

The quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning

Briefing for section 5 inspectors

This guidance is intended to help inspectors to judge the quality of schools' teaching and the use of assessment to support learning. It should be read in conjunction with *The evaluation schedule for schools*.

Age group: All

Published: September 2009

Reference no: 090196

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Introduction

1. Judgements about the quality of teaching, including the effective use of assessment, cannot be made in isolation. *The evaluation schedule for schools* has been devised to ensure that inspectors and schools understand the importance of, and make links between, different judgements. The key factor in judging teaching and the use of assessment is their **impact** on pupils' learning. While these are best observed first-hand in lessons, judgements on teaching and the use of assessment are not made solely through lesson observations.
2. In order to secure these two judgements it is essential that inspectors use the range of evidence available. The evidence gathered to help inspectors reach these judgements may also help inspectors when judging other aspects of the schools work such as the range of pupils' outcomes, other elements of provision and areas relating to the school's leadership and management.

Guidance

3. The new evaluation schedule focuses strongly on the achievement of different groups of pupils as well as individuals. Therefore, it is vitally important that inspectors look carefully at the impact of teaching and use of assessment for different individuals/groups within the class, as guided by the pre-inspection briefing.
4. When observing lessons, a connection should be made to the impact that teaching and the use of assessment have on learners' behaviour, progress, and the quality of learning, making specific reference to different groups of learners. Where possible, inspectors should also seek to confirm judgements about attainment. Additionally, as the learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities forms a separate judgement, inspectors should always try to include a comment on the learning of these pupils when observing lessons, where relevant.
5. Inspectors should use their professional judgement when applying the outline guidance and grade descriptors in *The evaluation schedule for schools* to guide their observations and to support their judgements on the quality of what they see in lessons.
6. When observing lessons, inspectors may find the following prompts helpful. It is important that inspectors consider the impact of teaching and the use of assessment in relation to different groups of pupils and individuals as well as the class as a whole.

Quality of learning

- What are different groups and individual pupils *actually* learning as opposed to *doing*?

- Are pupils consolidating previous skills/knowledge or learning something new?
- Can all pupils make the links between previous/new learning?
- Can pupils talk about what they are learning, as opposed to simply describing what they are doing?
- Do they consistently produce work of a good standard?
- Are pupils working independently? Are they self-reliant - do they make the most of the choices they are given or do they find it difficult to make choices? To what extent do pupils take responsibility for their own learning?
- How well do pupils collaborate with others? Do they ask questions, of each other, of the teacher or other adults, about what they are learning?
- Are pupils creative, do they show initiative?
- How well do pupils follow routines/expectations?

Enjoyment of learning and attitudes

- Are pupils engaged, working hard, making a good effort, applying themselves, concentrating and productive?
- Are pupils developing habits of good learning?
- Are pupils happy with their work? Are they proud of it?
- Are pupils interested in their work and in what they are learning? Or are they easily distracted?
- How smooth is the transition from teacher input to group work? Do pupils settle to work easily?

Assessment to support learning

- Are there any significant differences in the learning of different groups of pupils, or of any individuals?
- Are pupils involved in assessing their own learning and progress?
- Do pupils know what they are learning and why?
- Do pupils have targets and do they understand what they mean/what to do to achieve them?

7. When looking across the broader range of evidence, not just lesson observations, but also by talking to pupils, scrutinising their work, talking to staff (and parents), scrutinising the school's records of pupils' current learning and progress and looking at evidence of past progress, for example through contextual value added data for the past three years, inspectors may find the following prompts helpful. Again, it is important that inspectors consider the impact of teaching and the use of assessment in relation to different groups of

pupils and individuals as well as the class as a whole. The following questions might be considered in terms of how far and how fast different groups and individuals have 'travelled' in their learning.

Pupils' progress

- Are different groups making the same/different progress?
 - What new skills and knowledge are pupils gaining?
 - How well are pupils developing ideas and increasing their understanding?
 - Are pupils making gains at a good rate in lessons and over time as shown in their work and the school's records?
 - How are weak/good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills affecting pupils' progress?
8. Inspectors should use the outline guidance and descriptors in *The evaluation schedule for schools* as prompts for questions about teaching and the use of assessment. In addition they might find the prompts below, helpful. It is important to note that judgements for teaching and use of assessment cannot be seen in isolation from pupils' learning and progress. Therefore the evidence gathered through prompts such as those shown above, will help steer the judgements for teaching and the use of assessment to support learning.

The quality of provision

- Are staff using assessment for learning strategies to enable them to differentiate effectively?
- Are activities pitched at the right level to challenge pupils of different abilities?
- How well does marking identify strengths and diagnose next steps to improvement?
- How good is the dialogue and oral feedback? Are teachers alert to pupils' lack of understanding during lessons?
- How effectively do staff use questioning to gauge pupils' understanding? Are expectations of behaviour sufficiently high?
- Are teachers alert to the social, emotional, and learning, needs of individuals?
- What impact are any support staff having?
- Are resources sufficient? Are they well matched to needs to support learning?