The National Strategies Secondary

Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)







Page 1 of 12 The National Strategies Secondary Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

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This document is intended to help schools make progress with the whole-school development of Assessment for Learning (AfL) by providing examples of approaches and strategies different schools have used.

They are not a recipe for success but ideas for consideration, for example to provide a focus for discussion at a senior leadership team (SLT) meeting and inform action planning.

School leaders will wish to consider:

- which are appropriate for their school
- which would involve further development or refinement of existing practice
- which would involve introducing new approaches and ways of working.

Two review tables have been produced to support the self-evaluation of developing AfL in schools. These are annexed here and also in the AfL Strategy document published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

One table supports the self-evaluation of the leadership and management of developing whole-school AfL (Annexe A, pages 8 and 9) and the other supports the self-evaluation of AfL in lessons (Annexe B, pages 10 and 11). Each table has had to be produced on two pages, which need to be placed one above the other when using them.

This document focuses on the leadership and management of developing AfL.

National Strategies research has shown that schools typically get better and better at the 'Developing' stage of the leadership and management review table but would benefit from additional guidance to help progress to the 'Establishing' stage.

Moving to the 'Establishing' stage requires schools not only to continue to refine what they already do well, but also to introduce new approaches where needed. School improvement is not just about getting better at what you do but getting better at how you get better. Key to this is developing distributed leadership: improving schools are schools in which everyone has ownership of change (schools in which everyone plays their part and takes professional responsibility for school improvement).

The examples of approaches and strategies used by schools relate to six focuses:

- 1. School structures, systems and processes
- 2. Developing a shared understanding of AfL
- 3. Monitoring and evaluating impact
- 4. Tracking individual pupil progress and curricular target setting
- 5. Collaborative working within a learning community
- 6. Partnership with parents and carers

Page 2 of 12 The National Strategies Secondary

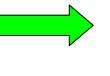
Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

Focus 1: School structures, systems and processes

Moving from 'Developing' to 'Establishing' involves maintaining strong senior and middle leadership while developing more distributed leadership where everyone gets on board, takes responsibility and helps to drive change. It involves developing structures, systems and processes which promote and support collaborative working.

From 'Developing'

'SLT are introducing structures & systems to foster distributed leadership (to support and develop both top-down and bottom-up change processes).'



To 'Establishing'

'Headteacher, senior and middle leaders work together to refine and sharpen structures, systems and approaches to whole-school change and introduce new ones where things aren't working.'

- Developing AfL is at the heart of the school's vision for developing motivated and successful independent learners and this is expressed in the school's mission statement.
- A senior leader has responsibility for ensuring everyone is up to date with national and local developments and that all work on developing AfL is properly coordinated and resourced, with everyone playing their part.
- Structures are planned for, and resources provided (especially time), to help subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) work collaboratively within and across schools and departments to develop AfL, e.g. cross-hierarchical meetings (governors to TAs), AfL working groups, opportunities in whole-school events for different colleagues to meet together to tackle AfL issues (fostering new partnerships and working relationships).
- A whole-school assessment policy supports consistent approaches across the school and is regularly reviewed by the SLT and in departmental, governing body and student body meetings (in the light of developing practice and its impact). The whole-school assessment policy informs other key whole-school policies, e.g. relating to behaviour management, rewards and sanctions systems, interventions, and reporting to parents.
- AfL development is based on self-evaluation form (SEF) analysis and is explicit in both the school improvement
 plan and <u>all</u> subject plans which express the centrality of developing AfL to improving teaching and learning. The
 responsibilities of all leaders and teachers in evaluating the impact of AfL are clearly stated in the school
 improvement plan and the development of AfL is an integral part of performance management.
- Improvement plans clearly articulate the success of developing AfL in terms of pupil outcomes (i.e. their development as motivated independent learners and their improved progress in lessons). Systematic and systemic monitoring and self-evaluation processes continuously review the impact of AfL practice.
- Progress with developing AfL in lessons and its impact on pupil motivation and progress is a standing item in every whole-staff, departmental and student meeting, and examples of developing practice are routinely shared, e.g. through staff bulletins, school newsletters, displays and e-forums.
- The development of AfL is a key item in all discussions with the School Improvement Partner.

