes for presenters linked to the focus for the meeting • application to units of work for English and mathematics
3	**Putting into practice in school – developing the learning community** The final section of each PDM includes: • notes for presenters • teachers' identification of their own CPD needs and follow-up actions • ensuring that CPD impacts on children's learning

Collaborative learning

In schools where CPD has worked well there is a commitment to collaborative learning and working, with all those involved learning from each other. This is led by the headteacher. Collaborative working and learning emphasises that all staff, including teaching assistants, learning mentors, teachers and LA partners, have contributions to make to whole-school improvement. Collaborative learning and working goes beyond the PDMs, providing opportunities for teachers to be supported in the classroom, thus developing their own expertise in school. This support can draw on the expertise either of an external consultant or within the school. The collaboration builds capacity to sustain improvements because the school develops a 'can do' culture.

Schools funded for the programme are supported by the ISP consultant. This support may include leading PDMs as well as enabling other staff to take on this role. The consultant works alongside subject leaders to develop their skills and abilities, for example, through joint book scrutiny, planning scrutiny and lesson observation.

00314-2009BKT-EN
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CPD and individual needs

Consultants also work with individuals, providing in-class support, and modelling ways of working such as setting up working walls and coaching to promote the development of new skills. Teachers are encouraged to try out and refine their use of the teaching and learning strategies and to monitor and evaluate the impact on pupils' progress.

CASE STUDY: CPD in action

Moorside Primary School, in Lancashire, has a systematic programme of CPD linked to priorities.

> *What really made the difference for us was when we started to adapt the way in which consultants were used so that they worked inside the classroom directly with teachers. Our results started to improve dramatically.* ***Headteacher***

The headteacher particularly appreciated how the ISP consultant worked to develop first-name relationships with the staff and work with all members of staff. In addition to the direct classroom input from consultants, the supply budget was increased to enable teachers to have half-termly surgeries with consultants to discuss concerns and have support for planning.

Other training in school is now usually led by staff and a programme of paired observations, senior with less senior staff, is used both to observe lessons and to scrutinise children's work. To ensure this is having an impact, the Standards group monitors the process.

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2.5 An explicit focus on learning and teaching

An explicit focus on learning and teaching:

- establishes the context from which school leaders can lead improvement through a focus on learning;
- identifies the key areas of learning and teaching (including the use of whole-school curricular targets) that are priorities and ensures a common language for adult learners to talk about children's learning;
- identifies the focus around which teacher knowledge and understanding is to be secured and supports increased pupil involvement in this key area of learning;
- identifies quality-first teaching as an entitlement for all children.

In the ISP, children's learning is inextricably linked to teachers' learning. For children to make accelerated progress, particularly in previously low-attaining schools, the quality of teaching must be good. The programme aims to improve the quality of the teaching through a focus on specific teaching and learning strategies, linked to teachers' own professional development. Teachers are supported to try out and refine their use of the teaching and learning strategies and to monitor and evaluate the impact on pupils' progress.

Developing quality-first teaching

All children are entitled to make good progress through school and to meet agreed age-related expectations. For children to make good progress, teaching needs to be consistently good throughout the school and setting. In many schools there is variability in the quality of teaching, including pockets of teaching that are less than good, and a lack of consistency in the quality of day-to-day teaching. This consistently good teaching is what ISP is aiming to achieve through:

- improving the use of specific teaching strategies;
- using the *Primary Framework*;
- tracking in the classroom;
- using systematic day-to-day and periodic assessment, including APP, to inform tracking and next steps in learning;
- planning precise, timely interventions at Wave 2 and Wave 3;
- using curricular targets as a tool for whole-school improvement;
- developing of the environment for learning;
- promoting positive learning behaviours to motivate and develop skills for learning.

Improving the use of specific teaching strategies

The ISP identifies particular teaching strategies that support children's learning. Professional development meetings (PDMs) focus on the use of each one of these strategies. Currently these include sharing objectives, questioning, modelling and demonstrating, problem-solving and speaking and listening. Examples of these meetings and how they are followed up in schools are available on the CD-ROM and discussed in section 2.4, Whole-school systematic CPD, in this handbook.

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Tracking in the classroom

For the teacher, and those additional adults who work with children on a daily basis, effective class or cohort tracking is part of AfL. It identifies expected progress over the term and the year, based on prior attainment and age-related expectations. It helps the teacher to plan for the identified target group to make accelerated progress towards and beyond age-related expectations.

Interventions at Wave 2 and Wave 3

Planning precise and timely interventions supports groups of children who are underachieving to catch up and keep up. In the ISP, such interventions take place both inside and outside the classroom. Some individual children will need one-to-one support. Other groups of learners may benefit from short-term targeted intervention, using published programmes.

Using the *Primary Framework*

The *Primary Framework* is the key tool for supporting the planning, teaching and assessment of literacy and mathematics. The ISP schools have access to all National Strategy resources, including additional support from literacy and mathematics consultants. The flexibility offered by the *Primary Framework* helps teachers to draw on a wide repertoire of teaching approaches to ensure that every child follows their pathway towards age-related outcomes and at least two levels of progress across a key stage. The NS Primary Framework is available on: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies by clicking on the 'Primary' tab and selecting 'Primary framework'.

Using day-to-day and periodic assessment

For schools in the programme, AfL is a crucial area for improvement that can make a big difference to children's progress.

> *We know what a difference it makes to pupils' learning when they and their teachers have a really good understanding of where pupils are in their learning, where they need to go next and how best to get there – which is what assessment for learning is all about. Many schools are already seeing the benefits of using assessment for learning practices and resources, but I want all schools to have access to high-quality training and support so that assessment for learning can be embedded in all classrooms.*
>
> **Assessment for Learning Strategy (Ref: 00341-2008)**

Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) is a structured approach to teacher assessment, developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in partnership with the National Strategies. It supports teachers by providing clear criteria against which judgements can be made and shapes future planning and targets for improvement. See *Assessing Pupils' Progress* on the Standards site: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies after clicking on the 'Primary' tab.

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Curricular target setting

Whole-school curricular targets layered for each year group

Whole-school curricular targets enable schools to bring teaching and learning in specific areas of English and mathematics into sharp focus. The targets are a means to raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in key areas of learning and teaching in English and mathematics that have been identified as whole-school priorities. These areas are identified as priorities for improvement across the school, after an audit of attainment and progress based on evidence from the school's self-evaluation. The use of whole-school curricular target setting is therefore linked to the school's cycle of improvement, identified within the single plan, linked to teacher CPD, made explicit through learning and teaching, and monitored and evaluated by the leadership team. They are part of a whole-school approach to strengthening accountability for children's progress, raising expectations and supporting the achievement of age-related expectations.

Layering curricular targets

- Schools select curricular target areas to address each term, at a whole-school level, for example, understanding and interpreting texts in reading, or calculating in mathematics. Such whole-school curricular targets are based on key strands of the Primary Framework.
- Layer into year-group targets, using age-related objectives from within the strand. The layering of whole-school curricular targets strengthens understanding of progression in learning in this area across the school, from Foundation Stage to Year 6.
- Whole-school systematic CPD focuses on the development of the knowledge, skills and understanding teachers need in the selected areas of learning.
- The whole-school layered curricular targets are identified in teachers' planning and then focused on explicitly in teaching and learning in every year group, strengthening assessment for learning within the area of learning. Teachers emphasise the whole-school target at different points in a term or half-term, integrating it into selected units of work.
- Children are involved in assessing their own progress towards the achievement of curricular targets. To support children's engagement in their learning, the age-related whole-school curricular targets are displayed, in appropriate language, in the environment along with relevant prompts, support materials and steps to success.

  Targets help you because they show you what you are good at and it sort of boosts your confidence. And you can keep a check on your progress and you can practise what you need to learn.

  Year 6 child

There is more information on setting curricular targets on the attached CD-ROM.

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CASE STUDY:
Improving the quality of learning and teaching

At Harehills Primary School, in Leeds, developing a whole-school approach to curricular target setting was crucial to improving the quality of learning and teaching and ensuring a consistent approach across all year groups. Careful analysis of assessment data (from tests and teacher assessments) identified trends in terms of strengths and weaknesses at cohort and whole-school level. Each term curricular targets were developed, using the *must*, *should*, *could* approach to a core whole-school issue.

The layering of the targets has helped demonstrate age-related expectations in real terms and teachers have developed better understanding of progression. They have helped teachers see where children 'should be' and where they actually 'were' and, in turn, facilitate discussion about core barriers to learning (e.g. at pupil progress meetings). Each term's target area is also reflected in the whole-school CPD to ensure that 'learning and teaching' is moved forward, developing pedagogy and subject knowledge within this key area.

The school believes that the targets played a key role in involving children in their own learning and ensured accelerated progress towards age-related expectations.

The targets have also encouraged staff to reconsider their use of the learning environment. Out of this has developed effective use of working walls to support pupils in their own learning.

The school now aims to develop personalised learning further and has recently moved towards a more 'group and individual' approach to target setting. However, focusing on common whole-school curricular areas in terms of CPD remains key.

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Curricular target-setting in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Considerable work has been done across EYFS and National Strategies to integrate the approach to curricular target setting across the phases and to make it relevant to EYFS.

Extract from *Improving outcomes for children in the Foundation Stage in maintained schools* (Ref: 03960-2006BKT-EN)

CASE STUDY (extract): Curricular target setting in the Foundation Stage, Tameside local authority

- Foundation Stage targets must derive from The *Early Years Foundation Stage* (Ref: 00261-2008). It is not appropriate to water down the school target into a simpler form; we must look at the stepping stones and goals and decide on what the most appropriate 'next steps' are for this child, for this group, for this class.
- Foundation Stage targets relate to all six areas of learning. They support the whole-school focus but may not necessarily be literacy and numeracy targets. The area of learning will depend on the needs of the group of children at that time.
- Foundation Stage targets should link with the planned focuses for work with the Foundation Stage children. They should be part of everyday practice and not something extra, an 'add-on'.

Whole-school focus Problem solving

Year 2 target Explaining how we have worked out a problem

Possible learning focuses for the EYFS taken from the FS profile scales

Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy: NLC8

Uses developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems

Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy: C8

Uses developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems

Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy: SSM8

Uses developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems

Knowledge and understanding of the world: KUW5

Asks questions about why things happen and how things work

Looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change.

(Many other points were also highlighted but these were the most relevant for our children at this time)

Foundation Stage curricular focus

ELG: Use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems

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Developing the environment for learning

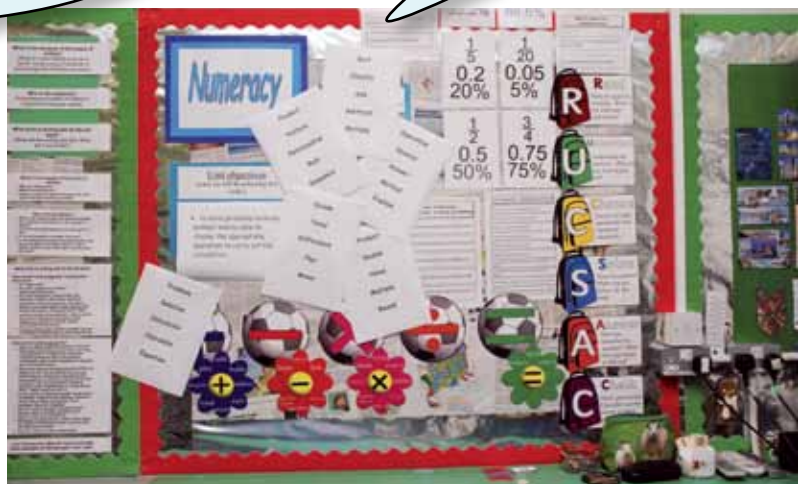
Schools in the programme have developed the environment for learning through the use of working walls, steps to success, learning prompts and interactive displays. This has been an area of visible and early success. Evaluations show that these had a positive impact on children's learning and children were using the prompts to support their learning.

