



Secondary Update



Summer 2024 – Contents

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Editorial



Welcome to the summer term edition of the *Secondary Update*.

We hope you all had a restful Easter holiday break with some time for yourselves and your families and friends. It seems that spring has arrived later than usual but hopefully the weather will improve as summer term progresses.

I am sure many of you are on the countdown to public examinations as some of the subjects are quite early now. In many schools I have visited they have reported that the Year 11 cohort have settled to their revision and I know that there are detailed programmes of intervention and revision in place across the county to support the GCSE pupils in their run-up now to the examinations. Some of the pupils I have spoken to recently have been hugely appreciative of these efforts by their teachers. Thank you to you and your staff for all you do for them.

We were delighted to see so many headteachers and their deputies attending the recent Hampshire secondary executive leaders' (HSEL) conference at the Holiday Inn in Winchester on 21 March. David Gregson from the Gregson Family Foundation led us through the day starting with the background to the formation of the #Beewell project to improve well-being.

He talked through his personal experience of what makes a great enterprise and then we reviewed some interesting data from the surveys which schools have undertaken across Hampshire.

Chris Anders (HSEL Chair) and Jean Thorpe (County Education Manager) will be pondering next steps in answer to the interactive sessions about what we will do next.

We have experienced quite a few Ofsted inspections across autumn/spring terms mostly in the expected timeline. Ofsted has updated its policies for making complaints about inspections and pausing inspections under exceptional circumstances. The new complaints process allows providers to seek a review of their inspection when they receive their draft report. Providers are now able to directly escalate complaints to the Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted (ICASO) if they are dissatisfied with Ofsted's formal response.

The new complaints process comes into effect now. Ofsted has already introduced enhanced professional dialogue to help address any issues about an inspection on site, and a new helpline for providers to call and speak to a senior Ofsted inspector if they have concerns about inspectors' conduct. From what some colleagues have experienced the enhanced dialogue has taken place. See the accounts of local headteachers from two different schools who have experienced an Ofsted inspection very recently.

Improving attendance is a top priority for us all. I would encourage all schools to ensure a member of staff is booked onto the online webinars which are run termly by Inclusion Support Service (ISS) and Hampshire Improvement and Advisory Service (HIAS) to keep everyone up to date and to share examples of good practice. I have included here some sample internal documentation from Horndean Technology College. They work with the Havant Federation of Schools and have previously shared the information all the schools in their cluster and the wider federation send out to families to ensure a real consistency of approach to clear communication with parents. I think the internal overview of responsibilities and the strategy document from the school, included here, will be really helpful as a checklist for all.

Virtual School have been running a pilot attendance project with nine secondary schools, to raise awareness of improving attendance for pupils who have a social worker. They have explored the research about what works and the project is ongoing, but there are several themes emerging that are worth sharing now.

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Music

Striking the right note ... and finding the right balance

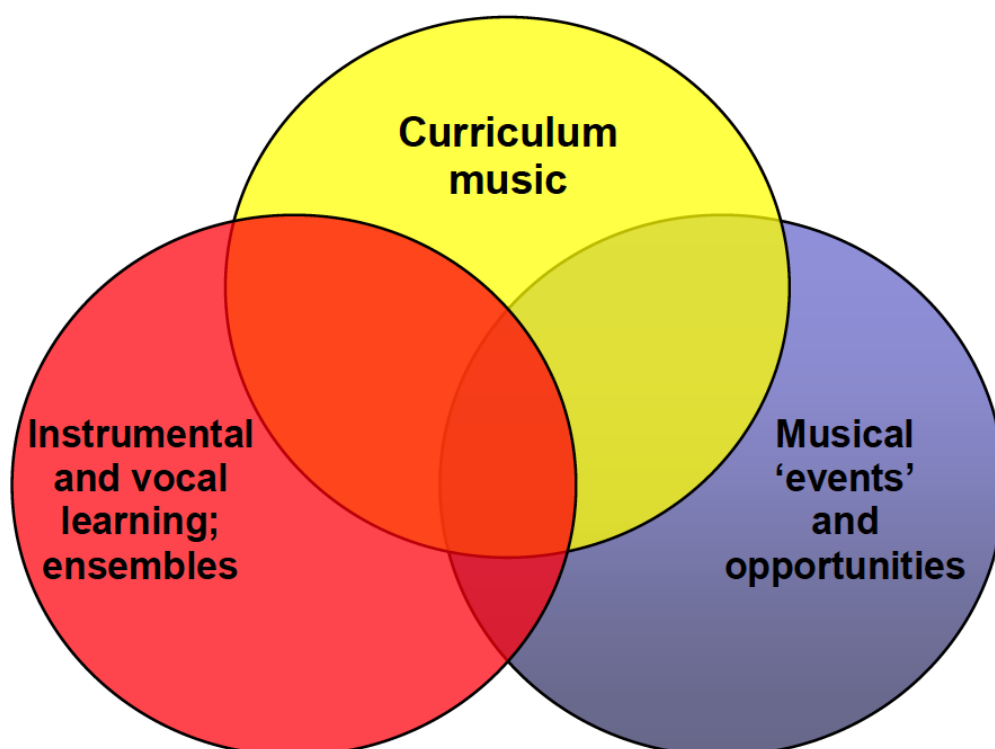
There is no doubt that music departments are battling many challenges. Across the country, numbers of instrumental learners are dwindling, funding is being reduced, options numbers are declining, and new teachers are becoming harder to find. Add to this the ongoing long-term impact of Covid on learners, teachers not being allowed out for training due to cover implications and schools' push towards the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), and the plight of the music teacher is plain to see.

Much of this was recognised in *Striking the right note: the music subject review*, published by Ofsted in September 2023. This document sets the Department for Education's (DfE) national plan for music education (updated in 2022) as the benchmark and reviews how successfully schools have been able to implement the intentions therein. Unsurprisingly, given the

factors described in paragraph 1, the outcomes have not matched the aspirations of the plan.

We are working with departments to improve some of the common areas cited in the report, including sequential curriculum plans, composition pedagogy and extra-curricular provision. Network meetings and training events have been focused on the first two of these, and we have seen great successes in pilot ensembles designed for new instrumentalists in Alton and Totton. However, many of the hurdles can only be overcome through systemic adaptations in the schools.

In order to find the right balance, at some point there must be compromise. The trick is to find a compromise that will not impinge on the opportunities or quality of education offered to the learners. The below diagram displays Hampshire Music Service's long-standing model of successful music provision. This model was validated by the DfE, as it was included in their national plan for music education and gives schools a clear holistic framework for their music department.



Schools are often happy to promote music through instrumental learning and ensembles, as well as trips and clubs, so long as the costs can be recouped. Schools are also happy to celebrate the rewarding and fulfilling effects of participating in musical performances and activities, basking in the reflected glory and appreciation from the wider community. Schools will understand that this is only possible due to the unique nature of the subject and the special possibilities of music. We would ask that schools also consider the unique nature of the subject when planning their curriculum. Whether that be simply giving enough curriculum time or compensating the immense time and effort it requires to provide so many exciting and transformative opportunities, schools should not be afraid of making music a *special case*; different from other subjects.

The Ofsted subject review and the DfE's national plan makes plain the expectation that music should be taught weekly for at least one hour, from Early Years until the end of Key Stage 3. The reports also make clear that avoiding carousels and enabling regular subject-specific training for teaching staff is key. The anomalous nature of the subject means that requiring departments to follow a whole-school written marking policy, homework routine or reading programme is detrimental to high quality music provision. Music leaders often feel nervous about having this discussion with senior leaders, but the fact these recommendations come directly from Ofsted and the DfE should empower them to do so.

Music teachers are not asking for special privileges to make their lives easier, they are asking for permission to make the educational experiences of their students better.

My final example of how schools can help music departments find the right balance is based on Key Stage 4 qualifications. There are two broad pathways that learners can follow at Key Stage 4; GCSE or vocational. The GCSE music course (offered by four different exam boards) is the more conventional option which develops musical skill and knowledge with a traditional view of musicianship. The vocational qualifications on offer (offered by three exam boards, allowing students to explore performance, composing, technology, musical theatre, or a combination of these) provide a contemporary study of the music industry. These two pathways are significantly different, and most students will be far more suited to one more than the other.

