

Leading functional skills in secondary schools



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Introduction

Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is written for consortium, school and subject leaders, to support the implementation of functional skills with information, guidance and exemplification. More extensive support for leadership in functional skills can be found by visiting www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies and selecting Secondary and then Functional Skills. There is also a dedicated website for the Functional Skills Support Programme (FSSP): www.fssupport.org.

What's in this booklet?

As part of an extensive suite of materials (see page 21), this booklet supports leadership by providing:

1. a high-level introduction to functional skills
2. an introduction to 10 factors for successful leadership, along with key questions and guidance
3. illustrative case studies
4. continuing professional development (CPD) materials for functional skills as well as useful websites.

'Functional skills will provide individuals with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work.'

14–19 Education and Skills white paper (2005)

What are functional skills?

Functional skills are:

- essential English, mathematics and ICT skills for success in learning, employment and life
- applied skills for problem-solving in realistic, purposeful and relevant contexts
- key to developing confidence and independence for all learners.

Each of the three subjects has a set of standards contained within the subject criteria.

Functional English	Functional mathematics	Functional ICT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking, listening and communication • Reading • Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing – selecting the mathematics and information required to model a situation • Analysing – processing and using mathematics • Interpreting and communicating the results of the analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using ICT • Finding and selecting information • Developing, presenting and communicating information

Functional skills are part of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and a key element of all learning pathways. They are:

- embedded in GCSEs in English, mathematics and ICT
- in the generic part of Diplomas as a mandatory requirement at level 1 for the Foundation Diploma and level 2 for Higher and Advanced Diplomas

- an essential component within Foundation Learning
- within apprenticeship frameworks post-16.

Raising the participation age means learners will also need to achieve the functional skills qualifications to take full advantage of this opportunity.

How are they assessed?

From September 2010, functional skills accreditation is available for all learners and is:

- by stand-alone assessment
- awarded separately in English, mathematics and ICT
- at Entry levels 1, 2 and 3 and at levels 1 and 2.

For further information on functional skills examinations, visit the websites of awarding organisations or QCDA. Achievement of GCSE English, mathematics or ICT does not negate or replace the need for the functional skills qualification.

How do functional skills link to wider learning outcomes?

Learners who are able to apply functional skills well make better progress in the rest of their studies. This results from their increased ability to apply these skills to all their learning. In particular, functional skills can make a significant contribution to the Every Child Matters outcomes to:

- **enjoy and achieve** by improved progress in all pathways and better motivation and engagement resulting from increased ability to select and apply skills appropriately
- **make a positive contribution** by learning in real-life contexts that relate to the local and global community
- **achieve economic well-being** by learning in work-related contexts
- **be healthy and stay safe** within carefully chosen contexts that contribute to a learner's capability and awareness.

In this context, functional skills will have a crucial and direct impact on wider educational progress and success. The main challenge now is to help all teachers to support the effective development of functional skills for all learners.

What is the evidence from the pilot?

Evidence from the three-year pilot in over 2000 schools shows that successful implementation of functional skills is dependent upon effective leadership at all levels.