School is brighter.

I'm absorbed in my work.

We concentrate more.

I love my learning now.



Quotes from children at Highfield Primary School, Plymouth.

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Classroom environment: checklist for effective learning

This is used by teachers to audit their own classroom environment or as a monitoring or observation tool by peers or the school's senior management team.

Checklist for effective learning

Focus area	Desirable elements	Evidence
Sharing objectives and reviewing learning	• Objectives displayed and discussed • Key questions displayed and used in lesson starts and plenary: What? Why? How? When? • Key questions and prompts available to support children's talking and thinking about learning • Use of key questions or grids to trigger prior knowledge • Curriculum displays include statements and questions to highlight key learning points	
Curricular targets	• Key literacy and mathematics targets are displayed • Classroom displays, visual prompts and resources support key curricular target focuses, e.g. structural organisers	
Vocabulary	• Key words and technical vocabulary displayed for a variety of curriculum areas • Vocabulary referred to and used within teaching • Definitions of words discussed with children • Collections of words or phrases to support key writing forms, e.g. sticky notes, cards, pocket charts	
Positive affirmations	• Positive affirmations are displayed in the classroom and referred to regularly • The teacher actively fosters positive attitudes and behaviours • Successes are celebrated	

- **Are the resources, displays and prompts used as a teaching tool?**
- **How interactive are they?**
- **Have you also got displays that celebrate children's work?**

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Positive learning behaviours

Children who are confident, enthusiastic and effective learners make better progress. Engaging children in their learning and helping them to be responsible for their learning is an important part of the ISP's explicit focus on learning and teaching. Schools in the programme have been able to use social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials with the ISP core elements to support children to become better learners.

CASE STUDY: The ISP and SEAL

Birchwood Junior School used the ISP to establish rigorous whole-school improvement systems to raise standards. Central to the success of the programme was the introduction of the SEAL materials.

The school had identified several areas that it felt were holding back children's learning:

- children's skills in understanding and managing their feelings;
- working cooperatively in groups;
- demonstrating resilience in the face of setbacks.

The SEAL materials were used because they provide a whole-school framework to help to develop children as effective learners.

The identification of a member of the leadership team to drive the SEAL programme forward was important to its success. This ensured that SEAL was integrated into the school's RAP. For each term, key actions, success criteria, monitoring evaluation and resources were planned. The plan was then reviewed and updated at the middle and end of each term.

The Birchwood case study is available on the CD-ROM.

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CASE STUDY:
Including children in their learning

Lordswood Infant School serves a large estate in Chatham, Kent. The school's partner junior school was invited to join the ISP in 2004. The LA extended support to the infant school to strengthen school improvement across both schools.

> *It was a very exciting opportunity for us, we had many procedures in school…but we were very aware as a school that we were inconsistent in some of our processes.*
>
> ***Headteacher***

A decision was made to use ISP to develop wider use of 'pupil voice', to inform not only learning and teaching, but also strategic decision-making in the school.

The school had identified that children of all ages learn best when they have ownership of that learning and quickly started to involve children in the actual planning process.

Before each unit of work, children are given some stimulus related to the topic and then asked what they might like to learn, do, see, visit and make within the forthcoming unit. This is then taken to a planning meeting where the children's views, questions and ideas are built into medium-term plans. At all times content is cross-referenced against the National Curriculum and the National Strategies Primary Framework to ensure content is age-related.

As a result of this process the children now see their world reflected in the school.

> *By listening to what the children were saying we actually changed the way we taught completely.*
>
> ***Headteacher***

Through ISP, the headteacher and the senior leadership team (SLT) very quickly realised that the potential for pupil voice in monitoring and evaluating processes was under used. The school gradually developed systems for collecting children's views at all levels to inform strategic decision-making, with the priorities for the single plan truly reflecting the needs of the children.

> *As adults, we need to listen to what children are saying, we need to understand how children learn, we need to understand what engages the children, so it's important to ask them what engages them.*
>
> ***Headteacher***

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2.6 Pupil progress meetings

Pupil progress meetings (PPMs):

- provide a regular timetabled forum for analysis and discussion of the factors that have supported progress and identify collaborative actions to overcome barriers to progress;
- require teachers to share evidence of pupils' progress with members of the leadership team and be accountable for progress;
- provide a forum to answer questions which tracking poses and move tracking off the page and into actions for learning;
- support the development of pupil conferencing, enabling children to reflect on, control and improve their learning;
- demonstrate and celebrate success;
- provide a forum to support teachers and their professional development.

The development of pupil progress meetings in the ISP

At the start of the ISP, pupil progress meetings were used by a few schools but those using them could see the impact that they had on pupils' progress. They found that they supported the development of the school as a learning community through the way that they engaged children, parents and carers in discussions about children's learning. This dialogue raised the profile of learning in the school. In turn, this helped the teachers and school staff became more focused on children's learning, identifying successes and barriers to learning, and addressing them.

Over the last five years the use of pupil progress meetings has become widespread. Local authorities and schools working with the ISP have developed ways of using them. Feedback from schools about PPMs has been so strong and positive that they are now firmly established within the core elements.

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Key features of pupil progress meetings

At pupil progress meetings teachers share their evidence of the progress that children have made; they identify what has supported children's learning and what has got in the way. They decide upon the next steps to support children's progress. Pupil progress meetings:

- take place on a termly or half-termly basis;
- focus particularly on those children who have previously been identified as needing to make accelerated progress (the target group) and those children who have made more or less progress than expected;
- are based on the information that the teacher has about the children's progress over the term or half-term;
- use the full range of assessment information from day-to-day, periodic and transitional assessments;
- can include evidence from children about their learning;
- are a dialogue between teachers and the senior leadership team about what's worked and what needs to change to support the children's learning;
- plan and record the next steps for the school to take (in class and beyond) to meet the children's needs;
- are professional learning for teachers, as the discussion and challenge helps them to reflect on and evaluate the impact of their teaching;
- help leadership teams to pinpoint the needs of underperforming groups across the school, or an area of the curriculum that would benefit from whole-school CPD;
- provide detailed evidence to support discussions with parents about their children's learning.

For the leadership team, PPMs are not just a valuable part of the school's monitoring, evaluation and review process; they also provide opportunities for the team to strengthen their role in leading on learning.

- Many headteachers find that these discussions give them a detailed picture of progress and teaching in schools. The leadership team brings to these discussions their additional knowledge about the children.
- The discussion about overcoming barriers enables staff to think beyond what happens within the classroom and plan to work with the wider community and wider services. For example, one headteacher organised a 'walking bus' to collect those children whose family circumstances hindered their punctual arrival at school. Not only did this improve attendance and progress, but it also improved social and speaking and listening skills, which developed in conversations that took place as children were collecting other children.

For school staff, the professional dialogue between colleagues at a PPM supports their collaborative professional learning.

- Discussing the evidence for pupils' progress, identifying barriers and next steps helps teachers and TAs to identify their own successes, their professional strengths and their learning needs.
- Pupil progress meetings are an enormously positive force in schools, as they support the expectation that no problem is insurmountable. In schools where pupil progress meetings are well established, the actions planned as a result of the meetings range widely, from ensuring a child is identified to answer questions in class to involving the speech therapy service.

For children, PPMs are also a structured way of involving children in discussion about their learning and progress. They are a learning conversation.

- The discussions help children to talk about what they have done well, what they have learned, how they did it, what was difficult about it and what might help them in future. They support children to reflect on, review and improve their learning.

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The range of pupil progress meetings

All pupil progress meetings need to share the features described above. Schools in the programme organise their pupil progress meetings in different ways. The key difference is who attends them. This influences how pupil progress meetings are used as part of monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress. Key is that the model used is right for the circumstances of the individual school and provides the leadership team and the teachers with the specific information they need to tailor teaching and learning to children's needs.

The main types of pupil progress meetings are those between senior leadership and individual teachers as described above.

Meetings with teachers are an established part of the school's routine; they take place at regular half-termly intervals. They are sharply focused on progress and raising standards and have a clear agenda, with the needs of children firmly established as the priority.

> *…our progress meetings are hard but it is good to have some time devoted to me to talk about my class. I know that I will be supported when there are problems and challenged to ensure that children receive what they are entitled to.* ***Key Stage 2 teacher***

Some schools find **whole-staff pupil progress meetings** a good starting point to develop the whole-school focus on learning and confidence and trust in discussions about the impact teaching has on progress and learning.

Some larger schools have **year or phase team pupil progress meetings**. They find these useful to discuss children's progress in detail within a particular cohort or year-group particularly when children are taught by different teachers for different subjects

Appendix 9 is an example of a format to record PPM.

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Pupil progress meetings: talking with pupils

Talking with children underpins all the pupil progress meetings because what they say about their learning is a crucial part of the evidence about pupils' progress. Talking with children ensures that they have a voice in the monitoring and evaluation of their progress. These 'learning conversations' help children to talk about what they have done well, what they have learned, how they did it, what was difficult about it and what might help them in future. They support children to reflect on, review and improve their learning. Schools that involve children in pupil progress discussions find that the children's perspective adds significant information and children's engagement in the process supports their learning.

These meetings:

- are organised for individual, pairs or groups of children;
- help children to talk about what they have achieved over the term or half-term, how they know that and what they need to do next;
- help children to identify what supports them as learners and what gets in the way, and build their capacity to reflect on learning;
- help children to become more actively involved in their own learning;
- build confidence and self-esteem as they help children to feel respected, listened to and taken seriously;
- inform the next steps for learning, leading to improvements in the quality of learning and teaching and supporting personalised learning;
- are part of the school strategies to involve children more in the life of the school and to strengthen pupil voice.

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CASE STUDY: Meetings in progress

At Countess Wear Community School in Exeter, Devon, these meetings are now established in each class teacher's half-termly schedule of activities. Progress meetings involve the teacher and a small group of up to six targeted children. They offer real insight into the impact of particular strategies or interventions, and how close the children are to achieving end-of-year targets.

The meetings typically last about 20 minutes and are worked into class time, in the same way as guided reading or numeracy sessions. The idea is to target up to six children each half-term for one meeting. During the meetings, teachers use simple and open-ended phrases such as 'show me how...', 'how do you know...' or 'explain why...'. Year 2 teacher and mathematics coordinator Annie Mossop says:

> *We try to ask the children individual questions to make sure they've understood the learning strategy – that's the greatest use of pupil progress meetings.*

Resources are laid out on a table, so teachers can evaluate which are most effective, or whether children are using the most appropriate apparatus for a given task. Annie adds:

> *Children who are less confident in the strategies they're using are more ready to share in a small group when they have resources in front of them to help with their explanations.*

Reception teacher and deputy headteacher Duncan Nelms says that pupil progress meetings support other assessment methods by bringing into focus the next steps for development. He adds:

> *Several of us found that children weren't commonly using number lines, so that has now become a focus of our next raising attainment plan.*

But headteacher Jill Mahon believes that pupil progress meetings are about much more than assessment and planning. She says:

> *Reviewing can really embed learning. It's also a way of raising self-esteem. For our children, to be involved in talking about their learning is a very big thing. They have previously tended to be passive learners and thought of learning as something difficult to do.*

Extract from Meetings in Progress by Margaret Kubicek in *Primary Teachers* magazine, July 2008. Copyright© Margaret Kubicek.
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Further information about pupil progress meetings, including an interactive guide, is available online at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies by clicking on the 'Primary' tab and selecting 'Improving schools programme'.

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Section 3 The ISP in action

3.1 The local authority and the role of the ISP

Introduction

The ISP is a supported school improvement programme. The support is provided by the LA, working with schools, to enable them to use the programme to raise standards and build capacity for sustainable improvement. The majority of LAs receive funding through the Standards Fund for designated consultant support, an LA adviser and for the schools to use to provide time for staff development.