With this in mind, many music leaders wrestle with which qualification they should offer, especially given the aforementioned national decline in musical engagement leading to lower option numbers and therefore usually just one music class per cohort. In most schools, the vocational route is more suitable for the majority of the students, who are keen to take music but have a more modern, popular music background. However, the GCSE route is more suitable for the more experienced musicians, who might look to A Level music and beyond. This puts music departments in a very difficult position; do you offer a course that caters for the top musicians or for the prevailing majority?

School profile	Pupils	APS	Grade 4+	Grade 7+	APS Progress	Grade 4+ Progress	Grade 7+ Progress
Scores for schools offering GCSE Music only (33)	540	5.0	73%	26%	0	2%	0%
Scores for schools offering Vocational Music only (13)	218	4.9	78%	60%	-0.7	-13%	-5%
Scores for schools offering both GCSE <u>and</u> Vocational Music (12)	297	6	91%	52%	0.4	5%	4%

This table shows analysis of Hampshire schools' Key Stage 4 music results 2023, broken down in to three school profiles: those that offer GCSE or vocational or both. This data and historical evidence shows that schools that offer both types of qualification achieve better results, reflecting the principal that students are better catered for if they can choose the course that is right for them.

We would like for more than 12 schools to be able to offer both pathways, but that will require compromise from school leaders. If a school allows for a smaller GCSE music class than other subjects, then their students would have more choice, their departments would be more inclusive, and their outcomes (including grades) would be better. I believe this is a relatively small compromise, all things considered, and one that is definitely worth making. Especially as, considering the numerous activities, opportunities and events that the school celebrates and benefits from; music is unique and special, and should be treated as such.

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Religious education (RE)

Being Ofsted ready

Reframing expectations

Quite often, the thought of an Ofsted inspection inspires anxiety if not dread. But it does not have to. Similarly to how we might frame exams with students, this is an opportunity, not a threat, we should already be prepared and aware of what the likely outcome will be.

An Ofsted visit is likely to be a stressful moment. We want to do the best for the young people we work with, we are invested with the work of the school and want it to be successful, and we have our own professional pride. All of these might be true, but this is why an Ofsted inspection should be, if not welcomed, at least not a call to inspire fear.

An inspection is our chance to show off all the great practice that we are a part of delivering in our school. It is an opportunity to share our curriculum with pride, to demonstrate the strong classroom practice and explore the impact this has had. It is also a chance to openly explore areas that are a focus for us, things we could do better. Ofsted inspections therefore should be seen as an opportunity. One in which we can showcase what is going well and highlight what we are doing to improve further. Neither of these things are ones we should be worried about; they should already form part of our personal reflective teaching practice.

Preparing for Ofsted

So, what is a deep dive? Simply put, it is an in-depth look into a selection of elements in the school's curriculum, usually of between three and six subjects or areas. It is about showing you have given careful thought to what it is you want students to know and remember, and importantly, why. It is about showing that you have a knowledge and passion for the subject.

Ofsted will form a judgment on four key areas:

- the quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- leadership and management.

This article is about RE, and therefore will focus primarily on the quality of education judgment. The expectations, process and descriptors for inspections can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-for-september-2023#evaluating-the-quality-of-education-part-2

However, the information can perhaps be summarised as: “*having a consistently strong intent and implementation allowing all students to succeed.*” This includes a well sequenced curriculum, assessment plan and QA processes. It means teaching and learning that supports the needs of all students, whether they be Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), pupil premium (PP) or any other priority category within our context.

The key starting point is clarity about the intent and intended impact of RE within our own school context. It is helpful therefore to know what your cohort looks like, along with the local area. RE is determined locally to allow the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) to create an Agreed Syllabus that reflects the local context, and our curriculums should mirror this. While personalisation for your school is important, *Living Difference IV* has a ready-made purpose statement which sets out what it is Hampshire RE seeks to achieve, and from which you can directly quote and reference in any intent documentation. The purpose statement is on page 8 of the document, which you can access here: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/living-difference-IV-2021.pdf>.

Ofsted inspectors will want to know what the subject lead's vision for RE is in the school. Why does it matter, what does it seek to achieve? Hampshire RE is something we should be proud of, and so this is a chance to really sell why RE matters to us, to an inspector who may not be very familiar with the Agreed Syllabus.

The second really important bit of prep is to make sure the curriculum is clearly structured and thought through. Inspectors will want to know what you are teaching, when you are teaching and why these decisions have been made. It might be that your curriculum includes particular faith traditions because there are families in the area from these traditions. It might be that you are revisiting a particular tradition further up in the school as part of a thematic unit to reinforce the learning and to deepen this through application in a new context. For example, if Buddhist faith traditions are taught in Year 7, and Sikhi faith traditions in Year 8, it might be that there is also a Year 9 thematic unit on conflict, or the environment that both are applied to in order to secure, extend and refresh this learning. If you have good links with your feeder schools, this might help shape which traditions you chose to cover and why.

Similarly, identifying where Abrahamic and Dharmic faiths are taught and how knowledge of religion is built over time needs to be evident. Making links with your feeder schools and considering transition will help with this, as will knowing your local context. It might be that a particular faith tradition is moved to be taught early on in Year 7 because common misconceptions have arisen from students and in the local community for example.

Identify where explicit links can be made across the curriculum to add depth and nuance. For example, if *Israel* is taught within a unit of Jewish faith traditions, this idea of struggling with God can be referenced and explored further while learning about the concept of *Jihad* in a unit on Islamic faith traditions. The concept of *struggle* is therefore revisited and its function in the lived experience of believers contextualised within a range of traditions allowing greater discernment of its value.

Alongside the sequencing of units and faith traditions, it is important to be able to talk about knowledge and skills development. Some suggestions for showing and explaining how knowledge is built up over time include:

- revisiting traditions within thematic units
- developing awareness of a wider range of Dharmic as well as Abrahamic traditions which builds a greater awareness of the diversity and complexity of faith traditions
- Christianity is taught throughout the curriculum, but with deepening complexity, being able to give specific examples of this
- revisiting concepts within different traditions and contexts
- mapping in golden thread concepts – see below.

For skills development, the end of year expectations are a great starting point. These show how skills are built up over time. Explaining the cycle of enquiry and how this is repeated with more complex content will also help. By showing that your curriculum is designed to allow children to demonstrate the end of year expectations, you are demonstrating how progress is designed to occur.

One important way to show progress through the curriculum is by having the golden threads explicitly embedded in your curriculum map and planning. The golden threads, *Belonging*, *Community*, *Special* and *Love*, are concepts important to human beings generally and are a strand running through the curriculum to which further depth and nuance can be added. By revisiting these concepts, but through different traditions and contexts it helps develop a depth of understanding and opportunity to respond to them. They are also designed to support transition as they will be covered at primary as well. In Year R, children should encounter one of the golden threads, in Year 1 two of them and the remaining two in Year 2. This is the same for Years 3 and 4, and again 5 and 6.

In secondary school, all should be encountered in Key Stage 3 and core Key Stage 4 lessons. By regularly revisiting these concepts it allows a spiral curriculum that builds up understanding over time and so, apart from the benefits to the students, also allows us to show inspectors how progress is clear and explicit through our curriculum design.

This is not just reteaching the same thing over and over but giving a foundation on which to build. For example, as you can see from Brighstone Church of England Primary School's long-term planning, available on the RE Moodle <https://re.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=41>, Love is encountered first through a special baby looking at the birth of Jesus. This is then developed through love explored in the context of salvation, and later still through interpretations of elements of the Gospel of Luke and Matthew. Love forms the scaffold, or the thread on which this knowledge is built up, making recall easier, but also allowing a greater engagement and personal reflection on this concept over time.

While this is a primary school, the principle is exactly the same in secondary schools. Your curriculum is your progression model and should identify how knowledge and skills build over time. As *Living Difference IV* highlights, the curriculum should be a spiral where core concepts and ideas are revisited in new contexts and depth over time. For example, one school has term three in each year as a thematic unit. This allows religious traditions to be applied to new contexts but is also structured to develop new knowledge.

In Year 7, concepts common to humans in general are encountered, for example community and love. In Year 8, the unit *Being human* focuses on real world issues that these concepts can be applied to. Year 9 is an introduction to ethics where students develop an awareness of different ethical theories which they can then test out on the issues studied in Year 8.