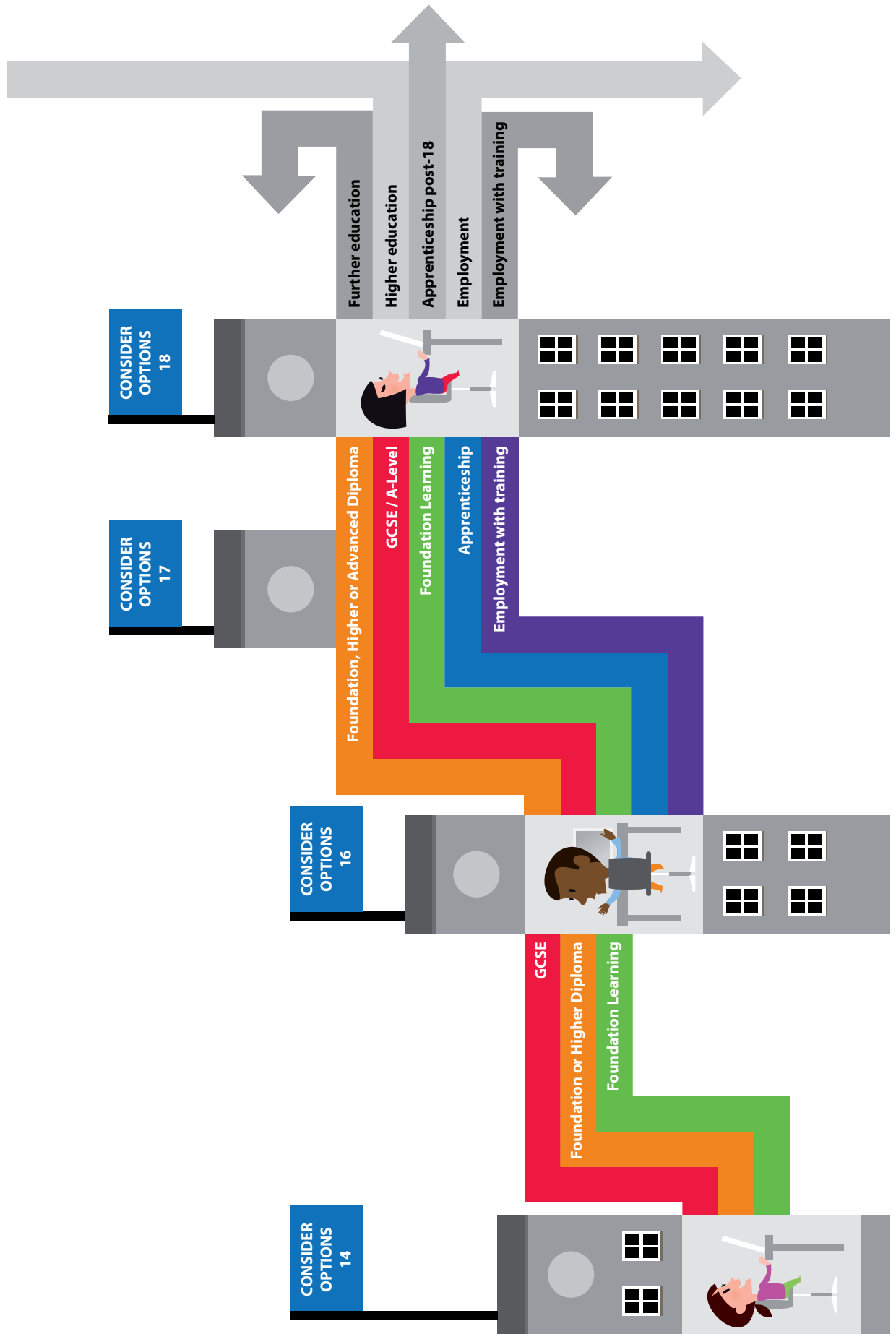
Functional skills work well to enhance learning and progress when they are:

- the responsibility of all teachers and not just those in English, mathematics and ICT
- an integral but explicit feature of the curriculum and linked to personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)
- used to solve problems in realistic, purposeful and relevant contexts
- transferred and applied across the curriculum and to life, work and learning beyond school.

Therefore the vision and support from senior and middle leaders to shape the curriculum, support CPD and provide the time and opportunities for collaborative planning and practice are crucial to success and to ensuring best progress and impact.

How do functional skills link to wider educational reform?

Qualifications currently available are being brought together into a series of distinct pathways.



Teaching and learning functional skills

How do we teach and learn functional skills?

As part of an ongoing, integrated and cyclical process a successful learner:

- **builds** the range of functional skills
- practises **applying** those skills in a range of contexts
- **secures** them by choosing and using the appropriate functional skills to tackle problems in increasingly unfamiliar contexts.

An effective teacher:

- **directs** the **building** of functional skills
- **guides** the **applying** of those skills in a range of contexts
- **challenges** learners so that they **secure** skills by drawing on them to solve problems in real contexts.

For more information see the diagram on page 7.

For examples of planning and practice, visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies, search for 'functional skills e-learning modules' and view the following modules: Module 1 Teaching functional skills: from skills building to application, Module 2 Teaching functional skills: within real, purposeful and relevant contexts, Module 3 Assessing progress and Module 4 From Entry level to Level 1.

How do learners progress in functional skills?

Functional skills are embedded at level 1 in the Key Stage 3 programmes of study and at level 2 in Key Stage 4. However, learners will be working towards securing their functional skills across the range of levels.

Progression in functional skills depends on the interplay of four factors:

- the **complexity** of tasks and problems and the contexts in which they are embedded
- the **technical demand** of the content that might be applied in these contexts
- a learner's level of **familiarity** with the type of task or problem and context
- the level of **independence** required of the learner.