The national support for the programme is for all LAs (and schools), whether they are funded or not. This includes the development of materials, regional workshops for LA school improvement teams, tailored support for individual LAs and opportunities for LAs to work together to transfer effective practice and contribute to the programme's development.

The focus of the ISP has been on whole school improvement in low-attaining schools: those schools that are the LA's 'core business'. This has meant that a significant emphasis has been on the strengthening of LA systems to work with their priority schools. The 2004 Education and Inspections Act and subsequent guidance provides significant new measures to ensure that fewer schools become a cause for concern. The 2008 Statutory Guidance on schools causing concern says:

> *Local authorities are responsible for enabling schools to respond to the challenge provided by the SIPs. Where challenge from SIPs indicates that schools will need additional support to deliver against these priorities and targets, it is the local authorities' role to design, commission and broker a suitable package of support and monitor its success…*

The ISP supports the LA to do this in three ways:

- At the LA strategic level, it provides a robust model for the LA to audit, plan, action and review impact in their priority schools.
- At school level, the LA information provided to the SIP and the LA from the self-evaluation relating to cycle and core elements shows the LA how robust the school's self-evaluation is, and how strong the capacity to improve.
- This, in turn, allows the LA to tailor its support and challenge to the schools to ensure that the school is improving and has the capacity to sustain this.

For the ISP to make a difference to the LAs' work with priority schools, it needs to be at the heart of school improvement services.

Using the ISP processes and the programme in an LA

The ISP provides a clear framework within which LAs can support and challenge schools. The school improvement processes support all schools and the programme brings together the work of the whole-school improvement team, and of the wider children's services to address the school's priorities. This can be differentiated as part of the LA's intensive, targeted and universal provision for schools.

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Intensive provision

For all LAs that have been funded for ISP, it has been part of their intensive support for their priority schools, and it has been particularly targeted at schools where attainment is low and/or groups of children are underperforming or making slow progress. The ISP consultant, supported by the SIP or LA adviser, works alongside the school to establish and embed the core elements through a carefully planned sequence. This coaching model supports the school as it takes ownership of the programme, making it its own and using the systems to continue sustaining improvements. The SIP and LA adviser provide the rigorous challenge to ensure that the pace of change is sharp and that the changes are effectively led and owned by the school leadership team. This model has also been taken on by a number of non-funded LAs as the way they choose to work with their priority schools.

Targeted provision

The aim of the targeted use of the ISP in LAs and schools has been to extend the reach of the core elements to other schools that the LA has identified as vulnerable, for example, those schools where leadership is new or where standards are at national expectations but progress is below expectations. In these schools the model has been a useful guide for improvement and the cycle and core elements sharpened the focus on children and their progress throughout the schools.

Universal provision

Several LAs have used the ISP cycle and core elements as part of their universal provision for schools by sharing it with school leaders at headteachers' conferences. In some LAs the core elements have become a focus for universal CPD, for example, how to set up and run pupil progress meetings. Others use the model as the framework for their SIP visits to all schools. Overall the feedback from all schools is that the model makes sense, it is what good schools do, but that it is helpful to have a common language in which to discuss improvement and a framework and statements against which to self-evaluate.

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Using the ISP cycle to strengthen the LAs' work with their priority schools

The ISP cycle that has been so successful in supporting schools to build ongoing sustainable improvements provides LAs with the structure to support their strategic and operational working with their priority schools.

- The cycle starts with the LA review of the data – qualitative and quantitative – to identify the priority schools.
- This feeds into the LA plan, which identifies the priorities for LA action and expected outcomes against pupils' progress and how the aligned LA support across the school improvement and wider children's services sectors will work together to achieve these outcomes.
- This is shared and supported by regular team and sector CPD, which feeds into the actions in schools.
- The impact of these is reviewed termly, against pupils' progress, to ensure that the planned LA activity with schools is resulting in improved pupils' progress. From the termly review, changes are made to the LA support and challenge to the schools to ensure impact.

The LA cycle supports the LA to establish the systems and processes to move improvements forward. However, to be successful it relies on the effective LA strategic leadership to provide the determination and drive to ensure that barriers to improvements are overcome in priority schools and that hard decisions are made if schools do not improve. At the heart of the effective LA strategy is the determination that no child shall fail.

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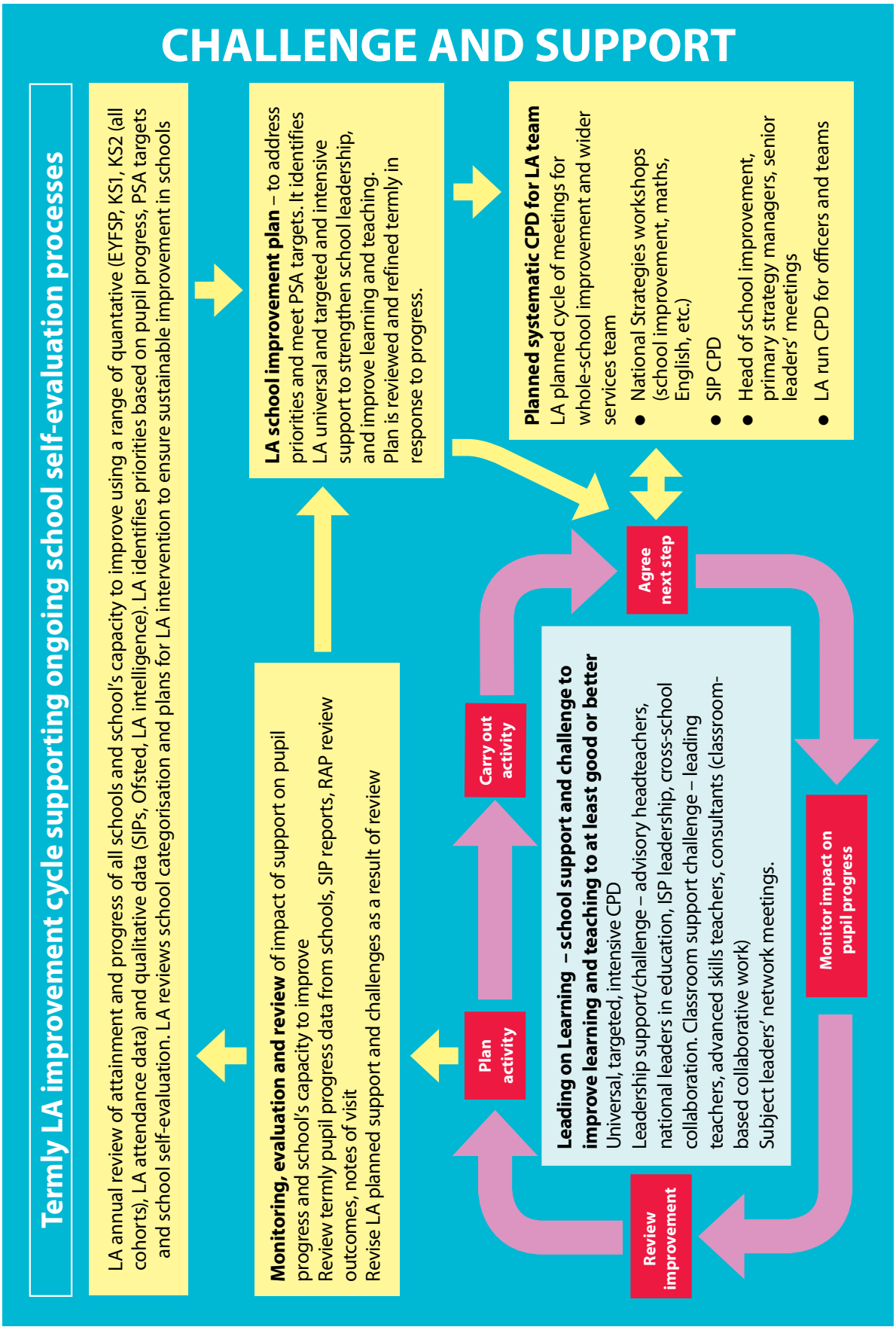
This is illustrated on the diagram below.

The LA cycle



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Sustaining improvements

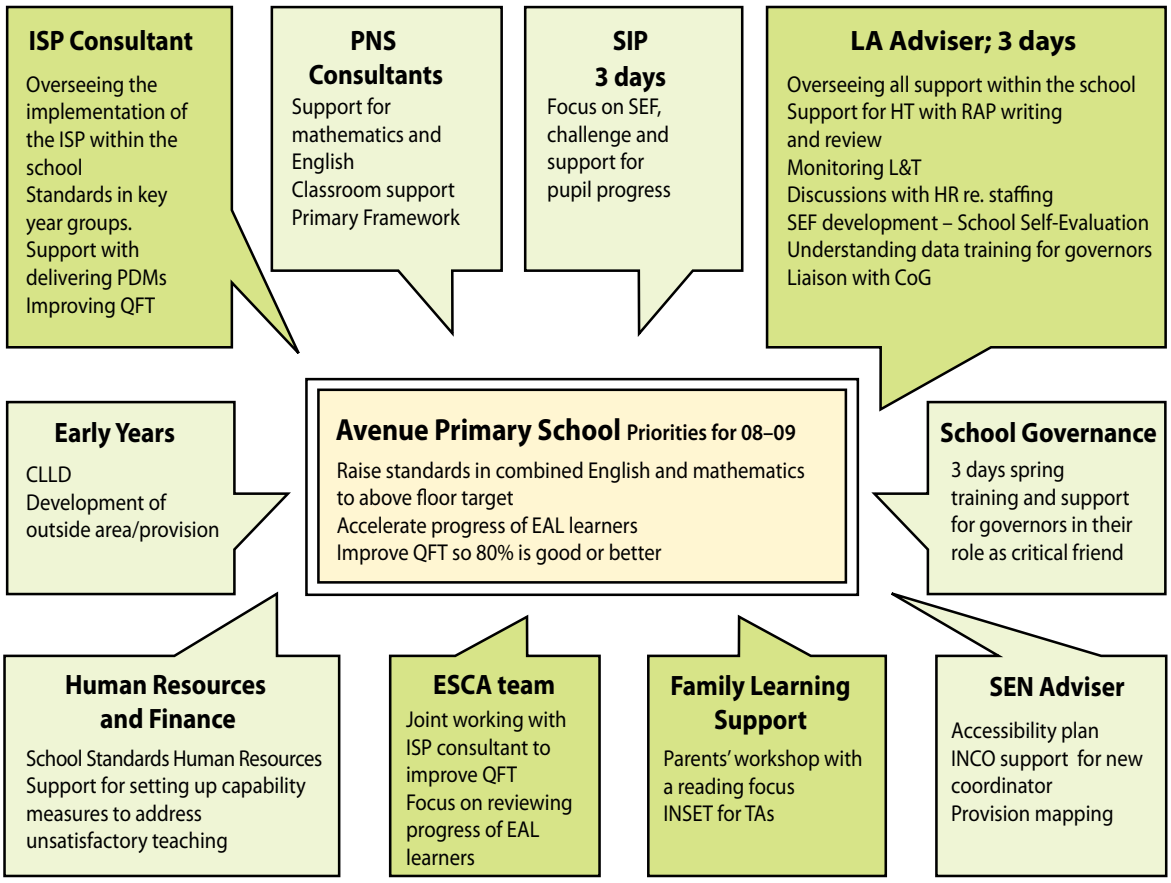
The aim of the work of the LA with an ISP school is to build the school's capacity to be an effective and sustainable independent institution. The programme was designed to be a two-year model but the experience of the last five years has made it clear that before moving schools out of the ISP the LA must be sure that the school has taken on the ISP processes and expects to continue to use them to drive their sustainable improvement. Where this is the case, schools continue to improve and, as the case studies show, a large number of ISP schools that started as vulnerable low-attaining schools are now good and outstanding schools. On the other hand, there are some schools that have exited ISP but improvements have not been sustained. In nearly all cases, the reason for this is that the LA has not been sufficiently rigorous in its judgement about the school's capacity to improve.

