

Inspector guidance: secondary English

The purpose of this document

This document has been created for training and supporting inspectors to conduct subject deep dives in schools. The training guidance provides a structure to explain variation in subject-level quality of education. It should be used in conjunction with handbooks for section 5, section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools, and section 8 no formal designation (subject-specific) inspections.

Points to consider when examining the evidence:

School leaders may not be able and should not be expected to articulate their intent **as it is outlined** in this document or to provide documents which neatly provide the evidence for these focus areas. Inspectors should always investigate claims that issues affecting quality of subject education are outside of the school's control. It should be evident that the issue has been identified prior to the inspection and that the school has taken steps to mitigate the ill effects. For example, in the case of text books, it should be clear that leaders have previously identified the issue and raised it with senior leadership, investigated funding, identified texts they would prefer, identified the specific weaknesses of the current text and taken specific action to mitigate against those weaknesses.

The structure of this training guidance

The six focus areas

These provide a structure to explain reasons for the quality of subject education as identified by inspection activities. Inspection activities are likely to be an iterative process as inspectors consider the evidence. Under each focus area there is one row and two columns.

Column 1: This is an outline of potentially stronger practice in the area each question explores. It also provides likely responses and other evidence inspectors may encounter and gives explicit guidance on how to interpret these responses.

Column 2: This is an outline of weaker practice in the area each question explores. It also provides likely responses and other evidence inspectors may encounter and gives explicit guidance on how to interpret these responses.

Inspector Questions: These are organising questions which, together, cover the relevant points inspectors need to investigate under each focus area. These questions serve as headings and are not designed to be asked of school leaders. There are examples of useful **school-friendly** questions inspectors might ask of people or the evidence to explain reasons for the quality of subject education. This is **not** a comprehensive list of questions which may be asked. Inspectors should use their own judgement but will find the school-friendly question suggestions useful.

Six focus areas

1. The school's understanding of progress in English and how that informs its approach to the curriculum
2. The extent to which teaching supports the goals of the English curriculum
3. The effectiveness of assessment in English
4. The extent to which there is a climate of high subject expectations where a love of English can flourish
5. The quality of systems and support for staff development
6. The extent to which whole-school policies affect the capacity for effective English education

Inspectors are likely to use the following sources of evidence in making their judgements.

They will generally use:

- interviews with subject lead (if there is one) and/or the appropriate senior leader
- curriculum plans
- pupils' work
- discussions with pupils
- interviews with teachers
- lesson visits, including conversation with teachers, if possible.

Where appropriate, inspectors may use:

- the school's own records of lesson visits in the subject
- the resources available for teaching the subject (incl. school library, ICT facilities)
- the school's assessment policy
- assessment instruments, including mark schemes if there are any (not internal data)
- how the school provides pupils with feedback on their work
- how the school promotes the value of the subject including via enrichment activities
- forms of support for inexperienced, non-specialist or struggling staff
- any support provided for the subject lead
- performance management's role in improving subject provision
- details of the timetable and staffing (including details of experience and qualifications of staff)
- school policies on teaching, assessment, homework, behaviour
- documents analysing strengths and weaknesses of the subject and any associated improvement plans.

Focus area 1: The school's understanding of progress in English and how that informs its approach to the curriculum

Secondary English combines two disciplines: English literature and English language. Four domains of knowledge: literary studies, rhetoric, composition, and linguistics (grammar) span across these disciplines and make up the categories of knowledge or progression pillars. Secondary English foregrounds literary studies. In schools this domain is often the 'organising' domain for knowledge in the other domains. If so, the other domains should be enhanced as a result and not diminished.

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Inspector question 1a:

Scope: How does the school understand what it means 'to get better' (progression) in the subject, and does the school give meaningful attention to all categories of knowledge in English? Is the scope commensurate with that outlined in the National Curriculum?

School-friendly questions:

- Is the subject's complex architecture understood, for example the way English language and literature are combined?
- Is domain-specific knowledge applied and through the modalities of reading, writing and spoken language?

Subject planning should outline the content in the domains/categories of knowledge through which progression is delivered in English (language and literature).

- The conceptual framework for this guidance uses the domains of: **literary studies, complex composition, rhetoric and linguistics (including grammar)**. NB: This framework is to provide inspectors with a model that they can use to interpret what they are told and any planning documentation that they may be given. **It is not in any way prescriptive.**
- It is important to note that breadth of knowledge and/or end-goals in the NC are expressed **through the modalities of Reading, Writing and Spoken Language**. These modalities are the means by which expertise in the four domains is demonstrated.
- The BPs below provide top-level summaries of the domains and make explicit links with the NC modalities to exemplify the point made above. Questions 1-5 in this document outline the scope of each domain in detail.

The curriculum leader finds it hard to answer this question coherently.

- Generalised comments are made about how the curriculum enables pupils to get better at writing/reading/SL skills. There is confusion about the progression necessary to achieve this and/or how pupils will acquire knowledge in the four domains which underpin progression.

The department have not considered the range of knowledge needed to become an expert in English.

- Sometimes this is because they have focused on the skills in three modalities of R, W and SL and not on knowledge. NB: This knowledge does not have to be considered/ delivered using the same framework as is outlined in this guidance document. However, the school should organise the curriculum so as to ensure that key knowledge, as outlined in each of the progression pillars **is** delivered.

Lit Studies ▪ This includes Kn about genre, form structure and critical practices and is primarily delivered through reading and exploring the range of texts required in the NC. ▪ The NC for KS3 specifies: - whole books (which are important for building reading stamina) short stories, poems and plays and requires: - literature from pre and post 1914 should include prose, poetry and drama - two Shakespeare plays in KS3 - seminal world literature. Complex composition ▪ This domain includes knowledge of : different stylistic features (including grammatical features) and their effects, as well as different forms, and genres (including literary styles and analytical writing). It also includes knowledge about how to plan, proof-read, edit, refine and shape writing and also how to express complex ideas. ▪ The NC for KS3 outlines the range of writing that will enable pupils to both acquire and demonstrate this knowledge: - well-structured formal expository and narrative essays - stories, scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing - notes and polished scripts for talks and presentations - a range of other fiction and non-fiction texts, (arguments, opinion pieces, discursive essays) as well as literary non-fiction - summarising and organising material, and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail.	We have designed a curriculum which delivers GCSE knowledge and skills. KS3 supports pupils for success in KS4 by introducing pupils to key Kn and skills and enabling pupils to practise exam skills. ▪ This combines two big issues: being constrained by exam specifications, and 'planning backwards' from GCSEs or A levels to determine what should be taught at Key Stage 3. ▪ It is undoubtedly important to emphasise the knowledge needed to build readiness for complexities that lie ahead but this is different from an entire curriculum being revered engineered. When planning backwards, our attention is on the build-up of a narrow set of knowledge and skills, but when planning forwards we are more likely to consider the curriculum in all its messy breadth before later narrowing our focus to the content of specific exams. ▪ This allows us to make sure the curriculum includes what Christine Counsell¹ has called the 'hinterland' within the discipline – areas that are not directly examined but give students the knowledge base to think better, for example reading the whole novel or play not just key chapters/scenes. Taught lessons and work books do not align with the curriculum map. No matter how good the curriculum plan, this is clearly problematic but the inspector must not make hasty assumptions that there has been a significant departure if pupils' books show little evidence that the curriculum plan is being followed.
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¹ <https://thedignityofthethingblog.wordpress.com/2018/04/07/senior-curriculum-leadership-1-the-indirect-manifestation-of-knowledge-a-curriculum-as-narrative>

Rhetoric This domain includes knowledge of the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, knowledge of devices used in Renaissance literature and knowledge of techniques of oratory from Classical civilisations. It is linked closely with spoken language in the NC (see below): ▪ pupils should be taught to understand and use the conventions of SL (including rhetoric) for discussion and debate ▪ work collaboratively with their peers to discuss reading, writing and speech across the curriculum ▪ the curriculum should also identify the knowledge and skills associated with the artistic practice of drama (see appendix for further information about drama). Linguistics/grammar This domain includes grammar terminology, etymology, the history of English language and discourse studies. It has strong links with the grammar section in the NC. It is a body of knowledge in its own right as well as underpinning progression in the three other domains. The NC states: pupils should acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.	
Inspector question 1b: Scope and components: Does the department identify, appreciate and teach the underpinning knowledge for progression in all domains in English, especially vocabulary knowledge? School-friendly questions: ▪ Tell me how you ensure that pupils have the underpinning linguistic and vocabulary knowledge they need.	
The interconnected nature of the domains means certain key knowledge underpins all the domains. This underpinning knowledge includes vocabulary knowledge, knowledge about language (linguistics) and grammar, and some other functional knowledge and skills e.g. handwriting. NB the grammar /linguistic pillar is a domain in its own right as well as having this interlinking supportive role.	Leaders have not broken down composite end-goals that are expressed as skills. In such cases the department view getting better as through development of English skills. These are sometimes derived from GCSE specifications or Bloom's Taxonomy. A good-quality curriculum will have identified the range of component knowledge that allows the capacity to perform skilfully. There are a number of reasons why hierarchies such as GCSE mark schemes or Bloom's Taxonomy are unhelpful:

Vocabulary importance

The department recognises the importance of vocabulary acquisition for progression in all aspects of English:

- limited vocabulary significantly affects reading comprehension
- pupils also need to know how to use words that will help them express concepts original thought and across the domains. This includes subject-specific vocabulary e.g. words such as genre, metaphor, imagery and soliloquy, tri-colon.

Vocabulary development

- A combination of identifying carefully chosen vocabulary for explicit teaching and an approach to teaching which highlights and explains vocabulary as it is encountered.
- Teacher and pupil repetition of words and using them in a range of different contexts.
- Words label ideas. To understand the meaning of words means to understand a range of contexts in which that word can be used – building a rich schema for that word.
- A focus on manipulation of vocabulary within sentences and embedding vocab in long-term memory.
- Links with the humanities curriculum so that knowledge and vocabulary from other linked subject domains can be reinforced.
- Knowing the forms and uses of standard English, spelling, punctuation and the KS2 grammar appendix as a minimum and language registers for both spoken and written forms.
- Making links with linguistics domain to understand roots and etymology.
- Know-how to use words deliberately and purposefully to achieve coherence and fluency.

- they don't consider component knowledge and are thus not useful tools for planning or assessing progression in English
- the discipline of English requires a certain kind of critiquing which could be confused with Bloom's evaluation or similar structures but it is not the same; it's much more dependent on subject knowledge.

The department primarily encourages pupils to look up words they don't know in a dictionary.

- While pupils should learn to use dictionaries, they are not a very useful way of learning the meaning of new words. They often define words using synonyms pupils don't know and do not provide the context necessary for the word use to be well grasped.
- However, carefully selected knowledge about the way dictionaries have changed from Dr Johnson onwards can deepen vocabulary knowledge.

Teachers use lack of vocab knowledge as a reason for not introducing challenging texts.

They do not see that rich texts can enhance vocabulary and that access to rich texts promotes of cultural capital As a result, there is little sense that vocabulary stores are increasing over time.

