

Guidance for SIPs: Supporting and challenging improvement in learning and teaching



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Please check all website references carefully to see if they have changed and substitute other references where appropriate.

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Introduction: Effective use of the National Strategies' core offer

This guidance provides a framework for supporting School Improvement Partners (SIPs) in their work with headteachers and senior school leaders to improve individual pupils' progress and attainment through the leadership of learning and teaching. The guidance introduces SIPs to the principles that underpin the National Strategies' core offer and how this sits within an effective school improvement cycle of audit, target-setting, pupil tracking, planning, action and review. These core elements of school improvement, including an explicit focus on improving learning and teaching, support the school to enable all children to make expected or accelerated progress so that as many children as possible are working at age-related expectations or above.

The materials are intended to support SIPs as they plan their work with headteachers, focusing sharply on establishing whether the school:

- has an effective system for the termly tracking of individual children's progress in the core subjects, taking account of prior attainment and national expectations for attainment and progress
- uses assessment data and pupil-tracking information to map provision and plan appropriate support and intervention that impacts on progress and attainment and closes the gap between identified underachieving groups and their peers
- periodically assesses all pupils' progress within National Curriculum levels, making use of assessing pupils' progress (APP) processes and materials available through the Primary Framework
- makes effective use of curriculum guidance and the Primary Framework to inform class teachers' quality-first planning, teaching and Assessment for Learning (AfL) practices across the core subjects, within a broad and rich primary curriculum that meets the needs and interest of all learners
- has a focused whole-school programme of continuing professional development (CPD) that includes collaborative, classroom-based learning models
- has effective and efficient whole-school monitoring and evaluation systems in place to ensure that any improvements in the quality of learning and teaching impact positively on progress and attainment.



The materials are placed in the context of the core role of the SIP to challenge and support the school's leadership on its self-evaluation, the setting of key priorities, action-planning for improvement, brokering of tailored support and effective monitoring and evaluation of the impact of focused actions on progress and attainment.

General questions to secure school accountability can often generate general assurances. This document aims to provide an approach to test what is happening in relation to teaching, learning, progress and attainment as it affects named, individual children.

The guidance prompts should not be used as a tick list but should open lines of enquiry, dialogue and debate as SIPs support and challenge headteachers in their work to refine school improvement processes that build the school's capacity for further sustained improvement. The materials aim to help SIPs develop their understanding of the National Strategies' core offer to enable more effective brokering of tailored support and relevant materials to meet the school's improvement priorities.

The document includes a simple tool to support SIPs and headteachers to review the school's current stage of development and engagement with the National Strategies' core offer, to enable progress to the next stage in their journey to improve outcomes for all children.



Section 1: What are the principles that guide the National Strategies' core offer?

Schools are successful when they have effective headteachers who lead learning and ensure the whole school understands it is responsible for its own improvement. Within this context, the National Strategies support SIPs, headteachers, senior leaders and class teachers to raise standards and improve rates of progress for all children as a central part of the school improvement process.

The National Strategies' core offer is based on a wealth of international evidence which has been proven to secure school improvement and raise standards. The offer is underpinned by a philosophy for leadership and learning for whole school communities which, when put into practical and systematic action, secures sustained school improvement.

The National Strategies' core offer places headteachers, first and foremost, as leaders of learning and sets the highest expectations for the way in which the headteacher's passion and commitment for learning influence all aspects of school life. The core offer is grounded in three key principles. The headteacher, using the Primary Framework as a vehicle for school improvement, takes these principles and turns them into practical focused actions which make a difference for teachers and children in the classroom. Each of the principles has related materials to support the headteacher and leadership team in their work. This guidance aims to help SIPs understand both the principles and the support and guidance materials available that make up the National Strategies' core offer and their potential for supporting school improvement as we work to secure a national world-class education system.

What are the principles and do they stand alone?