Page 3 of 12 The National Strategies | Secondary

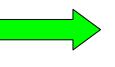
Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

Focus 2: Developing a shared understanding of AfL

A challenge for schools is developing a shared understanding of AfL at every level so that teachers can work collaboratively within and across departments to develop their practice and school leaders can support this. Senior leaders' shared understanding of AfL can help ensure that different school policies (e.g. relating to behaviour for learning, rewards and sanctions, and reporting to parents) support and contribute to the developing AfL practice.

From 'Developing'

'Senior and subject leaders are developing a shared understanding of AfL as a key means of accelerating pupil progress and developing independent learners.'



To 'Establishing'

'All SLT and most teaching staff have a secure and shared understanding of what effective AfL practice "looks like".'

All senior and middle leaders maintain an unrelenting focus on developing AfL, and address competing priorities and contradictory policy or practices which stem from these.

- All members of the SLT have committed to appropriate AfL continuing professional development (CPD) (e.g. school coaching programme) so they are clear about what effective practice in the classroom looks like and can support quality staff talk which improves consistency and shared understanding.
- The school assessment policy has been collaboratively developed and clearly articulates the relationship between day-to-day assessment (AfL), periodic assessment (Assessing Pupils' Progress, APP) and transitional assessment (external tests and exams) for all teaching staff, pupils and parents/carers. The school assessment policy is routinely reviewed as understanding of AfL and practice evolves.
- AfL is on the standing agenda in meetings for SLT, staff, governors, parents/carers, pupil representatives and in
 assemblies (so that pupils are working with teachers to develop AfL) and agreed action is taken in light of
 discussions, e.g. an AfL cross-departmental working group is set up to help shape and respond to emerging
 policy.
- There is a structured and blended approach for the sharing of good practice, e.g. through displays of annotated pupil work, sharing practice meetings and regular bulletins about progress being made in implementing AfL across the school (relating theory to examples of good practice developed in the school).
- School leaders ensure all staff are aware of, and have supported access to, DCSF, National Strategies and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance and support materials for AfL with APP (see Annexe C), e.g. through attendance at appropriate training events and network meetings, e-learning resources and forums, internal briefings and collaborative working.
- All teaching staff are engaged in peer support to reflect upon and develop their own and each other's practice, e.g. through using the learning and teaching review table (Annexe B) to support peer observation, discussion and coaching.
- A strategic CPD plan, for all teaching staff, supports the systematic and collaborative development of AfL and APP within and across departments, e.g. through use of the National Strategies' Working together: teaching assistants and AfL or Working together: coaching and AfL materials.

Page 4 of 12 The National Strategies | Secondary

Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

Focus 3: Monitoring and evaluating impact

Monitoring and evaluation, e.g. related to the SEF, has become increasingly rigorous and sophisticated, with schools now using a wide range of evidence collection 'tools' (e.g. related to data analysis, pupil and parent voice, lesson observation and work scrutiny).

Research with schools has shown that:

(a) monitoring the strategies teachers are using in lessons is much easier than evaluating the impact these are having on learning and progress, and

(b) an enquiry-based approach to developing AfL can involve a cultural shift from monitoring of implementation of policy (focused on teacher behaviours) to supported self-evaluation of what works well (focused on impact on learning).

From 'Developing'

'Systems are being introduced to monitor and evaluate the impact of developing AfL on teaching and learning, motivation, behaviour and pupil progress.'

'Most subject leaders are proactively developing AfL across their department and reviewing its impact to determine "next steps".'

To 'Establishing'

'The impact of developing AfL on teaching and learning, motivation and pupil progress is systematically monitored and evaluated. This ongoing process directly informs CPD.'