Brighstone C.E. Primary School		RE Long Term Plan 2022-2023					
		Understanding Christianity	Living Difference	Jewish traditions	Hindu traditions	Muslim traditions	Buddhist traditions
		Golden Threads: Special ☆ Love ♥ Belonging 🧑 Community 👥					
Assessments	Autumn 1 Communicate	Autumn 2 Contextualise	Spring 1 Apply	Spring 2 Enquire	Summer 1 Evaluate	Summer 2 Contextualise	
EYFS	Thanking Harvest Sukkot (Creation/Fall UC)	Special person (Incarnation UC/ Celebration) ☆	Special Jewish traditions - special times (Shabbat) ☆	New life (Salvation UC)	Special Story telling Jewish traditions - Special books ☆	Looking forward	
Year 1/2 Year A	Bread as a symbol/ Creation / Fall (UC)	Love A special baby Incarnation (UC) ♥	Change Gospel - People Jesus met (UC)	Belonging Remembering Jewish traditions Passover 🧑	Special Special person (Buddha) Buddhist traditions ☆	Special Special books Jewish traditions - Torah ☆	
Year 1/2 Year B	Celebrating harvest Creation/ Fall (UC)	Light as a symbol - advent Jewish traditions Hanukkah	Community Kindness Buddhist traditions 👥	Love Sad and Happy Salvation (UC) ♥	Authority in Jesus life God (UC)	Special Special clothing Jewish traditions ☆	
Year 3/4 Year A	Community Buddhist traditions Community 👥	Love Holy Mary mother of God Incarnation (UC) ♥	Love Hindu traditions Devotion ♥	Special Pascal candle - Ritual Salvation (UC) ☆	Community Places of worship People of God (UC) 👥	Belonging Hindu traditions Protection 🧑	
Year 3/4 Year B	Hindu tradition Good and evil	Love / Special Angels Incarnation (UC Digging deeper) ☆ ♥	Stones as symbols Kingdom of God (UC)	Love Suffering Salvation (UC) ♥	Belonging Buddhist traditions Teaching 🧑	Community Hindu traditions Ritual 👥	
Year 5/6 Year A	Love Buddhist traditions Peace ♥	Special Warning - the Magi Incarnation/God (UC) ☆	Belonging Muslim traditions 5 pillars (Belonging) 🧑	Love Grace Salvation (UC) ♥	Justice Gospel (UC)	Community Muslim traditions Symbol and worship (Places of worship) 👥	
Year 5/6 Year B	Community Stewardship Kingdom of God (UC) 👥	Love Interpretation of gospels of Luke and Matthew Incarnation/God (UC) ♥	Special Muslim traditions Pilgrimage (Haji and Zakat) ☆	Resurrection Salvation (UC)	Buddhist traditions Enlightenment	Belonging Muslim traditions Peace (Qur'an, sawm, Ramadan) 🧑	

Having a clear view on what we are teaching and why means other teachers will be clearer and so will the children and young people in our class. It will also help to show Ofsted that we have a clearly sequenced curriculum where skills and knowledge build up over time and children are able to consider concepts important to many as well as themselves. In this way, *Living Difference IV* is a good support, not only in what good RE looks like, but in getting ourselves prepared for an Ofsted deep dive.

Ofsted top tips

Curriculum intent

This shows off the vision you have for RE and its purpose within the curriculum. It is important to have a vision statement setting out your aims and purpose. Much of this can be taken directly from *Living Difference IV* which has a clearly set out purpose statement. Along with using this wording, reference and a link to the syllabus should be used.

The next element required is your curriculum map as discussed above. Together with your vision and purpose, these will set out what it is that RE in your school aims to achieve. Some questions worth considering when reviewing your curriculum intent include:

- do all those teaching RE know what the vision for the subject is? Inspectors will want to see that all those teaching a subject are on the same page, so make sure your purpose statement is shared with others
- does your curriculum map comply with the requirement from the Education Act 1996, School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Education Act 2002 that you should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions in Great Britain?

- can you explain how young people progress through the curriculum? You should be using the golden thread concepts (*Belonging, Community, Special and Love*) across the curriculum and key stages. Use this to help demonstrate how the curriculum allows progress, showing how an understanding becomes deeper and more complex over time
- do all units follow the cycle of enquiry? Are all teachers aware of this?
- can you explain how, and more importantly, why, you have structured your curriculum the way you have?
- can you explain how what you are doing fits into the wider school context, including supporting SEND and PP children?
- are you ready to show your pride in what you are doing and the experience the children have in RE?

Curriculum implementation

The curriculum implementation is exploring how your intent is put into practice. It is seeing how this translates into teaching and learning in the classroom. It also involves adapting provision to meet the needs of all in the class. Much of this might involve general teaching and learning, but there are also subject specific elements. These include the level of subject knowledge of those teaching a particular topic, along with the appropriate choice of resources to deliver the content. The purpose statement in the Agreed Syllabus identifies the importance of diversity in understanding religion, so this should be evident in children and young people's learning. It highlights that to be religious is not one thing, so lessons should not simply focus on beliefs and practices but explore the lived experience of believers. It also highlights that to be educational, RE should have an impact on how children and young people come to speak, think and act in the world. Do lessons utilise the pedagogy of the cycle of enquiry to promote this?

Along with visiting lessons, other useful evidence for a subject lead might include:

- staff training for teachers with other specialisms, and keeping up to date with subject developments and knowledge. This could include records of network meeting attendance for example
- carrying out a subject audit to identify areas of strength and good practice to share, and areas to develop further
- the use of student voice to hear the experience of young people on the provision they receive. Select a genuine range of children to give a real view of their experiences of RE in your school
- collect examples of work that show how the curriculum is working in practice.

Curriculum impact

Impact is about being clear on what difference the RE curriculum makes to the young people in the school. This can be measured in various ways including exam and test results over time, and student voice. Ultimately, it is about showing how your progression model has worked in practice. It is important that we are aware of what impact the curriculum is having as this is the ultimate purpose of the RE curriculum. If there is no impact, then the curriculum model needs reviewing as it is not meeting the intention we have for RE in our school. Some of the evidence that might be helpful includes:

- data showing trends over time
- the number of children and young people meeting the end of year expectations for RE
- example of assessments to show the outcomes of learning in RE
- if you have carried out previous subject audits, review progress against previous actions

- staff voice to support what you say about the impact the RE curriculum has on children throughout their time in school
- collect evaluations of any CPD offered for staff
- evidence showing how RE provision has complemented whole school priorities, for example supporting SEND students and developing literacy across the curriculum
- have evidence of the ways in which you review the impact of RE. For example, any quality assurance, staff or student voice that has been carried out.

Top tips

- Show off the subject. Inspectors are not looking to catch you out, they want to see what provision is like so be proud of what you do.
- Make sure all teachers are on the same page. Inspectors want to see that what you say is what other teachers will say about the subject.
- Be honest. It is OK to highlight what your areas for development are and what actions you are taking. Do not hide these.
- Make sure you are clear on what you are teaching when and why you are teaching it.
- Be clear on the role of RE within the wider school curriculum.
- Create a single side department summary to share with all staff before a visit. There will not be time to review a large amount of paperwork so a summary will help give confidence to teachers and share what you will be discussing with inspectors. Headings might include: department context; what we are teaching at the moment and why; department strengths; areas we are developing, etc.

Common Ofsted questions

- How do you ensure progression in RE?
- What topics do you cover and why?
- How does this unit support the intent you have for the subject?
- What is your intent in teaching this unit now?
- What is the core knowledge required for this topic?
- Are you aware of what students know and understand when they come to you in Year 7?
- What are pupils learning?
- What will I see in RE lessons?
- What are the department priorities?
- How are pupils who have missed lessons supported?
- How does what pupils are learning build on what they have done before?
- How do you challenge your higher ability pupils?
- How are SEND pupils supported in RE?
- How are PP pupils supported in RE?
- Why is the curriculum structured the way it is?
- How do you assess progression in RE?
- How do you make sure all teachers are confident with the knowledge and skills needed for this unit?
- How are non-specialist teachers supported to ensure consistent provision?
- How is assessment structured and monitored?