The four factors are a key to reflection on **progress** in functional skills. For more information see the diagram on page 7, and visit www.ofqual.gov.uk/2578.aspx to view the functional skills qualification criteria on the Ofqual website.

Developing functional skills

The learner:

applies skills with increasing **independence** to more **complex** and less **familiar** situations that need higher levels of **technical demand**.
Progression in functional skills is recursive.

builds specific aspects of their functional skills within English, mathematics and ICT courses.

practises by selecting and applying functional skills in a range of purposeful contexts throughout the curriculum while solving problems.

demonstrates competence with confidence. They can, with an appropriate level of independence, select and apply skills to tackle problems in a variety of real-life contexts.



All teachers:

provide contexts that are

meaningful and enable learners to harness and consolidate skills that are being built.

opportunities for learners to apply their functional skills to solve problems. They work with other teachers to understand how and when functional skills are being applied.

opportunities for learners to demonstrate that they can select and apply the appropriate skills to tackle problems in a variety of contexts with an appropriate level of demand.

use assessment

so that day-to-day assessment and feedback on skills progression are provided to pupils at each stage. Evidence of skills development is accumulated to inform a periodic assessment. Learners' readiness for transitional assessment is judged against how secure they are at a particular level of competence.

apply a pedagogy to

develop learners' independence in applying skills and decision-making through the use of strategies such as modelling, scaffolding, guided learning, questioning and dialogue, group work and meta-cognitive plenaries (focusing on how as well as what they learn).

secure learners' competence and confidence as they respond with versatility to challenges and audiences that are increasingly unfamiliar.

Ten factors for successful leadership of functional skills

The pilot showed that effective leadership for the development of functional skills involved 10 success factors as part of a wider process of school improvement.

<p>Reviewing and planning ahead (see page 18)</p>	<p>Promoting a positive agenda for functional skills (see page 9)</p>	<p>Implementing an effective curriculum model (see page 10)</p>
<p>Ensuring appropriate staff development (see page 17)</p>	<pre> graph TD A[Setting priorities and targets] --> B[Planning and action] B --> C[Monitoring] C --> D[Evaluation] D --> A </pre>	<p>Establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities (see page 11)</p>
<p>Embedding quality assurance (see page 16)</p>		<p>Coordinating activity across the institution or consortium (see page 12)</p>
<p>Using resources efficiently and effectively (see page 15)</p>	<p>Establishing clear assessment procedures (see page 14)</p>	<p>Delivering effective teaching and learning (see page 13)</p>

This booklet deals with each of the factors in turn. They are listed in appendix A with key questions that can be used as prompts for self-evaluation and to focus use of leadership web resources.

Promoting a positive agenda for functional skills

Key questions

- How do we ensure that functional skills (FS) are understood to be a progression from other recent curriculum developments and use established effective pedagogy?
- How will we explain and present the benefits of FS to staff, learners, parents, employers and others?
- What information, advice and guidance materials need to be developed for learners?
- Who will develop and disseminate our policy for delivering FS?

There should be a strategy for the development of a positive attitude towards FS for learners, teaching staff, subject leaders, the governing body, parents and local employers.

Any strategy for creating a positive agenda will:

1. highlight the benefits to all concerned of increased application of independent skills, problem-solving and qualifications gained
2. explain the relationship between FS and the rest of a learner's curriculum pathways at Key Stage 4 and further progression, especially in light of the raising of the participation age
3. explain the advantages for a learner of studying FS for the benefits they will bring for living, for further study and for employment
4. demonstrate how studying FS can improve learners' engagement and motivation, especially through learning in Key Stage 4 and beyond.

Schemes of work at Key Stage 4 need to have a significant emphasis on teaching within credible contexts where learners apply their skills for a real purpose.

Any positive agenda will place the development of FS alongside personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS), which are at the core of any learning programme.

Devon local authority has developed an information leaflet for parents, providing detailed information about functional skills. It covers:

- what functional skills are
- how they will be taught
- what will happen during learning of functional skills
- who functional skills are for
- how functional skills will be assessed
- who will benefit from them.

The leaflet, which is practical, accessible and concise, also details how parents and carers can help young people to develop functionality.

Resources

Video introducing the leading functional skills materials: visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies and search for 'Leading functional skills: Introduction'.

