

High impact resources for secondary schools

The **National Strategies**

www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies



**A secondary teacher's guide to the support and
resources being offered by the National Strategies**



department for
children, schools and families

SecEd

Resources at a glance

Welcome to **High impact resources for secondary schools** the latest supplement to be published by SecEd focusing on the resources and materials being offered by the National Strategies for secondary practitioners. This supplement focuses on an array of support, including for the core subjects, SEN, school improvement, and narrowing attainment gaps. We kick off with a glance at some of the current programmes and resources available



Behaviour and attendance

The National Strategies' behaviour and attendance programme focuses on reducing persistent absence and securing good behaviour.

For information on the National Programme for Specialist Leaders for Behaviour and Attendance, go to: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/npslba

The Behaviour and Attendance core day training materials are available at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/coreday

The Children's Services Attendance Effective Practice materials can be found at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/practice

SEAL

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) is a whole-school approach to help create a climate that encourages pupils to develop their social and emotional skills.

The SEAL materials help teaching staff to plan focused learning opportunities for whole classes, both in formal lessons and in small groups – enabling pupils to practise and consolidate their learning.

They can be accessed at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/seal

Functional Skills

Functional Skills are the core elements of English, mathematics and ICT that equip individuals to operate confidently, effectively and independently in education, work and everyday life.

The full Functional Skills qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT will be available from September 2010 when Functional Skills will feature within each of the four qualification pathways for 14 to 19-year-olds – GCSEs, Diplomas, Apprenticeships, and Foundation Learning.

They are a key part of the secondary curriculum and will be available as qualifications for adults too.

The Functional Skills Support Programme (FSSP) is designed to prepare schools and colleges to deliver Functional Skills and features a wide range of resources and guidance. To find out more, go to: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/functionalskills and www.fssupport.org

What Works Well

Teachers looking for learning improvement ideas will find the What Works Well website invaluable, with more than 160 real-life case studies of effective practice to improve learning. Managed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the National Strategies, the website's case studies focus on targeted pupils with identified learning needs, demonstrate improvement in learning, describe action taken and impact, and provide key messages for teachers. Case studies can include toolkits, frames, templates, and CPD outlines to support transfer of practice. Visit: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/whatworkswell

For more information on the above, or anything mentioned in this supplement, see www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/secondary

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Supporting schools

Clive Bush gives an overview of the work of the National Strategies and the resources it offers schools

THE UNIQUE thing about the National Strategies is the focus on pedagogy. Our principal concern is to improve the quality of the classroom for pupils and teachers and thereby to maximise learning – everything we do is geared towards this aim. The National Strategies’ frameworks and resources, many of which are featured in this supplement, help teachers to plan lively and stimulating lessons for improved progression and offer assessment and tracking tools to inform decisions about next steps in learning.

We work with schools and local authorities to support them in focusing on the experience of teaching and learning in classrooms, through work with consultants, subject leaders and heads.

As a national organisation, we are able to draw on a huge range of data and case studies to see what makes an impact. We help teachers identify barriers to learning and demonstrate how to overcome those barriers by giving them high quality, tried and tested resources that we know work. Schools all over the country are now using these resources to stimulate professional development, school improvement, and a better learning experience for children, as illustrated by the case studies in this supplement.

Much of our focus recently has been on helping teachers to make the changes required for the new key stage 4 curriculum in mathematics and English. This includes the establishment of Functional Skills (see box, opposite) as a core component in key stage 4. Meanwhile in science, we have been helping teachers to develop key approaches, both to improve the teaching of scientific reasoning through *How Science Works*, and to encourage progression to higher grades and further study through the *Progressing to Level Six and Beyond* resources (see pages 8 and 9).

Assessment for Learning (AfL) has been a major thrust of our work over the last two years and is very much tied to the development of Assessing Pupils’ Progress (APP). Now that we no longer have key stage 3 tests we nevertheless need a recognised system for evaluating progress for young people from key

stage 2 to key stage 4. APP is the key to this, but will only be effective if AfL is properly embedded as the framework for effective pedagogy. (See pages 6 and 7 for more on APP.)

Another major area of our work is directed at narrowing the gaps between disadvantaged young people and their peers. Our work helps schools and teachers to improve outcomes for all children, with a particular emphasis on those vulnerable to underperformance – including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, Black and minority ethnic groups, those who have SEN and learning difficulties and disabilities, and gifted and talented pupils (see pages 14 and 15 for a look at narrowing the gaps work with students who have English as an additional language).

I also want to highlight our work with headteachers. The core business of a head is to lead learning. No matter how big a school is, if they do not establish the right climate for learning and drive good pedagogy and effective practice right through to the classroom, then progress will be limited. Our regional briefings for heads emphasise this point and we are currently running Leaders of Learning seminars where heads share good practice in strategic thinking about how schools can get themselves ready to lead their own school improvement programmes – the challenge they will need to meet once the National Strategies ceases in 2011.