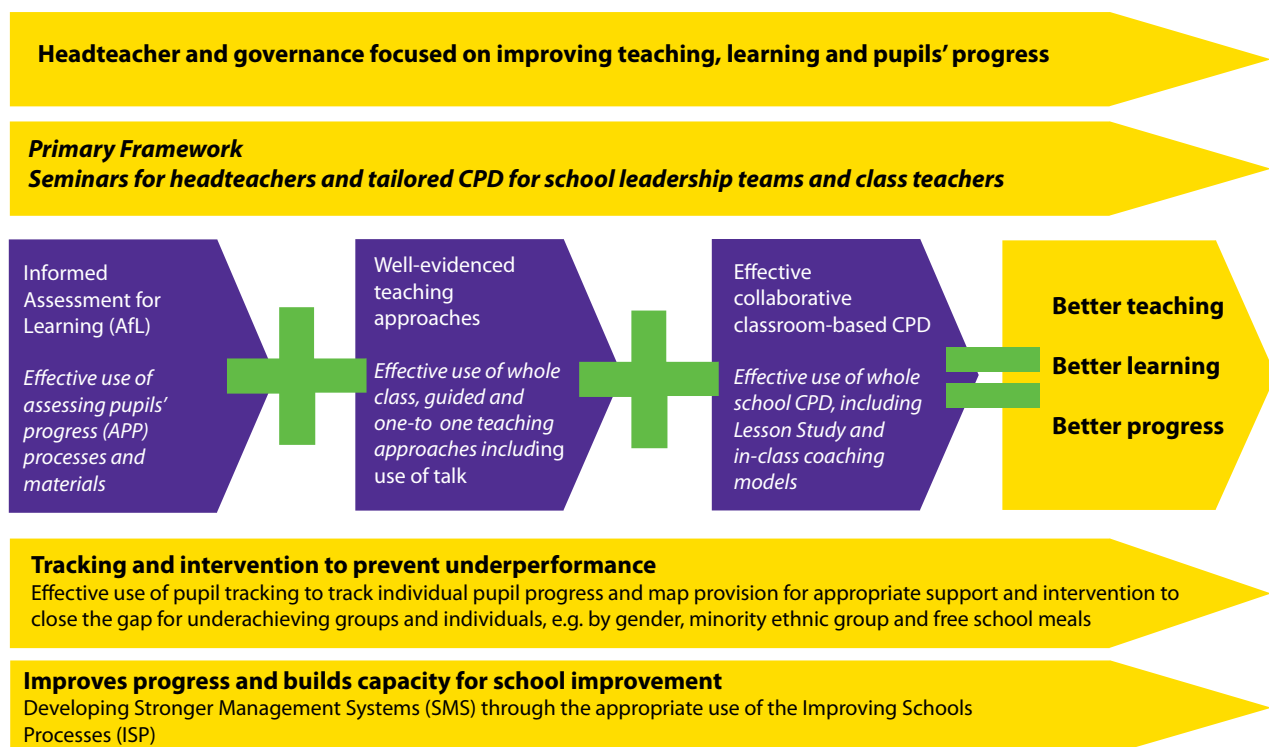
1. Teaching is improved when teachers use their understanding of progression to make accurate, informed assessments of children's achievements.
2. Well-evidenced teaching approaches are matched to specific learning needs to move learning forward.
3. High-impact, collaborative, classroom-based professional learning is essential to build the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

These three principles, expressed in the equation diagram below, combined with effective leadership and strong management systems, ensure better teaching and better learning and support good progress for all children.



The National Strategies provides a range of materials to support headteachers with each of these principles which, when harnessed together with effective leadership and strong management systems, enables sustained school improvement. The National Strategies' equation diagram below illustrates how the core offer is organised. To be effective within the school, all of the elements of the equation need to be in place and need to work together.

The National Strategies' core offer 'equation' – connecting leadership and learning



Section 2: Developing Stronger Management Systems (SMS): Supporting and challenging the school self-evaluation processes to improve learning and teaching

The questions are not intended as a tick list but to open lines of enquiry, dialogue and debate as SIPs support and challenge headteachers in their work to refine school improvement processes, building the school's capacity for further sustained improvement. The questions will help the SIP explore with the headteacher their focus on improving teaching, learning and pupil progress, using the Primary Framework as a vehicle for school improvement.

The questions will support SIPs in their complex role of supporting headteachers as they reflect on their role in securing: Informed teacher assessment + Well-evidenced teaching strategies + Collaborative classroom-based CPD which makes a difference for teachers and children in the classroom

SIPs will find that the question 'How is the school making use of the Primary Framework and National Strategies' offer to support their improvement priorities?' is supported by section 4 of the guidance, which links the questions to National Strategy materials.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of impact on pupil progress

- How does the school ensure outcomes from pupil progress discussions lead to explicit actions in classrooms?
- How does the school monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning? Does this take account of the impact on pupil progress and attainment?
- How does the school ensure professional accountability for progress and attainment through performance management systems?
- How does the school evaluate the impact of intervention on pupil progress and attainment? What happens as a result of this?