QCDA functional skills pilot pack – video with Sir Alan Jones: www.qcda.gov.uk/6062.aspx

Introduction to functional skills: www.qcda.gov.uk/22100.aspx

Nuts and Bolts guide: Functional Skills: www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=3&pid=225&ctype=Non&ptype=Contents

Implementing an effective curriculum model

Key questions

- How does our curriculum enable learners to build, practise, select and apply skills in a range of appropriate contexts?
- How will we ensure links between programmes or curriculum areas?

Typically, for secondary schools, there needs to be learner progression with functional skills (FS) from level 1 for Key Stage 3 to level 2 at Key Stage 4. This is reflected in the programmes of study for English, mathematics and ICT.

- In schools, most learners will build and apply FS during their studies in English, mathematics and ICT in both key stages. For most learners in Key Stage 4 this will be within their GCSE studies. For examples of planning and practice, visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies, search for 'functional skills e-learning modules' and view the following modules: Module 1 Teaching functional skills: from skills building to application, Module 2 Teaching functional skills: within real, purposeful and relevant contexts, Module 3 Assessing progress and Module 4 From Entry level to Level 1.
- The pilot demonstrated that the development of FS involves learning in plausible contexts for a real purpose, including problem-solving. The curriculum must also enable learners to develop confidence and competence by selecting and transferring skills and applying them beyond the three subject lessons.
- A curriculum must also allow learners an opportunity to demonstrate a secure level of competence in selecting and applying skills. At this stage learners may well be placed in a more demanding situation, such as having to present to an unknown audience, or where the circumstance suddenly changes, requiring them to adapt and so demonstrate their competence confidently.

A curriculum should have:

- subject-specialist teaching of skills within schemes of work
- problem-solving opportunities within realistic, purposeful and relevant contexts
- opportunities for learners to build and apply skills in subject lessons
- opportunities for learners to apply their skills in many other areas of the curriculum, such as the principal learning in a Diploma course
- opportunities for learners to demonstrate their independent ability to apply their skills confidently.

Resources

Visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies and search for 'Leading functional skills'.

Establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities

Key questions

- Who will be responsible for the effective leadership of functional skills (FS) in our school and across our consortium?
- How shall we ensure that roles and responsibilities for managing and developing FS are clearly defined and understood?
- How will we enable staff to work collaboratively to support the implementation and delivery of FS?
- Who will be responsible for the quality assurance of FS in our school and across our consortium?

It is most likely that subject leaders will take responsibility for leading FS within their own subject areas. Visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies and search for 'Leading functional skills: Subject leader'.

Senior leadership will:

- oversee the development of FS within English, mathematics and ICT and across all subjects and pathways
- ensure that skills are practised and applied, not only within a specific subject, but across all areas of a learner's programme of study and pathway
- need to cooperate with others fulfilling a similar role in each school, college or work-based learning provider, within the appropriate consortium delivering the Diplomas
- be the main conduit for communication to parents, staff, leaders, governors, employers and parents about development of FS
- instigate quality-assurance processes within the school, and forward-plan in light of findings. These may also be part of a consortium-wide audit.

Visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies and search for 'Leading functional skills: Senior leader'.

Ofsted's evaluation of teaching of FS within a typical consortium demonstrated that coordination of planning, assessment and quality assurance for FS between all centres in the consortium is essential. Without this, learners' skills were not effectively transferred into their principal learning. Visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies and search for 'Leading functional skills: Lead across a consortium'.

For all leaders, responsibilities include:

- developing policy and practice for learning FS
- ensuring the coordination of staff development activities, especially use of good practice within a school or the consortium
- ensuring that information on learners' progress regarding FS is disseminated to those who need it
- enabling opportunities for using compelling experiences for learners to apply skills within courses, especially in relation to the world of work.

Resources

QCDA pilot pack: www.qcda.gov.uk/6062.aspx

Functional skills in the 14–19 reforms: www.qcda.gov.uk/22533.aspx

Nuts and Bolts guide: Functional Skills: www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=3&pid=225&ctype=Non&ptype=Contents

Coordinating activity across the institution or consortium

Key questions

- What systems and shared documentation need to be in place to support the effective coordination of functional skills (FS) within the school and across the consortium?
- How will we ensure that key professionals are kept informed about developments within the school and across the consortium?