Pupils employ complex vocab in their own analytical writing or other types of writing but do not know what the words they use mean as they have come from the thesaurus/dictionary. This would raise questions about the impact of the English curriculum.

Inspector question 2a:

Scope and components: Does the school ensure wide-ranging and expanding knowledge of literary studies?

School-friendly questions:

- In KS3, are pupils studying a wide enough range of literature (genre/form/heritage/world lit etc.? Or do they only read GCSE texts (current and past)?
- Does the curriculum ensure that pupils deepen their knowledge of key literary concepts?
- How do you ensure pupils use their grammar/vocab knowledge when analysing texts?

Through reading and analysing a range of literary whole texts (fiction and non-fiction), pupils deepen their knowledge in this domain.

- They build a complex web of understanding about the context and ideas in the texts they read which they usefully apply when encountering new/unfamiliar texts.
- Pupils learn the best exemplifications of different forms/genres of writing (including poetic, rhetorical and dramatic forms) that push genres to their boundaries or subvert those genres.
- Pupils deepen their knowledge of key literary concepts:
 - texts are organised with the intention to create particular effects or to fulfil specific purposes
 - the way narrative, narrator and writer are not one of the same
 - the concepts of story: plot; narrative; point-of-view; parallel narratives etc.
 - appreciation of how audience, purpose and context shape texts, including 'context of reception' (factor that effects the way a text is interpreted) versus 'context of production' (factors such as . social, historical, political, economic, literary, cultural contexts which influence the writing of the text).

Leaders and teachers should be attuned to representation issues in the literary texts studied, checking whether pupils from diverse ethnic communities can see their world/themselves represented in the texts they read.

- NB: This refers to teachers introducing texts that have been carefully chosen because they are culturally diverse. It also refers to teaching enabling pupils to make connections between their own experiences, which may be culturally defined, and the experiences of characters they encounter texts from a different place/time/culture. **E.g. pupils identifying with Pip's confusion**

'We know that in Year 6 they did practice SAT tests and did not read any quality literature.'

- Schools do not always know what books are generally taught in KS2 or specifically taught as partner primary schools.
- They make choices based on an inaccurate picture or do not consider that some pupils may have read texts already. In some cases, the curriculum leader does not know the potential in the books that the school has in stock/is not familiar with them/has not read them or explored their potential with his/her team. A joint trip to the stock cupboard can be useful.

The department repeats the same literary texts at KS3 as well as KS4.

- This would need a very convincing rationale to be justifiable. Texts should not only be chosen because of their possible relation to exams.

'We don't do any extracts from literature because we only study whole texts.'

Or 'We mostly use extracts because our pupils cannot cope with the demands of whole texts.'

- Neither of these approaches is ideal. Pupils need to become capable and comfortable reading high-quality, whole texts. However, there is a place for extracts, for example when 'practical criticism' as an approach is used to consider layers of meaning that do not require context. Secondly, extracts can illustrate the timeline of the canon and enable fruitful comparisons between texts written in different eras.

The department prioritise accessibility and relevance when choosing literature. 'Our disadvantaged pupils have a low concentration threshold, so we do not encourage whole books being read as often our pupils cannot cope with it.'

about his identity, maybe not for the same reasons but being able to see the connections with their own lives. ▪ One key concept relating to literature is the idea of the canon and understanding of how far back the canon reaches and how it came into being. This includes knowledge of Classical literature and theories, such as those of Aristotle. ▪ In addition: - the canon represents a shared view of what society considers to be the best that has been written - the canon should not be seen through the lens of presentism, i.e. modern values imposed on it. However, the complexities inherent within it should be known, such as why more male writers than female writers are represented. ▪ The school should consider how to ensure that all children can gain access to the shared knowledge of their society, of which the canon is a key part; this is referred to as Cultural Capital. ▪ Well-chosen canonical texts can also shed light on pupils' own lives and experiences. ▪ Pupils should also gain increasing knowledge of the figurative literary devices that have specific linguistic formations and are used in, for example, polyptoton which is the repetition of words derived from the same root but with different endings. E.g. 'Love is not love/Which alters when it alteration finds/Or bends with the remover to remove...'	▪ Unfortunately, sometimes decisions about which books should be studied indicate the curriculum leader has low expectations, or poor subject knowledge, or limited horizons or a limited knowledge of the precise aspect of the text with which pupils will connect.
Inspector question 2b: Scope and components: Does the department ensure wide ranging and expanding comprehension in reading, including through reading for pleasure? School-friendly questions ▪ How do you make sure pupils that pupils have the right kind of, and sufficient, background knowledge to comprehend harder texts? ▪ Do plans help pupils' reading habits evolve? Do RfPI approaches focus on building reading stamina as well as the quality of texts read? ▪ Are barriers to reading properly understood and effectively tackled, including hidden gaps in phonic knowledge?	
The curriculum ensures confidence in all aspects of reading comprehension.	'We teach inference skills to support pupils' comprehension.'

- There is much research from cognitive psychologists on the importance of background knowledge and vocabulary for comprehension. The school should consider how the curriculum develops these aspects.
- Effective comprehension may also include carefully selected strategies such as monitoring understanding and reflecting on what has been read. These approaches need to be directly taught if they are going to be used well. They are very dependent on vocab knowledge/background Kn.

Writing can support better comprehension, but this is often overlooked.

Writing is a tool for expressing and justifying ideas as in the composition of criticism but it also helps pupils to discover what they think. In this way it supports skilled reading or reading for meaning.

The reading curriculum should enable pupils to build reading stamina gradually.

- It is not always appropriate for pupils to read 19th century texts in their entirety but the quantity they read should increase over time.
- As a simple starting point, inspectors can check the publisher's suggested reading level of texts, relative to reading level of the specific class assigned the text (NB: This is very different from using reading ages for assessment).
- For example, *Private Peaceful* and *Stone Cold* have a reading age of 10. *Holes* and *Skellig* have a reading age of 11. Progress is possible when pupils read texts that push them beyond their comfortable limits.
- **Inspectors should note that some secondary pupils cannot comprehend what they read because they are not automatic decoders - this cumulative dysfluency may be hidden (see SEND section).**

Reading for pleasure

- Any way of systemising pupils' reading should either include within it or have additional mechanisms for making sure the books pupils choose are appropriate (school decides what this means (see Q4)) and for ensuring pupils develop the habit of reading.

- Too much emphasis is placed on practising inference skills as the only way to improve comprehension with not enough focus on other aspects, including vocab gaps and phonics gaps.

The department uses 'knowledge organisers'.

- How knowledge organisers are used is much more significant than if they exist. If knowledge organisers fail to distinguish between differing levels of generality, and have pupils spending time memorising material that is excessively detailed or too general to be meaningful, that is problematic.
- It is also problematic if teachers expect pupils to make judgements in class activities or essays with very limited knowledge of the topic. Teachers' curriculum thinking should have identified the necessary prior knowledge pupils need to learn for the task to be meaningful. For example, a piece of persuasive writing on ending animal cruelty needs good contextual knowledge of the arguments for and against and there is little point requiring pupils to say what they think about the message of a WW1 war poem when they know little of WW1 or attitudes at the time.

The department choose more accessible texts and assume they can 'up the challenge' by developing skills.

This is problematical as the demand of the text both contributes to the challenge and the demand of 'skills' is dependent on the complexity of the content being analysed. Additionally, and crucially, exposure to increasingly more complex texts is a key means of helping pupils make progress in English. Challenge also includes: difficult themes, non-linear time sequencing, complex narration, complex plots. NB: Some texts in English seem to lack challenge on the surface but have hidden layers of complexity.

Reading for pleasure is not given deep consideration; it is done in a cursory manner as an activity that is experienced by pupils not taught.

- Through investigation, it is clear that some pupils are will be reading more complex and richer books at home and/or will have read complex richer books in primary school. If the school is unaware of this, it will not allow these pupils to make progress.

Habitual readers/avid readers should be introduced to exciting and challenging but appropriate books by their teachers.	Online systems are used but the school does not maximise their impact. Many rely on the school's existing library stock so it's important that this is wide-ranging and ambitious. 'In this school all pupils have silent reading lesson to develop RfPI.' Check that this is the case. Silent reading can lead to pupils performing reading or pretending. There is increasing research on maintaining and developing fluency through pupils practising reading aloud.
Inspector question 3a: Scope and components: How does the department ensure wide-ranging and expanding knowledge of complex composition? School-friendly questions: - What thought is given to texts used as models for pupils' own compositions? - Is writing seen purely in terms of composites or are components embedded, e.g. spelling & grammar? - Do pupils develop the building blocks needed to evaluate and edit their own writing?	
Complex composition includes mastery of all the facets of form and genre in a wide range of texts. The Composition domain has close links with the linguistic and rhetoric domains This is because they share underpinning knowledge. Through composition pupils can also show and refine their understanding of literature. - Curriculum plans should indicate how the curriculum will enable pupils to write in a wide range of forms and styles, bearing in mind the importance of rich exemplars and models. Composition in terms of range of writing includes: - narrative forms e.g. short stories, novellas, novels, play scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing forms - literary non-fiction forms; travelogues, diaries, letters - well-structured formal expository, writing critical and narrative essays. - Writing tasks should be embedded within curriculum planning, giving pupils sufficient opportunity to master writing in a given form/genre before being introduced to another and/or how new forms relate to ones already mastered.	'We get pupils to write from experience as we feel it means they can relate more to their writing.' - Teachers do not always plan for different forms and genres when setting writing tasks, so pupils write mostly in the first person, confessional style e.g. a diary entry. Research shows that writing in this way is useful as one part of a pupil's repertoire, but not as a sole focus. - Confessional writing does not always develop pupils' ability to express complex ideas but may have value in other ways. 'We focus on developing pupils' creativity through writing in extended forms.' Is the department aware enough of the importance of fluency in components to achieve this? For example, are they asking pupils who struggle to construct sentences to develop paragraphing? Does this stifle their ability to write at length on an imaginative topic? Teachers are unaware that if component knowledge is missing children will not be able to compose complex compositions. For example, if pupils are required to understand how a writing genre has developed over time, then this understanding won't be attained

- The curriculum should emphasise commonalities between different styles, genres and forms as well as what makes them unique.
- In addition, as pupils move up the school there should be an increasing focus on developing notions of how texts that are studied for lit studies might be suitable/useful models for their own writing.
- This means that attention should give to the order in which pupils are introduced to the specific forms and styles which act as models for their writing so that key compositional concepts are already in place:
 - the prior knowledge needed to write in a particular form e.g. play script
 - awareness of the role that audience and purpose has on shaping compositional choices.
- **Curriculum plans indicate the knowledge for expert performance in composition.** This broadly falls into four categories (NB: Composition is particularly interconnected with the other pillars, especially linguistics, including grammar):
 - **knowledge of the subject matter to be written about including** knowledge gained from their own reading and/or from knowledge of other subjects, especially humanities and arts
 - **vocabulary and grammatical knowledge** and how to apply it in formal and informal modes of writing (see row below and linguistic domain)
 - **the language know-how to use words deliberately and purposefully to achieve coherence, and fluency and creative verve.** The NC for KS3 outlines the end of key stage goals in writing. In primary, writing is divided into composition and transcription, but in secondary a more sophisticated approach is often adopted
 - **knowledge of how to plan, draft, edit, proofread, summarise and organise their writing.** This includes shoring up any transcriptional Kn not in place from primary or

through analysing model essay answers and then pupils writing their own essays on this topic.