The wider services of the LA

Because the focus of the LA support is targeted at the school's needs and priorities, it is important that the LA plans the support from the wider range of LA services in a coherent and integrated way. It is tempting sometimes for the lowest-attaining schools to be overwhelmed with support that is not always best suited to their immediate needs.

Using the core elements helps to ensure that the LA's wider services are involved, according to the needs of the school. This means there is better evidence of the impact of services such as governor support, speech and language services, educational psychologists, special needs teams and others who align their support around the single plan. The diagram below has been helpful for LAs to ensure that the support is aligned against the school's priorities and that the whole-school improvement team is clear how their support is linked back into the priorities.

Mapping the priorities and LA support



This diagram is based on an idea originally developed by Hertfordshire County Council LA

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3.2 Making the ISP work: the roles of the LA school improvement team

This section outlines in more detail the role of key players in the LA to make sure that ISP is implemented effectively and moves the school out of the category of priority support to become self-sustaining in the shortest possible time.

The role of the SIP

In all schools, SIPs support and challenge the quality and impact of self-evaluation to help the school reach an accurate judgement of how well it is serving its pupils and what it needs to do to improve. In low-attaining and priority schools the SIP works with the LA to broker and implement the ISP. This ensures that support is appropriately targeted and impact evaluated.

School improvement partners have found the cycle and core elements extremely useful as a model of school improvement, to evaluate the capacity of the school to improve. The kinds of question SIPs might ask to evaluate the school self-evaluation and the impact of ISP, and to indicate areas to improve are listed in Appendix 8.

The working partnership between the LA adviser and/or SIP and the ISP consultant

In LA priority schools support from the LA goes beyond the SIP. In ISP there is an agreed, successful pattern of work in schools to introduce, develop and establish effective systems and structures for improvement. The adviser and ISP consultant work closely together to support and challenge the school, through two quite specific roles:

1. **Working strategically with school leadership** to implement the ISP systems, and to see the impact of this, is the role of the LA adviser or, in some cases, the senior ISP consultant.
2. **Providing the ongoing operational support and challenge** with teachers and school leaders to ensure that the school can effectively put into practice the cycle and core elements is the role of the ISP consultant, brokering support from other LA consultancies related to teaching and learning.

The strategic role of the LA adviser

This is to:

- support and challenge the school leadership in the implementation of the cycle and core elements and to confirm that they are sufficiently well-established to ensure sustainable improvements;
- work with the SIP to ensure that the priorities identified are addressed through the single plan or RAP and that evidence is provided from the review of the termly single plan or RAP to identify progress in relation to priorities;
- broker wider LA support linked to the priorities, for example, governor training, speech therapy, personnel and, where appropriate, from wider services such as community health or youth services.

These functions are specifically modelled through:

- support and challenge at the school's single plan or RAP and review meetings maintaining the overview of the strategic direction of the school's action-planning;
- quality assurance of the school's accountability through their monitoring and evaluation procedures;

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- requiring the leadership team to be accountable for the impact of LA support in school, for example, backing up the consultant if meetings are cancelled by leadership teams or if consultant support is not used effectively;
- using the end-of-year meeting to verify the school's self-evaluation and its capacity to continue to improve without intensive support;
- quality assurance of the LA CPD support.

The operational role of the ISP consultant

The operational role is the regular work that the ISP consultant undertakes with the schools, probably visiting every fortnight. The ISP consultants are key agents of change in a school. Schools have valued the support of ISP consultants because they take on a wider role than the traditional subject-based consultants.

ISP consultants work directly with the schools. They give targeted support to meet the school's priorities. These priorities will have been agreed with the school's leadership team, for example, by the SIP during the termly visit, the school's adviser, as a result of a local authority review or following an Ofsted inspection.

The ISP consultant:

- works alongside subject leaders to develop their skills and abilities, for example, through book scrutiny, planning scrutiny, lesson observation;
- works with the school to establish the core elements, for example, to:
  - set up whole-school tracking systems;
  - support using tracking in the classroom;
  - set up whole-school curricular targets;
  - set up pupil progress meetings;
  - model the use of working walls;
- offers modelling and coaching for teachers to improve learning and teaching through the use of the Primary Framework and assessing pupils' progress (APP);
- supports the school in providing focused CPD through professional development meetings (PDMs) and in-class support;
- works with the school to monitor and evaluate impact;
- ensures that there is accelerated pupil progress and that children in Year 2 and Year 6 do as well as they possibly can.

The ISP consultant may work alongside a number of LA consultants, depending on the schools' priorities. Funded LAs often have an identified ISP consultant who oversees the support to those schools in the programme. In other authorities a senior adviser, with responsibility for schools causing concern, may lead the programme and oversee the work of a range of consultants in the school.

It is important that all LA consultants understand the core elements and tools of the ISP so that they can give consistent messages to anyone in the school with which they work. It is the consistency of approach and the rigour with which the core elements and tools of the programme are used that has led to the consistent improvement in schools supported through the programme.

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CASE STUDY:
The role of the ISP and LA consultant in an ISP school

Working in an ISP school in Blackburn with Darwen LA the ISP consultant was concerned at the large number of underachieving pupils identified from tracking, so brought in the LA raising achievement consultant to help support improvement. A high number of pupils were identified as underachieving, so working with the SLT and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) they analysed the data in more depth and specific assessments were carried out to identify gaps in learning.

It became clear from the analysis that there was considerable misidentification of needs. Teachers had been relying on the SENCO to take responsibility for those identified as underachieving. Quality- first teaching needed to be a priority, with class teachers responding to the range of needs of the children in their classes.

A programme of CPD was put in place to develop teacher knowledge and skills in assessing and working with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and moderate learning and speech and language differences. CPD for teaching assistants focused on the development of children's motor skills, the use of intervention programmes and the role of TAs in quality-first teaching.

Two years on:

Now:

- teachers can talk about each child's next steps in learning – their stage not age;
- teachers use quality-first teaching across the curriculum to support the diverse differences of their pupils;
- children trust teachers, knowing that their teacher understands the different ways in which they learn;
- a blended approach to intervention makes explicit links for pupils across the curriculum.

There is much greater coordination between all aspects of inclusion, with all teams working together. The intervention manager now takes a lead role in the tracking process to identify need and plan provision.

Two examples illustrate the impact of the more tailored approach on individual progress:

- A child with complex needs who produced no score in a March 2007 assessment of accuracy and comprehension skills in reading was achieving close to her age-related expectation by September 2008.
- A Year 5 child making slow progress in reading was assessed and diagnosed with dyslexia. Provision to match his needs was put in place, in class, as part of quality-first teaching and he made rapid progress, achieving level 4 in English by Year 6.

The Ofsted report in February 2008 recognised the impact of the improvements:

> *Pupils who underachieve are identified accurately for additional support. Subsequent intervention is effective in helping lower-attaining pupils to progress in line with their capabilities.*

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3.3 The role of the school in ISP

The responsibility and accountability for improvement lies with the school and should be driven by the leadership team and the governing body. The 2008 Statutory Guidance relating to schools causing concern says:

> *The leadership provided by the headteacher and senior management team is crucial to the speed and success of its improvement.*

At the start of the programme schools sometimes resisted being identified for additional LA support but, over the last five years, the positive reputation of the programme is such that LAs have schools asking to be part of the programme and many schools use the processes without LA support.

Leadership of the cycle and core elements

Where the ISP has been most effective, the school leadership has:

- seen ISP as an opportunity to work in partnership with the LA to meet the school's priorities more quickly than they could without this support;
- demonstrated commitment to the programme by leading on the learning and owning the programme, for example, supporting the consultant leading the PDMs;
- used the programme to drive through improvement in line with identified priorities, for example, sharing the RAP priorities with everyone;
- seen how the ISP processes build on and strengthen the school systems, for example, through using the tracking grids to identify the underachieving children across the school and in the classes;
- focused on leading on learning, for example, using the pupil progress meetings to review the progress of the target groups and planning how to overcome their barriers;
- strengthened the distributed leadership by giving the middle managers (subject and phase leaders) a strategic role in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress.

Whole-school engagement in the ISP

The whole school is involved in the implementation of the ISP. The ISP core elements support school leaders to be effective leaders of learning by strengthening school self-evaluation and the mechanisms to ensure pupils' progress.

- The **headteacher and senior leadership team** lead all aspects of the programme in school to ensure impact on progress. They involve all the school community and develop a positive culture focused on progress and achievement for all.
- **Governors'** involvement with the core elements develops their skills and abilities. They know what is expected of their school and how it needs to improve. The tracking of pupils' progress and explicit identification of priorities helps the governors to fulfil their role of accountability for pupils' progress.
- The **distributed leadership team** supports the monitoring and actions identified in the single plan. These could include, for example, observation of agreed teaching strategies, scrutiny of planning and children's work linked to the school priorities, and discussions with children about how the actions taken are supporting their learning and progress.
- **Teachers** take responsibility for the progress of the children they teach. They implement the agreed changes in their practice and involve themselves in CPD, relating their own learning to the needs of the children they teach. Teachers use day-to-day assessment and draw on this as part of the evidence base used in pupil progress meetings.

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- **Teaching assistants** lead the learning of children in their teaching groups and work in close partnership with teachers to focus on the accelerated progress of children in target groups.
- The focus on progress and overcoming barriers to learning strengthens **parents'** involvement in their children's learning.
- The focus on making learning explicit supports **children** to reflect on, control and improve their learning.

Strengthening leadership and governance: the ISP leadership pilot

To build on effective practice, in 2007 a pilot was set up to strengthen leadership and governance in some ISP schools. It built on the good practice in schools where the ISP was established, owned by the school and had already had impact.

The pilot linked these schools with other ISP schools where there was less evidence of impact – the schools were not fully engaged with leading improvement – and enabled these schools to work in partnership together. Evaluation of the pilot showed positive results; the schools involved benefited from the collaborative working and demonstrated improved quantitative and qualitative outcomes. It is now being used by a larger group of ISP schools and the evaluation of the pilot is continuing over 2008–9.

From the evaluation, the following three key factors that had made the pilot successful were identified:

- **The use of the school improvement cycle and core elements**. All schools were involved in the ISP and were familiar with the ISP model and this helped to ensure the joint work focused sharply on improvement using the school improvement cycle and core elements.
- **The shared experience of leadership in a school identified as 'causing concern'**. This provided a common context for the schools working in partnership.
- **The commitment to collaborative working and collaborative learning**. The headteachers and schools involved saw themselves as taking on a journey of improvement. They were open to and positive about learning and working together.

There is more information about the pilot in Appendix 11 and the resources used are available on the National Strategies area of the Standards site:

www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies by clicking on the 'Primary' tab and selecting 'Improving schools programme'.

Using the ISP to strengthen governance

The ISP processes and programme support governors in fulfilling their role as critical friends. The tracking, RAP and review provide governors with a clear view of the strategic direction of the school and evidence of the impact of the ISP.