Within a school, senior leadership will need to ensure:

- that there is a shared vision for the development of skills throughout all curriculum teams and that this is reflected in school self-evaluation
- an audit has been conducted of where opportunities exist for the application of FS across the curriculum
- subject leaders are aware that schemes of work should appropriately reference and enable FS opportunities
- key staff have information about where FS appear in all learning pathways
- that there are school systems for tracking FS that are aligned with other school systems
- that communication methods used across the consortium are supported within the school, including giving feedback to the consortium about pupils' progress, effective practice and successful approaches to learning.

Those leading FS across a consortium will:

- establish a consortium policy or memorandum of understanding about the teaching and application of FS between core subjects and principal learning (also within additional and specialist learning)
- agree responsibilities within each school, college or work-based provider within a consortium for FS
- ensure the use of tracking systems for pupils' progress and share data about development of learners and the stand-alone FS accreditation
- ensure effective teaching and learning are disseminated across centres and that collaboration on lessons learned is carried through
- negotiate the effective use of resources, staff experience and staff development for FS across all institutions
- instigate and coordinate cross-consortia monitoring, review and quality-assurance processes that have FS as a significant element.

In order to do this, leadership strategies will need to take into account:

- the establishment of clear collaboration and communication routes within a school and across a consortium
- monitoring of the quality of FS learning, including capturing and sharing the effective practice from within a school and across the consortium
- the communication of national materials and key information within a school and across the consortium.

Resources

Delivering functional skills: Lessons learnt from the pilot (video): www.qcda.gov.uk/22238.aspx

LSIS 14–19 Leadership and Management Development Programme:

www.lsis.org.uk/Servicesandsupport.aspx?id=9EB0B9D0-ACFE-4829-98EE-A56DA4EF1737

Delivering effective teaching and learning

Key questions

- How will we ensure that schemes of work provide progression for functional skills (FS) and a variety of real-life contexts?
- How will we develop an effective pedagogy for applied learning?
- How will we ensure that there are appropriate opportunities for learners to build, develop, apply and secure FS?

The diagram on page 7 shows how learning of the skills moves between three recursive phases of building and practising, selecting and applying and, ultimately, the demonstration of functionality, i.e. competence with confidence.

- Functional skills need to be taught explicitly in classrooms and developed with learners. Early development will need scaffolding but this requirement will decrease as learners become more independent and able to select and apply skills with minimal support.
- Progression in FS is planned through Key Stages 3 and 4 as learners move from dependence to independence while applying skills, enabling them to gain the confidence to access and explore extended and increasingly complex problems in unfamiliar situations.
- Planning for FS provides opportunities for the application of skills in a dynamic way, offering compelling learning experiences, while constantly looking for openings for learners to secure these skills.
- Subject and senior leadership have to take positive action to encourage departments to work collaboratively, supporting the explicit teaching of FS by all staff and cross-centre collaboration across a consortium.

A Birmingham school is part of a consortium offering the Creative and Media Diploma. The Diploma teacher is also an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) of English. As a result of the integration of FS within the Diploma and the realistic, relevant and purposeful contexts these courses provide, the teacher saw a difference in learners' motivation and progress. She was keen to extend this to her GCSE English teaching. Introducing a contextualised challenge, relevant to the school's sports specialism – why boys don't dance – the teacher incorporated elements of functional mathematics and ICT into a sequence of GCSE English lessons. Learners were asked, through discussion, to select which English, mathematical and ICT skills they needed, to be able to address the challenge, and then justify these choices. The outcome of this learning was to be given to the school's PE department to help them consider how to address low uptake in GCSE dance.

Resources

For examples of planning and practice, visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies, search for 'functional skills e-learning modules' and view the following modules: Module 1 Teaching functional skills: from skills building to application, Module 2 Teaching functional skills: within real, purposeful and relevant contexts, Module 3 Assessing progress and Module 4 From Entry level to Level 1.

Establishing clear assessment procedures

Key questions

- How will the assessment of functional skills (FS) be part of day-to-day, periodic and transitional assessment?
- How will we ensure that learners are secure enough for external assessment?
- What systems and procedures will we need to put in place to support and monitor assessment?
- How shall we record and track learner progress?

The DCSF Assessment for Learning (AfL) Strategy gives guidance for leadership, particularly when considering a whole-school approach to the assessment of learners' functional skills.

- Every learner knows how they are doing and understands what they need to do to improve and how to get there.
- Every teacher is equipped to make well-founded judgements about learners' attainment, understands the concepts and principles of progression and knows how to use their assessment judgements to forward plan.
- Every school has in place structured and systematic assessment systems for making regular, useful, manageable and accurate assessments of learners.