- All senior and middle leaders are trained in evaluating the impact of AfL on pupils' learning and progress (see learning and teaching review table, Annexe B) and are able to promote, facilitate and directly support peer lesson observation, coaching and collaborative working (within and across departments).
- Responsibilities of middle leaders and teachers for evaluating the impact of AfL are clearly stated in the school improvement plan (i.e. there is a clear expectation of distributed leadership) and progress with this is monitored by the subject leaders' line managers.
- School policy clearly articulates the distinction, and relationship, between monitoring and evaluation, e.g. there is
 clarity in relation to monitoring and self-evaluation for performance management purposes and self-evaluation for
 personal professional development purposes (e.g. peer support where teachers use the learning and teaching
 review table to help each other to try things out and persevere with approaches which are outside their comfort
 zone).
- SLT actively supports teachers in trying new approaches and engaging in action-research, which helps teachers to evaluate the impact on learning of different teaching strategies and encourages them to persevere with new approaches as part of their supported professional development.
- A timetabled framework and tools (e.g. learning and teaching review tables, work sampling guidance, pupil
 questionnaires, pupil interview questions, parent/carer questionnaires) support wide-ranging and focused selfevaluation. SLT ensures that the evidence of impact is triangulated, analysed and reported on.
- Self-evaluation is integral to the culture of the school. Staff at all levels are committed to it. AfL-focused lesson review forms (Annexe B) are routinely used to support lesson observations, teachers' own self-review of teaching and learning, and teachers' peer discussion about their developing practice and its impact.
- Improvement Groups (for example, a faculty group of three subject leaders and two SLT colleagues) meet halftermly to review performance and impact of the AfL development strategy. These meetings create a forum for collaborative challenge and support for developing practice.

Page 5 of 12 The National Strategies | Secondary

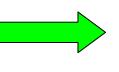
Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

Focus 4: Tracking individual pupil progress and curricular target setting

It is now widely acknowledged that schools with good rates of progression have effective tracking systems. Schools are increasingly getting to grips with how pupil tracking can inform long- and medium-term planning for progression, teaching for next steps in learning, curricular target setting for individual pupils and discussions with pupils (and their parents/carers) to help them achieve their targets.

From 'Developing'

'Systems are being developed to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in pupil performance, set individual targets, and track pupil progress in each subject.'



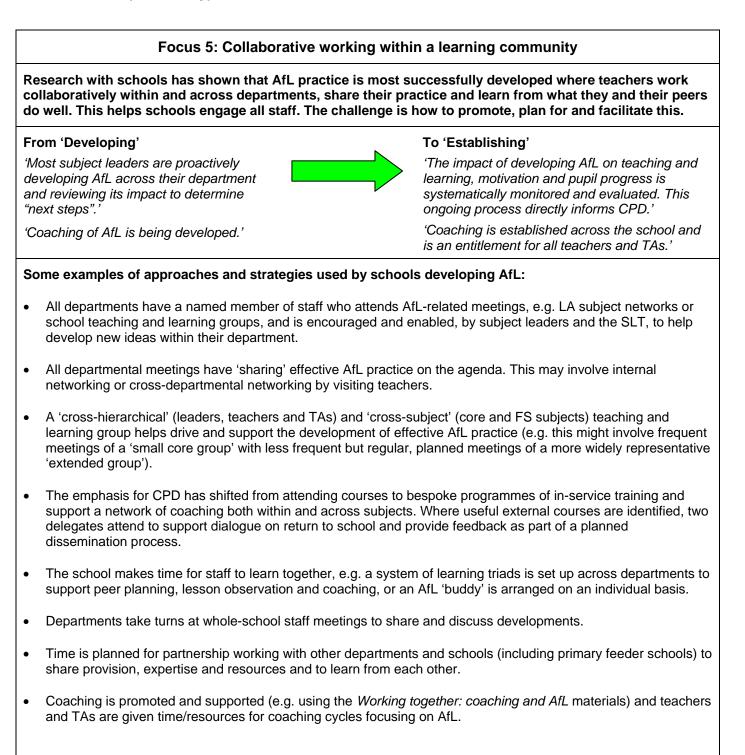
To 'Establishing'

'All subject leaders and teachers evaluate strengths and weaknesses in pupil performance and track individual pupils' progress.'