> *ISP is a very important tool for governors. The information that ISP gives us enables us as governors to tell whether the school is making that progress or not – without having that kind of information it makes it difficult for us to do the job. It gives us the evidence we need to be able to monitor the school against its RAP and it helps us to look at the targets that have been set and whether or not those targets are capable of being achieved and whether they are being achieved.*
>
> ***Chair of Governors, Greyfriars Primary School***

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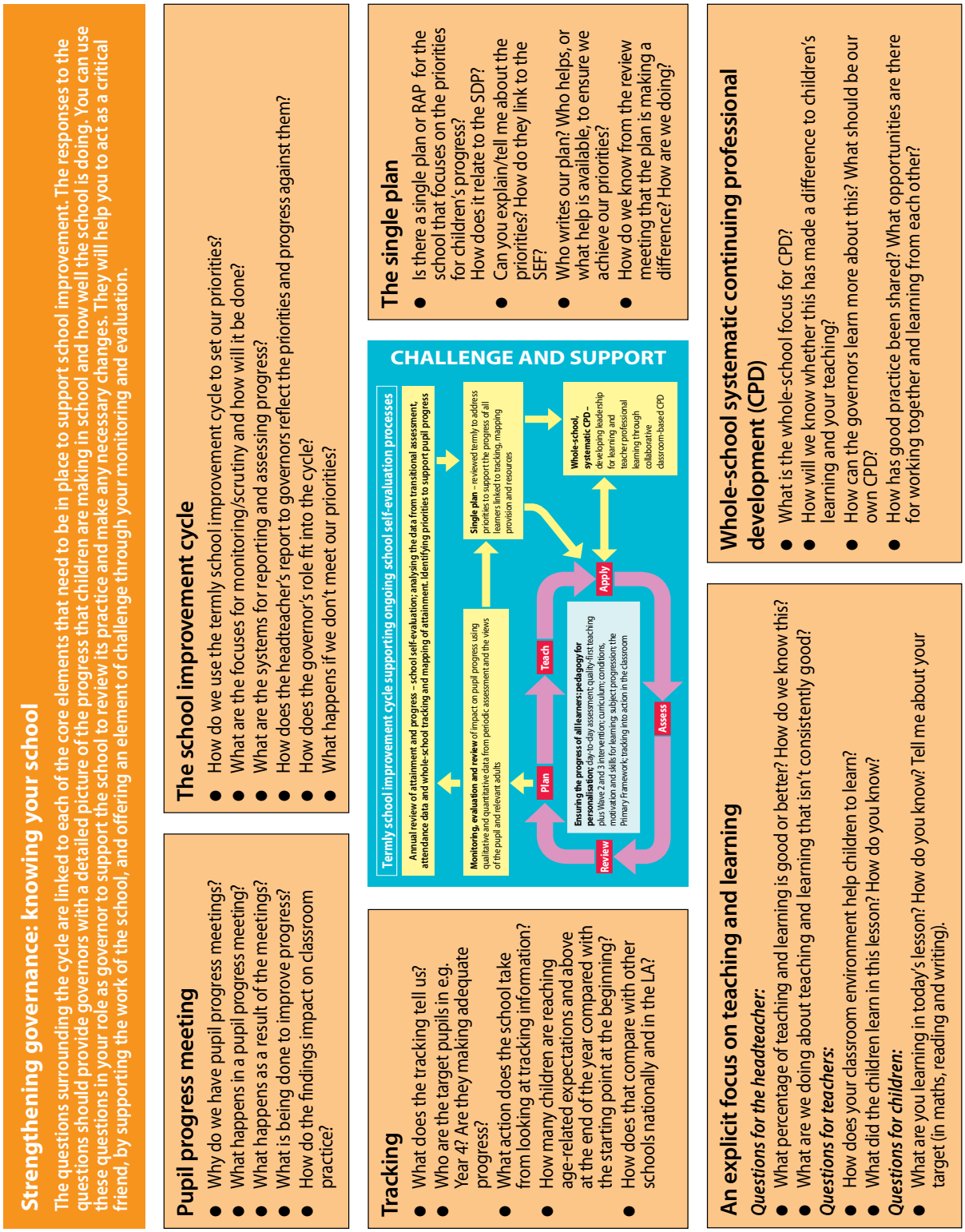
Governors are finding the diagram below helpful in developing their role.

Strengthening governance: How well do governors know the school?



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Section 4 Useful publications

The Standards Site; Improving Schools Programme
www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies (click on the 'Primary' tab and select 'Improving schools programme').

The Improving Schools Programme leaflet
Ref: 00148-2008LEF-EN

The Improving School Programme Strengthening Leadership and Governance leaflet
Ref: 00824-2008LEF-EN

National Challenge: raising standards, supporting schools
Ref: 00372-2008PCK-EN

Statutory guidance on schools causing concern, May 2007
Amended statutory guidance on schools causing concern, September 2008
Both available on www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies (select 'School improvement' from Standards site drop down and navigate to 'Schools causing concern').

The Primary Framework
www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies (click on the 'Primary' tab and select 'Primary framework').

Assessing Pupils' Progress
www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies (click on the 'Primary' tab and select 'Assessment' and then 'Assessing Pupils' Progress').

Personalised learning; A practical guide
Ref: 00844-2008DOM-EN

Moving beyond the floor target: A report on what made the difference in 20 previously low-attaining primary schools (2008)
www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies (click on the 'Primary' tab and select 'Improving schools programme' and then 'Programme overview').

The Extra Mile; How schools succeed in raising aspirations in deprived communities
Ref: 00447-2008BKT-EN

21st Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child
Ref: 01044-2008DOM-EN.

Making Great Progress – Schools with outstanding rates of progression in Key Stage 2
Ref: 00443-2007BKT-EN

Getting There – Able pupils who lose momentum in English and Mathematics in Key Stage 2
Ref: 00935-2007BKT-EN

Making Good Progress at Key Stage 2
Ref: 00105-2008PCK-EN

Making Good Progress in Key Stage 2 English
Ref: 00947-2007BKT-EN

Making Good Progress in Key Stage 2 mathematics
Ref: 00948-2007BKT-EN

Keeping Up – Pupils who Fall Behind in Key Stage 2
Ref: 00442-2007BKT-EN

The CD-ROM that accompanies this handbook includes all the materials in the book and some additional useful materials.

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Section 5 Appendices

Appendix 1 The audit: identifying priorities to support progress and attainment

IDENTIFYING THE BASELINE
Prompts to support analysis of current school situation The criteria support identification of the school's starting point and possible actions necessary to ensure that the 'bottom line' plan is in place by the end of the initial phase of the programme.

Improving the achievement and personal development of learners	**Comments/school evidence**
Knowing about standards What data is collected, how and by whom? What assessments are currently in place in the school? How are they analysed and used? What is the data telling you about progress and attainment in all year groups?	
Target setting What systems are in place for setting numerical and/or curricular targets? Do they inform teaching and learning? How are they monitored and evaluated?	
Pupil tracking Are there school systems for tracking pupils' progress – across a key stage, a year group? If so what does the tracking look like? How is the tracking data used?	
Additional support/catch-up programmes Are intervention programmes in place and working and monitored?	
Improving teaching and learning	**Comments/school evidence**
Planning Is agreed medium- and short-term planning in place across the school? Is the school using the Primary Framework? Are the planning mechanisms appropriate?	
The quality of the teaching Are structured lessons in place for teaching literacy and mathematics? Do the lessons exemplify the main features of effective teaching in both subjects? Are social, emotional and behavioural outcomes promoted alongside subject outcomes?	

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Subject knowledge Is subject knowledge in literacy and mathematics secure and sufficient to teach the age-related objectives in the Framework? Is there sufficient understanding of the social and emotional aspects of learning (and how they develop)?	
Improving the conditions for learning	**Comments/school evidence**
Learning environment/resources Are additional adults deployed to improve the achievement and personal development of learners and accelerate progress? What resources does the school have for teaching literacy, mathematics and for promoting SEAL? Is the range of resources sufficient to meet a variety of teaching needs? Are there storage/retrieval/accessibility issues? From an initial survey of the classrooms, what are your views on the learning environment overall? Will this be a key area of development?	
Promoting positive behaviour Is there an emphasis on building positive relationships? Are there agreed expectations about how children and adults behave that are monitored and reviewed? Are there systems in place to ensure that children feel safe and develop a sense of belonging? Are there opportunities provided for children to give their views and be listened to? Are achievements for behaviour and learning recognised and celebrated?	
Developing the school as a professional learning community	**Comments/school evidence**
Developing a learning culture Does the school's leadership and management support an appropriate climate for professional development and collegiate approaches? If not, what appear to be the significant issues? Are sources of LA support aligned to meet the school's priorities?	
CPD focus Is there is an agreed CPD action plan which forms part of the school raising attainment plan (or RAP)? Will the existing planned staff-meeting timetable meet the needs of the programme?	

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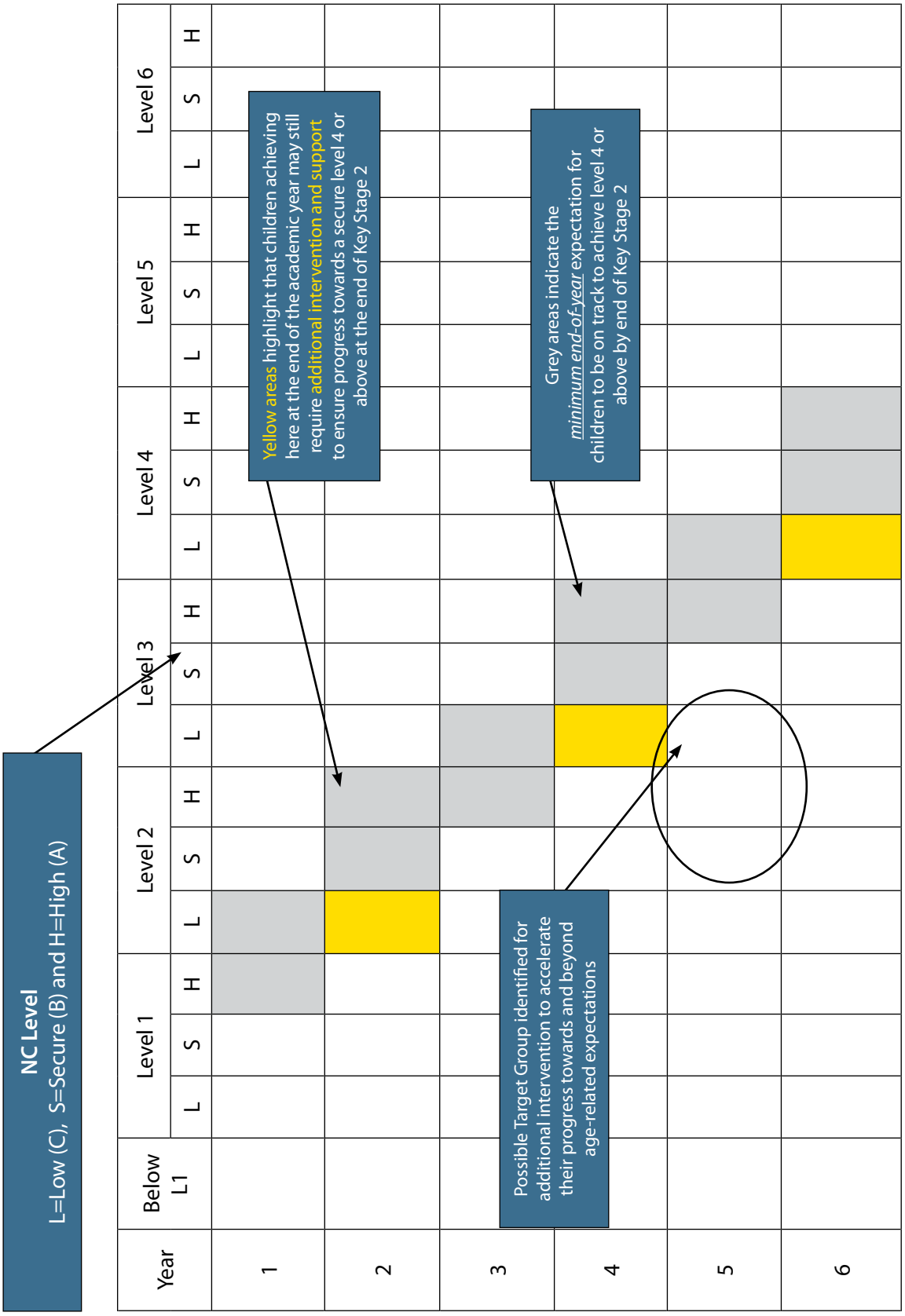
Appendix 2

Grid for mapping whole-school attainment



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Appendix 3

Grid for mapping whole-school attainment (blank)

Level 6	H						
	S						
	L						
Level 5	H						
	S						
	L						
Level 4	H						
	S						
	L						
Level 3	H						
	S						
	L						
Level 2	H						
	S						
	L						
Level 1	H						
	S						
	L						
Below L1							
Year		1	2	3	4	5	6

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Appendix 4

Class tracker (blank)

NC level		Baseline	Mid year/ term	End of year	NC level	
Level 5	H				H	Level 5
	S				S	
	L				L	
Level 4	H				H	Level 4
	S				S	
	L				L	
Level 3	H				H	Level 3
	S				S	
	L				L	
Level 2	H				H	Level 2
	S				S	
	L				L	
Level 1	H				H	Level 1
	S				S	
	L				L	
Below L1					Below L1	

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Appendix 5

The single plan: RAP review questions

Key success criteria

- More children across school working at the age-related expectation or above in reading, writing and mathematics in each year group.
- The identified target groups' learning accelerated to achieve the age-related curricular targets in reading, writing and mathematics.