forgotten. Needs to be done quickly and efficiently so pupils can apply it in their writing ASAP.	
Inspector question 3b: Scope and components: Does the department ensure pupils acquire and develop underpinning knowledge for written composition? School-friendly questions: ▪ How are spelling errors dealt with? ▪ How do you make sure pupils have mastered key grammatical knowledge for effective writing? ▪ Do you use models for more technical aspects? If so, how?	
Grammar knowledge for better writing. ▪ There is an increasing body of evidence about how knowledge of grammar supports effective writing; it's important that schools are aware of the relationship between grammar knowledge and writing, especially how this relationship evolves as pupils' grammatical knowledge deepens. ▪ Sentence combining, construction of sentences and syntactical manipulation are prioritised to develop articulation of ideas in sentence². ▪ In some cases, schools will need to ensure that key grammatical components, identified as necessary for writing, have been embedded in long-term memory through drill, practice and exercise. ▪ Leaders and teachers will also need to identify any additional grammatical components that they feel should already be embedded and close gaps rapidly. Punctuation knowledge for better writing. ▪ Punctuation is not left to chance and the curriculum enables rules to be memorised and applied through increasingly complex practice.	'We focus on the structures of writing using different text types.' The department may not have realised the importance of syntactical knowledge and how poor grasp of sentence structure might explain problems applying punctuation. 'We don't tend to use exercise or practice to teach grammar or punctuation, we teach it all in context.' Although important to apply grammatical knowledge as pupils write, this approach does not take into account that some grammatical knowledge is essential for effective writing and therefore needs to be mastered. It also means that when pupils write they may be attending so much to grammar they cannot attend to other aspects such as style/content. Work across year groups tends to have basic errors, e.g. wrong use of missing capital letters, and insufficient focus is placed on tackling these areas. Pupils will have been taught correct use of basic punctuation since Reception. If classes still need to be retaught the basics each year of secondary, as pupils do not recall the rules of basic punctuation, this indicates a problem with the department's approach to ensuring content is remembered. In addition, lack of automaticity can use up working memory that could be focused on ensuring compositional aspects are sophisticated.

² <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/sep/21/how-to-write-a-great-sentence>

- Over time, pupils develop a more sophisticated approach to punctuation, using it accurately and with increasing invention, depending on the purpose and form. - They also understand how in certain forms such as poetry, punctuation works differently and some poets deliberately using no or little punctuation (see EE Cummings). Handwriting The department should have programmes in place to remediate issues with handwriting which are serious enough to hinder written communication. Links with good handwriting and good spelling, as well as fluency in writing helping in expressing ideas, are known.	A separate issue is whether pupils have become habitual in the use of the rules they know. If large numbers of pupils continue to make basic errors, this suggests a lack of department/whole-school focus on requiring accurate punctuation to ensure bad writing habits aren't embedded and good habits are built. 'We tend to ignore handwriting as it's not as important as other aspects like spelling.' Good handwriting which is legible supports success in exams and helps pupils with spelling. Cursive script can enable pupils to write better at speed. Some pupils with SEND have particular fine motor skills/processing difficulties which need to be understood.
Inspector question 4: Scope and components: How does the department ensure wide-ranging and expanding knowledge of, rhetoric including spoken forms/oratory School-friendly questions: - Do plans indicate that pupils gain knowledge of how to present an effective argument in speech and writing? - How do pupils get better at public speaking/giving presentations? - Do pupils get to see rhetoric and oratory in action and dissect how it works?	
Rhetoric is the study of all forms of effective communication. Therefore, rhetorical knowledge is the knowledge needed for effective communication (both orally and written) of ideas, knowledge, arguments and concepts. It relates to SL in the NC because to succeed at the high-level end-goals requires a knowledge of rhetoric. Knowledge of rhetoric better enables pupils to better analyse great speeches, old and new, which are part of their cultural capital. Underpinning knowledge for rhetoric. - Through articulating their thoughts, pupils get better at speaking in public with confidence. Articulation, either in writing or speaking, also pushes them to greater clarity in their thinking. - Structured tasks in which pupils verbally use disciplinary vocabulary, knowledge and sentence structures (acquired through the curriculum) can support the above. For example, verbal critical	The department says that pupils gain confidence speaking skills through lots of peer interaction in lessons and group tasks (see pedagogy section). This might well be problematic if it assumed that talking to peers alone will improve pupils' confidence in speech or the quality of what they talk about. It is problematic to assume that children with a limited vocabulary or poor spoken English will make significant improvements from informal communication with their peers. Structured tasks in which pupils use new vocabulary and sentence structures that they have acquired through the curriculum will be more helpful. The department says it teaches rhetoric knowledge and skills and talks generally about argument. It references the trivium in conversations. Such an approach needs to be carefully planned so pupils have the necessary component knowledge and grammar. It is not additional challenge that can be sprinkled of the curriculum. The Trivium (ie the curriculum taught in Roman times and the Renaissance) sounds academic

interrogations of poems or verbal descriptions of works of visual art (known as ekphrasis). ▪ The department should also ensure that pupils learn the 'art' of expressing argument formally and in a compelling manner for audiences, either speaking individually or in debates. ▪ Through the curriculum, pupils should cumulatively develop knowledge and expertise in well-chosen aspects of rhetoric (i.e. a systemised approach to making a case and presenting an argument), and also oratory. NB: The features of rhetoric and oratory are very closely linked because of their antecedence. ▪ This domain includes increasingly detailed knowledge of: - the five basic parts of rhetoric known as 'the canons of rhetoric' and how they work. This knowledge is important because it assists pupils in structuring/composing compositions and adds to their understanding of the way classical literature influences the English canon - the 'art' of expressing argument formally and in a compelling manner for audiences, either speaking individually or in debates - key theories from Ancient Greece relating to the art of giving speeches (voice, manner, tone) and the construction of speeches and how such knowledge has been used throughout the ages e.g. Gettysburg Address is based on funeral oration by Pericles.	and sophisticated. It has become 'en vogue' in certain schools but rhetoric knowledge needs to be carefully sequenced through the curriculum. The danger if this is not the case is that pupils gain a false understanding or a very superficial knowledge which is full of misconceptions or not applied well enough.
Inspector question 5: Scope, Components: Does the school ensure wide-ranging and expanding knowledge of linguistics, including grammar? School-friendly questions: ▪ Do leaders see standard English as an important dimension of English and why? ▪ Does the curriculum develop pupils' knowledge of, and about, standard English, including its origins and purposes? ▪ Do pupils learn about etymology and the history of the language? ▪ How are connections made between linguistic knowledge and other domains?	
Knowledge in linguistics includes:	'We start Year 7 with Beowulf in the original Anglo Saxon as that adds challenge.'

▪ knowledge about dialect, accent and standard English, the history of the language, including Anglo Saxon and middle English ▪ the linguistic features of informal talk, formal talk and writing and how they differ from each other and from writing known as discourse studies ▪ graphology - study of printed language ▪ other linguistic knowledge e.g. of grammar, orthography/morphology, syntax, standard English, and etymology and semantic field. NB: There are strong links between spelling and vocabulary such as knowledge of Greek and Latin roots (their spelling and meanings). Grammatical knowledge ▪ Grammatical knowledge is a category in its own right but it supports the other pillars e.g. composition (see row 3b). ▪ Grammatical knowledge is important for comprehension e.g. knowledge that assists understanding the complex syntax of archaic texts. ▪ Teachers should ensure carefully selected key grammar rules are taught to be remembered and then ensure the application of these rules become habitual by not accepting errors in areas that pupils can now be expected to be accurate. Standard English ▪ Standard English is widely recognised as being appropriate for formal written modes and pupils should know the grammatical features of SE. ▪ They should know the history of the SE form, how it came about and why it is important. They should recognise that non-standard forms can be appropriate in some cases such as in dialogue. Links with other domains ▪ Knowing how the language of English has come into being helps pupils understand literary heritage texts, especially the way certain words have different meanings and thus used differently in them.	This is logical in terms of the canon but may not work without the linguistic knowledge to understand Anglo Saxon and lead to cognitive overload. ‘We tend to deliver linguistic knowledge within SL tasks.’ This may not enable pupils to acquire the specific knowledge of linguistics and how to apply it, especially more complex concepts. ‘We know pupils have no grammatical knowledge in Year 7 so we start with a grammar unit.’ ▪ This means that teachers’ understanding of the entire cohort’s GaPS strengths and weaknesses, as well as each pupil’s performance in the KS2 GaPS test, may be limited. Teachers not knowing the extent of pupils’ GaPS knowledge when they start in Year 7, nor their gaps, leads to fruitless repetition and limited progression from secondary to primary. ▪ This shows confusion about NC PoS in KS2, what’s in them and how grammar appendix applies to KS2 and KS3. Not enough consideration is given to teaching the terminology so pupils can use disciplinary language to reflect on their choices. It also might show that not enough focus is being placed on studying the effectiveness and impact of the grammatical features used in the texts they read. ‘We only teach grammar in context i.e. when pupils write.’ Writing may lose its way because of the above, i.e. limited consideration given to how writing might be developed from being above expected in Year 6 to meriting the highest scores in GCSE (dealt with in 3b).
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▪ Pupils should also know the relationship between grammar and rhetoric. Many aspects of rhetoric depend on a strong knowledge of grammar. ▪ Strong grammatical knowledge can enable pupils to make conscious choices in their use of language. If pupils have the meta-language/key terminology they can explain their choices. Knowledge about semantic fields Semantic field is a lexical set of semantically related items, for example terms related to war in sports commentary.	
Inspector question 6: Scope, Components, Rigour: Does the school ensure wide-ranging and expanding disciplinary knowledge in the domains? School-friendly questions: ▪ What do you consider the key disciplinary traditions are and how do you teach them? ▪ How do you develop key critical practices? ▪ Tell me your thoughts on what might be called disciplinary knowledge in English (ie knowledge of the way the subject constructs truths)?	
The subject's disciplinary traditions/modes and practices are complex. ▪ This means they can often be operationalised in complex ways or seemingly hidden. Probing through questioning leaders is therefore important. ▪ The subject has a strong theoretical basis which might be mistaken for being the disciplinary, when it is in reality a content concept i.e. substantive knowledge such as concepts about how narrative works. The disciplinary is something else. Critical impartiality should be modelled and prioritised. This enables dispassionate analysis. ▪ Leaders should ensure that literary texts (and other texts used in lessons) are not used to share the political agenda, themes and preoccupations of particular political perspectives, whether left or right wing. ▪ Leaders should ensure that an imbalance in the themes across text choices does not, in practice, have this effect. For example, the	'We have a disciplinary unit and we teach it throughout the curriculum.' This seems to show a lack of understanding of the complexities of the disciplinary in English and what it is. Some schools that have narrow end points e.g. GCSE AOs overlook the disciplinary. 'We see the disciplinary as making sure that all texts are relevant to our pupils and help them understand current issues.' ▪ The English National Curriculum has a set of well-established disciplinary aims. It should not be seen as a vehicle for other subjects or curricular aims. ▪ The disciplinary aims equip pupils to explore how values and ideas over time have been represented in a range of texts through language. Gaining such knowledge equips pupils to interrogate what they read and what they are told i.e. understand current

political message in 'An Inspector Calls' needs to be explained as such rather than presented as a self-evident right thinking.