Finally

RE is an important subject on the curriculum that has the potential to make a difference in how children and young people come to speak, think, and act in the world. It has a crucial role in preparing children and young people for life in modern Britain and the challenges facing the wider world today, and in helping them develop the vision of the future they want to go on to create.

An Ofsted inspection is a chance to show off the passion we have for our subject and show why it is such an important part of the school we work in. There will always be areas we are still working to develop further, and this is fine, because that is a part of our passion for the subject and how it can best support the young people we work with. Preparing for Ofsted is as much about striving to offer the best RE provision we can as it is about Ofsted. None of this is just for the inspection, it is about being clear on what high quality RE provision is and working always to get there. If this is the department ethos, then we are already prepared for an inspection.

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Geography

It is not a fieldtrip, it is fieldwork

There has been one distinctive feature of geography education since its introduction in the National Curriculum in 1991 and that is fieldwork. I am sure the term will flood your memory with your own personal fieldwork experiences, perhaps a day spent measuring groynes at Hengistbury Head, or counting traffic along the high street, or even a residential visit, perhaps to a highland area like the Brecon Beacons? (Now known as Bannau Brycheiniog).

Whatever fieldwork memory comes to mind, the action of visiting a site and gathering and analysing data from an investigation is a core aspect of the subject and vital skill geography teachers want all their students to hold.



Photo of GCSE students measuring groyne depths at Solent Beach.

What is the problem?

But we have hit a bit of a road block in recent years as research has shown that schools are providing less fieldwork now than before 2020. (See Steve Brace's article in the TES www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/how-do-we-save-geography-fieldwork-in-schools#:~:text=If%20costs%20are%20a%20significant,space%2C%20woods%20or%20a%20river).

It is a significant concern that both national subject organisations have felt compelled to champion with the Geographical Association (GA) running a national campaign for two weeks in summer 2023 to encourage geography teams to engage their pupils through outdoor fieldwork investigations.

However, this is where things get blurry as we cannot blame the pandemic alone for the weaknesses now acknowledged in fieldwork from Key Stages 2-4. Whilst I appreciate that the restrictions on movement and removal of the familiar fieldwork element from the terminal exam post Covid reduced the need for it, the opportunities to learn about it did not. This view is held by the Geography HMI Mark Enser and shared in the Ofsted geography subject report published in September 2023:

“While it is clear that the amount of fieldwork was reduced, it was also clear that in most schools very little fieldwork was done before the COVID-19 pandemic beyond that needed to fulfil the requirements of the exam boards. Pupils may have gone out on visits at Key Stage 3, but they did very little fieldwork during these visits. Many pupils did not learn how to collect geographical data. Those who did often did not do anything meaningful with the data when back in the classroom. In a minority of schools, fieldwork at Key Stage 3 was, and continues to be, completely absent.”

Point 103, Getting our bearings: geography subject report, Ofsted www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-geography/getting-our-bearings-geography-subject-report#geography-in-secondary-schools.

If I am being completely honest, I can see this criticism laid bare in my own practice. Just before I joined the HIAS team I organised one last *fieldwork* visit for Year 7 to London. It was a tried and tested visit to the Natural History Museum with an afternoon *enrichment* experience of a ride on the London Eye.

Although I look back, recalling the enjoyment at the Kobe earthquake simulation feature as the ground shook and of students pointing out buildings from our rotating pod, it was definitely not fieldwork, it was a fieldtrip.

What is the big difference between fieldwork and fieldtrips?

The easy check is that fieldwork involves data collection. This could involve asking members of the public a questionnaire at the local shopping complex, or conducting an environmental quality survey around the school site. The issue with fieldwork is not so much where pupils go, it is more concerned with what information they will collect and sample in an environment.

All four exam boards agree on this investigation approach to fieldwork, and it is organised at Key Stage 4 in a six strand process including data collection, presentation, analysis and evaluation.

The six strands of the fieldwork enquiry process:

- introduction and planning
- selecting measuring and recording data
- data presentation
- data analysis
- concluding and answering the enquiry question
- evaluation.

What should geography teams be doing to develop fieldwork?

The Key Stage 3 National Curriculum states pupil should:

“Use fieldwork in contrasting locations to collect, analyse and draw conclusions from geographical data, using multiple sources of increasingly complex information.”

Fieldwork Audit 2023-4

Year	School grounds	School locality	Wider locality	UK & beyond
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				

An example of a fieldwork location audit.

The first step for a subject leader is to audit their fieldwork provision considering questions such as:

- what local, national and international sites do we visit and how is it fairly spread across Key Stage 3?
- is there a balance between the number of physical and human locations/enquiries?
- what opportunities do we utilise in the school grounds?
- what is the balance between primary data collection and secondary data collection?
- what virtual fieldwork do we do?

From here departments need to reflect on the range of data collection techniques in each investigation. Ask your geography leaders *how do our pupils have the opportunity to practise using a range of methods and the progression of data collection skills across Key Stage 3?*

For primary data collection common answers are likely to include: land use surveys, environmental quality surveys, field sketches, counts such as traffic counts, conducting questioning or interviewing a stakeholder, taking photographs, etc. For secondary data collection it could involve using historical maps and old photographs, researching news articles and online websites.

It could also involve virtual data collection, not leaving the classroom. For example, in the autumn edition of *Secondary Geography News* the subject leader at The Burgate School shared how the department have built in two virtual fieldwork investigations, where students watch a short walking tour around a busy city such as Rio de Janeiro and use the information to record their environmental quality or soundscape findings.

The next stage is to come back to the six strands and to consider which strand you will focus more on during the investigation. For example, pupils at The Burgate School spent more time evaluating the reliability and validity of the data they collected during their virtual fieldtrip, developing vital understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of gathering information in this way. The key aspect here is teachers need to

teach students about fieldwork, how to collect, present and analyse data and successfully conclude and evaluate their findings.

From here curriculum leaders should consider the skill set of their team. This is especially vital for teachers newer to the profession who will have fewer fieldwork experiences or conducted more virtual enquiries. This professional development could be run in-house with the team sharing expertise or a paid training session through the Field Studies Council (www.field-studies-council.org/courses-and-experiences/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw8J6wBhDXARIsAPo7QA8v8xUBstQmy57GOTzsFTAymr-ds-cBw5ByTi_xHcJH-XxAek7xvSYaAk8MEALw_wcB), Royal Geographical Society (www.rgs.org/schools/fieldwork-in-schools) or Geographical Association (www.geography.org.uk/geography-fieldwork/).

The Hampshire subject leader network events are also a great way to access support and resources, and the autumn term event will include a workshop session on developing progression in fieldwork at Key Stage 3.

Finally, encourage your geography department to get involved with the GA's festival of fieldwork www.geography.org.uk/national-fieldwork/ which will be held in June to raise the profile and status of fieldwork in school. The GA has organised an area of its website in preparation to support teachers in conducting some local and school grounds investigations.

To get in touch for more information and support with developing fieldwork please contact me.

Kate Broadribb

Secondary Inspector/Adviser and Subject Lead for Geography, School Improvement Manager for New Forest and Test Valley, HIAS

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Ofsted experiences

Perspective of an ungraded Ofsted inspection – Crestwood Community School

We enjoyed our inspection! Words we never thought we would say. From the outset it was a two-way dialogue, with the senior leadership team (SLT) involved fully, we were listened to and heard.

As the Headteacher, it was much different to any of the five inspections I had led. I felt much more distant from the process, as my team was more involved in the inspection activities. However, I could steady the ship, reassure staff and be out and about with the students. The support shown to my own mental health and well-being, and that of my team, was really emphasised throughout the two days. We felt involved, that we were doing the inspection with the team, and we felt empowered to challenge views that we did not agree with. The context of our school was taken into account, the effects of Covid, and there was a mutual respectful realism in what we faced on a daily basis.

Preparation, preparation, preparation!

This was the key to this inspection being successful. It started a year from the window and was continually reviewed and updated.

- All subjects used the Ofsted subject audits to review their curriculum and from this subject briefing sheets were created, so all teaching staff understood where they were and where they were heading.
- The morning of the first in-service training (INSET) day of the year was devoted to Ofsted preparation including a *script* which held all the factual and contextual information we wished to share, ensuring a commonality of approach.
- Staff created *red folders* of key student information meaning that staff knew their students well.
- We continually updated our self-evaluation form (SEF) every month, linked with school improvement plan (SIP) and these key documents were reviewed regularly at full SLT and with governors.