Use of pupil tracking data

- How many children are (and/or were at the start of the academic year) working at age-related expectations in each year group for reading, writing and mathematics? How do you know?
- What is the predicted number (and percentage) of children expected to be working at age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of the academic year? Are all relevant staff aware of this information?
- What progress has been made by underachieving groups, for example, children with special educational needs, girls, boys, EAL or gifted and talented children?
- What judgements can you make about the quality of learning and teaching, based on the children's progress? Is this judgement the same for different underachieving groups?
- How is the leadership team quality-assuring teacher assessments of pupil progress?

Knowledge of the accelerated progress of the target groups

- How have you identified the target groups for reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups? What other data or information has been used, besides QCA national tests, for example, teacher assessments, APP, FFT , prior attainment at KS1/FSP, personal history or circumstances?
- Have appropriate age-related curricular targets been set for the target group?
- How many children in the identified target groups have achieved the age-related curricular targets? How do you know? Do relevant staff members know?
- What evidence do you have to indicate accelerated progress for groups of pupils in the target groups?
- What impact have planned intervention strategies had? How do you know?
- How are you personalising the interventions and support to meet the specific needs of the target groups?

Pupil achievement and teacher assessment of the age-related curricular targets

- Have all staff planned to teach curricular targets explicitly? Are there enough opportunities within teachers' planning to practise, apply and review the learning of the curricular targets across the curriculum?

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- Are teachers assessing all children's progress towards the achievement of the curricular targets, using mainly day-to-day assessments such as observations, questioning and discussions with children?
- Are the processes of teacher assessment/APP secure, consistent and moderated across the school? How do you know?
- Do children receive oral and/or written feedback about their progress towards achieving the curricular targets? How do children know when they have achieved their curricular targets?
- How are the children's achievements of the curricular targets celebrated? Is this reported and discussed with parents or carers?
- What impact has the use of day-to-day assessment of the curricular targets had on the quality of teaching and learning? How do you know?

Outcomes of pupil progress meetings

- What opportunities are there for staff to discuss the successes and barriers to the achievement of the curricular targets and consider possible ways to address the issues identified?
- Which children or groups have made progress in achieving their curricular targets and why? How can this improvement be sustained?
- What are the barriers to the achievement of curricular targets? How are these being addressed?
- Are teacher assessments of children's progress against the curricular targets secure and accurate? How do you know?
- What actions need to be taken following the review of target groups? (For example, redirecting intervention and adult support, CPD.)
- How are the agreed actions from pupil progress meetings being monitored and evaluated?
- How do children know when they have achieved their target?

Supporting school self-evaluation

- What evidence will you use to feed in to your SEF? Have the outcomes from the RAP been reflected in the SEF?
- What priorities have emerged from current monitoring and evaluation?

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Appendix 6

The single plan: What makes a good RAP review?

The single plan or RAP review

The review of the single plan or raising attainment plan (RAP) is central to the monitoring and evaluation schedule and provides the opportunity to evaluate rigorously the impact of the actions on pupil progress and teaching and learning. The review happens termly and informs the next steps for school improvement.

The review meeting is led by the senior leadership team of the school and draws on the evidence from the monitoring and evaluation of activities in the RAP. Local authority (LA) colleagues contribute to the review, supporting discussion and challenging judgements as appropriate.

What makes a good review?

The role of the school

Before the meeting

Prepare all relevant paperwork in advance; ensure that there is a robust evidence base from ongoing monitoring and evaluation to support judgements about progress: update tracking, collate outcomes of pupil progress meetings and gather qualitative evidence to support judgements made about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

- Conduct a pre-review with staff before the formal meeting takes place.
- Agree attendance at the meeting, for example, the chair of governors, subject leaders, deputy headteacher, ISP consultant, adviser, and provide release time for key members of staff.

During the meeting

- The headteacher or member of the senior management team should lead the meeting.
- An identified person should take minutes; clear, concise notes must be taken to support the school in compiling the next single plan.
- Ensure the discussion is clearly focused on the success criteria and outcomes, not on actions completed; use the evidence to evaluate impact.
- Celebrate the successes and learn from them by identifying what made the difference.
- Identify the next steps or discuss the action that will lead to the next plan. Explore the barriers to moving forward the solutions to these and consider what needs to be done differently, for example, CPD needs, targeted intervention in identified year groups, curricular targets or focus, monitoring and evaluation.
- Agree success criteria and key priorities for the next plan and establish the date of the next meeting.

After the meeting

- Finalise the new plan with agreed actions, timescales and responsibilities and share with all staff and stakeholders (LA and school). Note: This must be completed promptly to ensure the new plan is in place from the beginning of the term.

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- Ensure the success criteria and planned actions are regularly reviewed through ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- Use self-evaluation from the plan and review process to inform the update of the SEF.

The role of the LA

Before the meeting

- Where appropriate, coach the leadership team and attendees to support them in their role in the review: how to collate appropriate evidence, how to lead the meeting, how to evaluate progress.

During the meeting

- The LA adviser or consultant adds challenge by asking key questions (see Appendix 6).
- Support the leadership team in taking the lead and developing ownership for the review and evaluation process.
- Support the identification of priorities and next steps that will inform the next plan.

After the meeting

- Quality assure the completed plan, giving support as appropriate to ensure the plan is robust and meets identified needs and priorities.
- Review deployment of internal and external support to ensure support provided meets identified needs and builds school capacity.

Ensure all relevant LA personnel have a copy of the review and new RAP.

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Appendix 7

PDM: Sharing learning objectives

Agenda for Professional Development Meeting (PDM)	
1	Review and reflect on progress since the last meeting
2	Planning and pedagogy: *Improving learning and teaching*
3	Putting it into practice in the school: *Developing the professional learning community*

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1: Review and reflect on progress since the last meeting	
Review progress	**Headteacher to lead discussions** Participants review their personal targets set at the last PDM. They discuss with colleagues successes and areas which still need addressing. They record their needs for future professional development and support – noting whether these are individual needs or part of a wider issue. Participants reflect on the outcomes from the pupil progress meetings, reviewing the progress of their class against the age-related curricular targets, particularly those children in the target groups who need to make accelerated progress to achieve the age-related expectation.
Notes for senior leadership team	See *Setting of whole-school curricular targets* in the *Leading on learning* section of the professional development materials. ***Prior to this PDM, the leadership team should have identified an aspect of reading, writing and mathematics that needs to be developed as a whole school.*** ***This section may require additional session(s) in school to introduce the whole-school curricular targets and ensure all staff members fully understand the subject and curricular knowledge required to teach the curricular targets effectively.***
Setting curricular targets for half-term	The setting and getting of whole-school curricular targets in reading, writing and mathematics is a tool to improve 'quality-first' teaching to raise standards through the accelerated progress of underachieving children Remind colleagues that the school has identified, from analysis of children's work, test papers, and discussions with teachers and children, aspects of literacy and mathematics from the Primary Framework that are more difficult to teach and/or learn. These have been set as whole-school curricular targets. Remind staff of the main messages: • Whole-school curricular targets are set as a context to improve 'quality-first' teaching in aspects of literacy and mathematics that are difficult to teach and/or learn; • The aim is to raise the expectations of the whole-school community in aspects of the curriculum and then accelerate the progress of underachieving groups towards and beyond the age-related expectations; • Curricular targets should be set each half-term and be linked explicitly to the development of teaching and learning strategies in classrooms to improve 'quality-first' teaching that is judged good or better; • Curriculum provision should be reviewed to ensure there are appropriate opportunities planned to review, teach, practise and apply the curricular targets within literacy and mathematics units of work and across the whole curriculum, including the use of precision intervention with the target groups; • The leadership team should support colleagues to fully understand the subject, curricular and pedagogical knowledge required to ensure that all children achieve the expectations set for them.

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2: Planning and pedagogy: *Improving learning and teaching*

Notes for the presenter	*These notes are only for guidance and it is expected that schools will choose from what is suggested and adapt materials to meet their needs. The notes are written to be appropriate for the whole school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.*
	Aim of this session is to: • identify effective ways of planning and sharing learning objectives with children.
Introduction, purpose and the key messages	**Purposes of sharing learning objectives** Effective planning shows: • the learning objectives for the lesson or series of lessons (expectations); • what different groups will learn (learning outcomes, including the curricular targets); • how one lesson links to another across a unit of work, including appropriate cross-curricular links. It is useful to think of the unit of work as a block of learning. Sharing the learning objectives with the children helps them to see the steps they need to take towards meeting their targets, and to make sense of their learning. Curricular targets are age-related learning outcomes that teachers want children to achieve over an extended period of time (for example, a half-term). The children's journey towards achieving these targets will need to be mapped carefully from where they are to where they need to be. *Activity:* Ask participants to share briefly with colleagues their current planning and teaching for literacy and mathematics. • How do you currently share learning objectives and (or) curricular targets with the children? • Where do you think planning and teaching could be improved to ensure that the learning objectives and (or) curricular targets are shared more effectively with the children?
Linking the teaching strategies to progress in literacy and mathematics	**Sharing learning objectives** Sharing the learning objectives and (or) curricular targets with the children helps them to learn because they are clear about what they are learning and why. Children need to know: • what they are learning in the lesson (learning objective); • why they are learning this and how it fits into the unit of work and moves them towards the achievement of the learning outcome, including the curricular target set for the half-term where appropriate; • what they need to know, understand, or to do to show that they have achieved the learning intention; • how they are learning (what they will do in the lesson or unit of work). *Activity:* Ask the teachers to identify the learning objective from a recent literacy or mathematics lesson or unit of work and discuss, in pairs, how they shared these with the children. What language did they use? What works best with the children?

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	When sharing learning objectives, 'stems' can be useful. For example, 'know that', 'be able to', 'understand how and why', 'develop and be aware of', and 'we are learning to'. The stems can be qualified by using 'begin to, continue to' when objectives carry over a number of lessons within a unit of work. *Activity:* Ask the teachers to discuss the curricular target for a unit of work. • How was this shared with the children at the start and (or) at the end of the unit of work? • How did the teacher take account of the range of abilities in the class? Some useful stems for learning outcomes and curricular targets are: 'What I am looking for from everyone is', or 'What I expect from Green group is', or 'What you can do now is'. These can be shared with children as 'I can' statements. It is important that the teacher and additional adults fully understand the specific subject, curricular and pedagogical knowledge required to teach the learning objective effectively, not just the 'child-friendly' version of this; it is created only to engage and support children with their learning. View an opening sequence of a literacy and (or) a mathematics lesson on video or DVD to show how the teacher shared the learning objective with the children. • How did the teacher make sure that the children were clear about what they were learning and why? • What else could the teacher have done to make this clearer for the children? Use the stem: 'Even better if'.
Linking the teaching strategies to literacy and mathematics units of work	When planning to share learning objectives with children, it is important to consider the phase in the teaching and learning sequence, and therefore the purpose of sharing the learning intention. For example to: • review prior learning; • teach new knowledge, concepts, skills and understanding; • practise and apply (these should include cross-curricular opportunities where appropriate); • review new learning and consider the next steps. *Activity:* Ask participants, in small groups, to give feedback on the merits of sharing learning objectives with the children. Make the following points. Planning: How does success against the learning objective appear if children have achieved it? What activities do I need to plan to ensure that the objective is taught, practised and applied? What is the starting point for my current class? Teaching: What effective teaching strategies do I need to use to ensure that the learning objective is explicitly taught, practised and applied? Assessment: What are the success criteria that I am looking for to make judgements about the children's progress towards the achievement of the learning objective, including the curricular target?