Assessing FS must build upon systems already used for day-to-day and periodic assessment. It involves the application of the:

- English skills of speaking, listening and communication, reading and writing
- interrelated mathematical process skills of representing, analysing and interpreting
- interrelated ICT areas of using ICT systems, finding and selecting information, developing, presenting and communicating information.

Functional skills relate to an assessment of progress with the four interrelated factors of complexity, familiarity, technical demand and independence. Effective learner progress in FS needs:

- learners to know what they are learning and why they are learning it
- learner achievement to be recognised, often as a consequence of co-constructed goals
- planned group work to allow learners to support and learn from each other
- learners' confidence to develop so when challenged they demonstrate security when applying skills
- real-life contexts to enable feedback to learners, possibly from an external source.

A school in Kent delivers a Higher Diploma in ICT. The FS lead was established, with an overview of pupils' progress across all aspects of the Diploma. Coherent systems for assessment of progress were identified as an essential factor for success in this high-achievement school. Lead FS teachers in ICT, English and mathematics devised subject tracking sheets to monitor pupils' development in building, practising and securing application skills. This guided the provision of a good range of opportunities for pupils to apply and secure FS.

Teachers and pupils were appreciative of the detailed understanding of progression in FS that their tracking grids provided. Pupils took ownership of their progress and were keen to demonstrate ability to apply skills independently in many areas of their life. The 'I can' statements were a motivating element of self-assessment sheets, enabling pupils to plan to work independently.

Resources

For examples of planning and practice, visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies, search for 'functional skills e-learning modules' and view the following modules: Module 1 Teaching functional skills: from skills building to application, Module 2 Teaching functional skills: within real, purposeful and relevant contexts, Module 3 Assessing progress and Module 4 From Entry level to Level 1.

Using resources efficiently and effectively

Key questions

- How will we ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate resources to support functional skills (FS) with 14–19 learners?
- What internal and external knowledge and expertise can we harness to support success?
- How will we monitor the cost of introducing FS and the ongoing use of real-life contexts and ensure that funds are effectively deployed?

Learners need to choose and use their functional skills to solve problems in real-life contexts.

Consequently, there may well be increased costs in equipping a scheme of work, but senior and subject leaders should first look at opportunities that already exist, such as:

- community and global links
- schools' links with potential employers, especially through Diplomas
- local schools or colleges, especially within a Diploma consortium
- planned trips
- courses and clubs associated with the school, such as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

They will also need to consider the expertise and experience that may be available through:

- previous careers of teaching staff or teaching assistants
- interests of teaching staff or teaching assistants
- other adults associated with the school, such as governors.

Using external sources can create compelling and purposeful learning contexts.

A new household furnishings and kitchen superstore was planned to open in Southampton. At the nearby school, the English, mathematics and ICT departments noted the learners' interest in the construction of this new store, and recognised its potential as a realistic, relevant and purposeful context. They collaborated on a project based on the new store for a group of Higher Diploma learners.

Among other activities, in English the learners examined the store's publicity materials and produced their own. They read about a near-riot at the opening of a similar store in another part of the country, and wrote letters to the manager of the Southampton store, advising him what actions he should take to avoid a similar situation. In mathematics, the learners used the store's kitchen planning tool and catalogues. They applied mathematics in working out measurements, layout and volume. Once the kitchen was planned they used online information to cost the kitchen.

The learners were successful in persuading the headteacher to support a visit, which allowed them to see their work in the context of the brand new store.

Resources

For examples of planning and practice, visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies, search for 'functional skills e-learning modules' and view the following modules: Module 1 Teaching functional skills: from skills building to application, Module 2 Teaching functional skills: within real, purposeful and relevant contexts, Module 3 Assessing progress and Module 4 From Entry level to Level 1.

Embedding quality assurance

Key questions

- How will we monitor and evaluate the impact of functional skills (FS) as part of an improvement cycle?
- What achievement performance indicators will we set and who will take responsibility for this?
- Who will ensure that the implementation of FS is embedded in our school's development plan?
- When and how will we adapt our quality assurance systems and processes to ensure that FS are, for example, linked to lesson observation?
- What systems do we need to put in place to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in relation to FS is consistent across our centre and across our consortium?

Effective monitoring and evaluation of FS must eventually both align with and be integral to a school's routine evaluation cycle.