- This is in-keeping with key disciplinary traditions of objectivity. Whether texts have literary merit and add to pupils' 'cultural capital' should also be considered when thinking about challenge.
- Another key tradition relates to the appreciation of the aesthetic within works of literature, often demonstrated through a more personal response.
- Disciplinary notions embrace aesthetic pleasurable aspects of literature as well as the possibility of personal connections with texts. These aspects do not exclude theoretical approaches or vice versa. Such apparent contradictions are part of the discipline.
- Because pupils see best exemplifications they seek to emulate these in their own compositions. The curriculum enables pupils to make deep and meaningful connections between their wide reading/literary studies and their own writing, from the perspective of a writer. Pupils develop an understanding of the differences between being a writer and 'writing' and being a reader and 'reading'.
- Pupils become increasingly attuned to the notion of literature as an art form and schooled in/aware of the creative practices that enable such an artform to be produced; they use this to develop an original voice in their own writing.
- They also analyse texts through cultural and theoretical lenses. This requires developing pupils' reasoning, judgement and aesthetic sensibilities (including their creative responses to texts) through:
 - reading about theories and exploring their basis and origins and how they have been applied to other texts
 - reading criticism which employs different theories
 - close reading of texts, including author's revisions
 - creating summaries/synopsis/precis
 - paraphrasing
 - practical criticism/unseen analysis

issues and importantly contextualise ideas within a broader referential framework and participate meaningfully in the debate.

- dramatic performances - discussion and debate.	
Inspector question 7: Components/sequencing: Does planning consider component content and its sequencing to build knowledge over time and create 'readiness for future learning'? ▪ within the lesson sequence ▪ within the topic ▪ within the year or phase School-friendly questions: ▪ Show me a curriculum example where specific English content is sequenced to enable pupils to be 'ready' for something more complex. ▪ Show me how your curriculum prepares pupils for a particular topic through the knowledge that came before it.	
As pupils move through the secondary curriculum, content may become less linear i.e. build knowledge more cumulatively. This is because the subject is predicated on complex interconnections, and the application of key disciplinary practices, such as comparisons with complimentary texts. A strong and coherent curriculum outlines the knowledge that needs to be acquired and organises it coherently and meaningfully so that key content is emphasised and deep structures understood by: ▪ clearly defining the component knowledge within each domain that is required for expert performance of ambitious end-goals ▪ ensuring end-goals are expressed in curricular terms and not just in terms of (GCSE) assessment objectives or skills ▪ providing well-planned opportunities for links to be made between concepts in different domains, ▪ noting those parts of the curriculum 'hinterland' that need to be revisited, alluded to or used as a means to adumbrate new learning etc. ▪ establishing prior learning needed to access complex ideas and making sure it is acquired meaningfully ▪ ensuring building blocks are embedded (fully) and deepened cumulatively through the modalities of R,W SL. E.g. knowledge in the rhetoric domain might be deepened through the modality of	The curriculum becomes 'task- based' with insufficient focus on the 'what' i.e. analysing what? In this kind of scenario pupils do not read whole texts but extracts, and pupils access model answers more than actual texts. The department may mistakenly consider using GCSE questions from Year 7 as a way to increase the challenge. ▪ This approach may in fact lead to a limited understanding of the component knowledge needed to access more challenging 19th century texts: for example, canonical knowledge, contextual knowledge, grammatical knowledge, as well as how best to build up and embed this knowledge over KS3 so it can be confidently applied in KS4. Because the questions are examples and pupils do not have a rubric for how to approach them, Pupils spend time practising questions rather than reading the texts. ▪ The non-linear, cumulative nature of some disciplinary Kn means there is ad-hoc repetition of some genres aspects of language or literature study while other areas are neglected. 'We know pupils are hot-housed for SATs, so they have not got the knowledge and skills needed for KS3.' Comments like this can lead to low expectations and texts/work pitched too low in Year 7. Some pupils reported English had been their favourite

writing, for instance writing a speech based on the structure of the Gettysburg Address ▪ a strong rationale for exposure of pupils to texts – when and what is emphasised for each text and why ▪ essential domain-specific concepts that will be drawn out through mastering underpinning knowledge, like knowledge about narratorial viewpoint, leit motifs etc. The curriculum over time provides opportunities for the application of key domain concepts in increasingly complex contexts. For example, writing a commentary on a chapter written from the POV of an unreliable narrator. The curriculum is organised coherently so that underpinning knowledge, i.e. foundational knowledge, is consistently re-emphasised so that it is fully absorbed. This forms the bedrock which enables pupils to achieve real confidence in the key concepts relating to domains. This enables them to connect concepts from one domain to another making subject-based links. This is a key disciplinary practice. Lesson sequences ▪ Teachers should be able to explain how lesson sequences relate to the aims of the curriculum and support progression in domains through modalities. ▪ They should be able to identify times when they have changed or adapted the curriculum (sometimes at class level) to ensure progression for pupils. For example, teachers can explain that pupils have been working on first person speech writing, and are now focusing on a third person argumentative essay to consider and deepen their understanding of how to write persuasively in different forms. ▪ Teachers can explain why they have introduced an extract as an exemplar or anecdote or a retrieval exercise or why they have spent longer on a scene/chapter in a lesson. Within the phase/year	subject in primary and stopped being so in secondary because of this. (Transition research 2016.) The department may set tasks which it characterises as ambitious and challenging, for example to analyse a chapter from a novel by Dickens. ▪ They do not see that this requires knowledge of the context, the genre, complex vocabulary styles and structures, its place and significance in the timeline of literary heritage etc. If the school has not identified or planned for this knowledge, nor assessed how much relevant knowledge pupils have before coming to the task, it is problematic. ▪ For example, if pupils are set a task to explore Dickens' use of language in the opening chapter of 'Bleak House', if they do not have some carefully-chosen knowledge of Victorian London, especially the way it then looked (and some selective geographical / social knowledge) they will struggle. NB This does not mean that they need to know every single fact about Victorian London. Without such knowledge, composite tasks such as the one mentioned will show a shallow understanding (more like a novice with a focus on surface features rather than deep structures). The department has ambition in the challenging texts it teaches, but pupils are not successfully accessing these texts. ▪ Pupils provided with, for example, literary heritage texts to read in an effort to make the curriculum more challenging may not succeed if pupils do not have the underpinning knowledge, including vocabulary knowledge, to access them. In this case, working memory is overstretched. ▪ Careful curricular thinking is missing if teachers have not anticipated these component knowledge gaps or considered how to address them e.g. through abridged versions, pre-reaching vocabulary, introducing complex characters or complexities that may be barriers or key knowledge about what concerns the writer had.
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▪ Secondary English teachers should know the NC for KS2 well and the PoS for Years 5 and 6, and build curriculum content from this starting point so it is increasingly challenging. ▪ They should find out about the full curriculum experience of the new Year 7 intake – accepting the challenges that may be presented by an intake coming from a wide range of contributory primaries, and pupils who are newly arrived in the country.	The department explains it does not have the funding for new stock which is why texts are not pitched appropriately. This may be the case and such claims should be verified by checking the issue of inappropriate texts had been raised with SLT prior to inspection, possible funding for chosen texts had been investigated and clear actions taken to mitigate against the weaknesses of the texts available, e.g. text swaps with other deps in other schools.
Inspector question 8: Memory: Do teachers identify, emphasise and repeat crucial content so that pupils know more and remember more (i.e. make progress)? School-friendly questions: ▪ Show me which bits of your curriculum (like concepts, ideas, vocabulary, etc.) are really crucial to re-visit so that they are remembered. ▪ How do you identify and ensure pupils remember the most crucial content covered? ▪ How do you as a school go about agreeing which specific knowledge (ideas, concepts, vocabulary, etc) pupils absolutely need to know within each topic you teach?	
The curriculum outlines the ideas, concepts and vocabulary for progression in each domain. It outlines those specific ideas concepts and vocabulary which need processing at a deep-structure level so they can be fixed in long-term memory. ▪ The inherently interconnected nature of most domain knowledge means that the curriculum should enable connections to be made across the secondary English curriculum. For example, when studying <i>The Tempest</i>, references might be made to other novels in which to explore the way colonial power was transacted (<i>Jane Eyre</i>) and its impact on indigenous peoples. Therefore, teachers should regularly reference previous curriculum content. This is not the same as going over old ground but is much more keeping with disciplinary traditions. ▪ Interplay of domains is essential. The domains work as separate entities but the interplay between them is and is a crucial facet of the subject. ▪ The curriculum in secondary is structured to enable pupils to journey being experts. Therefore, it is generally more cumulative in nature, especially in the domains of literary studies and complex composition. Much of the 'heavy lifting' and more functional aspects will have been done in primary.	'We take as a given that previous content needs to be taught as if new.' This is problematic. For example, pupils should not lack confidence in applying subject terminology in their own analysis, such as simile or metaphor or being able to say when to use commas. After Year 7 gaps in such basic knowledge should have been addressed. 'English is not like other subjects, there is no content that needs to be learned.' When insufficient focus is placed on recall or thinking about the use of recall in the disciplines and domains within English, or there is a superficial approach to recall, this can impact negatively on progression. In such cases, pupils cannot carry out complex tasks.