Explicit focus on improving learning and teaching: Pedagogy for personalisation

- What is the percentage of 'good' or better literacy and mathematics teaching in school? How do they know and what is the ambition for improvement?
- How do judgements about the quality of teaching and learning take account of pupil progress and attainment, e.g. analysis of pupil outcomes, focused pupil interviews, learning walks and work trawls as well as observations of learning?
- How are teachers using the Primary Framework to match teaching approaches to specific learning needs – particularly for those at risk of not achieving the expectations set?
- How do teachers use quality-first teaching to provide effective intervention for children making insufficient progress? What is the evidence of impact?

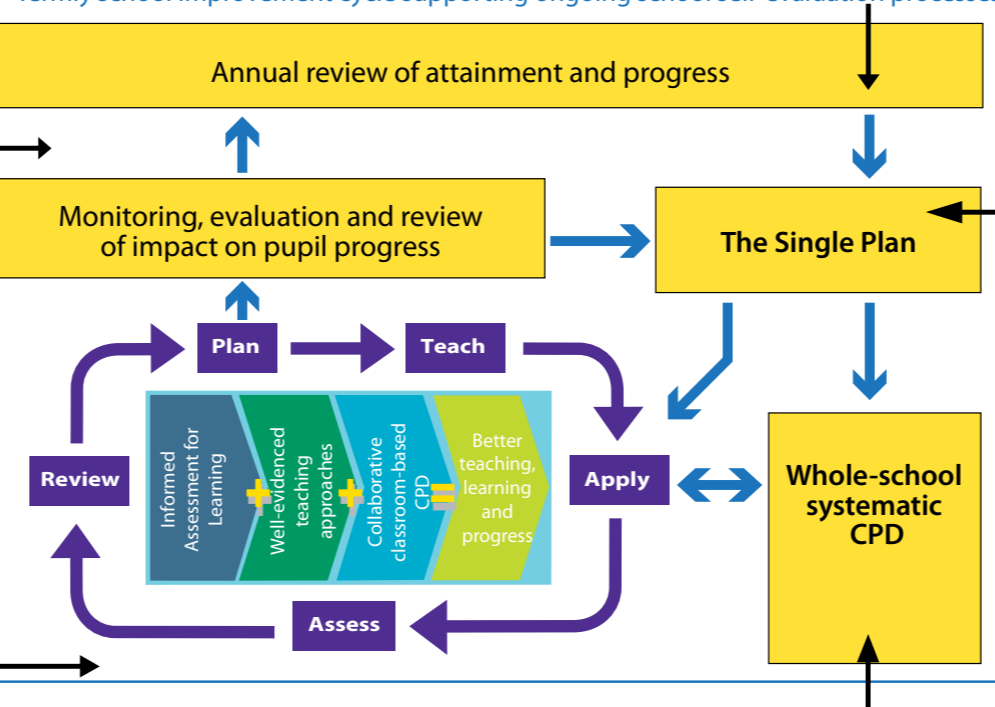
How can the National Strategies' core offer support improvements in quality-first teaching?

Review of attainment and progress: Tracking and intervention to prevent underperformance

- How accurate are the judgements that inform the school's tracking of pupil progress? How does the school know they are accurate?
- Are *all* teachers engaging with the APP processes and materials and does this inform the school's pupil tracking system?
- How does the school use pupil tracking to identify children that are making insufficient progress?
- How does the school use pupil tracking to plan and map appropriate interventions for underachieving groups? Which children are making insufficient progress? Are there any underachieving groups, e.g. by year group, gender, FSM, minority ethnic group?
- Does pupil tracking lead to explicit actions in classrooms that improve teaching and learning? What is the impact of this action on pupil progress and attainment? How does the school know?

Which National Strategy interventions would best support the progress of underachieving groups or individuals?

Termly school improvement cycle supporting ongoing school self-evaluation processes