The National Strategies also helps schools to share practice with each other, helping them to work in effective partnerships and encouraging them to think strategically about school improvement in the run-up to 2011. See pages 10 and 11 for more on our Stronger Management Systems programme.

Last year’s key stage 4 results were very encouraging. Not only are the gaps closing and behaviour and attendance improving, but we are above trajectory to meet the government’s key stage 4 targets for 2011.

As is evidenced in the following pages, schools and local authorities tell us that our programmes are having a significant impact on outcomes for young people – and over the next year we will be continuing to support them in building capacity for the local delivery of school improvement as outlined in the recent White Paper.



Clive Bush
National Director,
Secondary
National Strategies

Making good progress

Study Plus and Literacy Plus are having a major impact in the English classroom

ONE OF the National Strategies' key aims is to increase the proportion of children who make good progress at school.

The Study Plus approach was introduced in 2006 to help achieve this and is already having a strong impact on pupils who have not made sufficient progress during their first three years at secondary school.

It seemed to make a difference when they were aiming towards completing something in a couple of weeks. They particularly enjoyed being able to take the skills they learned during these sessions and then apply them across the curriculum

As David White, senior advisor, English, for the National Strategies, explained:

“Study Plus is designed for pupils who by year 9, although they have potential, look as if they are not going to get a good GCSE grade in English and/or mathematics. The programme involves schools putting two Study Plus lessons into the timetable for year 10 and year 11 pupils who don't seem to be making the progress you'd expect. The idea is that the pupils will become more effective learners and improve their chances of making two levels of progress and attaining good grades at GCSE.”

Study Plus lessons are staffed by a teacher and a teaching assistant, which means that they can personalise the learning and tailor it to youngsters' interests and abilities. Study Plus English, for instance, includes a unit of work called *Trailers*, where pupils produce film trailers and write their own voice-overs.

Meanwhile, Study Plus Mathematics includes a unit entitled *Disaster Relief*, which involves students planning the relief aid for a fictitious tsunami that has struck the coast of South America.

So far, around 500 schools have used Study Plus to raise attainment and the feedback from teachers and pupils has been very positive.

An evaluation of the Study Plus pilot showed that nearly a quarter of pilot pupils achieved five GCSEs at A* to C (including English and mathematics) in 2008. Forty-two per cent of pupils targeted for English gained a grade C or better, while 39 per cent targeted for mathematics achieved likewise – very positive outcomes for pupils who were predicted to achieve at less than a grade C.

The Literacy Plus programme was launched in 2009 after schools that had been running Study Plus asked for a key stage 3 version. More than 300 secondary schools across the country are now using it.

Literacy Plus is available for English only and is aimed at pupils who are at Level 3 when they arrive at secondary school. They have two Literacy Plus lessons timetabled every week in year 7 – with the programme aiming to enable them to achieve Level 4 by the end of year 7. Literacy Plus can also be used to give year 8 pupils additional support.

“Study Plus and Literacy Plus both need to be planned into the curriculum by senior managers,” said Mr White.

“It's very difficult for heads of English or mathematics to organise this themselves because it needs to be put into the timetable and staffed.

“I'm absolutely convinced, though, that where Study Plus and Literacy Plus are being used well, they make a very positive impact on pupils' learning.”

Further information:

Study Plus: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/studyplus

Literacy Plus: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/literacyplus

Additional resources include the Reading Challenge handbook, part of a scheme to help key stage 3 pupils whose reading skills are two years below expectations: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/readingchallenge

The Writing Challenge handbook is part of a scheme to help pupils whose writing skills are two years below expectations: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/writingchallenge

Case study: St Robert of Newminster Catholic School



impressive. Out of the 19 pupils who took part, 16 achieved a grade C or above in English. One boy achieved an A grade and three others got Bs.

“If you are talking about success stories, Study Plus has really made a difference,” said Ms Reed.

“I now teach one of the pupils at A level and he said to me recently ‘if I hadn’t done Study Plus, I wouldn’t have got my C and I wouldn’t be doing A levels now’. It’s lovely to have seen him blossom – and a real affirmation of the Study Plus approach. We are now in our third year of Study Plus and it is continuing on with positive success.”

Following on from St Robert of Newminster’s success with Study Plus, the local authority asked the school to pilot Literacy Plus from September 2009. It is obviously early days, but a group of 21 year 7 pupils now have two hours of Literacy Plus timetabled each week – with the aim of helping them to achieve Level 4 in English by the end of the summer term.

St Robert of Newminster is also using the Reading Challenge programme to support year 7 and year 8 learners whose reading skills are below expectations. The scheme involves schools identifying a key reading target for each pupil and then organising individual coaching geared towards that target. Coaches can be teaching assistants, adult volunteers or senior pupils. In St Robert of Newminster’s case, the school asked 6th form students to get involved.