- Teachers should still emphasise the ideas and concept that will need to be most attended to, sometime known as liminal because they are gateway concepts. Approaches to teaching these concepts are considered so they can be mastered fully and applied. - It may be that for a number of different reasons key components from KS2 are not fixed in long term memory and pupils have not got the fluency embedded enough to journey into becoming experts. - If this is the case some KS2 knowledge will need be revisited in KS3 and the approach to this type of revisiting should be targeted and ideally not take up too much curriculum time.	
Inspector question 9: Rigour: How does planning ensure the interplay of different categories of knowledge, thus ensuring pupils are given the capacity to consider subject-specific questions for themselves? School-friendly questions: - Tell me how the different types of knowledge that you teach combine together in each topic. - You have stated that you wish for pupils to learn to develop 'subject thinking' or to think more like a subject expert. How have you planned curriculum content to ensure they have learned and what they need to attain this goal?	
This question focuses on all of the four domains. It considers how the curriculum: - enables pupils to connect/combine knowledge from different domains using over-arching concepts (see below) to inform their theorisations - the importance of becoming practised in disciplinary modes of discourse, especially the critical essay but also talking about a text so as to develop a shared reading - compares texts with other texts in the canon to justify a reading, making the invisible visible, known as a foil. Below are some key over-arching concepts in the domains of literary studies and composition (these are not definitive but are used to illustrate the points made above). - Words are chosen, ordered and organised with the intention to create particular effects or to fulfil specific purposes.	Teachers' knowledge of how to teach English revolves around strategies to prepare pupils for exams. For example, there is little consideration of aspects such as how to introduce poetry to pupils or what pupils need to know about the Great Depression before they read Of Mice and Men. In some cases, teachers' own knowledge of these areas will be weak. 'The department makes statements about how they make sure pupils enjoy Shakespeare and make it accessible.' Tasks set do not enable pupils to get better at disciplinary practices e.g. a Facebook page activity to explore Macbeth rather than direct pupils towards disciplinary questions. This is problematical not least because Facebook will be fixed in episodic memory and the SH will be forgotten. It is also problematic because it assumes that pupils only enjoy what is easy. Pupils talk about repetition from key stage 2. It is important to unpick this more as we know that review and repetition can help fix things in long-term memory. However,

▪ The way narrative, narrator and writer are not one or the same and have complex overlapping relationships which mediate meaning in texts. ▪ The notion that one text can give rise to a number of different readings which are given warrant because they use the text as evidence. ▪ Appreciation of context of reception v context of production and notions of universality of texts. ▪ Comparisons and connections between and within texts. ▪ How audience/purpose shapes meaning. ▪ Creative practices associated with creative forms of writing and how they work. ▪ Carefully selected film and media texts can be used to support the development of knowledge in the four domains within English. E.g. in the domain of literary studies it can enable pupils to gain an insight into the structure of narrative and the idea of a mediated viewpoint. It also contributes to the hinterland of knowledge needed for big disciplinary ideas such as big ideas about symbols and semiotics. NB: there is no evidence that teaching through the medium of film has a positive effect.	studying the same texts/in the same way/not being introduced to new vocab and/or learning grammatical terms and knowledge that is already embedded, may be problematic. ▪ However, if a piece of writing completed by a class suggests that they do not understand embedded quotation, for instance, it would be sensible to revisit this or to revisit some underlying concepts that are complex/ some linguistic knowledge. This should not be taught as if new when pupils have familiarity. For example, a Year 7 lesson on 'what is a noun', without consideration of what pupils already know, shows a lack of curricular thinking in identifying what knowledge pupils have.
Inspector question 10: SEND: How do you ensure those pupils who find it most difficult to learn English (e.g. some pupils with specific SEND) are given the best chance to keep up? School-friendly questions: ▪ Which pupils in this class are finding the subject most difficult? Why do they find the subject hard? ▪ Which bits of content are absolutely key that all pupils, including those with SEND, need to take away from this specific unit?	
To support pupils who find English difficult, the same curriculum needs to be broken into smaller chunks of knowledge and skills. Pupils may need more time spent practising them and/or need to be revisited. Some practices may need rehearsing more frequently. When considering what scaffolds pupils need to access the curriculum, leaders and teachers should pay attention to pupils' reading fluency because this is so essential to all domains.	Interventions may be therapeutic rather than targeting reading gaps. ▪ They may be too sporadic or piecemeal rather than systematic and not evidence-based. They may not be using systematic synthetic phonics for decoding or not following a programme faithfully. ▪ Children may be inappropriately grouped meaning the intervention is not effective for all children. All of these are problematical.

Pupils who are not decoding effectively should be provided with focused systematic synthetic phonics teaching by someone trained to deliver the programme. If pupils cannot decode they will not have enough WM to carry out complex tasks nor access the curriculum in any subject. Phonics gaps can be rectified through a phonics programme and expert teaching. Similarly, gaps in key transcriptional knowledge such as spelling, handwriting and punctuation can be rectified through direct teaching and additional practice. This should be done as directly and swiftly as possible.	Interventions should not be delivered by teachers without adequate training in the programme. Where teachers lack confidence, they may focus on aspects of a programme closer to their secondary knowledge (such as making comparison, for example) rather than properly teaching the more technical aspects. Pupils with reading difficulties are identified but interventions are not adequate. They tackle the symptoms more than the cause.
Inspector question 11: Sixth Form: How does the department ensure high-quality sixth form teaching? School-friendly questions: - How do you structure the curriculum at A-Level to ensure that pupils are helped to make links across the course? - If the Exam Specifications set out a lot of content that pupils need to cover, how do you map out that content over the course? - If the Exam Specifications set out content and sources that pupils need to cover, what are the disciplinary tools (disciplinary knowledge – methods) that you teach them to be able to handle that content in a sophisticated way? - How do you ensure pupils appreciate how the knowledge they have should be used to address examination questions?	
Teachers need excellent and up-to-date subject knowledge of the specifications. They also need wide-ranging Kn that goes beyond the textbook and specification content³. This includes knowledge of the best specific critical essays/articles/critical approaches. The school supports teachers in developing their higher-level subject knowledge, especially through effective collaboration with English departments in the higher education sector. Plans that support pupils in navigating reading more widely beyond their set texts indicate this aspect of the curriculum has been carefully devised and not left to chance. They also show how pupils will move from being heavily guided in this to having the way withal to guide themselves.	The teacher does not understand pitch/standards. The curriculum and approaches do not assist pupils in the leap from GCSE to A Level, especially the theoretical aspects. - This can lead to theory being treated like separate subject or an add-on, or limit pupils' capacity to apply theory in novel ways. - It leads to the text playing second fiddle to a set of disconnected theories or buzz words. - Pupils not transferring knowledge/limiting capacity, e.g. understanding of the major political and ideological shifts in 20th century from History, should be used to deepen schema about modernism/post modernism.

³ The subject specification for A level qualifications often provide a useful guide as do the content guides from the DfE
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-for-english-literature>

Over-arching concepts are deeply understood in terms of their antecedence. Theories relating to liberal humanist approaches are explored and understood alongside critical theories. Pupils develop a deep understanding of how having different and sometimes contradictory readings contribute to the uniqueness of the discipline. E.g. knowledge should not be placed in opposition to an emotional response. Students are taught to grapple with the complexity of how literature is viewed as an art form that is experienced aesthetically and what it is that makes meaning in texts/how texts are influenced by ideologies. Modelling and insisting on the correct academic register in speech and writing is an important aspect of subject provision. There should be greater specificity in subject terminology and more sophisticated application. There should be a more developed approach to comparison, so it makes the invisible, visible, enables pupils to understand notions of intertextuality, parody, differences between genres. The provision should be characterised by high-quality discussion and debate.	'We bridge the gap between A level and GCSE by using GCSE approaches at the start of Year 12.' Such an approach sounds reasonable but will not help pupils make the leap. It would be better to have thought about building readiness for KS5 in KS4.
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Focus area 2: The extent to which teaching supports the goals of the English curriculum	
Lesson visits may or may not highlight possible issues. Further investigation will be necessary to ascertain if such issues illustrate something typical about the teaching in the school, through triangulation.	

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for	Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for
Inspector question 12: Is the rationale for the teaching approaches chosen primarily to achieve the curriculum intent? What is the rationale for the teaching approaches chosen for sequences of lessons?	

School-friendly questions:

- Tell me a bit about the teaching approaches you have chosen in this sequence of lessons – what made them suitable for the content that you were teaching?
- Can you give me some examples of how the content that pupils study shapes the activity you have chosen to teach it?

The focus of teaching approaches should always be to deliver the intended learning goals outlined in Focus Area 1 on progression.

- There should be evidence that teachers have planned enough systematic repetition, interleaving etc. of the most crucial content to ensure it is secure in memory and can be subsequently applied by pupils.
- Teachers are able to talk meaningfully about how they have helped children fit new knowledge into their existing framework of knowledge or schema.
- The teacher needs to consider carefully how often and when in a learning sequence that deliberate practice is used, carefully selecting content.
- They also should consider when in that sequence pupils are required to apply the knowledge that the practice has embedded.
- In lessons, questioning should help to broaden pupils' vocabulary and English knowledge by giving support to use challenging vocabulary within appropriate contexts, correcting misconceptions and checking pupils' understanding of terms used. Teachers should also appropriately correct pupils' grammar when they are speaking formally. They should also ensure pupils understand why this is important.
- Worked examples and modelling of key processes, such as annotating a text live, helps with this.

Teachers can give a strong rationale for the teaching decisions made to deliver a sequence of learning.

This is strong practice. For example, a teacher may explain that they are starting the lesson with a debate on Oliver Twist to allow the pupils to verbally practise key academic language that they will then use to write an essay on the text.

There are assessments every half term.

It is unlikely that half-termly assessments of written work will provide the necessary reinforcement of key component content e.g. of SPAG, context or terminology. It can be helpful if a department uses different forms of assessment depending on purpose e.g. quick recall exercises are good for reinforcing crucial detail, and aspects of SPAG, while less frequent written assessments are useful to identify how well pupils can synthesise what they have learned e.g. to create their own critical analysis.

Activities in lessons revolve around performing against exam criteria.

- To make progress in English, pupils need to spend their time discussing the stuff of the subject and not how to respond to specific assessments.
- Pupils from Year 7 onwards move up through GCSE level descriptors as they make progress. GCSE mark schemes are designed to discriminate between Year 11 pupils' answers. The practice is often at the expense of the wider, richer component content actually needed for success.

Inspector question 13:

What approaches do teachers use to ensure that key content is remembered long term? How do teachers ensure that pupils remember that which they have been taught?

School-friendly questions:

- Show me some examples of where teaching activities were specifically chosen for pupils to remember things long term.
- Tell me a bit about how the approaches your school uses ensure that pupils remember what they've been taught.
- Can you show me some examples of approaches your school uses to support pupils remembering what's on the English curriculum over time?

Department should know how pupils can best remember a more challenging text or challenging content.

- This involves care and precision, e.g. frequent comprehension activities, glossaries, explicit teaching of underpinning contextual knowledge, key vocabulary; summaries and recap work may well support more dialogic approach. For children who need texts to be accessible, abridged versions could be used with thought and care.
- The school has fully engaged with research about cognitive psychology and therefore, for example, may appreciate the importance of identifying necessary prior knowledge of comprehension and therefore promote the teacher reading aloud to pupils.

Tasks are set which do not require a substantial level of thought and effort from all pupils and therefore do not enable deep processing.

- A good example of this is repeatedly setting pupils the task of writing a letter. It does not necessitate that pupils have to think and develop their knowledge of different form/styles.
- Teachers should have a good rationale for the activities pupils are asked to undertake, and be able to explain how these build on prior learning and are part of an ongoing progression. There should be oversight so the same tasks are not repeatedly given, such as writing letters in role as characters/authors.
- **In cases where the problems of comprehending more challenging texts are seen as insurmountable, teachers may not have deep enough subject knowledge to support pupils in successfully in overcoming these barriers.**
- The gaps teachers have in their own knowledge may limit pupils and this may not have been identified by curriculum leaders as the barrier to pupil progress.

Focus area 3: The effectiveness of assessment in English

Assessment should not dictate the content of the KS3 curriculum. End of key stage assessment objectives cannot reliably show if components have been learned.