- Appropriate management information systems (MIS) are developed to support the tracking of individual pupil
 progress and curricular target setting (e.g. linked to APP in English, mathematics, science and ICT) with ready
 access and appropriate training for all teaching staff.
- Tracking systems are based on regular and reliable assessments which provide a profile of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses and specific targets for improvement in each subject. Every pupil's progress is monitored and tracked in every subject in relation to their individual targets.
- All English, mathematics, science and ICT staff have training and support (including moderation and standardisation activities) to secure the successful use of APP to support tracking pupil progress, target setting and planning for appropriate intervention/support.
- Pupil attainment and rates of progress of individual and groups of pupils is a standing item for discussion on line management, department and year group meeting agendas. Progress of each pupil across subjects is analysed and this informs intervention/additional support (in line with the '3 Waves' model) as required. One-to-one tuition, informed by APP, helps students achieve their curricular targets.
- Tutors work with pupils to manage the demands of different subject targets. In discussion with pupils, they make sense of the targets and agree clear and measurable steps to progress.
- Transition and transfer is supported by APP. APP information for every pupil is transferred from primary to secondary school, and primary and secondary teachers are enabled to discuss the support individuals need.
- Curricular targets for individual pupils (which have been discussed and shared with parents) are passed on to the receiving teacher from year to year.
- Primary and secondary school teachers engage in joint moderation and standardisation activities.

Page 6 of 12 The National Strategies | Secondary

Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)



Page 7 of 12 The National Strategies | Secondary

Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

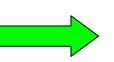
Focus 6: Partnership with parents and carers

Research shows that parents and carers have more impact on children's development as confident, motivated and successful learners than anything else. Schools continue to get better at working more closely with parents and carers already committed to supporting their child's learning. However, there remains a challenge to engage the parents and carers of children who are significantly underachieving.

(Note: This focus moves from 'Establishing' to 'Enhancing' because there is no statement under 'Developing' in the review table.)

From 'Establishing'

'Parents and carers are consulted as part of self-evaluation and are being helped to support their child's learning.'



'Parents and carers are proactively engaged in supporting learning in and outside of school.'

To 'Enhancing'

- Reporting to parents and carers provides clear and specific information about their child's progress, with
 appropriately challenging personal learning targets, success criteria and what their child needs to do to achieve
 their targets.
- 'Reporting to' shifts towards 'ongoing dialogue with' parents and carers about their child's progress and how they can be encouraged and supported at home, i.e. a move towards a stronger partnership relationship between the school leaders, teachers, parents and carers, and children.
- APP is used to inform the ongoing dialogue with parents and carers regarding their child's progress, curricular targets, the support they will receive at school and the support that would be useful at home. Where pupils are receiving one-to-one tuition, parents and carers are fully informed of the focus and nature of support and are encouraged and helped to contribute.
- Parents and carers are enabled and supported to be at the heart of transition and transfer and continuity of progression in learning, e.g. by being actively engaged in the dialogue with primary and secondary school teachers (using APP where appropriate) during transfer.
- During parents' meetings, AfL guidance sessions are run to help parents and carers understand AfL, i.e. how it
 supports teaching and learning in lessons and what can be done to support their child's learning at home.
 Parents/carers are invited to join 'learning walks and talks' to actively build staff/community relationships where
 they can experience first-hand what is happening in classrooms.
- A 'parents/carers e-forum' gains feedback from parents and carers. Subject areas post current issues and
 priorities for discussion on a rolling programme. An externally managed parent/carer survey is conducted (e.g.
 every two years) as part of the self-evaluation of the impact of AfL. Priorities are identified and used to inform
 revisions to the AfL elements within the school improvement plan.
- The parent governor is a champion for AfL and meets regularly with SLT, staff, pupils and parents/carers to review progress with its development and impact on children's learning and progress.
- The use of support materials, e.g. the National Strategies' *Working together: parents and carers and AfL*, is promoted and facilitated by the SLT.