- We had an action plan, with responsibilities, of what would happen when the call came in.
- The base data updated every week.
- We held whole governing body training on Ofsted by Mark Kingswood, which was really good, and governors learnt a lot.
- We selected prior four key governors that we would want Ofsted to meet, and they undertook a training session with our leadership and learning partner (LLP). As a result, questions were raised and we responded in writing to give them a script for their meeting.
- We held assemblies with all students and held a staff meeting after school, to reassure and give feedback on what the team were looking for.

Phone call

- Initial phone call is from lead inspector, which was reassuring and supportive.
- It was much more friendly and approachable – care and support around the mental health of the headteacher given and emphasised greatly.
- For the focused conversation we gathered SLT representatives of pastoral, curriculum, teaching and learning, and progress in the room on conference call.
- We cannot emphasise how important the *script* was during this conversation, it kept us on track with consistent messages.
- As the phone call was progressing, we made notes which were shared live to the SLT not in the room.

The inspection

- Rooms used for the inspectors were away from busy areas – locations with their own dedicated toilets to limit unnecessary movement around the school. They had refreshments in them even though not requested.
- Copies of all relevant documents readily available in each base, one for each inspector.
- We had case studies for each of the Ofsted complaints from parents, even though they were not asked for we could reference them in meetings, showing we knew our school.
- It was important that the depth of the senior team was shown throughout the inspection activities. Meetings were shared out across leadership and SLT accompanied the inspectors on the deep dives.
- We were allowed to pick staff and students for the meetings on day two, however, we picked a couple of students with hidden axes to grind, on reflection we would do this in advance of the call!
- The keeping in touch (KIT) meetings and team meetings were essential, it enabled us to update throughout the day the consistent messages to staff and students.

Krista Dawkins

Headteacher, Crestwood Community School

A professionally positive experience – John Hanson Community School

After waiting five years and five months it was actually a relief to finally receive the call.

You will all be familiar with the drill. The initial call came in mid-morning from an Ofsted administrator who set out the logistics for the two days – ours was an ungraded inspection with two inspectors on day one and just the lead inspector on day two. At this point the ball is in your court regarding the timing of the 90 minute (ish!) conversation with the lead inspector. Give yourself enough time to collect your thoughts and gather the people and any documents you need before having this conversation – I gave myself about two hours. Also use this time to get the ball rolling with all the other logistics – telling staff, governors, and the local authority (LA) if applicable, sorting out car parking spaces, a base for the inspectors, etc. Following the initial call you will receive your login and password to the Ofsted portal, where you will find all the documentation to send out to the various stakeholders, for example letter to parents (including *Parent View* guidance), staff and student questionnaires etc, as well as the mechanism for uploading your SIP, SEF etc.

The best bit of advice I can give is *be prepared*, but do not fixate or let it consume you day in day out. I had spoken to a number of colleagues and read much of the helpful advice written by fellow Hampshire headteacher. I used that to make sure the following was in place for whenever the inevitable happened:

- emails to all the relevant stakeholders – staff, parents, governors, LA
- video for students. An opportunity to not only explain what will be happening over the next two days, but also a reminder to the students about how amazing their school is and that the two days is an opportunity to celebrate that

- script for the 90 minute conversation (see below)
- PowerPoint presentation for staff as a reminder of all the key elements of safeguarding, pastoral support, teaching and learning and behaviour for learning. This presentation had been developed well in advance and shared with heads of faculty (HoF) and subsequently with their teams.

I then got on with the day job!

The 90 minute conversation – this is your opportunity to *set the scene* for the next two days. I made sure that I had a script prepared that I updated regularly in preparation for the call. It included all the key information about the school and the *positive stuff* to emphasise. I had my two deputies with me at this point, along with a flip chart. The lead inspector has no issues with others being present and was happy for them to contribute to the conversation where relevant and where I felt they could answer questions better than me. We used the flip chart to record key questions and actions we needed to take following the conversation. For us, there was a focus on making sure all students had equal opportunity to be successful in lessons – thus a focus on adaptive teaching and the impact it has in students in both settled and mixed ability groups.

I had significant input into the scope of the deep dives. As you all know, Ofsted will look in detail at your website in the weeks leading up to the inspection. From this, the lead inspector picked out our approach to reading and wanted to see how this linked with English. They also wanted to see how our significant sporting extra-curricular participation was developed through physical education (PE) lessons. Beyond this I had some choice. With modern foreign languages (MFL) and humanities being mentioned on our last two reports and knowing all the hard work that had gone in to moving these two curriculum areas forward, I asked that MFL and geography be the other two deep dive subjects.

At the end of the day I met with all the staff and set out the logistics for the two days, went through the staff presentation one more time and reminded the staff that this was our collective opportunity to shine.

Members of my senior team went off to support preparation for the faculty areas which were to be deep dived.

I met with my senior team early evening and we went through the plan for the two days. Day two will always be flexible depending on what inspectors see on day one and the lead inspector met with me at the end of day one to confirm the plan for day two. We made sure that everyone knew their role and was prepared for the meetings they would be present in.

We made the decision that no member of staff, other than me for the KIT meetings, would meet an inspector on their own. This worked well in regard to staff feeling confident that if they did not remember some of the positives they wanted to get across there was someone else there to support them.

Day one

Meeting the staff soon after arrival. The key point the lead inspector made was that she was not worried about *the language* used by staff. She said it was the role of the inspectors to put what they saw and heard in to Ofsted speak.

The single central record (SCR) – we use CPoms Staff Safe. This is managed by my business manager. Make sure you are able to evidence how the SCR is quality assured by you and governors.

The deep dives – the two inspectors went to a total of 16 lessons across the four subjects – all observations had a member of my senior team present. Each of my staff has a folder with seating plans. This identifies the SEND students, those who are disadvantaged, and for the whole class, and strategies that are in place for students to make sure they have the best opportunity to succeed. These setting plans are updated regularly.

HoFs were really well prepared for the deep dives and especially the meeting with the inspector before they went into lessons. Over the last two years, HoFs, have on rotation, presented their curriculum intent, implementation and impact to the senior team.

In year one this was a detailed overview taking approximately 45 minutes. In year two it was much more like the 15-20 minutes they would eventually have with the inspector. This instilled a great deal of confidence that then shone through during the inspection.

They met all the staff they observed at the end of day one.

The meetings – the inspectors focused on the following during their meetings on both days one and two:

- safeguarding, child protection (CP) (logs and records) and LLCs (log)
- behaviour (suspensions, isolations, bullying, etc) – the theme that ran throughout the inspection with a focus on those students missing significant amounts of education due to their behaviour. This included a discussion with a group of pupils who had recently been suspended
- alternative provision and part-time timetables
- attendance
- personal development and careers
- reading
- SEND and disadvantaged students.

There was no specific meeting focused on the curriculum or academic outcomes.

Day two

Observe tutor time/assembly.

Pupil pursuits – six students (two each of SEND, English as an additional language (EAL), disadvantaged). They then met these students with their books.

More meetings.

Governors – most of my governors are relatively new (less than three years on the board). It was therefore important that significant time was spent supporting them in the run up to the inspection.

Using some of the common questions inspectors ask governors, I produced a governor SEF template and asked each governor independently to complete it. I then completed a *school version* with everything I thought would support governors when Ofsted came calling. The individual governor SEFs and the school version were compared, and gaps identified. We then did a series of in house continuing professional development sessions for governors run by my senior team to make sure all governors were confident in all aspects of their roles.

The lead inspector was out and about talking to students at break and lunchtime.

Throughout the two days I had a series of KIT meetings with the lead inspector. These allowed me to gauge how the inspection was going and tweak our approach as required.

Ultimately, this inspection was a totally different (in a good way) experience to all the other inspections I have been a part of during my career. If this is the template for inspections moving forwards, Ofsted are acting on their rhetoric.

Russell Stevens


Headteacher, John Hanson Secondary School

Attendance

Sharing good practice around school attendance

As we know, all schools are striving to improve attendance in order to reduce the increased numbers of children who have been missing more school sessions since the pandemic. The LA webinars are run once a term to keep you all updated on the DfE guidance and to share examples of good practice from a wide range of organisations including schools.