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Review and teach	In shared and guided sessions, teachers use the most appropriate strategies to teach the learning objective. For example, explanation, questioning, modelling and demonstrating, analysis and problem solving. This is balanced with the necessary oral work and participation by the class to support learning (for example, paired work, discussion and role-play). The teacher shares the learning objective in a lesson where appropriate to: • establish the success criteria for the lesson(s) and where the lesson fits into the bigger picture within a unit of work; • access the children's prior knowledge and develop their speaking and listening skills and ability to reflect and analyse; • promote engagement and involvement in learning and purposeful reflection on how we learn – 'learning to learn'.
Practise and apply	Teachers plan independent time, including home-learning activities, to practise and apply the knowledge towards the achievement of the learning outcome, including the curricular targets. Teachers devise independent work that: • builds on the whole-class work; • is introduced clearly and quickly; • provides appropriately challenging tasks for all children; • children can work on by themselves, with a partner or with additional adult support. Planning effective tasks for independent work, including home-learning activities, that support children to practise and apply their learning, continues to be challenging for some teachers. *Activity:* Choose one of the following activities. 1. Ask teachers, in phase or year-group pairs, to recommend to each other independent activities that they have found effective in moving children towards achieving the lesson outcome. 2. Use the current curricular targets and ask teachers, in pairs, to consider appropriate independent work that will enable children to practise and apply aspects of the curricular targets.

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Review	A plenary is the time to determine what children have learned and how confident they are about the subject matter. This can take place in any part of the learning and teaching sequence. In a plenary the teacher: • returns to the learning objective(s) and focuses on the outcomes; • establishes what children have learned (not the tasks completed); • uses planned questions to assess children's understanding. (For example, when we subtracted 19, we subtracted 20 then added 1. How could we subtract 29, 39, and so on?) Questioning stems of what, why, where, how and when may be useful; • gives children some links to the next lesson or unit of work. *Activity:* Watch sequences from a literacy or mathematics plenary video or DVD. Use some of the following discussion prompts: How did the teacher link the plenary back to the learning objectives? What questions did the teacher use to assess and monitor the children's learning? How did the children demonstrate their new knowledge and understanding? What are the implications for future planning beyond the plenary?
Improving the conditions for learning	*It is suggested that schools identify one or two key messages from those outlined below for improving the conditions for learning and developing the school as a professional learning community and link these to the PDM.* Improving the conditions for learning in the classroom needs to involve the children in their learning. The following points support this PDM. • Children are clear about what they are learning and what they will achieve. • Teachers share with children the relationship between the specific lesson objectives, the wider learning objectives or curricular targets, and the tasks and activities they are set. • Children can talk confidently about what they are learning and how this will improve their work and their ability to learn. • During the plenary, teachers provide feedback to clarify, refine, and extend children's reasoning and communication skills. • All staff provide positive feedback to children on progress made to meet the shared learning objectives and the learning outcomes or curricular targets. • ISP focuses are explicitly shared in whole-school contexts (for example, in assemblies) and with the wider community (for example, through home-learning activities and parent or carer consultation meetings). Conditions that support an effective learning environment in the classroom are as follows: • visual prompts in all classrooms support the explanation of learning objectives and curricular targets and reinforce the teaching and learning focus; • display and modelling the use of a range of vocabulary and visual or physical prompts to encourage children to use the relevant terminology when responding to and exploring the learning objective or curricular target; • the physical arrangement of the classroom and the role or focus of any additional adults encourages the participation of all children.

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3: Putting it into practice in the school: *Developing the professional learning community*

Ensuring CPD impacts on children's learning	*'Adults are the most important resource in any school'* (DfES Making Great Progress 00443-2007BKT-EN). Effective CPD is collaborative, contextualised in classrooms, and gives teachers time and space to refine their current practice. *Activity:* Ask participants, drawing on the small-group discussion, to identify from their practice two aspects that are well-developed in their classroom and two aspects that require further development in sharing learning objectives with the children. *Activity:* In year groups or phases, consider the age-related curricular targets and how these are currently shared with the children in the class. What is working well and what needs further development?
Personal CPD **Reviewing the children's progress**	Identify one or two personal professional development strategies to try. These should include: working with other teachers, collaborative planning, joint observation of children, evaluation of learning to gather information, reflecting on what has worked well and why, feeding back to the whole school. Identify opportunities to review the achievement of the curricular targets by the target group through discussions with children, samples of work, and pupil progress meetings with colleagues. These can be noted on the personal CPD log.

Useful resources

PNS and QCA *Speaking, Listening, Learning: working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2*
www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies

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Personal CPD log

Focus of PDM:

Date of meeting: Class:

Targets	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Whole-school curricular target(s):			
Class and age-related curricular target(s):			
Names of target group:			

Focus	Outcome(s)	Personal action(s) and comments
Raising standards and accelerating progress: **Review and progression:**	Children in the target group make accelerated progress – more children are working at age-related expectations	
Improving the quality of teaching and learning: **Improving the conditions for learning:** **Planning and pedagogy:**	Identified teaching strategy explicitly planned for and used to support the achievement of the high-value curricular targets Classroom climate, organisation and environment support the learning of the high-value curricular targets	
Developing the learning community: **Putting it into practice in the school:**	Collaborative models of CPD impact on both adult and children's learning Children know where they are, and what they need to do next	

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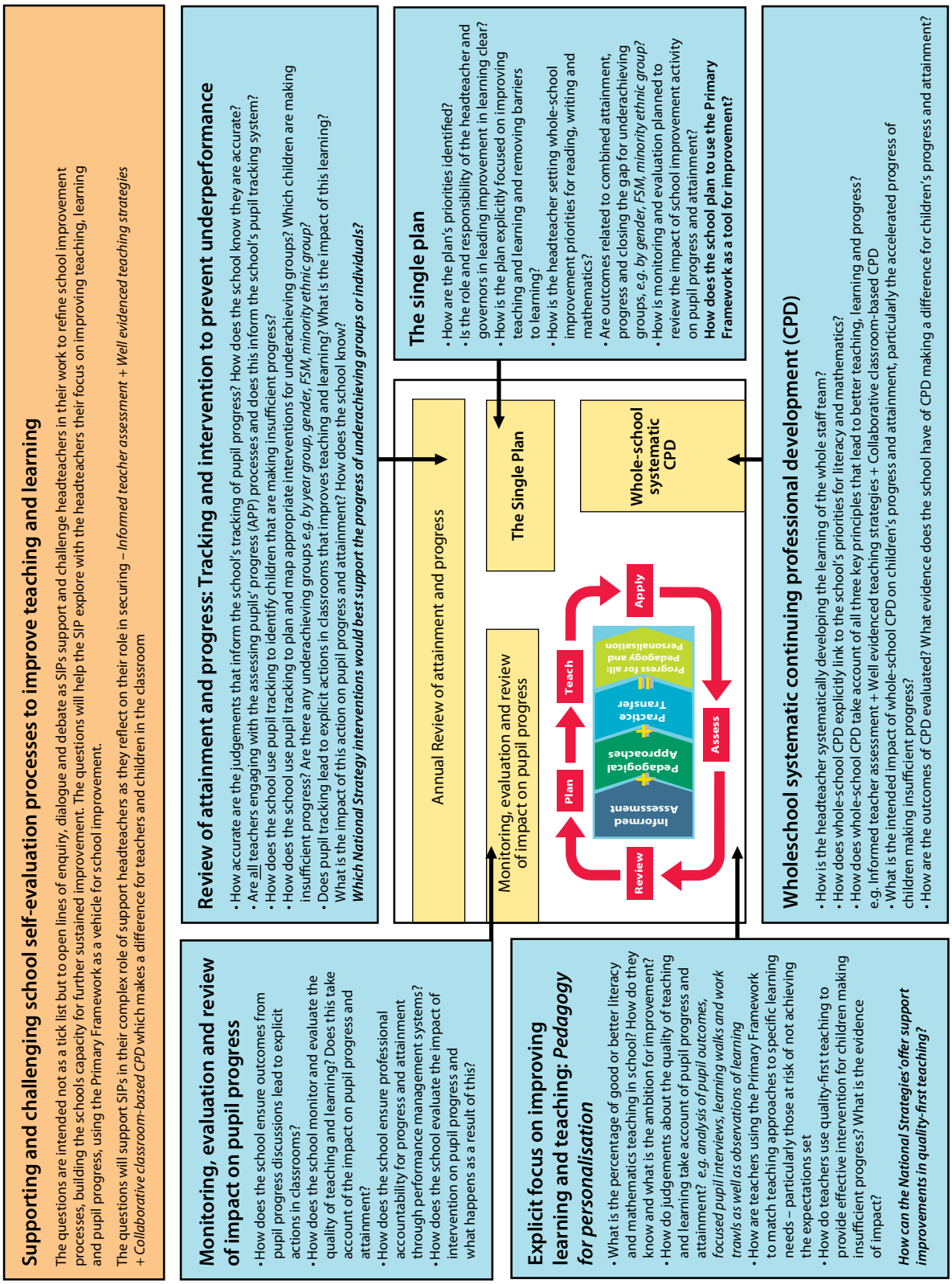
Appendix 8

Supporting and challenging school self-evaluation processes to improve teaching and learning



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Appendix 9

Pupil progress meeting summary

Pupils identified as making good progress	What made the difference	Agreed action (e.g. wider dissemination)

Pupils identified as making slow progress or stuck	Possible core barriers to learning	Agreed action (including roles)

Pupils identified as falling behind	Possible core barriers to learning	Agreed action (including roles)

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Appendix 10

Strengthening leadership and governance: ISP hub pilot

The National Strategies

The Improving Schools Programme (ISP)

Strengthening leadership and governance ISP hub pilot

This leaflet provides information about the ISP leadership pilot. It shares the learning from the pilot and explains what works and why.

The leaflet is for:

- colleagues interested in strengthening leadership and management in schools
- LAs who would like to set up a similar collaborative model to support leadership
- schools that are focusing on strengthening leadership and governance and/or are planning collaborative work around this theme.

What is ISP?

ISP is a supported whole-school improvement programme targeted to schools below the floor target. The core elements of ISP support the development of school-wide systems to raise standards, accelerate and sustain progress, build leadership capacity and support school self-evaluation. Evidence from a wide range of sources confirms the impact of ISP in raising standards and sustaining improvement.

The role of leadership in school improvement

- Learning from ISP makes it clear that the leadership of the school improvement cycle and core elements is essential to the strengthening of self-evaluation, the impact on pupil progress and to the school being able to sustain improvement.
- Where ISP is most successful the leadership has fully engaged with the programme and the school improvement processes. This pilot was set up to share the experiences and expertise of these leaders with schools where ISP was less well established and had less impact.

How we worked

The pilot aimed to:

- strengthen primary leadership to raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress
- develop models of leadership to support collaborative cross-school working
- create replicable models to apply across groups of schools and local authorities
- strengthen the role of governance.

This was a small-scale pilot involving 32 schools. It used existing work patterns established through the Improving Schools Programme (ISP) and was evaluated termly through workshops, discussions and personal learning logs.

Key staff from the provider or lead school paired up with their counterparts in the recipient or supported school. The joint work reflected each school's priority area for improvement. This included improving self-evaluation and prioritising what needed to change, understanding and using the Primary Framework to improve learning and teaching, creating a more focused single plan to drive improvement and making more effective use of pupil tracking to drive progress. All schools were involved in the ISP programme and were familiar with the ISP model and this helped to ensure that the joint work was focused sharply on improvement, using the school improvement cycle and core elements.