Page 8 of 12 The National Strategies | Secondary

Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

Annexe A: Reviewing the leadership and management of change (AfL focus)

Traffic light the statements: Green = secure or surpassed Amber = partial or inconsistent Red = pot evident

School: Date:					Red = not evident	
Focusing	Developing	Establishing			Enhancing	
Senior and subject leaders review strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning across and within all subjects. Some senior leaders understand the nature and purpose of AfL (as a key aspect of all good teaching) and are beginning to build upon identified pockets of good practice. AfL is being woven into school improvement planning as a key development priority. Systems are being introduced to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in pupil performance and track individual pupil progress in each subject. All teaching staff (including TAs) are included in communications and training. AfL development is often a focus in departmental discussions. All subject leaders are expected to review their AfL practice as part of departmental self-evaluation. Most subject leaders are prioritising the development of AfL.	SLT is introducing structures and systems to foster distributed leadership (to support and develop both top-down and bottom-up change processes). Senior and subject leaders are developing a shared understanding of AfL as a key means of accelerating pupil progress and developing independent learners. Systems are being introduced to monitor and evaluate the impact of developing AfL on teaching and learning, motivation, behaviour and pupil progress. The whole-school focus for AfL development is informed by analysis of the learning needs of pupils. Systems are being developed to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in pupil performance, set individual targets, and track pupil progress in each subject. Most subject leaders are proactively developing AfL across their department and reviewing its impact to determine 'next steps'. Many subject leaders and teachers are working collaboratively, within and across departments. Coaching of AfL is being developed.	Headteacher, senior and middle work together to refine and sharp structures, systems and approact whole-school change and introdu ones where things aren't working All SLT and most teaching staff h secure and shared understanding effective AfL practice 'looks like'. All senior and middle leaders ma unrelenting focus on developing address competing priorities and contradictory policy or practices stem from these. All subject leaders and teachers strengths and weaknesses in pup performance and track individual progress. The impact of developing AfL on and learning, motivation and pup progress is systematically monito evaluated. This ongoing process informs CPD. All subject leaders and most teac TAs work collaboratively, share t practice and learn from each oth through peer observation) both w across subjects. Coaching is established across t and is an entitlement for all teach TAs. Parents and carers are consulted of self-evaluation and are helped support their child's learning.	ben hes to lice new j. have a g of what intain an AfL, and which evaluate bil pupils' teaching il bred and directly chers and heir er (e.g. vithin and he school hers and d as part	appro on de indep A sha to be All sta ways box' i throug intellin Struct estab facilit: betwo All put to mo All sta across share they a Cross of the buzz. Parer engag	aff work collaboratively within and so departments, enthusiastically their practice and learn from what and their peers do well. s-school collaborative working is part o culture and generates a learning	

Taken from p.14-15 of The Assessment for Learning Strategy, DCSF 00341-2008

Page 9 of 12 The National Strategies Secondary Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

Impact in relation to 'Reviewing learning and teaching in lessons (AfL focus)' progression table						
Typically, most pupils and teachers are at 'Focusing' or 'Developing'. with a few at 'Establishing'. High within-school variation.	Typically, few pupils and teachers are at 'Focusing', most are at 'Developing' or 'Establishing'. Significant within-school variation.	Typically, some pupils and teachers are at 'Developing', most are at 'Establishing' and some at 'Enhancing'. Some within-school variation.	Typically, pupils and teachers are at 'Establishing' or 'Enhancing'. Minimal within-school variation.			

Page 10 of 12 The National Strategies Secondary Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