Attached are two examples from The Horndean Technology College. They have shared their attendance strategy documentation and also the overview of responsibilities for the attendance team and all the staff who are involved in this important work.

 <h3>Attendance Strategy – overview of responsibilities 2023</h3>			
Assistant Headteacher Overall strategic lead for attendance Chair Federation Attendance group Regular reviews of attendance for each Year Team/SLT Line Manager (Attendance Officer)			
Year Leaders Termly Attendance/Punctuality meetings Half termly attendance meeting Chairs Tutor Meetings and Tutor Briefings- attendance regular meeting item Attendance of the Year Group Messages about attendance in assemblies 4 chocolate bars for 100% attendance weekly Year group strategy for attendance- use of Standards Leader, attendance report, positive strategies e.g. tutor group attendance league, 100% attendance rewards, 95% attendance challenge Contact with parents Parent meetings Maintain attendance monitoring and refer names for contact to Attendance Officer Challenge 'weak' reasons like 'ill' 'unwell' and get medical evidence of absences Late on the gate	Attendance Officer Attend strategic fortnightly Attendance/Punctuality meetings Half termly attendance meeting with each YL and Family Support Worker Weekly updates to individual attendance tracking spreadsheet Follow up with parents on reasons 'ill' Follow up with parents on medical appointments taken during college day Send out Letter 1- drop below 95% Letter 2- drop below 90% Letter for persistent punctuality issues Phone calls Contact with parents Update attendance monitoring Attendance letter each half term to below <95% <90% Positive contact with student/parent when attendance improves Maintain record of holiday forms PN/LIT paperwork	Family Support & Intervention Worker Attend strategic fortnightly Attendance/Punctuality meetings Half termly attendance meeting with each YL and MDT Home visits Contact with parents Parent meetings CP list receive attendance phone call every day absent Same day call if absent for <85% attendance	
Secretarial Support Award weekly 100% attendance points to students in each year group Half termly 100% attendance points Termly 100% attendance points		Standards Leaders for each year group Attend Strategic Year Team Meeting Attend Tutor Meetings and Briefing Lead on year group strategy for attendance e.g. attendance report, positive strategies e.g. tutor group attendance league, 100% attendance rewards, 95% attendance challenge Contact with students/parents	
Further Support and Guidance from:			
Tutors Weekly tutor session where absences are questioned Opportunity to contact parents for attendance of their tutees Reinforce year group strategy and messages for attendance Celebrate 100% attendance of their tutees Impact on 5 attendance- work on the attendance of 5 tutees and feedback at 3 points in the year	Student Support Services SS Take off absence messages received by phone/email and document on CC Refer medical appointments taken in College day to AO Same day message sent to parent asking why not in Unexplained absences follow up message sent to parent later in week Work with Year Leaders in identifying concerns with patterns of absences	ELSA Emotional and well-being support Contact with home Contact with Year Leader	Subject Leaders Raise progress concerns related to attendance Contact with parents to emphasise hours lost and how affect progress



Achieving Excellence

Ambition Independence Motivation

- College attendance to be above 95%.
- All groups to perform above national.
- Students and parents value and support good attendance and punctuality, with link between attendance and progress/attainment.

Severely	PA <90%	90-95%	AM lates	All groups	100%/no lates
Actions				Date/Frequency	Review
Daily phone calls to challenge N and weak reasons for absence					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call all N or weak reasons daily. Do not accept unwell or ill. • Ask for medical evidence for antibiotics or tonsillitis. 				Daily	
Parent attendance meetings- IAP or parenting contract					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned parent meetings. • Conversation may need to be around support and targets for improvement, so attempt IAP route first. • If support not being utilised and attendance rapidly declining, parenting contract at meeting, warning letter and LIT referral to follow period of 15 days contract. • Allocation of meetings to MJT or with Year Team clearly identified on tracking spreadsheet. • Year Leader has review meeting with MJT and VEN half termly. First half term meeting sets up the actions for the subsequent half term for letters, put on report, phone calls to take place querying every absence, IAP meeting/parenting contract. 				Half termly review and planned parent meetings	
Half termly Year Leader and Attendance Team meeting					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings must be booked with YL, VEN and MJT every half term to share information, log updates on tracker, plan and log actions on tracker with who is responsible. 				Half termly	
Students under attendance monitoring called on the day of EVERY absence					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every absence must be questioned/challenged for students we are concerned about attendance (typically <90%). Query every absence, if it is necessary, because their attendance is so poor. 				Daily	
Home visits					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MJT has known list of Known absentees for every Year Group. Can complete follow up phone calls after absence to question further or home visit on day of absence to check up. • Home visits responsive to refusal/anxiety not coming in. • Home visit after 3 days of absence. • Year Leaders responsive home visits to check up reasons for absence. • Home visits to check in on medical absentees to see if we can get them back sooner e.g. adaptations to work in library etc. • Weekly welfare checks for Persistent Absentees. 				Daily check of absentees	

Impact on 5		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year Leaders set up and monitor with tutor teams. Each tutor has 5 students they think they can have impact on attendance working with student. Tutors can put in place own strategies e.g. reports, rewards etc. Students having Impact on 5 work sent to MJT to include intervention on tracking spreadsheet. Review at tutor meetings (minimum every after College tutor meeting). 	<p>Set up in September based on previous year attendance figure</p> <p>Review at after college tutor meetings</p>	
Individual tracking spreadsheet kept up to date on R Drive		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions to date kept updated. Up to date with clear actions for every student for the next half term and who is doing what. 	Live/ongoing updates	
Reduce the number of U absences		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing monitoring by MJT, Year Leaders, AMA. Identify the persistent U to receive letters. Parent meetings. Parenting contract. LIT referral. 	Daily, weekly and part of half termly review meeting	
Reduce persistent AM lates		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing monitoring by MJT, Year Leaders, AMA. Identify the persistent L to receive letters. Parent meetings. Parent contract. LIT referral. 	Daily, weekly and part of half termly review meeting	
Reduce late to lesson		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem shared with staff- set detentions. Year Leader Robins for students identified as persistently late- set detentions. Year Leaders monitor/spot check those persistently late and whether detention is set- query with teacher. Progress updates on lates in announcements. Year group strategies to tackle e.g. league table (bottom of league litter pick), reports, targets and rewards. 	Ongoing and frequently	
Positive strategies for no lates		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year Team strategies to reward those always getting it right! 	YL to plan appropriate to year group	
Positive strategies for 100% attendance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% attendance chocolate bars x4 every week in assembly from previous week. MJT send 100% attendance to Year Leaders for the previous week on a Tuesday morning. MJT award Class Charts points half termly for 100% attendance. Individual year group strategies to incentivise 100% attendance- raffles, house leagues, certificates, postcards. 	<p>Weekly</p> <p>Weekly</p> <p>Half termly</p> <p>YL to plan appropriate to year group</p>	

Communication of attendance expectations with parents		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance leaflet issued in Welcome Pack and sent to parents electronically via CC announcements. Messages about good attendance via CC and Facebook. Attendance leaflet and FPN information given out at every parent meeting. Days of learning lost strategy- MJT send personalised message to parent/student with days of learning lost since September and this new term is a fresh start. 	Half termly/ Termly	
Communication of attendance expectations with students		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembly. Staff challenge and question absence and the importance of good attendance. 	Once a year Ongoing	
Year Team Line Management		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual tracking spreadsheet up to date to review actions for students. Review and feedback to AMA about completion of each aspect of the strategy. Is it happening? Impact? Once a term- prompted by AMA. 	Tracking spreadsheet up to date to review in line meetings after 06/11/23	
Attendance Team communication		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes must be kept up to date on Class Charts with contact and actions so all Attendance Team and Year Leaders can monitor. MJT individual attendance tracker kept up to date. Fortnightly Attendance Team meeting 9 Thursday Period 3. Fortnightly line meeting AMA/MJT 8 Thursday Period 3. MJT and VEN fortnightly meeting. Year Leader and Attendance Team meeting once a term. 	Ongoing	

Making school unmissable for children with a social worker

Children with a social worker are now under the remit of the Virtual School because they significantly underperform compared to their peers in terms of attendance, suspensions/exclusions and academic outcomes.