The success related to three key factors.

1. **The use of the school improvement cycle and core elements.** All schools were involved in the ISP programme and were familiar with the ISP model. This helped to ensure the joint work focused sharply on improvement, using the school improvement cycle and core elements. (See next page.)
2. **The shared experience of leadership in a school identified as causing concern.** This provided a common context for the working partnership.
3. **The commitment to collaborative working and collaborative learning.** The headteachers and schools involved saw themselves on a journey of improvement. They were open to and positive about learning and working together.

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The Improving Schools Programme

Key factor 2
The shared experience of leadership in a school identified as 'causing concern'

The schools involved had faced similar issues that can be common in schools of concern, for example staff/pupil mobility, low expectations, underachievement, some lack of parental engagement. The lead schools had been successful at addressing these issues and the partner schools were able to learn from how issues had been worked through.

Central to the pilot was for the lead head teachers to be able to make explicit what had made their leadership of change successful so that they could support strengthening leadership with their partner schools. Headteachers identified characteristics of effective leadership and governance and reflected on:

- the ongoing evidence of strengthening leadership in supported schools
- the impact on leadership in their own school.

The whole-school collaboration gave their school staff the opportunity to reflect on their practice and share it. This further strengthened the practice.

Lead schools had the opportunity to reflect on the most effective ways to feed back to governors on progress. Sharing their reports to governors helped to identify best practice in modelling the focus on pupil progress and whole school achievements. The work on strengthening governance is at an early stage. The next steps are to develop how the three key factors from the pilot can support governors to further develop their skills and abilities and strengthen school self evaluation.

Key factor 3
Collaborative working and collaborative learning

The commitment to collaborative learning and collaborative working was a key factor in strengthening impact. This meant that there was a genuine partnership, with all the schools involved wanting to learn from each other. The commitment has resulted in both groups of schools benefiting from the experience.

A willingness to learn reciprocally is central to the leadership pilot. The collaborative action focuses on the whole school and draws on the expertise of all in the school. Involvement in the pilot and subsequent ways of working needs to be agreed so that all are positive participants. Collaborative working and learning emphasise co-construction and shared experiences rather than 'being done to'.

In the pilot we agreed upon a set of the skills desirable to support collaborative working and learning. Their development contributed to success, for example:

- deadlines being set and adhered to, because there was a commitment to not letting partners down
- collaborative working led to recognition that 'we are capable'.

Working alongside colleagues fostered independence and greater resilience.

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ISP Leadership Pilot Key Factor One

The school improvement cycle and core elements – examples of joint working

This diagram illustrates how the school improvement cycle provides the common framework around which the collaborative activities are built, the tools and processes which drive the improvement and a common language for talking about school improvement

Pupil progress meetings:

- Teachers/SLT sharing experiences across schools on how pupil progress meetings are set up and used
- Teachers share pupil progress meetings documentation, e.g. question prompts and use of evidence
- Teachers support each other by attending progress meetings to identify next steps and agree how these are implemented

The school improvement cycle

One-to-one work between HTs to strengthen self -evaluation, using the cycle to:

- provide support for ways of working with the whole school, to support the understanding of and engagement with the priorities for improvement, model use of specific tools for monitoring – pupil progress meetings, learning walks
- identify priorities through discussion, e.g. analysis of data
- access ways different governing bodies operate, how they are involved in monitoring and evaluation (linking with governor training).

Headteachers broker support to build capacity for leadership across both schools.

Tracking:

- Sharing school's tracking and how it is used in the classrooms
- Joint admin team working – to set up whole-school tracking system for HTs and SENCOs to map targeted provision
- SLs/HTs identify impact of actions through joint analysis of pupil progress
- HTs and members of SLT working alongside each other to interpret RAISE and other data

Termly school improvement cycle supporting ongoing school self-evaluation processes

Annual review of attainment and progress – school self-evaluation; analysing the data from transitional assessment, attendance data and whole-school tracking and mapping of attainment. Identifying priorities to support pupil progress

Monitoring, evaluation and review of impact on pupil progress using qualitative and quantitative data from periodic assessment and the views of the pupil and relevant adults

Single plan – reviewed termly to address priorities to support the progress of all learners linked to tracking, mapping provision and resources

Plan → Teach → Apply → Assess → Review

Ensuring the progress of all learners: pedagogy for personalisation; day-to-day assessment; quality-first teaching plus Wave 2 and 3 intervention; curriculum; conditions, motivation and skills for learning; subject progression; the Primary Framework; tracking into action in the classroom

Whole-school, systematic CPD – developing leadership for learning and teacher professional learning through collaborative classroom-based CPD

CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT

The single plan

- One-to-one support between HTs to support writing/revising RAP/single plan
- Leadership teams share single plans to review whether they will have the required impact on pupils' progress
- HTs and/or SLs attend RAP/ single plan reviews, identifying next steps together
- SLs/phase leaders carry out joint cross-schools monitoring, planning and work scrutiny and agree next steps

Whole-school systematic CPD:

- Subject leaders support planning and delivery of PDMs providing CPD opportunities for whole staff
- Subject leaders and phase teams lead training days with both schools, with agreed outcomes to impact on pupils' progress
- HTs working alongside each other to plan staff meetings and adapt these for governor meetings
- Class teachers – joint focus on 'case study' pupils (lesson study approach across schools)

An explicit focus on learning and teaching:

- Year-group teachers working together on planning and resources
- SLT/SLs discussing outcomes from joint monitoring, planning, work scrutiny – agreeing ways forward to improve outcomes
- Joint cross-school visits – planning and completing learning walks, looking at working walls to increase pupils' involvement in their learning
- Pupil groups to share how they talk about targets, their learning, their school.
- Guided selection of teacher buddies – from within and across the schools (for example, subject leaders working together, teachers across year groups)
- Paired observations of identified priorities – formal and informal, agreeing ways forward

Appendix 11

The ISP year plan: Key actions

	LA operational: ISP consultant or consultancy	LA strategic: LA adviser and/or lead ISP consultant	SIP	School – headteacher – SLT – governors
Summer	Initial school visit: audit to establish baseline and priorities against key themes. Draft RAP with school and provide relevant feedback. Agree timeline and key dates for PDMs etc. Contact second-year ISP schools.	Identify priority schools for ISP, including those below floor target and 'hard to shift'. Discuss with headteacher, SIP, chair of governors their tailored programme of support. ISP launch event for new and existing schools. Collect and analyse key data and pupil-tracking information from schools. Brief all LA support teams, including SIPs, on the key priorities for each school. Align and integrate LA support, including wider services, to school's priorities single plan. Use LA data to review capacity of leadership and management and quality of learning and teaching.	Analyse LA and nationally collated data relating to case schools and examine support and challenge provided by LA.	Invite senior leadership team and chair of governors to discuss LA support programme. Compile and share school tracking information. In discussion with consultant, draft initial RAP or single plan. Headteacher to lead full staff meeting to introduce new systems, processes and structures geared at supporting whole-school improvement and increased rates of pupil progress.

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	LA operational: ISP consultant or consultancy	LA strategic: LA adviser and/or lead ISP consultant	SIP	School – headteacher – SLT – governors
Autumn 1	Ensure focus is on high-impact activity linked to single plan/RAP. Quality-assure selection of target groups (children expected to make accelerated progress), especially in Year 6. Support teachers with planning, teaching, assessment with a focus on progress of target groups Work with headteachers and school leadership to provide whole-school CPD (PDMs).	Ensure single plan is in place, includes all LA support and has been circulated to all relevant people. Plan appropriate CPD for new and existing National Strategies consultants and SI team on ISP processes. Draw up diary of ISP workshops and other National Strategies events and identify officers who need to attend.	Review assessment data and prepare for target-setting meeting.	Ensure all staff are familiar with how to use tracking sheets and have identified target groups. Agree with SLT mechanisms for evaluating implementation and impact of actions on pupils' progress, including monitoring the quality of learning and teaching. Establish PDM timetable and support CPD process.
Autumn 2	Continue to support teachers with planning, teaching, assessment and to work school leadership to provide whole-school CPD (PDMs). Support school in conducting pupil progress meetings and plan response to evidence collected. Ensure Year 6 booster provision. Prepare updated work programme for spring term.	Conduct review of single plan with each school, evaluating impact against success criteria. Set up moderation session for next term's single plans and give feedback as appropriate. Collect key data from each school and update LA tracking information from each school, including Year 6 data, and revise actions accordingly. Submit at least Year 6 progress data to National Strategies regional adviser. Evaluate impact of LA support and review existing work plans in response to impact.	Conduct target-setting meeting in schools and evaluate how effectively schools are tracking progress in combined English and mathematics and towards two levels of progress.	Prepare for end-of-term single plan or RAP review – review progress of target groups against age-related expectations, two levels of progress, combined English and mathematics. Update single plan to include response to evaluation. Reflect current evaluation in SEF. Update tracking information, review, analyse and evaluate impact of newly established systems and processes.

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	LA operational: ISP consultant or consultancy	LA strategic: LA adviser and/or lead ISP consultant	SIP	School – headteacher – SLT – governors
Spring 1	Ensure appropriate provision in place to accelerate the progress of target groups. Continue to support teachers with planning, teaching, assessment and to work school leadership to provide whole-school CPD (PDMs).	Support headteacher and leadership team to: • review progress of target groups, especially current Year 6, against age-related expectations or curricular targets through pupil progress meetings, discussions with children and samples of work; • update pupil tracker information.		Review impact of strategies on teaching and learning through observations, scrutiny.
Spring 2	Prepare updated work programme for summer term. Provide additional support to review impact on pupils' progress and update pupil tracker information, making use of APP materials on the Primary Framework and assessment information, as appropriate. Continue to support teachers with planning, teaching, assessment and to work school leadership to provide whole-school CPD (PDMs).	Hold network meeting for ISP and other relevant schools to share practice and evaluate LA impact . Conduct review of single plan with each school, evaluating impact against success criteria. Set up moderation session for new single plans and give feedback, as appropriate. Collect key data from each school and update LA tracking information from each school, including Year 6 data, and share with RA. Evaluate impact of LA support and review existing work plans in response to impact on pupils' progress. Review capacity of leadership and management and quality of learning and teaching.	During spring visit, evaluate impact of support on pupils' progress. Send report to school and LA.	Prepare for end-of-term single term RAP review, review progress of target groups against age-related expectations, two levels of progress, combined English and mathematics. Update single plan to include response to evaluation. Reflect current evaluation in SEF. Launch next series of observations, with specific focus on teaching and learning.

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	LA operational: ISP consultant or consultancy	LA strategic: LA adviser and/or lead ISP consultant	SIP	School – headteacher – SLT – governors
Summer	Ensure appropriate provision in place to accelerate the progress of target groups. Continue to support teachers with planning, teaching, assessment and to work school leadership to provide whole-school CPD (PDMs). Review use and impact of interventions. Progress of target groups monitored and pupil progress meeting completed.	Review intervention strategies across ISP schools and evaluate ways of working.		
	Support selection of target groups (children expected to make accelerated progress), especially in Year 5. Review impact of own work in school. Prepare updated work programme for autumn term.	Carry out end-of-year review with each school and self-evaluate with school against impact criteria (RAG). Moderate and sign off each school's new termly single plan or RAP, giving feedback, as appropriate. Plan appropriate strategy for schools moving on from targeted support. Collect key data from each school and update LA tracking information for each school. Evaluate impact of LA support and review existing work plans in light of impact.	Summer visit preparation for annual report. Evaluate progress and impact of support. Report to governing body impact of programme.	Prepare end-of-term single plan review, review progress of target groups against age-related expectations, two levels of progress, combined English and mathematics. Update single plan to include response to evaluation. Reflect current evaluation in SEF. Set up target groups for the following year. Confirm target areas for autumn term. Agree work plan for consultants for autumn term.

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