Every year around 30 6th-formers volunteer to support year 7 and year 8 pupils who need help with their reading.

“They are asked if they would like to make a difference in the life of a younger child who is struggling to read,” explained Ms Reed.

“We ask students who might be interested in going into teaching or a caring profession and train them. They then run one-to-one reading sessions for half an hour on Monday lunchtimes, and although it’s hard to quantify in terms of success, it seems to be going very well. We have seen distinct improvements in the younger pupils’ reading and they seem to grow in confidence and self-esteem.”

TEACHER HELEN Reed is delighted by the impact the Study Plus approach has had in helping to raise pupils’ attainment at St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College.

The 1,800 pupil school, which is situated in Washington, Tyne and Wear, and has one of the largest 6th forms in the country, was asked to pilot Study Plus in English from 2007.

Teachers chose around 19 key stage 4 pupils who, although they had the potential to get a grade C in GCSE English, looked like they might not achieve this. In many cases they were “quiet” students who were vulnerable to underperformance and who, in some cases, lacked confidence.

The Study Plus sessions take place for two hours a week in year 10 and one hour a week in year 11 and are staffed by an English teacher and a classroom assistant or “learning mentor”. The sessions tend to be skills-based and students thrive on working on units of work with short-term goals.

“It seemed to make a difference when they were aiming towards completing something in a couple of weeks,” said Ms Reed, second in English, who taught the first cohort of Study Plus pupils. “They particularly enjoyed being able to take the skills they learned during these sessions and then apply them across the curriculum.”

The impact the Study Plus approach made to the first cohort of Study Plus students at GCSE was

A broader range of evidence

Assessing Pupils' Progress materials in mathematics are making a real impact at secondary level

THE MATHEMATICS Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) materials provide a key set of resources to help teachers develop all aspects of assessment in mathematics.

APP is a structured approach to pupil assessment in mathematics which enables teachers to track pupils' progress and use diagnostic information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses. It forms part of three linked levels of assessment – day-to-day, APP, and transitional assessment.

“Day-to-day assessment comes under the banner of Assessment for Learning (AfL) and is very much about guiding the teaching and learning in the day-to-day,” explained Derek Huby, senior advisor, mathematics, for the National Strategies. “APP is about the next stage, periodic assessment, which means taking a step back from the day-to-day and considering pupils' progress more broadly. So rather than looking at the outcome of individual lessons or activities on a day-to-day basis, APP is about considering pupils' progress across the piece, measured against the national curriculum criteria.

“Then, to complete the picture, there is transitional assessment, when pupils move from class to class or key stage to key stage.”

All secondary schools are aware of APP, but some are further forward in implementing it than others. However, the growing number of teachers who are using the APP approach to assess their pupils' development in mathematics say that it is having a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Instead of relying almost exclusively on testing or what pupils have written in their exercise books, teachers using APP are drawing on a far broader range of evidence to track pupils' progress, identify gaps in learning, and plan for progression. They say that APP is helping them to make rigorous, robust and reliable judgements, linked to national standards.

APP is intended to be used at regular intervals, perhaps twice or three times a year, when mathematics teachers review their pupils' work using APP guidelines to build a profile of their attainment. As well as enabling them to analyse pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses, the process also helps teachers to reflect on their teaching.

Mr Huby said: “APP is about raising the game in terms of teachers reflecting on children's progress, measuring that against national standards, and trusting their professional judgement to assess where pupils are in their learning. If you are talking about pupils making sense of mathematics and having the ability to use mathematical ideas, make mathematical decisions, and communicate mathematical results, these are too rich a set of skills to be assessed simply by ticking, short tests, or marks out of 10. APP is about giving a broader, richer range of assessment approaches which enable teachers to make sense of where pupils are and what the next steps in their learning should be.”

It's important to remember, however, that introducing APP requires time and effort on the part of schools. “The message for senior leadership teams is that it takes mathematics departments time to get used to the change of culture that APP represents,” Mr Huby added. “It requires slow, thoughtful development in terms of getting to know the materials and approaches, finding ways of making it work, and clearing away the legacy of old assessment approaches.”

Revised mathematics APP materials were launched in 2008 to align both with APP in other subjects and at primary. The materials consist of the assessment guidelines (with assessment grids available in either A3 or A4 format), the APP teachers' handbook describing how APP works, and the standards files, a set of booklets giving examples of pupils' work assessed against national curriculum levels.

Associated resources include the *Assessing Pupils' Progress: Secondary Mathematics Guidance – Day-to-day assessment in mathematics*, which gives guidance on what teachers should be doing day-to-day in order to generate a “bank of evidence” for APP.