Monitoring should focus on:

- interrogation of learner attainment in the stand-alone assessment of FS, including the success rate at each assessment opportunity
- the quality of teaching and learning of FS as applied learning
- pedagogy used for applied learning
- curriculum opportunities to build, apply and secure FS in the curriculum, in school or across the consortium
- the quality of learners' decision-making during problem-solving in real-life contexts
- assessment practice for FS in school and across the consortium.

The monitoring and evaluation evidence should:

- develop pedagogy, improve curricular opportunities for learning FS and develop the real-life learning contexts, including making them more purposeful and compelling
- inform the quality of communication across centres, the effective use of resources and opportunities and the impact of sharing practice.

The Barking and Dagenham consortium sought support to carry out an audit for FS. It was essential that the school senior leaders were part of the audit process, to ensure a shared understanding by the schools of any issues arising. An audit schedule was agreed. Through discussions with individual teachers, learners and school leaders, the CPD needs of school staff were identified. Among other things, jointly-planned bespoke training sessions for the schools were agreed.

The teachers who were involved with the audit now have a better understanding of the position of FS, not only within their own subject but also regarding the links to Diploma principal learning. In one of the schools, the audit highlighted the need for learners to have FS taught in English, mathematics and ICT concurrently and that teaching one subject each term did not work.

Resources

Visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies and search for 'Leading functional skills'.

Ensuring appropriate staff development

Key questions

- How will we identify staff training needs?
- How will we use e-learning, coaching, collaborative planning and other CPD opportunities for the development of teaching functional skills (FS)?
- Who will monitor the impact of the professional development offered?

The school's senior leadership with responsibility for the development of FS will play a crucial role in how staff development occurs.

Professional learning will involve a blend of approaches, including:

- training
- specialist and co-coaching
- mentoring
- networking
- joint working
- action research.

Plans for staff development for FS will need to be an integral part of professional development plans, of both schools and consortia. Ways of blending the use of the various forms of training and development, over time, need to be carefully considered. Visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies and search for 'Effective CPD using functional skills e-learning modules'.

A school or consortium may seek expertise with FS by using:

- external consultancy
- expertise developed within the school
- expertise developed within a consortium.

Working across a consortium presents opportunities for collaboration and networking, whether via the internet or in meetings.

In North Yorkshire, using training modules as their basis for face-to-face training, the steering group wanted to emphasise the role of active teaching and learning strategies and AfL strategies in the development of FS. They also wanted to champion the approaches of some of their schools as examples of existing effective practice. Therefore training events focused upon these aspects and were practical workshop events.

The next development phase focused more on the leadership and management of FS at all levels and for all learners, based, in part, on evaluations from the training events the previous year. So, the five consortia in the region have appointed quality curriculum managers to oversee the development of FS in lines of Diploma learning. The steering group has offered a coherent and extensive menu of support for schools, which enables schools' senior leadership teams to consider their schools' professional development needs and then tailor the support, as required. Short exemplar case studies have been developed to illustrate the menu choices that are appropriate for schools at different stages of development.

Resources

The six e-learning modules listed in appendix B support teacher development in teaching FS.

Reviewing and planning ahead

Key questions

- How will we use the outcomes of each phase of school or consortium development of functional skills (FS) to inform our future delivery?
- How will we ensure that FS review outcomes inform wider developments in 14–19 education, such as Diplomas, foundation learning, the effective planning for learner progression onto post-16 pathways, raising of the participation age and the development of personal learning and thinking skills into the curriculum?

Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system (DCSF report, June 2009) said:

‘...without skills and qualifications, today’s young people will struggle to find meaningful work in the future; and in an economy increasingly focused on high-skill activities, those without good skills and qualifications will be increasingly marginalised. So, we must inspire all young people to remain engaged and to succeed in education and training into early adulthood.’

The report linked the development of learners’ personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) and those literacy and numeracy skills with personal and future economic prosperity in a modern world.

Functional skills provide a significant component in planning for future developments in:

- raising the participation age and engaging more learners in learning, thus reducing the numbers of those not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- broadening of post-14 and post-16 pathways into more Diplomas and Foundation Learning.

Future planning will need to consider:

- transfer arrangements of FS between different teachers, areas of the curriculum and Diploma centres
- arrangements for transition into and through Key Stages 3 and 4 and into post-16 education or training centres
- learners’ readiness for further study and their transition into employment.

