



Key Stage 3

National Strategy

Securing improvement: the role of subject leaders

**Headteachers,
School Key Stage 3
Strategy Managers
and Heads of
Department**

Status: Recommended

Date of issue: 03/02

Ref: DfES 0102/2002



The work of subject leaders in schools is vital. With the school's Key Stage 3 strategy manager, subject leaders are the key contact between the Strategy and classroom teachers. They provide the leadership, subject expertise and enthusiasm that teachers need in order to understand and implement the Strategy.

This booklet is intended to support subject leaders, and in particular to identify core tasks and areas for development. It has three sections:

Section 1: identifies three core roles: judging standards; evaluating teaching and learning; and leading sustainable improvement. This focuses on the role of the subject leader at Key Stage 3 but also cross-refers to the complementary roles of the school's strategy manager and year team leaders (page 2).

Section 2: describes what each role entails, and identifies the core tasks for each role (pages 3–5).

Section 3: identifies a series of detailed actions for subject leaders. Using self-evaluation grids, links to Key Stage 3 materials and some school-based examples, you are invited to decide:

- whether each task is currently undertaken and if so, how effectively; and,
- if it is not in place or only partly in place, whether it is a priority for action.

This process should help identify areas of good practice to share, and development priorities for the future (pages 7-13).

The booklet has also been designed as preparation for the two half-day training sessions for schools' Key Stage 3 strategy managers, which take place during 2002–03. It takes into account:

- the DfES *Teacher Standards Framework* (DfES 0647/2001) specification for subject leaders;
- the DfES five-stage cycle for school improvement;
- the National College for School Leadership's *Leading from the middle* programme for subject and specialist leaders;
- the *Good teaching, effective departments* report from Ofsted (HMI 337).

The core roles for subject leaders

The focus of this booklet is on the role of the subject leader in securing and sustaining improvement in each subject of the curriculum. This is because of the key role that subject leaders play in every school in leading improvement in Key Stage 3. They help to ensure that the Strategy pervades the whole curriculum and builds the capacity for continuing and sustained improvement.

Using the Key Stage 3 audit as a starting point, there are three core roles for subject leaders:

- **Making judgements** about standards of pupils' achievement;
- **Evaluating teaching and learning** and setting priorities for improvement;
- **Leading sustainable improvement** by identifying targets for improvement, by developing and leading strategies to achieve these targets and by quality assuring the curriculum.

At the **subject leader level** these skills are essential if the Key Stage 3 audit is to support the process of improvement.

At the **whole-school level** effective leadership and management by the Key Stage 3 strategy manager is vital to ensure that the positive steps made by teachers towards teaching more effectively are secured and embedded in the practice of the school.

Across **the year group** or **key stage cohort** the leadership role of year team leaders is similarly critical in ensuring that individual pupils are appropriately challenged and supported across the curriculum in a coherent and consistent way by all staff.

A key function of the school's strategy manager is therefore to develop and improve the school's leadership and management capacity at subject and year team levels in relation to these core roles.

The cycle of improvement

The primary leadership role of subject leaders is to raise and maintain standards in their subject. This is often presented as a cyclical process in response to the questions:

- *How well are we doing and how do we compare with similar schools?* Improvement planning begins with an audit designed to establish secure judgements about standards of pupils' achievement, the current quality of teaching and the appropriateness of the curriculum.
- *What more should we aim to achieve this year and what must we do to make it happen?* Improvement targets are established against the audit and strategies developed to achieve the targets set.
- *Taking action and checking that it happens.* The improvement strategy is put into action and progress is monitored. Judgements about standards are made to identify whether they have been raised.

This section describes in more detail what each role entails, and on the next page identifies the core tasks.

1 Judging standards

Subject leaders make secure judgements about the standards of pupils' attainment, rate of progress and personal development in their subject at Key Stage 3, on the basis of evidence.

Strategy managers support subject leaders by ensuring that pupil performance data is used effectively. They also moderate and review judgements about standards in the context of the whole curriculum with subject leaders.

Year team leaders ensure that individual pupil attainment data from Key Stage 2 is available to set appropriate expectations at Key Stage 3. They hold an overview of the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils across the curriculum.

2 Evaluating teaching and learning

Subject leaders understand what makes teaching effective in their subject. They accept they are accountable for the quality of teaching. They systematically observe colleagues teaching and have the skills needed to feed back constructively and objectively. They monitor the planning of teaching in their subject.