Further information

Mathematics APP materials: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/app

Download the *Assessing Pupils' Progress: Secondary Mathematics Guidance – Day-to-day assessment in mathematics* resource at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/mathsapp



Case study: Varndean School

MATHEMATICS TEACHER Zeb Friedman sums up her opinion of APP in one word – “phenomenal”. “APP impacts on how you think about your teaching, how your students are learning, and the progress they are making,” said Ms Friedman, who is a part-time mathematics advanced skills teacher at Varndean School in Brighton and a mathematics consultant for Brighton and Hove. “It changes how you teach and engages teachers more in pupil learning than ever before.

“I found my first couple of dips into APP quite scary because it uncovered misconceptions where I had believed pupils understood what they were doing. Using APP you have to gather more information about what pupils do and don’t understand and work out what strategies and techniques you can use to deal with misconceptions. In other words, APP automatically engages with Assessment for Learning (AfL) in a way that I don’t think mathematics teaching has done before.”

The mathematics department at Varndean, a 1,300-pupil school with a reputation for innovation and achievement, introduced APP in September 2008. The approach is now being used across virtually all key stage 3 and half of key stage 4 classes.

In her mathematics consultant role, Ms Friedman helped to run APP training sessions for all the subject leaders within Brighton and Hove. The local authority has also set up an APP network to share best practice and support mathematics departments in taking APP forward.

Meanwhile at Varndean, the seven-strong mathematics department launched APP through three training sessions during the course of the 2008/09 academic year. Ms Friedman said: “The first two sessions involved introducing teachers to

what APP is about and the APP materials. Then four members of the department who were taking it up quite rapidly focused on working with three or four students within a class. We then very quickly went on to work with whole classes with APP. The pupils responded very positively too. They have become much better at responding to smart questions, problem-solving and thinking through.”

APP automatically engages with Assessment for Learning in a way that I don’t think mathematics teaching has done before

Ms Friedman and her colleagues took care not to treat APP tasks as an “add-on” method of assessment to be used every half-term or after every module.

The Varndean teachers agree that APP is very much about using “blended aspects of a student’s work in order to make a judgement on their progress”.

“Every teacher I have worked with has said APP has shown them that they need to plan this differently or teach that differently,” said Ms Friedman. “As a result, APP has done far more for what is going on at the chalkface in maths than anything I have seen so far. Most teachers find the A3 assessment grids incredibly helpful and are using the hard copy version rather than the electronic version. They like the fact that they get the whole picture with this recording sheet and there is a huge sense of ownership.”

The grids have proved so helpful that the staff are considering getting rid of their mark books altogether: “An A3 grid tells me more about a pupil’s progress than a mark book ever could,” said Ms Friedman. “There’s simply no competition.”



Moving up a level

Increasing the number of pupils achieving at least Level 6 in science by the end of key stage 3 is an important focus for the National Strategies

THE SCIENCE and Innovation Investment Framework (SIIF) has played a major role in driving the science education agenda forward.

Published in 2004, it set out the government’s ambitions for UK science and innovation for the next decade.

One of its aims was to increase the number of pupils achieving at least Level 6 in science by the end of key stage 3, and with this in mind, the National Strategies developed the *Progressing to Level Six and Beyond in Science*, with added *How Science Works* materials.

“The reason it is called *Level Six and Beyond in Science* came from the realisation that if pupils got to Level 5 at the end of key stage 3, the likelihood of them getting a grade C in science at GCSE is about 50 per cent,” said Ed Walsh, senior advisor, science, at the National Strategies.

“But if they get to Level 6, the likelihood is more than 90 per cent. It was clear, therefore, that the key distinction between Level 5 and 6 is absolutely critical and we needed to be building foundations in year 7,” he added.

The *Progressing to Level Six and Beyond in Science* resource was first launched three years ago, but

is continually being developed and added to. As well as supporting good progression in science, the materials are designed to extend approaches to support classroom pedagogy and professional development.

A total of 864 secondary schools are currently involved in 88 funded *Progressing to Level Six and Beyond in Science* projects up and down the country, but many more are using the materials.

“When the project started we talked to teachers who were very good at getting pupils to Level 6 and beyond in science about the strategies that had been successful,” explained Mr Walsh.

“These strategies basically tended to fall into six different categories and tended to be things that blocked children’s progress, such as scientific inquiry, group-talk, research skills, scientific writing, misconceptions, and using models.”

As a result of these discussions, the *Progressing to Level Six and Beyond in Science* resource was grouped around these six headings.

The National Strategies then developed a “steps and layers” approach. Each “steps table” describes the characteristics of pupils working at four different steps in the development of a process or skill and then offers strategies for teachers to use to support pupils in progressing to the next step.

Annual evaluation reports of *Progressing to Level Six and Beyond in Science* show that teachers are “extremely positive” about the project and believe it is helping to improve students’ outcomes in science.

“Teachers are saying that it is tremendous and that pupils are becoming more enthusiastic about science,” said Mr Walsh.