National attendance figures show that children with a social worker – or those who have had a social worker in the last six years – are more likely than their peers to be absent from school. As stated in recent DfE guidance (March 2024):

“Children with a social worker are around 3 times more likely to be persistently absent from school, and between 2 to 4 times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than their peers. This group are also over 10 times more likely to attend state-funded alternative provision settings than all other pupils.”

Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension, DfE. www.gov.uk/government/publications/virtual-school-head-role-extension-to-children-with-a-social-worker/promoting-the-education-of-children-with-a-social-worker-and-children-in-kinship-care-arrangements-virtual-school-head-role-extension

These statistics are replicated in Hampshire data, with just over half of children with a social worker being persistently absent (10% or more) in the summer term of 2023.

Virtual School have been running a pilot attendance project with nine secondary schools, to raise awareness of this cohort and to explore the research about what works. The project is ongoing, and we will continue to share the findings, but there are several themes emerging that are worth sharing now.

- **Make sure that attendance is everyone’s business.** It is vital that everyone in school understands the importance of attendance in providing students with social connection and a sense of belonging and that every member of staff understands their role in supporting this. If all students feel welcomed

as soon as they arrive on site, they are much more likely to want to attend every day. Additionally, join up between academic and pastoral staff will ensure that consistent strategies are in place and that lessons are more accessible and welcoming to all students.

Why not try? Look at the school day from a student perspective – what are your procedures for welcoming students onto site? If a student has been absent, how will they be greeted on their return to school? If a student feels they will be judged or is greeted with a reprimand *before* a welcome, are they likely to avoid coming back to school or into a specific lesson? Do academic staff understand their role in welcoming students back to the classroom and are they fully aware of triggers and best strategies for students with vulnerabilities? Have you asked students with high rates of absence to RAG rate the timetable? What does this tell you about their experience and some potential strategies for making school more unmissable?

Some of the schools on our project have found it invaluable to revisit the vision and culture for attendance with everyone in school, including the administrative team, so that consistent messaging is driven by an agreed set of values.

- **Ensure that communication with parents is positive and effective.** It is helpful to consider who in your school communicates with families around attendance and to check that the messaging is consistent. It is useful to consider if the communication methods are the most effective in engaging your target audience.

Why not try? Reach out to parents of children with low attendance to ask about their preferences for communication. Would texting work better than email? Would a phone call work better than a formal letter?

The need for social connection and a sense of belonging is just as important for adults as it is for students, so building authentic partnerships with parents can go a long way to getting buy-in.

One school we have been working with has been experimenting with sending positive texts to families on a Sunday night to celebrate when the previous week's attendance has been good. The texts also identify events and opportunities in the coming week to encourage students to attend.

- **Review your arrangements for lateness.** Being on time is crucial for students so that they do not miss out on a positive start to the day. However, for many of our children with vulnerabilities, there are a raft of issues to overcome before school. Many children open to social care have unidentified caring responsibilities or currently have insufficient support from carers to get to school on time in the correct uniform. It is not easy to ensure that everyone in your school is aware of the adversities that some pupils may face before school. Our interviews with students showed that issues such as, unreliable transport or needing to take younger siblings to school felt insurmountable and students often felt it was better to stay off school completely than face the sanction for being late.

Why not try? Share an anonymised *day in the life* scenario with your school staff to demonstrate a range of issues for a child who is open to social care. What practical support could be provided to a young person in this scenario? What emotional support are they likely to need? What is the impact of a potential reprimand when they make it to school – late – despite the difficulties they have overcome? Consider the barriers and issues and what could potentially be done to support the child in getting to school on time.

The key message being – how can we *positively and practically* support the young person to get to school on time, ready to learn?

- **Look ahead to change habits.** [The Children's Commissioner's guidance for attendance officers \(Sept 22\)](#), highlights the correlation between a student's absence in the first two weeks of the year and high absence rates for the rest of the year. Look at your pupil data for the first two weeks in September 2023 and identify those pupils who were absent – has this been an indicator of high absence overall? Prepare a list of students and families who can be engaged with positively in the summer term to ensure that any barriers to attendance are identified and addressed in good time for a positive start to the year in September 2024.

Why not try? Analyse the data for other trends and patterns. Are there high levels of absence around Christmas for example? Is the absence disproportionately for students who are disadvantaged? Are there difficulties with Christmas activities that may have been overlooked that could be avoided in future? Examples might include pressure to have a Christmas jumper, issues around cost of living, or a trigger about difficult or traumatic events around Christmas.

Are there particular days of the week or subjects that have the highest rates of absence? What issues can be identified and how can these be addressed? Are there specific year groups or cohorts identified?

In all of these cases, it is important to collect authentic student voice. Schools in the project found that student voice has often challenged assumptions about the reasons for absence. The Virtual School is developing some resources and training around pupil voice which we will share in the near future. Do contact us if you would like to know more!

If you have ideas or questions about attendance or would like a problem-solving conversation, the team at the Virtual School are available for advice and guidance. Please do get in touch if you would like to discuss an issue affecting a child with a social worker at virtuelschool@hants.gov.uk.

Tamsin Austoni

Deputy Head of Service for Hampshire and IOW
Virtual School

Good practice reviews

Secondary subject specific good practice visits – spring 2024

Many schools in Hampshire have multiple strong subject departments and much to share with other schools and leaders to support development and growth.

HIAS understands the importance of sharing good practice, recognising the impact of school leaders' work, and capturing strengths in order to support all schools in working alongside each other with clarity where strong and improved practice is, and in accessing guidance from others. Hampshire officers are also fortunate to have strong relationships across all schools which enables us to work across the different schools and colleges.

Following the Year 11 GCSE outcomes and validated data from 2023, the subject lead advisers in HIAS considered the performance of school separately and also carried out an evaluation of performance across the county. This focused on particular aspects of strong performance, changes to practice, aspects that have underperformed and patterns in the performance of pupil groups. This collation of findings was shared with all secondary schools in the LA as well as in the subject network meetings with a professional development foci.

Key Stage 4 public examination evaluation 2023
https://assessment.hias.hants.gov.uk/pluginfile.php/4859/mod_resource/content/0/Key%20Stage%204%20Public%20Examination%20Evaluation%202023%20HIAS.pdf.

In spring 2024, and with reference to the strong performing schools, each subject adviser then carried out a number of good practice reviews to a number of specific Hampshire schools to understand their practice and explore the impact of their development work and capture their good practice. This will be shared with all schools shortly. A number of secondary schools

were visited by the curriculum subject advisers, with agreement of their headteachers. Schools were chosen to be representative of the range of contexts/localities within the local authority. The schools visited are a sample of the many strong departments in Hampshire.

Advisers were looking to deduce similarities and differences between schools that perform well in identified subjects, in order to:

- further inform leaders' thinking
- identify key themes between middle leaders/teams that perform well
- understand in more depth the leadership, curriculum, teaching and assessment that exist in high performing subject areas
- note pupil organisation, attitudes to learning and development of independence of pupils in subjects that perform well

and in time ...

- specifically use the learning from the visits to further inform thinking, support and develop practice in schools that are performing less well in specified subject areas.

Key outcomes from all schools

Whilst each subject visit identified a number of school specific strengths and strategies in place, there were some key commonalities present that school leaders could identify as being fundamental to providing the foundation of strength in pupils' performance.

The impact of school culture on provision and outcomes

A recurring element present in schools visited was the overt understanding of the impact of having a positive culture which captures the expected approaches across the whole school, with expectations of engagement and interaction between pupils and adults.

This culture extends to the expectations of school leaders working as a team and also incorporates accountability of all staff, requiring them to adhere to schedules, deadlines and pupil management. In many schools this is captured in a statement about learning expectations, independence or aspiration. In all schools, however, the emphasis on consistency of approaches and delivery is very strong, with the assertion that this consistency ensures that a culture is in place, and that all staff are collectively responsible for all pupils.