Strategy managers ensure that the school: has a clear policy for monitoring teaching and learning at Key Stage 3; supports subject leaders to monitor teaching and learning through training and the allocation of time; has schemes of work in all subjects; promotes a consistent range of teaching and assessment approaches; and maps cross-curricular elements in a coherent way.

Year team leaders develop an overview of the impact of teaching and learning on the attainment and personal development of individual pupils and groups of pupils. They ensure that the outcomes of individual pupil reviews are communicated to subject leaders. They also ensure that parents have a clear understanding of the curriculum, approaches to teaching and the standards of work and behaviour expected.

3 Leading sustainable improvement

Subject leaders are confident in their role as leaders of teachers and other adults in their subject team at Key Stage 3 and understand how to inspire and enthuse colleagues. They create the capacity for change. They encourage teachers to review and improve on their practice. They work to ensure that the improvements made are embedded in the subject team's practice. They ensure that the review, construction and resourcing of the curriculum bring about improvements.

Strategy managers support and challenge subject leaders to achieve the targets set at Key Stage 3 in the school's improvement plan. They coordinate the impact of the Strategy across subjects and aspects of the curriculum. They plan the resourcing for the Key Stage 3 Strategy in the school's improvement plan.

Year team leaders ensure that the use of pupil performance data across all subjects is used to link targets for individual pupils with whole-school targets.

1 Judging standards	
Strategy manager / Senior leadership team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secure arrangements for transfer and use by all departments of Key Stage 2 curriculum and pupil attainment information. ■ Ensure use by departments of aspects of the Autumn Package. ■ Undertake annual subject review with each subject leader to identify rates of pupils' progress in Years 7, 8 and 9. ■ Provide opportunities to moderate and review standards across the curriculum.
Subject leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Analyse and interpret data on pupils' attainment in the subject. ■ Review with teachers their assessments of progress for classes, identified groups and individuals. ■ Sample pupils' work. ■ Discuss work, progress and attitudes with sample groups of pupils.
Year team leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manage the use of pupil transfer data across years, key stages and subject departments. ■ Lead the use of data within the school's academic review cycle. ■ Feed back implications from assessments, reports and communications with parents to subject departments. ■ Analyse pupil assessment data across subjects to establish cross-curricular provision for additional support, intervention or extension.

2 Evaluating teaching and learning	3 Leading sustainable improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement a school policy for monitoring and evaluating teaching quality. ■ Support and monitor this process and its outcomes. ■ Promote a consistent range of teaching approaches. ■ Link the monitoring of teaching quality, the school improvement plan and the CPD programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locate the school's Key Stage 3 Strategy within the school improvement plan. ■ Involve subject leaders in setting the school's pupil attainment targets. ■ Monitor consistency in cross-curricular aspects, e.g. literacy, numeracy, assessment. ■ Act on the outcomes of monitoring of standards and teaching quality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Evaluate the Key Stage 3 schemes of work to ensure that they focus on effective teaching and learning. ■ Observe teaching and feed back to colleagues. ■ Review teachers' planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lead the department in discussion about priorities for the subject at Key Stage 3. ■ Agree targets for raising pupils' attainment for Years 7, 8 and 9 in the context of whole-school targets. ■ Develop a strategy for the improvement of the subject in Key Stage 3. ■ Lead the improvement of teaching quality. ■ Lead the review, the construction and resourcing of the curriculum.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with subject leaders to support good teaching. ■ Communicate the outcome of individual pupil reviews to subject leaders. ■ Monitor the impact of teaching across groups of pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secure partnerships with parents in raising attainment. ■ Set targets for pupils' achievement across the year group / Key Stage 3 cohort and work with departments to organise appropriate intervention to address under-performance.

3

Identifying strengths and points for action

This section describes, for each core task, a series of detailed actions for subject leaders. It is unlikely that you will be doing all of these. For each one, you should decide:

- whether this task is currently undertaken and if so, how effectively; and,
- if it is not in place or only partly in place, whether it is a priority for the next year, for two years' time or in a longer time-frame.

Undertaken with other subject leaders in your school, and in conjunction with the school's Key Stage 3 strategy manager, this process will help identify areas of good practice to share, and development priorities for the future. Key points can be written in the box marked *Development points and priorities*.

To help you, there are references to relevant Key Stage 3 materials, as well as examples of what individual subject leaders and subject teams have achieved.