“Rather than saying to pupils ‘you’ve got to learn this and you’ve got to learn that’, it looks at the skills and understanding that need to be focused on. From a pupil’s point of view, it is much more engaging and is proving very effective.”

Further information

For more information on *Progressing to Level Six and Beyond in Science*, with added *How Science Works*, visit: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/level6

The *Ensuring the attainment of more advanced learners of English as an additional language* resource can be downloaded from Teachernet: www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications (search for the title)

Falinge Park High School’s group-talk approach (see page opposite) features on the What Works Well website. To read *Talk to Learn: Using group talk to improve learning outcomes in science*, visit: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/whatworkswell

Case study: Falinge Park High School

FALINGE PARK High School in Rochdale has made extensive use of the *Progressing to Level Six and Beyond in Science* materials. Around two-thirds of the school's 1,174 pupils are English as an additional language (EAL) learners, who, although they have proficiency in English verbally, sometimes find written work more difficult. Keen to build their confidence, engagement and attainment in science lessons, science teacher Jennifer Richmond hit on the idea of developing structured lesson activities using group-talk in her classes.

"Jennifer realised that a very good way of getting better written outcomes in science was to allow the pupils the opportunity to rehearse the arguments orally," explained Ed Walsh, senior advisor, science, at the National Strategies. "By developing the pupils' understanding through group-talk and then interweaving it with written tasks, she came up with practical strategies that have been very effective."

Falinge Park was part of the original *Progressing to Level Six and Beyond in Science* pilot study and found the resource "very easy and useful".

Then in 2009, Ms Richmond and EAL co-ordinator Linda Sandler decided to use the group-talk approach with a mixed-ability class of year 7 science pupils. They believed that it would encourage the use of more academic language in science, help the pupils' confidence in the subject, and tackle key misconceptions.

"A lot of our pupils are highly intelligent and know the science but aren't necessarily confident enough to talk about it in a large group," said Ms Richmond, who as well as being second in the science faculty is a lead teacher and Rochdale's secondary strategy project consultant for science (she was seconded from Falinge Park one day a week to share effective practice with other schools). "We wanted to encourage them to talk about science in a very comfortable environment and build their motivation up. Getting them to transcribe their knowledge on to paper was the bridge we wanted to cross. The aim of our project, therefore, was to put group-talk at the centre of everything we did – in order to build their confidence and engagement in the

We wanted to encourage them to talk about science in a very comfortable environment and build their motivation up

attainment of science. A lot of them weren't confident about writing the science down, in comparison to their oral work which was of a much higher standard."

The year 7 cohort was selected based on prior attainment and language levels in order to deploy an approach of early intervention. The class of 27 pupils was initially divided into three groups and one of their first tasks was to set their own ground rules.

"Each of the three groups came up with their own rules about listening to people, raising their hands and valuing other people's comments. The list was basically everything you would expect in the classroom but it was great because the pupils came up with it themselves. They have a strong sense of ownership of their rules and adhere to them, reminding each other if anyone gets over-enthusiastic and forgets them. So even though I was the teacher at the front, I was really more of a facilitator. If there was a pupil who didn't quite get something, the others would put it into different words and you would then see the light-bulb moment.

"The pupils absolutely loved group-talk. There was a noticeable and significant impact in terms of their motivation and confidence, their language skills were more specifically honed to using science terminology, and their engagement with science increased hugely. The pupils were going to EAL homework classes wanting to do their science and they were very keen to show me their written work. One girl in particular went from a Level 4 to a high Level 6 in a few weeks."

Ms Richmond and her colleagues are now rolling out the techniques and approaches, which promote equality of opportunity and inclusion for all, across the whole of the science faculty.

See further information on page 8 for a link to more information on Falinge Park's group-talk work.

Driving up standards

The Stronger Management Systems and Stronger Governance Systems programmes support schools to drive whole-school improvement

THE NATIONAL Strategies developed the Stronger Management Systems (SMS) programme in 2008 in response to a recognised and growing need in secondary schools for support to secure effective management systems and processes.

The SMS programme is designed to show how leaders and managers at all levels have an important role to play in raising standards.

It focuses on practical and essential elements of management and provides materials to help schools review, refocus and improve their systems and structures.

Schools need to have strong and consistent management in place for line management, whole-school teaching and learning, pupil tracking, and monitoring and evaluation. This is where SMS comes in. It has already proved highly successful in schools supported by the National Challenge and is currently showing impact in a wider range of schools.

The materials, which were updated early in 2010, are intended to be used flexibly by schools to achieve short-term impact, focus and alignment, alongside longer-term capacity-building, and sustainable improvement.

The suite of materials starts with an overview and user guide aimed at headteachers and school improvement partners or National Challenge advisors.

Other materials are the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) Management Guide (which outlines the essential features for effective improvement planning), self-assessment materials, and 10 elements which explore the 10 key aspects of management systems and structures.