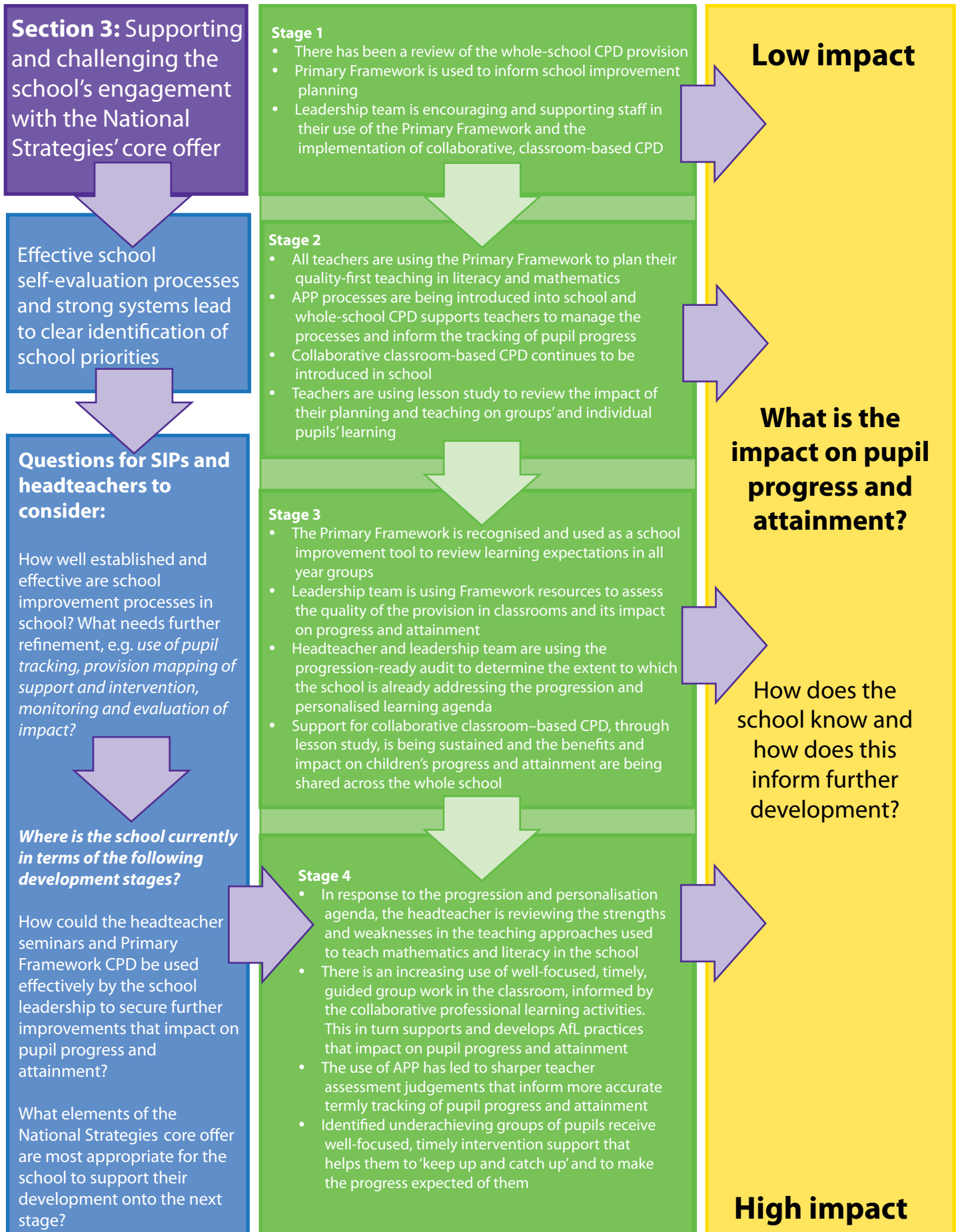
The single plan

- How are the school's priorities identified?
- Are these clear in the single plan?
- Are the role and responsibility of the headteacher and governors in leading improvement in learning clear and explicit?
- How is the plan explicitly focused on improving learning and teaching and removing barriers to learning?
- How is the headteacher setting whole-school improvement priorities for reading, writing and mathematics?
- Are outcomes related to combined attainment, progress and closing the gap for underachieving groups, e.g. by gender, FSM, minority ethnic group?
- How are monitoring and evaluation planned to review the impact of school improvement activity on pupil progress and attainment?

How does the school plan to use the Primary Framework as a tool for improvement?

Whole-school systematic continuing professional development (CPD)

- How is the headteacher systematically developing the learning of the whole staff team?
- How does whole-school CPD explicitly link to the school's priorities for literacy and mathematics?
- How does whole-school CPD take account of all three key principles that lead to better teaching, learning and progress, e.g. *Informed teacher assessment + Well-evidenced teaching strategies + Collaborative classroom-based CPD*?
- What is the intended impact of whole-school CPD on children's progress and attainment, particularly the accelerated progress of children making insufficient progress?
- How are the outcomes of CPD evaluated? What evidence does the school have of CPD making a difference for children's progress and attainment?