1 Judging standards	Effective and fully in place	Partly in place	Not in place
<p>Analyse and interpret data on pupils' attainment in the subject.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Compare pupil performance in tests / annual assessments with: prior attainment information; other subjects; previous cohorts. ■ Make judgements for year groups / classes / individuals in relation to: school, local and national expectations. ■ Use the outcomes of annual analysis to: set curricular targets; prompt further investigation; initiate staff training and resource development. ■ Draw attention to success and high rates of progress. 			
<p>Review with teachers their assessments of progress against targets for classes, identified groups and individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review regularly with colleagues progress related to key curricular targets, under-performing groups and individuals. ■ Use the outcomes of the reviews to: share effective practice, design support, and agree ways of tackling pupils' under-performance. 			
<p>Sample pupils' work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agree with colleagues the sample and how the outcomes will be used. ■ Arrange for a suitable sample of pupils' work to be available, ensuring a range across ability and year groups. ■ Make judgements, which identify standards in relation to objectives, teacher and pupil expectations, and rates of progress. ■ Use the outcomes to discuss with colleagues areas of effective practice, development issues and groups of pupils for intervention. 			
<p>Discuss work, progress and attitudes with sample groups of pupils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agree with colleagues the sample and how the outcomes will be used. ■ Arrange meetings with a suitable sample of pupils, taking into account the ability range and year groups. ■ Make judgements about pupils' attitudes, engagement and confidence in their learning. ■ Use the outcomes of the sample to discuss with colleagues areas of effective practice, development issues and groups of pupils for intervention. 			
<p>Development points and priorities:</p>			

Key Stage 3 links

This is a selection of related Key Stage 3 materials:

All strands

The LEA launch of the strand

English

Managing improvement in English at Key Stage 3, HoD training Summer 2002

Mathematics

From the *Mathematics three-day conference*:

Session 4: Implementing Springboard 7

Session 9: Auditing mathematics in Key Stage 3

Session 12: Next steps

Science

Unit 4: Curriculum targets and action planning

Unit 5: Evaluation and next steps

Unit 8: Assessment in Key Stage 3 science

TLF

Management training folder:

Reviewing a foundation subject

Training folder:

Assessment for learning

Summative assessments

Literacy across the curriculum

Marking for literacy

All inclusive: supporting EAL learners

1 Using data to set targets in science

A science department used Key Stage 2 data and the progress charts in the Autumn Package to set realistic but challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 3. The Key Stage 3 coordinator then provided each teacher with end of Year 7 and end of Year 8 milestone targets for their group. This enabled the department to keep a check on progress towards the targets and adjust teaching to ensure they were met. The yearly objectives provided the means for setting curricular targets for groups of pupils where progress was slower than expected.

2 Work sampling across the curriculum

After consultant advice on work sampling, a school's head of English, literacy coordinator and strategy manager sampled a range of work across the curriculum from 20 Year 7 pupils achieving at levels 3 to 5+. The agenda for the work scrutiny included: paragraphing, writing non-fiction, spelling and use of Standard English.

Pupils' strengths and weaknesses at each National Curriculum level were summarised for teachers at a staff meeting and the literacy management group subsequently provided departments with support materials for developing these aspects of work. Some departments have committed a department meeting for the writing session using the forthcoming subject-specific literacy materials. The exercise also provided an opportunity to monitor and reinforce the school's policy on presentation of written work. Further work sampling has been planned to prepare for a whole-school reading audit and to evaluate the impact of cross-curricular support for writing at the end of the summer term.

3 Work sampling in mathematics

The head of department led her team through a detailed and collaborative analysis of Year 7 work, so that they could reach joint conclusions on pupils' approaches to written calculations and pupils' progression at transition. Each teacher brought a sample of four pupils' exercise books, which were distributed across the team. Using a prepared form, pairs of teachers scrutinised the year group sample, studying the pupils' methods and strategies. The process was informed by accessing individual pupils' Key Stage 2 data, which had been supplied by the link primary schools. The department then drew together the key findings about the methods and strategies pupils used and agreed how they would build on pupils' mental methods to develop and refine written calculation approaches.