The 10 elements cover a wide range of areas, including effective line management structures and practice, pupil identification and intervention using the Venn analysis tool, and monitoring and evaluation underpinned by a clear focus on standards.

Each element features a rationale and a list of quality standards against which schools can assess

their current practice. Every quality standard is accompanied by exemplification and linked CPD materials and activities to assist school leaders to improve practice.

They are not expected to work their way through every section of the materials. Rather, schools are encouraged to focus on only those aspects applicable to their needs and use the materials to support them to improve their specific management systems and processes.

Frances Soul, programme director, secondary school improvement, at the National Strategies, said that feedback to SMS has so far been “overwhelmingly positive”.

The National Strategies has also produced Stronger Governance Systems (SGS), a shorter publication which is similar to SMS but aimed specifically at school governors.

A professional development booklet, SGS aims to help school governors improve the quality and impact of the contribution they make to school improvement.

It details the areas that governors need to be proficient in, such as the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of governing bodies, school improvement planning, key indicators of how schools are doing, and the role of governors in schools’ self-evaluation.

Ms Soul said: “It supports them to understand what we mean by school improvement and to carry out their strategic role of challenging and supporting school leadership teams.”

Further information

For information about the Stronger Management Systems programme, visit: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/sms

The Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) Management Guide is available at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/rapguide

Stronger Governance Systems is available at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/sgs



Case study: City of Ely Community College

WHEN CATHERINE Jenkinson-Dix became principal of City of Ely Community College in 2009, she decided to use the Stronger Management Systems (SMS) materials to open up a debate about school improvement.

The 1,250-pupil school in Cambridgeshire is not on the National Challenge, but is a Gaining Ground school (a Department for Children, Schools and Families programme for schools that need to improve rates of progress).

Ms Jenkinson-Dix believed that the SMS materials would help the college to reflect on and improve its management systems and structures. As an experienced head she knew it was vital to get the school to look at itself more “critically”.

“When I arrived, the school had been on an improvement trajectory and results and outcomes had gone up, but I was conscious that there were some things that structurally weren’t in place.

“For instance, I wasn’t clear that it had a real sense of purpose and pace about what it was doing and felt that some of the elements of SMS would be really helpful. I wasn’t using the elements in the same way or with the same level of urgency as a National Challenge school might, but I wanted to stimulate focused debate and discussion and get the school to reflect critically on itself. I also wanted to make sure that I was getting my team on board with how we were going to need to work to increase the pace, and to raise awareness with middle leaders.”

Ms Jenkinson-Dix and her senior leadership team looked at the elements of management systems and structures that they felt needed attention: “We dipped into the elements that we felt were priority areas,” she explained.

“This isn’t a resource where you start at page

one and work through until you get to page 100. It’s a flexible resource that you can genuinely tailor to the needs of your school. It’s very much like when you are planning teaching – you take things that are going to work for you for a particular aspect. We used the sections of SMS on high quality and effective line management structures and practice, and effective performance management and objective-setting informed by whole-school priorities.

SMS is a flexible resource that you can tailor to the needs of your school

“We have also dipped into Assessment for Learning (AfL), did some work on tracking pupil progress, and are currently looking at the quality standards used in lesson planning.”

Ms Jenkinson-Dix is delighted by the fact that the college has been able to tailor the resource according to its priorities.

“The real measure of impact is on pupil outcome, but I think that this resource has raised awareness and provided frameworks and thinking about systematic approaches for some core fundamentals that I expect middle leaders to be doing as part of their role,” she said.

“This package of materials is very powerful. The elements within it are fundamental to effective and sustainable school improvement, particularly in the way they promote discussion and debate.”

So far Ms Jenkinson-Dix has not used Stronger Governance Systems (SGS), but she is keen to do so in the future in order to help governors gain an accurate view of the college and to encourage them to reflect critically.

Improving learning for all

We look now at the range of resources that are supporting the inclusion and development of all students, including those who have SEN and from disadvantaged backgrounds

IMPROVING LEARNING outcomes and providing an appropriate, personalised education for every child is the responsibility of everyone working in education.

To support this aim and to ensure that teachers are skilled and equipped to teach all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, Black and minority ethnic groups, those with Special Educational Needs/Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (SEN/LDD), and gifted and talented pupils, the National Strategies has developed a number of key resources.

The Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) is a four-year programme of CPD. It aims to narrow the gap between those who have SEN and their peers. It consists of a suite of materials designed to increase the confidence and expertise of teachers and teaching assistants in supporting SEN pupils. The focus is very much on developing quality first teaching so that it is more inclusive and responsive to the requirements of SEN pupils.

At the moment, two phases of the materials are available on the National Strategies' website – *Dyslexia, Speech, Language and Communication Needs* (2008) and *Supporting pupils on the autism spectrum* (2009). A series of case studies showing how schools and local authorities have used the materials to improve their provision can be accessed on the Department for Children, Schools and

Families and National Strategies' What Works Well website. The *Dyslexia, Speech, Language and Communication Needs* materials are currently being refreshed in the light of Sir Jim Rose's 2009 report on *Identifying and teaching children and young people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties*. The updated version will be available early in 2011.