Annexe B: Reviewing learning and teaching in lessons (AfL focus)					Traffic light the statements: Green = secure or surpassed		
Teacher:		Subject:		Class:	Date:	Amber= partial or inconsistentRed= not evident	
	Focusing	Developing		Establis	shing		Enhancing
Pupils	All pupils know there are learning objectives. Most know what they have to do; a few have a limited understanding of what they are trying to learn. Some pupils can relate the lesson to recent lessons. Most pupils can work together. Some are confident to contribute to discussions. Some are confident to talk about their work. Most pupils make progress in their learning.	trying to learn. Many are awar good learning of Many can, with strengths and y and suggest ho Many recognis upon earlier lea In whole-class to others. Many contribute. In paired or gro pupils contribute other. Discuss	support, identify some weaknesses in their work ow to improve it. e how the learning builds arning. discussions all pupils listen y are confident to oup discussions most te and learn from each ions remain focused. uke progress in relation to	they are learning All pupils and can, quality of identify h Most pup determin All pupils present a most can In whole- pupils de each oth Pupils ar partially-1 challengi All pupils	trying to learn (a objectives). are clear about with support, us their own and e ow best to impro- pils can, with sup ing the success can relate their and future learning relate this learn class, group or velop their think er. e confident to ta formed thinking ing others. make good pro- ing objectives, w	pport, contribute to criteria. learning to past, ng in the subject and ning to other subjects. paired discussions all ing and learn from ke risks by sharing or constructively gress, in relation to	All pupils understand what they are trying to learn and confidently discuss this using subject terminology. All pupils routinely determine and use their own success criteria to improve. Pupils understand how the learning relates to the key concepts and skil they are developing. Pupils value talk for learning and consciously use it to advance their thinking. There is a classroom buzz: pupils initiate and lead whole-class discussions; group discussions are self-determined and governed. Responses are typically extended, demonstrate high-level thinking and support their views. All pupils have an appetite for learning: they independently identify and take their next steps in learning to make good progress.

Page 11 of 12 The National Strategies Secondary Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

	Lessons are planned to learning objectives and appropriate tasks then identified.	The lesson is planned to appropriately challenging <i>learning objectives</i> (linked to National Curriculum standards) which focus the teaching.	The lesson is planned to appropriately challenging <i>learning objectives</i> and intended <i>learning outcomes</i> using <i>success criteria</i> to scaffold learning.	Planning is informed by an in-depth understanding of standards and progression in key concepts and skills (subject and cross-curricular).
Teacher	then identified. The learning objectives and/or learning outcomes are shared, e.g. displayed. Opportunities are provided for discussion related to learning (whole-class, group or paired). Pupils are encouraged to listen and learn from each other and contribute to discussions. Progress, in relation to the learning objectives, is reviewed with the	focus the teaching. The teacher explains the <i>learning</i> <i>objectives</i> and <i>outcomes</i> and checks pupils' understanding. The teacher explains what a good <i>learning outcome</i> will 'look like' and this relates to subject standards. The teacher explains the value of what is being learned and how it links to past and future learning (<i>big picture</i>). The teacher relates the tasks to the learning objectives and outcomes throughout the lesson. The teacher regularly assesses learning and provides specific, positive feedback to inform next steps. There are opportunities for structured whole-class, and supported group/paired discussion.	 scaffold learning. Opportunities are provided for pupils to explore the objectives, outcomes and success criteria and sometimes determine the success criteria themselves. Exploration of the <i>big picture</i> includes links to other aspects of the subject and to other subjects. Pupils are helped to use success criteria (which focus on fine grades of progression in key concepts and skills) to identify how to take their next steps. Progress is regularly reviewed with pupils, e.g. prior to the next stage of a task. The teaching is flexible and responsive to pupils' learning needs and the progress they are making. The teacher uses skilful questioning, appropriate resources and engaging activities to focus and sustain whole-class, group and 	
	class, e.g. during the plenary.	Teacher uses specific strategies to improve the quality of dialogue and pupil confidence.	paired dialogue. The teacher explicitly develops pupils' dispositions, skills and confidence to engage in dialogue.	

Taken from p.16-17 of The Assessment for Learning Strategy, DCSF 00341-2008

Practical strategies to support the whole-school development of AfL with APP (Secondary)

Annexe C: Further guidance and support for whole-school approaches to AfL with APP

Further guidance and support for whole-school approaches to AfL with APP is available on the National Strategies area of the Standards site at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies

Publications

Assessment for Learning 8 schools project report (00067-2007BKT-EN) Personalised Learning – A Practical Guide (00844-2008DOM-EN) The Assessment for Learning Strategy (00341-2008DOM-EN) Audience: Secondary school leaders, local authorities and school improvement partners Date of issue: 08-2009 Ref: **00734-2009PDF-EN-01**

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