2 Evaluating teaching and learning	Effective and fully in place	Partly in place	Not in place
<p>Evaluate the Key Stage 3 schemes of work to ensure that they focus on effective teaching and learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure that the scheme of work: focuses on teaching objectives – what teachers intend that pupils should learn; includes cross-curricular themes; and promotes a range of appropriate teaching and learning styles. ■ Confirm full understanding and use of the agreed scheme of work by all teachers of the subject in Key Stage 3. ■ Ensure that assessment opportunities built into the scheme of work support improved learning and progress. 			
<p>Observe teaching and feed back to colleagues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement a regular system of lesson observation and feedback to teachers in Key Stage 3 lessons. ■ Discuss outcomes of the observations with the department to share effective practice and to devise strategies for action when learning and progress do not meet planned objectives. ■ Discuss the key points arising from the observations and subsequent discussions with the school's Key Stage 3 strategy manager. 			
<p>Review teachers' planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hold regular meetings with colleagues to review medium- and short-term teaching plans, especially with temporary, inexperienced and non-specialist teachers. ■ Ensure that medium- and long-term planning supports pupils' progression. ■ Encourage joint planning, especially of lesson starters. ■ Evaluate the effectiveness of the continuing professional development programme in improving teaching and learning. ■ Ensure that there is regular debate and discussion about the quality of teaching and learning, and expectations for pupils' achievement. 			
<p>Development points and priorities:</p>			

Key Stage 3 links

This is a selection of related Key Stage 3 materials:

English

Unit 3: Planning, English department training 2001
Sample units of work (Standards website)
The assessment of writing, Summer 2001
Diagnostic use of pupil test paper, Summer 2001

Mathematics

From the *Mathematics three-day conference*:
Sessions 5 and 8: Planning in Key Stage 3
Session 9: Auditing mathematics in Key Stage 3
Session 10: Leading developments in mathematics

From *Leading developments in mathematics 1*:
Session 3: Curriculum planning
Session 5: Supporting colleagues

From *Leading developments in mathematics 2*:
Session 6: Proportional reasoning
Session 7: Shared planning
Session 9: Problem solving
Session 10: Reviewing developments

Science

Unit 1: The LEA launch of the science strand
Unit 2: Planning and managing progression
Unit 4: Curriculum targets and action planning
Unit 5: Evaluation and next steps

TLF

Management training folder:
Reviewing a foundation subject

Training folder:

Assessment for learning
Teacher repertoire
Structuring learning
Knowing and learning

Literacy across the curriculum

The management of group talk
Writing style

Numeracy across the curriculum

Unit 3: Mathematics through other subjects

1 Identifying CPD needs in science

Following the LEA launch of the science strand, the head of department conducted an audit of the departmental needs at Key Stage 3 that included observing teaching. Detailed individual feedback and a departmental meeting identified general priorities for development for the forthcoming year. Science teachers also used the supplementary science audit material to identify a number of individual professional development needs which were turned into a CPD programme and included in the school's improvement plan.

2 Reviewing questioning in lessons

*The head of a department evaluated the initial impact of TLF on departmental questioning by conducting a series of focused observations covering the first fifteen minutes of a sample of lessons. This provided insight about how well teachers were using questions to move pupils from concrete examples to more abstract and theoretical thinking. The head of department provided feedback to each teacher individually and then used the information gathered to run a twilight session, to disseminate effective strategies and tactics. Subsequently, because the team wished to improve their questioning in plenaries, he made a further set of observations in the later parts of lessons. This helped the team judge whether their questioning was successful in encouraging students to think, not just about **what** they had learned but also **how** they had learned.*

3 Questioning and discussion in mathematics

After the mathematics three-day conference, the head of mathematics wanted to involve the whole department in evaluating strengths and weaknesses in teaching. At the next departmental meeting the team used the Framework section on direct teaching to focus their discussion. The use of questioning and discussion were identified as areas for development. After the meeting, the head of department and the key teacher planned a series of observations focused on teachers' questioning and how they stimulated discussion in mathematics lessons. They then identified some good features of questioning and discussed ways in which questioning skills could be extended.