The *Supporting pupils on the autism spectrum* materials are also having an impact on provision in schools. Self-evaluations completed by nearly 2,800 teachers and other school staff showed that 14 per cent were at the highest level and have the core knowledge and skills that all teachers should aspire to on completion of the IDP autism materials.

In March 2010, the third phase of the IDP materials – *Supporting pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties* – is published on the National Strategies' website with booklets and DVDs available by the end of March. These materials are suitable for all teachers (especially NQTs), teaching assistants, learning mentors, and school leadership teams. They cover a range of issues, such as how to identify these difficulties, how to improve provision in the classroom, and how to support these learners more effectively.

Further information

The IDP resources are available at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/sen

The Progression Guidance and accompanying CPD materials help to provide better data for schools on how pupils with SEN/LDD are progressing. Visit: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/progression

All schools are expected to have a Disability Equality Scheme in place and a National Strategies' leaflet and self-evaluation tool helps schools to meet key requirements. Visit: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/des (leaflet) and www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/destool (self-evaluation tool).

What Works Well: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/whatworkswell



Case study:

The Netherhall School

TEACHING STAFF at The Netherhall School and Sixth Form College in Cambridge began using the *Dyslexia, Speech, Language and Communication Needs* materials in January 2009 and have never looked back.

The 1,350-pupil school on the outskirts of the university city prides itself on being an inclusive place where everyone is valued. There are around 350 students who have SEN on roll and as Wendy Suter, the school's head of learning support, explained: "We don't see SEN as just being the responsibility of the SEN department. It's the responsibility of every member of society."

As well as achieving the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Inclusion Quality Mark, Netherhall also won an inclusion award in a competition organised by the Papworth Trust charity in 2009.

The charity challenged youngsters to design an inclusive activity that would bring pupils from mainstream schools together with young people who have disabilities. The year 8 Netherhall students hit on the idea of getting groups to design bed-sized sheets of fabric, which would then be sewn together and displayed along the side of the sports hall.

Netherhall jumped at the chance to be part of the pilot for the first phase of the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) and decided to concentrate on the speech, language and communication needs side of the programme. The school began by training all 12 teaching assistants with the materials.

"I know some schools have focused on IDP as a training tool for teachers, but we felt that teaching assistants go into so many lessons and are such a powerful resource that actually they had the opportunity to impact on the greatest number of students," said Ms Suter. "They then liaised with teachers and fed back ideas into teachers' planning and delivery."

At the start, Netherhall chose one year 8 class to focus on. The year 8 English, history, geography and religious studies teachers then used the IDP materials to develop their knowledge and understanding of pupils' speech, language and communication needs.

They also carried out student voice questionnaires (with the questions devised by the pupils themselves) to find out how youngsters felt about their performance and progression.

"The improvement in outcomes was staggering," said Ms Suter. "The IDP gave the teachers the confidence to look for the strategies that make a difference. As for the pupils, it made a real difference to the way they felt about learning – which was very important to us. Also, the average reading age for that particular group from the beginning of the year to the end of the year went up by 16 months, the average spelling age went up by 21 months, and there was also a decrease in behaviour concerns."

One of the teachers involved does a lot of 6th form work and he wasn't just using what he'd learned with children who have SEN, he was using it across the board with students of all abilities

"We are now at a stage where it is becoming a whole-school approach. One of the geography teachers involved does a lot of 6th form work and he fed back to us that he wasn't just using what he'd learned with children who have SEN, he was using it across the board with students of all abilities."

The school began working on the second phase of the IDP materials (*Supporting pupils on the autism spectrum*) in January 2010 and hopes to use the new behaviour, emotional and social difficulties materials in due course.

"IDP is really powerful," said Ms Suter. "Some schools might say 'we've got good teachers, we don't need it'. We've got good teachers here, but it still made a difference. If you are a teacher who hasn't had to teach a child who has extreme speech and language difficulties before, how do you pick that information up? You might be an outstanding teacher, but if you've never had to do it, how do you know? The great thing about IDP is that it makes good teachers even better."

Supporting EAL learners



When it comes to narrowing the gaps, a key challenge is helping those with English as an additional language

THE NATIONAL Strategies' secondary EAL (English as an additional language) programme was launched in 2006 with the aim of ensuring the attainment of more advanced learners of English as an additional language.

This targeted programme involved 12 local authorities and 44 schools and focused in particular on developing academic language and register, developing thinking skills, and improving extended writing.

"The impact was considerable," said Martyn Pendergast, regional advisor, narrowing the gaps, at the National Strategies. "Within the targeted groups of pupils, we found that almost 60 per cent were making two levels of progress at key stage 3. Also, our internal data shows that EAL learners at the schools that ran the programme made greater gains last year at key stage 4 than the national average for EAL learners."