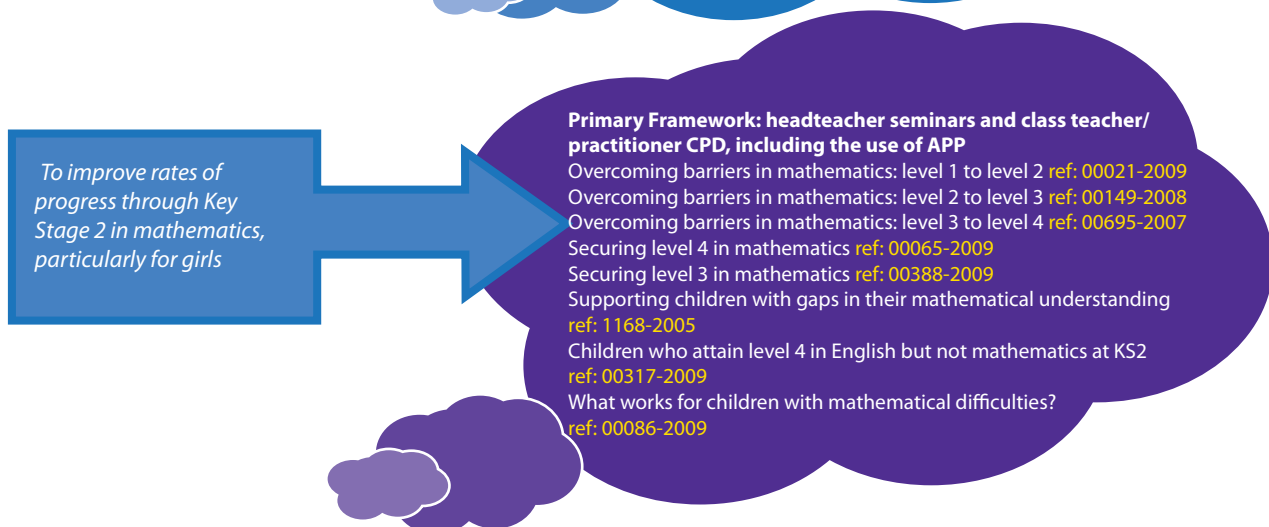
Section 4: Example school improvement priorities linked to the National Strategies' core offer

Sample of materials and resources available from the National Strategies area of the Standards site: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies (search using the DCSF reference numbers given below)

Developing Stronger Management Systems (SMS)



Example school improvement priorities...



To improve rates of progress through Key Stage 2 in writing, particularly for boys

Primary Framework: headteacher seminars and class teacher/practitioner CPD, including the use of APP and Support for Writing
Talk for Writing [ref: 00607-2008](#)
Helping children to achieve age-related expectations [ref: 00014-2007](#)
Year 3 Literacy Support [ref: 00042-2007](#)
Year 5 Further Literacy Support (FLS) [ref: 0584-2002](#)
What works for pupils with literacy difficulties? [ref: 00688-2007](#)
Support for Spelling [ref: 00171-2009](#)
See also *Every Child a Writer (ECaW)*

To improve the social and emotional skills of children to impact on children's progress and attainment, engaging children, families and the wider community

Primary Framework including links to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
Social and emotional aspects of learning: Improving behaviour, improving learning (primary) [ref: 0110-2005](#)
Excellence and Enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning [ref: 1378-2005](#)
Social and emotional aspects of development (EYFS) [ref: 00707-2008](#)
Promoting and supporting positive behaviour in primary schools [ref: 00153-2009](#)
See also: *Behaviour and Attendance (BandA)*
Inclusion Development Programme (IDP)

To close the gap in achievement between identified underperforming group and their peers, e.g. by gender, free school meals, minority ethnic group, EAL, social class and/or specific learning difficulty

Primary Framework: headteacher seminars and class teacher/practitioner CPD, including the use of APP
Every Child a Reader (ECaR) [ref: 00034-2008](#)
See also *Every Child Counts pilot (ECC)*
Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years [ref: 0013-2006](#)
New Arrivals Excellence programme (NAEP) [ref: 00650-2007](#)
Learning and teaching for Black children in the primary years [ref: 00058-2008](#)
Raising the attainment of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish heritage pupils [ref: 00043-2008](#)
Raising the achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils [ref: 00102-2008](#)
Gifted and Talented education: Guidance on addressing underachievement [ref: 00378-2009](#)
See also ethnicity, social class and gender achievement
See also Inclusion Development Programme (IDP):
Dyslexia and speech, language and communication needs [ref: 00070-2008](#)
Supporting children on the autism spectrum [ref: 00041-2009](#)

Audience: School improvement partners (SIPs),
LA advisers and consultants, headteachers and
senior leaders

Date of issue: 06-2009

Ref: **00614-2009BKT-EN**

Copies of this publication may be available from:
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further information at: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk**

Copies of this publication may be available from:

DCSF Publications

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