The commitment to subject specific Continuous Professional Development

Space and time given for **professional development**, frequently inhouse, is considered to be crucial. Not only is this seen as an opportunity to maximise collaboration and ensure a cohesive departmental approach – described as *teamship* by some where the expectations of all staff contributing is integral, but also where professional discussion, research, and where promotion of high quality resources takes place. Strong departments reflect that there is the expectation that all staff contribute to these sessions. The use of directed time being used flexibly is also cited, enabling the subject lead to determine the focus of their work rather than all subjects in the school following an agreed directed hours schedule. Underpinning all of this, it is clear that teachers having a genuine love of their subject is considered to be crucial and that structured CPD will promote this enjoyment in all staff, enabling it to be reflected in their work with pupils.

School specific pedagogy is supplemented by the promotion of subject specific pedagogy

Whilst many schools have an agreed approach to teaching and learning and strategies in place that encourage parity of whole school approach, schools with specifically strong subjects enhance this approach by confidently promoting subject specific pedagogy. This recognises and promotes discrete subject disciplines and as well as celebrates wider attitudinal approaches such as creativity, independence, hypothesis, celebrating a broader approach.

In all schools formative assessment is constant and understood by the pupils to be an integral part of them securing progress; it takes the form of structured verbal assessment, written assessment and self-assessment and its use is tightly planned. The place of a summative assessment is very different.

All leaders promote high standards of **presentation and accuracy** in pupils' books and of their staff in upholding this. Developing a sense of pride as well as responsible note taking, and ownership of their captured progression is considered to strengthen progress.

Physical collaborative spaces provided. Department celebrates subject strengths, achievement, and ambition in both the offices and learning spaces.

Leaders describe how their subjects are well served by the senior leaders' commitment to their subject by providing a designated physical space for team meetings, with resource allocation that permits some freedom. There is also an expectation that teaching spaces are vibrant, current and celebrate pupils' work as well as support learning.

Strong engagement with pupil voice

Pupil voice is welcomed not only in whole school evaluation and development but also with a subject specific focus. In this way pupils are considered to capture and take control of aspects of the curriculum and learning. This takes the form of regular discussion and developing good relationships with pupils, to canvassing their views of curriculum adjustments and meeting personal and interest needs recognising that this must be authentic and guided.

Schools report that this enhances the school's sense of community and engagement of young people through improved ownership and commitment, and that they believe learning is enhanced.

Stable staffing

School leaders do not underestimate the positive effect of having both a qualified and stable staff base, and those schools with consistently strong outcomes have identified that this lasting subject strength is typically built over five years which is undoubtedly challenging in the current climate. This however enables schools to have their fundamental subject principles in place with ongoing adjustments and amendments to approach and to provide adaptability being a further layer.

Leaders also commented how significant the clear oversight (line management) of a subject by a member of the SLT is, in order that the strategic direction of the subject is monitored and also that it remains congruent with and contributes to the overall culture of the school.

Fuller subject specific reports will be available in the near future.

Jean Thorpe

County Education Manager (Secondary and Post-16), HIAS

Courses 2023/24

Details of our upcoming courses and networks are provided below. Visit our [Moodle courses page](#) for our full catalogue of professional learning opportunities.

How to book

All training can be booked via the Learning Zone. To search for a specific course, type the keywords provided in the *Find Learning* box, then click *See Classes* for details of available dates and times.

Learning Zone guidance

Visit our Learning Zone Moodle information page for [Guidance on accessing the Learning Zone and managing bookings](#).

Need help?

To speak to a member of the HTLC bookings team, please contact:

Email: htlc.courses@hants.gov.uk

RE and the Ofsted subject report (Webinar)

Working with the latest edition of the Ofsted handbook and the Ofsted Subject Report for RE, this course will deepen understanding of the requirements for RE in light of the findings and recommendations of the Ofsted report.

 17 June 2024

 *RE report*

 Sub £55 / SLA £35 / Full £66

Getting your ducks in a row ... being Ofsted ready

These webinars are aimed at those secondary schools that are in the Ofsted window during 2023/24. Participants will be secondary headteachers accompanied by their chairs of governors.

The online session will include some general reminders about the changes Ofsted have made to the inspection process including the lived difference between a graded and ungraded inspection. The session will refer to recent school experiences, weave through ongoing changes and adjustments to the Framework and provide a practical approach to ensure school leaders remain confident throughout their inspection.

The webinar will also touch on some of the following aspects of a live inspection:

- pre-inspection documentation including the IDSR
- the phone call with the lead inspector to set the scene
- supporting the middle leaders to give a good account of their work
- managing the typical inspection timetable
- what to do when it feels as if things are going awry
- FAQs.

The webinars will be led by a member of the HIAS secondary team and will invite input from some headteachers who have recently experienced inspection.


 20 May 2024


 *Ofsted Ducks*

 Sub £42 / SLA £25 / Full £50

Do you want to teach design technology?

These series of workshops will offer a valuable opportunity for non-subject specialist teachers to up-skill themselves, participate in activities to develop skills/knowledge of the design and technology curriculum and meet other teachers to share ideas and thoughts about design and technology in the classroom. Participants will gain the knowledge and skills to effectively understand and deliver a successful and relevant design and technology curriculum across Key Stage 3/4 (product design/textiles/systems and control).

 6 June, 20 June, and 27 June 2024

 *Teach Design*

 Sub £1085 / SLA £950 / Full £1302

Teaching secondary science masterclass with Adam Boxer

Following on from the successful day in June 2023, Adam will be providing more detailed guidance and training on specific strategies from his book – *Teaching secondary science. A complete guide*.

 24 June 2024

 *Science Masterclass*

 Sub £150 / SLA £35 / Full £180

Supporting pupils with SEND in design and technology in secondary school (*Webinar*)

Practical guidance on how you might advise teachers when planning to support children with special educational needs in design and technology. This course offers a hands-on practical approach to supporting children in design and technology with the aim of improving access to the curriculum and improving outcomes for all. Exploring new approaches and tried and tested best practice. Specifically tailored for the secondary curriculum.

 11 July 2024

 *SEND Tech Secondary*

 Sub £235 / SLA £205 / Full £282


Secondary history leadership conference

This conference brings together the best of national and local research and practice to provide invaluable professional development for history leaders, history teachers and SLT history line managers. Hear from national and local speakers.

This year we are excited that our keynote speaker is Hannah Cusworth, an Educational Consultant who specialises in Black British histories. Formerly a schoolteacher, she is currently completing a PhD with English Heritage looking at race and the 18th Century Atlantic world and is part of the DfE model history curriculum expert panel. She is a well-known inspirational speaker at HA events.


 28 June 2024

 *Secondary History Conference*

 £320 / SLA £150 / Full £384

Art secondary photography network 2024/25

This network will enable participants to share practice and standards for the Key Stage 3/4 photography and will act as a forum for the subject area. These twilight meetings run from 4pm to 5.30pm.

 8 July, 23 September, 12 November 2024, 21 January and 14 March 2025

 *Photography*

 Sub £260 / SLA £205 / Full £312

Connecting with nature

Connecting to nature is a key first step to engaging pupils in conversations around conservation and climate change. Learn how to lead nature connectedness sessions for your pupils, which are designed to improve well-being, reduce stress and to empower participants to take positive action for themselves and for nature.

 24 June 2024

 *Connecting Nature*

 Sub £75 / SLA £0 / Full £90

Secondary network meetings – summer 2023/24

The primary aims of the subject network meetings are to:

- ensure a clear understanding of the national picture and its application in local and school contexts
- support effective subject leadership as appropriate to each school's individual context
- develop skills, expertise, and capacity within school subject leaders and their teams through quality strategic continuing professional development (CPD) and the sharing of good practice
- deepen understanding of subject specific pedagogy and knowledge that underpins good progress and attainment for all pupils
- facilitate school to school networking and develop strength across the system.


Price: Sub £75 / SLA £40 / Full £90 (**Webinar price:** Sub £50 / SLA £40 / Full £60)

Art

 1 July 2024

 *Secondary Summer Art*

Computing

 1 July 2024

 *Secondary Summer Computing*


Geography

 19 June 2024


 *Secondary Summer Geography*

Mathematics

 2 July 2024

 *Summer 2 Mathematics*

MFL

 27 June 2024

 *Secondary Summer MFL*

PSHE

 3 July 2024


 *Secondary Summer PSHE*

Science (*Webinar*)

 23 May 2024

 *Secondary Summer 1 Science*

TED

 2 July 2024

 *Secondary Summer Tackling*