After being trialled and developed in schools, the secondary EAL materials were rolled out nationally. The materials show how the needs of EAL pupils can be catered for in mainstream classrooms.

"They offer teachers and schools the collective wisdom of 12 local authorities and 44 schools in how to develop a pedagogy responsive to the local context and the needs of their pupils," said Mr Pendergast.

The materials consist of a suite of CPD modules and additional guided materials. These can either be used to

develop schools' training and discussion sessions or for teachers' own self-study.

Teachers can access the materials on the Narrowing the Gaps area of the National Strategies' website. This also highlights the four areas of activity known to be crucial in schools that are successful in narrowing the gaps. These are:

- Know the gaps (through effective use of data).
- Narrow the gaps (through high quality, personalised provision).
- Mind the gaps (through "rigorous, robust and effective" tracking of progress).
- Celebrate gap-busting (through recognition of personal achievement and sharing of good practice).

"Teachers and consultants are saying to us they find the materials easy to use – particularly because of the way they link theory and practice," said Mr Pendergast. "They also say that their pupils are showing higher levels of engagement, which is very encouraging."

The secondary EAL materials can also be used with a wider group of disadvantaged pupils whose language development may be lagging behind their peers: "Some of the schools on the targeted programme decided they would track more deprived, English-speaking pupils alongside the EAL learners, and many of these pupils made equal if not greater gains. A very tight focus on academic language and register is beneficial for all those who don't have access to it elsewhere."

Further information

For more on *Ensuring the attainment of more advanced learners of EAL*, visit: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/eal

A wide range of resources is available to help with narrowing the gaps. These include *From data analysis to impact: The golden thread*, *From data analysis to impact: A practical guide*, and *Narrowing the Gaps – Leadership for impact*. Visit: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/ntg

An overview of all the materials currently available to help narrow gaps and resources to support the achievement of Black and minority ethnic, disadvantaged, and gifted and talented pupils is available to download: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/sup5/ntgresources

Case study: Pleckgate High School



WHEN SCIENCE teacher Fiona Hope volunteered to take part in the secondary EAL pilot in 2006 she had no idea what a huge impact it would have – both on the progress of her own pupils at Pleckgate High School and beyond.

The programme at the Blackburn-based school proved so successful that the local authority rolled it out as an authority-wide literacy improvement programme called Language for Learning. Not only that, Ms Hope has been granted advanced skills teacher status on the strength of her work with the programme and is now a lead practitioner for the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

A school with 1,200 pupils on roll, many of them EAL learners, Pleckgate prides itself on being a multicultural community that values the efforts of all. When it got involved in the secondary EAL pilot to develop advanced EAL learners' literacy, the school decided to focus its work in the first instance on a year 7 science class taught by Ms Hope.

"I chose pupils who had achieved a Level 4 in key stage 2 science, so on the face of it were quite competent scientists," explained Ms Hope. "But they were also pupils who had only got Level 3 in English, which made us think that they might not make the progress we wanted them to make.

"Science is still a subject that relies on reading, writing and understanding, so throughout my lessons I concentrated on making literacy explicit using the strategies I was taught through the pilot.

"The local authority consultants really helped me develop my pedagogy during training days and then I would come back to the lesson, do the activities with the children, and assess them regularly. By the end of year 9 they had made excellent progress and now they are in year 10 they are all in higher sets than they would have been. The work has had such an impact that we have decided to run it out across the whole school and in every subject area."

Ms Hope uses a range of different literacy strategies in her lessons and also supports other teachers at Pleckgate and across the Blackburn with Darwen authority. She runs CPD sessions, does one-to-one support with teachers, and has showcased the work in a DVD for the Strategies.

"If I am teaching renewable and non-renewable energy, for example, I write some text about each," said Ms Hope. "I put the pupils in groups and they read the text with dictionaries, work out what it is saying, and prepare a visual guide to help them understand it. Then I take the text away, and using the visual guide, they have to explain it to the other pupils. It's a question of engaging with the text, understanding what they are doing, and using academic language to communicate."

As well as improving pupils' literacy, it has helped them to develop their Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills, group-work, independence, and to take responsibility

Teachers and students alike have been hugely supportive of the programme: "Teachers say that it is brilliant, not just for academic performance, but for pupil engagement, motivation and enjoyment," said Ms Hope. "As well as improving pupils' literacy, it has helped them to develop their Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills, group-work, independence, and to take responsibility."

Pleckgate now asks all subject leaders who are not English specialists to deliver at least one lesson with "explicit literacy strategies" every half-term.

"Once you develop the skills, you find that you're doing it anyway, without even realising it," said Ms Hope. "It's very much part of our routine at Pleckgate High School now."

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Secondary

Inclusion

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CPD

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