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for	Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for
Inspector question 14: How does the school assess pupils' progress? Does formative assessment identify the curriculum components pupils have not remembered or have forgotten? - What is the rationale for which content is chosen to be assessed? - How is any assessment used to inform future curriculum design? - A large part of the answer to a) should already be apparent from answers to questions in FOCUS AREA 1. School-friendly questions: - Tell me a bit about what your school thinks is the most effective way to assess pupils' progress in English. - Which bits of the curriculum do you prioritise when you construct assessments for pupils? Why do you prioritise these?	
The curriculum should be the progression model and how far this is the case in practice can be investigated. - Assessment should check the curriculum content is remembered long term. In summary, the components of the curriculum should be checked through formative assessment e.g. does assessment check pupils have learned progressively broader and more challenging. For example: - ways of using language: The forms and uses of standard English, spelling, punctuation and grammar - exemplifications different forms/genres of writing - vocabulary, styles and structures - conceptual picture of the canon/timeline of our literary heritage - ways to interpret texts and their responses - ways of writing. Components should not necessarily be assessed through a composite task because '<i>outcomes do not tend to resemble the means of their nurture</i>'. For example, it may be better not to assess if key spellings, terminology, character and plot	The curriculum plan covers areas of English progression (see Q1) but assessment has not been carefully designed to check this learning. - When the department tracks apparent English 'skills' they can neglect to check if all the components have been learned which allow the exercise of the skill in a specific context. Does assessment help the teacher appreciate how well pupils are using spelling, punctuation and grammar and specific problems? Can the teacher identify which pupils do not remember the plot of the book studied or if pupils have characters confused or which pupils have learned which quotes for GCSE? Assessing for these components is unlikely to be through extended writing and may also take many, often informal, forms. - It is problematical to think of 'English skills' as independent of the context in which they are used. These are English-specific ways in which pupils can <i>think</i> and write about texts and <i>not</i> transferable skills. For example, a pupil's success evaluating a simple text will not necessarily mean they could as effectively evaluate a passage of 19th century literature. NB: It is widely prevalent but, for the reason outlined, data tracking apparent progression in English skills using GCSE style assessment progressions is of limited value.

knowledge have been learned through formal extended writing. An informal recall check might be more appropriate.

- **Assessment tasks should not simply replicate GCSE style questions, especially during KS3.**
- Assessment should ensure pupils are building upon and deepening knowledge over time. This means that modes of assessment may vary from year group to year group and also between different learning sequences. Assessments shouldn't be written with the presumption that repetition of formulaic responses (e.g. forms of argumentation or analysis will be rewarded independently of explicit knowledge relevant to the topic.
- This is not to say that teachers ignore the requirements of exams, nor of the need to familiarise pupils with the style of questions that they will face in exams.

Different forms of assessment should be used for different purposes.

Assessment AS learning:

Using regular routine quizzes and tests and exercises to build memory to automaticity through over-learning of facts, concepts and procedures. Such testing can be informal and low stakes and seen as part of the learning process.

Assessment FOR learning

Formative assessment might be via questioning, feedback on mini whiteboards or through examining pupils' work. Such informal assessment can provide finer-grained analysis of pupils' progress.

Assessment OF learning

This is assessment for summative purposes such as data drops. Use of national standardised tests is also for summative purposes. Such assessment should be infrequent – once a term is more than sufficient or changes in the data are likely to be misleading.

The school has designed a tracking system which tracks progress according to Bloom's or Solo taxonomy (or a similar model).

- Such hierarchies and mark schemes are not useful tools for planning or assessing progression in English. Non-English-specific hierarchies of written modes or exam mark schemes *don't* really map onto English.

The department uses GCSE AOs to assess work at KS3. This is very common but problematic for several reasons:

- GCSE AOs describe desired outcomes for Year 11 pupils sitting exams. They do not provide a progression model for younger pupils as they learn the building blocks necessary to be ready for GCSEs.
- These AOs are not designed to assess individual pieces of work but rather several domains encompassing a broader body of knowledge and skills.
- Assessment tasks differ for different purposes, so assessing how well contextual knowledge has been embedded, is a different process than assessing pupils' ability to compare how a writer uses language to convey a character's mood.
- Pupils are given the impression that the only important aspects of English are those measured by exam boards, and speaking, and listening are therefore unimportant.

Assessment is too frequent to allow for a reliable understanding of pupils' progress.

Summative testing at intervals greater than termly is unlikely to yield useful data on pupil progress as the increments of progress are too small to measure reliably.

The department uses KS2 data to ascertain gaps in pupil knowledge.

- Gaps in pupil knowledge need to be identified with care and precision and evidenced by work in books not just using KS2 test data. The department should be aware of typical gaps in the knowledge of their intake which can therefore be addressed through the curriculum plan.
- Baseline testing using GCSE Eng. language AOs undertaken at the start of Year 7 (often commercially produced by examination boards) leads to a curriculum that seeks to solely fill gaps (that may or may not be there) in skills-based progressions which don't consider the

	missing knowledge components, leading to poor performance in 'skills'.
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Focus area 4: The extent to which there is a climate of high expectations where a love of English can flourish

This focus may well help explain the success of some schools, but a lack of evidence for 'climate where a love of the subject could flourish' could NOT reasonably be deployed to explain weakness given the challenge of identifying this during inspection.

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Inspector question 15:

Does the school ensure that there are high expectations of children and that they respond to these expectations?

School-friendly questions:

- How do you ensure pupils rise to your high expectations? For example, what actions do you take to ensure all pupils put their best effort into written work?
- Tell me how pupils with special educational needs might fare studying your English curriculum.

High expectations for English can be encouraged through:

- high standards being expected by all in the department and made clear to pupils
- NB: support should be given to assist pupils in meeting the standards (incl. revision support) but the high standards should be held firm
- assessment design/task design/instructional approaches etc. Teachers make it clear to pupils that English is a demanding subject. Great emphasis is placed on academic striving, the importance of learning etc.
- teachers should see themselves as subject ambassadors and demonstrate strong subject knowledge

The pupils set the level of difficulty.

- For some, this can be motivational but such choices can also entrench low expectations. It is also worth reflecting on whether different tasks can all be equally appropriate given the prior knowledge of pupils. When care has been given to sequencing and the practice pupils need, it is less likely that a range of tasks will all be equally appropriate.

Writing tasks are set which do not require a substantial level of thought and effort from all pupils.

- For example, repeatedly setting pupils the task of writing a letter does not necessitate that pupils have to think and develop their knowledge of different form/styles. Teachers should have a good rationale for the activities pupils are asked to undertake, and be able to explain how these build on prior learning and are part of an ongoing progression. There should be oversight so the same tasks are not repeatedly given, such as writing letters in role as characters/authors.

- the department celebrate pupils' effort and achievement, in ways that are in keeping with the discipline e.g. through publishing work in school magazines - teachers should encourage pupils to take up A level English lit or Lang as appropriate and know about the careers that relate to English like communications and journalism - teachers should be thinking about what the disciplinary means in English and share their thinking with pupils in different ways. Success is evident when pupils express enthusiasm about English. They understand it as an important and interesting subject. They intend to study it past GCSE level.	- Analytical writing is modelled through exam answer rather than through reading criticism. - Expectations around spoken language are low. The focus on exam scores means insufficient attention is given to the modality of SL. - Disciplinary practices such as critiquing/exploring a poem through discussion are seen as of low importance, pupils do not use the right meta language. They are not shown or given the knowledge they need to develop in writing or speaking a formal academic register. Teachers limit expectations by only considering exam performance. There should be reference to the purpose of learning English beyond exams, including for fulfilment in life as well as for careers. Teachers may also cap expectations for pupils on certain grades ('You just need to get a level 5').
Inspector question 16: How do you enrich the curriculum beyond classroom learning? School-friendly questions: - Tell me a bit about what happens on the English curriculum outside of the classroom. - Are there any English-specific experiences linked to the curriculum that take place outside of the English classroom? How do they link to the curriculum sequence? - In what ways to pupils, who are very keen on English, get to share their enthusiasm?	
In English there is a strong expectation that pupils watch performances of the plays they study. The department makes it clear that the medium through which this happens impacts on the way meanings are made, seeing a film of a live performance, is different from seeing a film adaption of a Sh play. NB: watching the play is additional to reading it and cannot replace the disciplinary emphasis on close reading of the text. This question is designed to allow the department to share any other aspects related to how they share and promote a love of English. NB: does not include developing the habit of reading as this is within the curriculum. A range of evidence is possible for enrichment. For example:	'We have many additional activities for English that take place on our activities afternoon when we finish early.' - Activities may be fun and justifiable in their own right but may not actually lead to reading or sharing books. - Well-intentioned additional events or activities that are designed to interest and enhance pupils' experiences of the subject have little impact because pupils do not have the background knowledge, language Kn or processing skills and/or buy-in to access them. 'We ensure our classroom activities are engaging.' Well and good but children need to learn about the intrinsic pleasure gained from the subject. Activities designed with engagement as a priority may be fun but is the message to pupils that the subject itself is not fun (the pill needs to be sweetened)? Rather, the curriculum should build the aesthetic appreciation

▪ initiatives to develop pupils as writers or to enter that creative space ▪ teachers delivering masterclasses for peers or pupils, especially sharing their own reading ▪ the department might get published writers to visit the school, or a writer in residence ▪ working with other departments on creative ventures such as putting poetry with paintings. The open-ended nature of this question means that it would be a concern if the department could not offer an answer or offer a limited response. Inspectors should also expect there to be evidence of aspects identified. E.g. if they are told teachers are avid readers, it is the expectation that they would ask teachers about this, and potentially pupils to see the impact this had on them.	so the literature can be enjoyed for its own sake and pupils gain a sense of self-efficacy when they see what they are now capable of. 'We tend to do debates at the end of term as a treat.' ▪ Positioning reading, writing and spoken word activities as treats or punishments rather than integral to the curriculum can have negative consequences. ▪ The concern is that tasks that develop oracy/speaking & listening are downgraded as 'fun' activities that are somehow easier or demand less from pupils. This does not consider the high levels of knowledge and embedded skill needed as a rhetorician. ▪ In addition, does the engaging activity become fixed in pupils' episodic memories. This does not engender success in acquiring knowledge in the way that information stored in semantic memory does. 'We encourage reading by participating in events which are additional and not on the curriculum plan.' Teachers might have a clearly justified rationale for departing from the curriculum plan on occasion, for example to participate in National Poetry Day, but for curriculum intent to be realised in implementation does require that, by and large, the plan is followed.
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Focus area 5: The quality of systems and support for staff development

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for	Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for
Inspector question 17: What do the strengths and weaknesses already identified indicate about the school's capacity to function effectively? School-friendly questions: ▪ Tell me a bit about how inexperienced or struggling staff are supported. ▪ What sort of support is there for non-specialist teachers who teach English? ▪ How are teachers of English enabled to develop their subject knowledge?	