3 Leading sustainable improvement	Effective and fully in place	Partly in place	Not in place
<p>Lead the department in discussion about priorities for the subject at Key Stage 3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allocate regular department meeting / training time to discussion of teaching and learning. ■ Embed agreed values and approaches in department handbook and the scheme of work for Key Stage 3. ■ Make explicit links between national, school and departmental strategies for raising standards at Key Stage 3 and embed these within the action plan. 			
<p>Agree targets for raising pupils' attainment for Years 7, 8 and 9 in the context of whole-school targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish targets for improvement for cohorts, groups of pupils and individual pupils, using the outcomes of review and monitoring. ■ Link targets for pupils' attainment to targets for pupils' learning. ■ Cross-refer targets for each year group with the scheme of work and teaching plans. 			
<p>Develop a strategy for the improvement of the subject in Key Stage 3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use the Key Stage 3 audit for subject departments to establish capacity for improvement and to identify curricular / staff / resource implications. ■ Establish curricular targets and staff development priorities with clear success criteria linked to raised pupil attainment and clear monitoring and evaluation procedures. ■ Allocate time, resources, status and responsibilities, and relate precisely to time, finance and personnel available. 			
<p>Lead the improvement of teaching quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Devise and implement an effective CPD strategy. ■ Share, extend and improve effective teaching. ■ Challenge and support the improvement of ineffective teaching. 			
<p>Lead the review, the construction and resourcing of the curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Take action as required following the regular review of the scheme of work, ensuring suitable differentiation and progression for pupils. ■ Build commitment to a set of agreed standards across the subject. 			
<p>Development points and priorities:</p>			

Key Stage 3 links

This is a selection of related Key Stage 3 materials:

All strands

The LEA launch of the strand

English

Managing Improvement in English at Key Stage 3,
HoD training Summer 2002

English department training, 2001

Training for Years 7, 8 and 9, 2002-3

Mathematics

From the *Mathematics three-day conference*:

Sessions 2 and 3: Features of effective teaching

Session 9: Auditing mathematics in Key Stage 3

Session 10: Leading developments in mathematics

Session 12: Next steps

From *Leading developments in mathematics 1*:

Session 5: Supporting colleagues

From *Leading developments in mathematics 2*:

Session 6: Proportional reasoning

Session 7: Shared planning

Session 9: Problem solving

Session 10: Reviewing developments

Science

Unit 4: Curriculum targets and action planning

Unit 5: Evaluation and next steps

Unit 6: Misconceptions in Key Stage 3 science

Unit 7: Scientific enquiry

Unit 8: Assessment in Key Stage 3 science

Unit 9: Literacy in Key Stage 3 science

Unit 10: Progression in the classroom

Unit 11: Effective lessons in science

TLF

Management training folder:

Building capacity

Departmental action planning

Coaching

Training folder:

Assessment for learning

Teacher repertoire

Structuring learning

Knowing and learning

Literacy across the curriculum

Active reading strategies

Writing non-fiction

Numeracy across the curriculum

Unit 4: A whole-school policy

Unit 9: Departmental developments

1 Improving assessment

In one department, it was agreed to generate 'quality standards' assessment, as this was recognised by the team as a weakness. Having attended an in-school training session on assessment for learning, the department conducted a detailed discussion in which each member contributed ideas about how their marking practice might develop. The head of department managed the discussion so that the ideas became a list of core agreements that all members of the team would use in their day-to-day practice. These agreements were written into the departmental action plan and became the basis for the head of department's and the teacher's own monitoring and evaluation.

2 Overcoming pupils' misconceptions in science

After attending the training unit on 'Misconceptions', the Key Stage 3 science coordinator disseminated the training to the whole department. All agreed that the strategies outlined would have an impact on both standards and pupil motivation. After discussing and agreeing which models and analogies they would use for each year group and what techniques they would use for revealing misconceptions, the teachers tried these out in lessons. The head of science identified criteria to judge the effectiveness of the approaches. The mood of the department changed as teachers became engaged in what was in essence action research. The pupils were enthusiastic and the teachers felt that many of the 'usual' misconceptions were disappearing.

3 Exploring and investigating in mathematics

Following the mathematics three-day conference, the head of mathematics led a departmental meeting focused on improving, exploring and investigating mathematics. They then collaboratively developed an action plan, which involved: joint planning; paired teaching; observing lessons taught by leading mathematics teachers; and follow-up departmental meeting to look at pupils' work, to discuss progress and to agree future actions.

Monitoring by the head of department and one other teacher established clear improvements. Teachers found joint planning particularly beneficial in sharing ideas and strategies. Further opportunities for joint planning, paired teaching and observations have been planned to ensure continued progress.

Further copies of this document can be obtained from:

DfES Publications
Tel: 0845 60 222 60
Fax: 0845 60 333 60
Textphone: 0845 60 555 60
Email: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Ref no: DfES 0102/2002

© Crown copyright 2002

Produced by the Department for Education and Skills

Extracts from this document may be reproduced for non-commercial or training purposes on the condition that the source is acknowledged.

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3

www.dfes.gov.uk