Much of the evidence already gathered will indicate whether the department has strong leadership with functioning systems in place. Next few questions below will also help with this.	The department's stated ideas about progression in English are not implemented due to the lack of effective departmental systems/training/resourcing.
Inspector question 18: How does the school go about the process of English curriculum construction, debate and renewal? School-friendly questions: ▪ Tell me a bit about how the curriculum is designed in your school. Is it tweaking possible? If so, who decides on the changes? ▪ Tell me about opportunities that staff have to feed back to you about whether the sequence of the English curriculum is working.	
There should be an open dialogue around curriculum development. ▪ While there is no virtue in perpetual or wholesale curriculum change for the sake of it, a curriculum should be a living document. There should be evidence of reflection on the schemes of work and clear mechanisms for curricular construction and renewal. Evidence that this has happened might include records of curriculum-focused discussions held in departmental meetings. ▪ Line management and oversight should focus on making sure the curriculum is strong and curricular aims are delivered effectively across the department. The department should be aware of developing thinking and best practice. Openness to change is important combined tangible progress and positive outcomes in terms of deepening knowledge and skills. This is possible through: ▪ part of departmental meetings being used to share research and develop English subject knowledge ▪ clear procedures for monitoring the delivery and impact of the curriculum. They are able to identify times when they have changed or adapted the curriculum (sometimes at class level) to ensure progression for all pupils	'We changed the schemes of work for the new GCSEs.' Such changes are important but unavoidable and only reactive. It is worth exploring the depth of thinking that has gone into making necessary changes. It is a cause for concern if the department do not proactively reflect on their curriculum. Departments should be able to reference previous discussion and the rationale for their current curriculum model. 'The department seeks to foster, reward and use teachers' relationship with the wider English subject communities.' This is good practice. The English teacher subject community is strong, developed, and generative in terms of curricular theorisation. Subject teachers benefit from interaction with this academic subject community. If a curriculum leader mentions time and funding, it is worth exploring what benefits the curriculum leader perceives could be gained and if they are aware of the benefits of reaching out to the wider English subject community. 'We have a two year key stage 3 to support success at GCSE.' ▪ Has this led to curricular adaptations at KS3 as well as KS4? How far has the department considered what content is appropriate at each key stage in the light of this decision? ▪ It is important to note that we don't have a preference on length of KS3, but that the issue is how content is covered if they have a lengthened KS4. 'Our curriculum is given to us by the MAT. We don't need to think about design.'

those with subject expertise or pedagogical content expertise are given the chance to use that expertise to train others in department and to develop relevant curriculum plans. If the department is using a bought curriculum the curriculum leader should be able to speak knowledgeably about the reasons for this and the underpinning rationale for the curriculum.	Teachers always need a good enough understanding of intent to ensure their lessons build an appropriate explanatory thread and emphasise the right detail. Teachers should be able to talk coherently about what the 'off the peg' curriculum is designed to achieve and how they think about delivering it lesson by lesson. Even where high-quality scripted programmes are used, there can be enormous variability in quality of delivery dependent on teachers' understanding of how the programme is best delivered.
Inspector question 19: How are all staff in the department encouraged to develop their subject knowledge and knowledge of how to teach that subject knowledge (pedagogical content knowledge)? School-friendly questions: - Do you think that staff in your school are aware of their subject knowledge areas of expertise and areas for development? - What opportunities do staff have to grow in knowledge and confidence about the topics that they teach? - What place does subject knowledge have within the school's programme for CPD in English? - Are there any barriers that are preventing staff to develop their subject knowledge and teaching expertise?	
Teachers should be actively seeking to boost their own knowledge of literature/key disciplinary ideas and practices. This is different from subject pedagogy (although it is important and should also be developed). Subject knowledge may be enhanced through being an avid reader/belonging to book clubs/being a regular theatre-goer/reading online forums/involvement in subject organisations/additional study of literature/language/creative writing classes/attending poetry readings and literary festivals, etc. Such activities should be viewed as very important if not essential if teachers are to develop their subject knowledge in the way that we would expect of other professionals to do so, e.g. doctors reading medical journals. Teachers and leaders should be able to identify CPD and support provided to develop subject pedagogy and subject specific knowledge in English. - They should be able to show how this CPD has positively impacted upon practice. - Teachers with specialisms in certain texts/eras/areas of English support others through planning/training etc.	Teachers' knowledge of teaching English is too focused on strategies to prepare pupils for exams. - For example, there is little consideration of aspects such as how to introduce poetry to pupils or what pupils need to know about the Great Depression before they read 'Of Mice and Men'. In some cases, teachers' own knowledge of these areas will be weak. - Teachers are un-enthusiastic about CPD provision - commenting on either its absence or lack of relevancy to them. - CPD provided is too general, for example focusing on whole-school strategies that are not relevant to English or lead to the inclusion of pedagogical techniques that have no demonstrable impact on practice e.g. starter activities. - Teachers are only able to identify exam board training and/or marking as the subject-specific CPD provided for them. There is an induction programme for new staff, but it is too limited and not used well enough for X struggling teacher. - It will be necessary to dig further to find out if enough time is given and support is constructive.

There should be high-quality resources based on a carefully considered SoW for inexperienced, non-specialist or struggling colleagues to use and evidence of very regular dialogue and support. ▪ Check the mechanisms for sharing useful resources and similar support for non-specialist, inexperienced, struggling teachers, for example enough allocated time for mentoring. ▪ Check the quality of professional task setting, target setting for new teachers and engagement with subject specific issues. ▪ There should be high-quality resources and SOW in place for those that need them and also clear mechanisms in place for sharing and reviewing quality of resources. ▪ There may not be suitable time for departmental development, either in terms of subject specific training, involvement with wider English communities or allocation of English specific staff meetings on a regular basis.	▪ Support should help with classroom management and pedagogy but also involve regular conversations about what and how to teach the specific content in the scheme of work. ▪ There may not be suitable time for departmental development, either in terms of subject specific training, involvement with wider English communities or allocation of English specific staff meetings on a regular basis. It is important to explore how well used any resources are, even if the resources are carefully thought through. For example, there may be high-quality resources based on a carefully considered SoW for inexperienced/non-specialist/struggling colleagues, but if they are not used well, they will not have the impact intended.
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Focus area 6: The extent to which whole school policies affect the capacity for effective English education	
This section is crucial to identify where the quality of education is influenced by the activities of the subject department and where the quality of education provided can be attributed to senior leadership.	

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for	Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for
Inspector question 20: What are the priorities for discussions at line management meetings between subject leaders and SLT? School-friendly questions: ▪ How is the English curriculum overseen/ influenced and perceived by senior leaders/MAT leaders/ those in governance? ▪ Are the different aspects of the subject appreciated alongside its inherent value?	
The curriculum, its content delivery resourcing, structure design are the focus for line management and department meetings.	'At line management meetings we mainly discuss assessment data.'

Meetings also focus on how strong teachers' subject knowledge and subject pedagogical knowledge are and whether teachers have the knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively. LMs appreciate the uniqueness of the discipline, supporting the SL in their work to ensure the curriculum skilfully combines content and disciplinary knowledge. Consistency should be prioritised to ensure expertise can be shared or workload reduced and not for its own sake. A drive for consistency should not promote unnecessary workload. Consistency should be understood within disciplinary frameworks While departments need to conform to whole-school policies, they should be aware that subject focused book scrutinies can be a very sharp or blunt instrument. The HoD should have a clear rationale for the type of book scrutiny they undertake, including when it is carried out in the learning sequence. Some scrutinies should be focused on how well the planned curriculum is implemented and testing out whether it is delivering progression.	How does senior leadership take assurance that the curriculum is appropriate? What support does a non-specialist curriculum leader have to ensure the curriculum is appropriate? 'I'm line managed by an art teacher who does not have any subject knowledge. Senior leaders primarily ensure our data is not a cause for concern.' In such a situation what is the support to ensure high-quality curriculum development? What is monitored tends to be what is prioritised. It is likely that in this situation you will have an explanation of weaknesses already identified through previous questioning.
Inspector question 21: What criteria are used to decide on timetabling priorities, such as time given to your subject, whether classes are split between multiple teachers and which classes will be taught by non-specialists? School-friendly questions: ▪ How do whole-school structures like grouping/tracking/transition arrangements etc play out in English? ▪ Are there any split classes in English? If there are how are they managed?	
Inspectors should check how far whole-school decisions of this sort are impacting on the effectiveness of the English department. ▪ E.g. classes split between teachers. The department should work with the school to ensure the timetable expedients do not adversely affect the quality of pupils' education. While all schools may bemoan the necessity of such decisions, further investigation should reveal how far the school makes serious efforts to avoid such expedients.	'We only have split classes in KS3 so that is ok.' ▪ KS3 is very important and it matters just as much as KS4; if pupils lose out in KS3 they cannot make it up. ▪ Sometimes split classes mean that sequences of learning are altered (topic divvied up by the teachers involved) in such ways that do not assist pupils in learning well. 'We are timetabled with science so English groups have to be the same as science.'

▪ Whatever extenuating circumstances there may be, this does not mean that significant impact on quality of education should be ignored/mitigated. ▪ Where non-subject specialists are used, there are extensive plans to develop expertise and mitigate the impact of any lack of SK.	Such a constraint may not support pupils' learning and progress in English as it is wrong to assume that pupils who are good at English are good at science and vice versa.
Inspector question 22: How do school-wide policies, such as marking or CPD, support the school's needs? School-friendly questions: ▪ Tell me a bit about how big-picture decisions in school affect English. ▪ Is there anything about whole-school policies that limits or holds back the English curriculum and assessment of it?	
Inspectors should check how far whole-school decisions of this sort are impacting on the effectiveness of the English department, especially approaches to assessment, tracking baseline testing and grouping: ▪ What role does the department play in promoting/developing policies that are relevant to the subject or would benefit from the department's expertise? ▪ Is there whole-school support for the departments approach to SPAG when marking? Have they deviated from a whole-school policy because of the discipline and has this been agreed with SLT? Is SPAG the only area? ▪ Does the school have a vocabulary policy? Does the department operate a separate vocab policy or is there additional guidance on this that is more subject-based?	The tracking requirements from senior leaders don't map well onto good English assessment. This is a common problem e.g. generic 'mastery levels' won't map well onto English assessment without distorting good understanding of good curricular intent in English. Such requirements will increase workload and may cause cynicism if departments are required to provide data they don't find useful or meaningful. On World Book Day the department all dress up but do little else of substance to promote reading during the rest of the year. ▪ It is worth being alert to whether initiatives involving reading and sharing books are actually monitored, developed and attended to. ▪ Check what role the English department takes in whole-school literacy development; is their expertise valued?

Glossary

Term	Description
Automaticity	Ability to recall and deploy (facts, concepts, and methods) with accuracy and speed and without using conscious memory; frees the working memory for higher-order processes that require holding a line of thought.
Composites	The more complex knowledge which can be acquired or more complex tasks which can be undertaken when prior knowledge components are secure in a pupil's memory.
Cumulative dysfluency	Educational failure caused when pupils do not have enough opportunities to recall knowledge to gain automaticity with the use of that knowledge. Over time this may cause many gaps in pupils' knowledge which prevent or limit pupils' acquisition of more complex knowledge.
Cumulative subjects	These are subjects where there are many possible content choices from which teachers can select e.g. English literature or history. In cumulative subjects, progression over time comes in part from the cumulative addition of more content areas being learned by pupils. The notion of cumulative sufficiency is particularly important when considering curriculum quality in cumulative subjects. Cumulative subjects are usually set in contrast to hierarchical subjects.
Cumulative sufficiency	When the sum totality of? Curriculum content can be considered an adequate subject education. This notion is particularly useful when considering the quality of the curriculum in subjects where there are many possible content options.
Deep structure	The different ways a principle can be applied that transcend specific examples. When a principle is first learned, it is used inflexibly as the learner will tie that knowledge to the particulars of the context in which the principle has been learned (the 'surface structure'). As a learner gains expertise through familiarity with the principle and its applications, their knowledge is no longer organised around surface forms, but rather around deep structure. This means that experts can see how the deep structure applies to specific examples and that is an important goal of education. For instance, pupils at first feature spot when analysing poetry and make generic statements about the impact of say a metaphor but as they become experts they approach the annotation of texts in a very different way. They probe the text more profoundly to come up with unifying ideas about meaning and the way it has been constructed, linking their ideas to appropriate theories and contextual information. They also explore different or contradictory readings and can explain how they have arrived at these and evaluate them using different criteria.
Disciplinary knowledge	Methods and conceptual frameworks used by specialists in a given subject, e.g. knowledge of history or geography as a discipline.

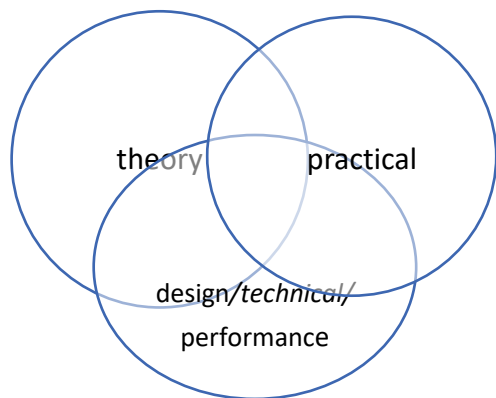
	Disciplinary knowledge arises from literature as an aesthetic form of knowledge in which it is the interpretative process that is key (more details in appendix).
Generic	In this context generic refers to ways of considering the education of children which can apply to any subject area and are thus not English-specific.
Hierarchical subjects	Subjects where content has a clear hierarchical structure and there is often less debate about content choices than for cumulative subjects. This is because there are core components of knowledge that you must know in order to be able to progress within the subject. It would be hard to argue for a mathematics curriculum that didn't include algebra or place value.
Long-term memory	Where knowledge is stored in integrated schema, ready for connecting to and for use without taking up working memory. See schema.
Modalities	Forms in which language occurs, such as written, oral and physical (gestures). In the written modality, we use language for reading and writing. In the oral modality, we use language for listening (aural) and speaking (oral).
Phonics	The study of the relationship between the spoken and written language. Each letter or combination of letters represent a sound or sounds. The information is codified, as we must be able to recognise which symbols represent which sounds in order to read the language.
Progression model	The planned path from the pupil's current state of competence to the school's intended manifestation of expertise.
Schema/schemata (plural)	A mental structure of preconceived ideas that organises categories of information and the connections between them.
Substantive knowledge	Subject knowledge; often that carries considerable weight in a given subject domain, such as significant concepts. Substantive knowledge is the text specific knowledge which includes language and literary concepts such as themes, characterisation, plot, narrative; and the extrinsic contextual knowledge needed for inferential and literal comprehension.
Understanding	We are using the cognitivist model in which understanding describes pupils' interconnected knowledge e.g. of facts, concepts and procedures in maths. Understanding describes a certain schematic pattern of knowledge and is not qualitatively different from knowledge. Mental schemata can be viewed as network node diagrams, where nodes represent knowledge (facts, concepts, processes, features) and arcs the relationships between them. Understanding in this model is a function of the quantity of appropriate nodes and the quantity of appropriate arcs - more knowledge, and more connections between them leads to more understanding. A knowledge schema can

	always be developed further and this is synonymous with deepening understanding. In this sense a curriculum plan articulates the degree of understanding intended. In everyday life, the question 'do you understand?' invites a binary yes/no response. This implies that understanding is something that is finite and can be possessed absolutely. This is incorrect and leads us into many traps, such as trying to 'teach for understanding' as an absolute when understanding can be viewed as a continuum and the nature and degree of understanding sought should be part of a teacher's articulated curricular intent.
Vocabulary (tier 1, 2 and 3 vocabulary)	Tier 1 words are extremely common, almost ubiquitous - high frequency words that require little or no explicit instruction. They are usually root words themselves and are not typically modified with prefixes and suffixes. Words like baby, clock or run are tier 1 words. Tier 2 words are high-frequency words are words that are frequent enough that most native speakers would know what they mean, but usually require explicit instruction (having to look them up in a dictionary, or apply context inferencing, etc.) They lack redundancy in the language, but are not so specialized as to be jargon or unique to specific contexts. Tier 2 words are words such as obvious, complex, reasoned, national, or informed. Tier 3 words are extremely specialised, require explicit instruction, are relatively low-frequency, and are usually limited to a content domain, like medical or engineering terminology. These are words such as misappropriated and atrioventricular tachycardia.
Working (short-term) memory	Where conscious processing or 'thoughts' occur. Limited to holding four to seven items of information for up to around 30 seconds at a time.

Appendix: Drama

The subject of drama within schools has traditionally been highly contested. This has been exacerbated by the fact that drama is not included in the national curriculum framework so it does not have a statutory government-endorsed curriculum. For a long time there was an unhelpful and entrenched divide between theatre studies and drama. In the 1980s and 90s, the prevailing view in education was that the subject of drama was a tool for learning and thinking. In this form, drama did not enable students to acquire any new subject-specific disciplinary knowledge or practices. It was more about exploring one's own experiences/emotions and social issues. The unfolding of such reflections in time and space was considered drama. Towards the end of the 1990s this view was challenged but it has not yet disappeared. It was at this point that some approaches developed in (what was considered) the subject of drama were incorporated into English, e.g. 'role on the wall, conscience alley, hot-seating'.

A strong drama curriculum combines the study of theatre, its contexts, forms and development along with an exploration dramatic art. It considers different approaches to performance as well as theories about the art form itself i.e. dramaturgy. When conceptualising the drama curriculum, it is helpful to move away from the binary opposition of drama or theatre. It is more useful to view the curriculum as comprising three core elements that overlap and link in complex and multiple ways. They are represented in the Venn diagram below.



The revised GCSE syllabus combines theatre and drama. For example, its aims state that pupils should explore performance texts, (including seeing them 'live'). They should know their social, cultural and historical context and the theatrical conventions of the period in which they were created. Pupils use all this, and additional, knowledge to develop their own theatrical skills, which they apply to create their own performances.

If you are doing a deep dive in drama, it is because the school's leaders have said that drama as a discrete subject (rather than a cross-curricular pedagogical approach or a set of disconnected experiences) that plays a significant role in the school's curriculum. It should have its own set of disciplinary aims which span practice and theory. Given the broad aims of GCSE drama, it is reasonable to expect that the subject of drama in schools builds towards readiness for

GCSE. This does not mean KS3 is simply an easier version of KS4. It is important to note that the nature of the subject means that progression will not always be linear and may look very different to how it looks in other subjects.

Focus area: The school's understanding of progress in drama and how that informs its approach to the curriculum

Please see Venn diagrams, these are the key progression pillars.

Outline of potentially stronger practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Outline of weaker practice in terms of intent, implementation and impact

NB: answers will take many forms. Below are common findings to look out for

Inspector question:

How does the department view the scope of the curriculum in drama what is included and what is foregrounded?

School-friendly questions:

- What does it mean to get better at drama?
- What are the department's assumptions about the way the curriculum delivers progression in English?

The department recognises that drama is a subject which encompasses three dimensions. It is an art, a practical activity and an intellectual discipline. No one aspect is promoted at the expense of the others. The interplay between these aspect is deliberately planned for.

The Venn diagram above shows how the three dimensions are organised through different aspects curriculum: theory, practical technical, design/technical/performance.

Like literature, it works on and develop symbolic and aesthetic sensibilities.

A strong drama curriculum

- Combines these different aspects/dimensions meaning fully. It will seek to integrate them and create a synthesis that does not place drama in opposition to theatre, for example.

Leaders do not have a clear view of the different dimensions and domains within the subject, or how they link together. Their rationale for the subject does not take enough account of the discipline of drama. They consider drama as a learning medium, a form of therapy or a way of exploring issues (an extension of PSHE/Citizenship).

Drama does not include enough text-based work because the school sees it as a purely practical subject for pupils with weak literacy. The drama curriculum therefore consists of lots of activities and tasks but these do not help pupils to get better at the subject of drama but are enjoyed and do keep pupils occupied.

OR

Drama is seen as a subject that is taken solely by the best performers in school (those who do the school play).

▪ Prioritises the play-to-be acted, just as music is notated by notes (quavers and crotchets), the play-to-be acted/performed is notated by drama; the performed play sits at the heart of the curriculum. It includes knowledge of inherited creative practices; a wide range of practices are understood. ▪ Enables pupils to acquire a strong knowledge of theoretical dimension, which supports practical and performance dimensions. ▪ Seeks to define domains of Kn and skills that span across these big area/dimensions. For example, movement, emotion, performance, dramaturgy and theory. ▪ Bridges the divide between the perceived artist (playwright) and the interpreter of the art (performer). ▪ Develop pupils' understanding of the cultural traditions upon which these different dimensions are built. ▪ Provide pupils with the disciplinary vocabulary knowledge, including procedural knowledge and modes of criticism by which to critique their own performance (this includes understanding the semiotics of the stage). ▪ Recognise that the study of drama enables a cognitive relationship with the play that feeds into and from the discipline of literature. Getting better at drama ▪ Knowing more and remembering more across all three aspects and making increasingly more domain-informed links, including independently. ▪ Mastery of domain specific set of sub surface structures – Keith Sawyer wrote about these sub-surface features such as the psychological, social and cultural contexts of the creative form. ▪ Knowing more about the history of the theatre, its modes and conventions as well as all technical aspects such as lighting and sound.	The school underestimates the expertise and knowledge required to teach drama. English teachers deliver the subject. who have not got enough subject-specific knowledge or subject pedagogical knowledge. The school does not see drama as an arts subject or does not have a well enough developed view of what is special about an arts subject in terms of its traditions and practices. Leaders are not clear enough about the complexity around progression in drama and see it in terms of cross-curricular skills (drama as a means of learning).
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▪ Building up schema of knowledge in the semiotics of the stage, theory and practice. ▪ Applying that knowledge confidently when acting, directing and creating. ▪ Knowing how expertise in the one feeds from and into expertise in another aspect e.g. expertise in Brechtian theory would support pupils in conceptualising the character of Alberto Ui and being able to apply that knowledge in more complex contexts. ▪ The performance/technical aspect is carefully considered and understood in terms of great performances from the past, theorisations that have led to such an evaluation and how performers applied theory.	
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