The senior leadership team (SLT) at a school in North Yorkshire recognised that effective whole-school development of FS will only happen if teachers from all subject areas see the relevance for their own context.

They have built in opportunities for teachers to collaborate and plan whole-school events, such as the Year 6 induction day, which has had a clear focus upon skills development and the ability of learners to reflect critically upon their learning. Personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS) are part of the day-to-day lesson-planning requirement at the school and the SLT wanted to have a common language for all staff to talk about skill development, too. They do this by encouraging teachers and learners to be reflective and evaluative, with practices such as expecting Key Stage 3 learners to record the skills they have applied during lessons in their ‘learning passport’.

The SLT are proactive in making visible, for staff and learners, the links between the skills they use in lessons. They use their own school farm as an example of a business and have a school garden, which they are planning to develop with the help of Year 7 learners. They involve the learners in as many meaningful decisions about the school, its environment and the learning it provides as possible.

Resources

Secondary Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) – available from the National Strategies web area: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies

Thinking skills (Leading in Learning) – available from the National Strategies web area: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies

Assessing Pupils’ Progress – available from the National Strategies web area: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies

Appendices

Appendix A: Ten factors for successful leadership of functional skills

The pilot showed that the following 10 success factors supported leadership of functional skills development. The following questions can be used as prompts for self-evaluation and to focus use of leadership web resources.

Success factor	Key questions
Promoting a positive agenda for functional skills	<p>How do we ensure that functional skills (FS) are understood to be a progression from other recent curriculum developments and use established effective pedagogy?</p> <p>How will we explain and present the benefits of FS to staff, learners, parents, employers and others?</p> <p>What information, advice and guidance materials need to be developed for learners?</p> <p>Who will develop and disseminate our policy for delivering FS?</p>
Implementing an effective curriculum model	<p>How does our curriculum enable learners to build, practise, develop and apply skills in a range of appropriate contexts?</p> <p>How will we ensure links between programmes or curriculum areas?</p>
Establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities	<p>Who will be responsible for the effective leadership of FS in our school and across our consortium?</p> <p>How shall we ensure that roles and responsibilities for managing and developing FS are clearly defined and understood?</p> <p>How will we enable staff to work collaboratively to support the implementation and delivery of FS?</p> <p>Who will be responsible for the quality assurance of FS in our school and across our consortium?</p>
Coordinating activity across the institution or consortium	<p>What systems and shared documentation need to be in place to support the effective coordination of FS within the school and across the consortium?</p> <p>How will we ensure that key professionals are kept informed about developments within the school and across the consortium?</p>
Delivering effective teaching and learning	<p>How will we ensure that schemes of work provide progression for FS and a variety of real-life contexts?</p> <p>How will we develop an effective pedagogy for applied learning?</p> <p>How will we ensure that there are appropriate opportunities for learners to build, develop, apply and secure FS?</p>

Success factor	Key questions
Establishing clear assessment procedures	<p>How will the assessment of FS be part of day-to-day, periodic and transitional assessment?</p> <p>How will we ensure that learners are secure enough for external assessment?</p> <p>What systems and procedures will we need to put in place to support and monitor assessment?</p> <p>How shall we record and track learner progress?</p>
Using resources efficiently and effectively	<p>How will we ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate resources to support FS with 14–19 learners?</p> <p>What internal and external knowledge and expertise can we harness to support success?</p> <p>How will we monitor the cost of introducing FS and the ongoing use of real-life contexts and ensure that funds are effectively deployed?</p>
Embedding quality assurance	<p>How will we monitor and evaluate the impact of FS as part of an improvement cycle?</p> <p>What achievement performance indicators will we set and who will take responsibility for this?</p> <p>Who will ensure that the implementation of FS is embedded in our school's development plan?</p> <p>When and how will we adapt our quality assurance systems and processes to ensure that FS are, for example, linked to lesson observation?</p> <p>What systems do we need to put in place to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in relation to FS is consistent across our centre and across our consortium?</p>
Ensuring appropriate staff development	<p>How will we identify teachers' and teaching assistants' training needs?</p> <p>How will we use e-learning, coaching, collaborative planning and other CPD opportunities for the development of teaching FS?</p> <p>Who will monitor the impact of the professional development offered?</p>
Reviewing and planning ahead	<p>How will we use the outcomes of each phase of school or consortium development of FS to inform our future delivery?</p> <p>How will we ensure that FS review outcomes inform wider developments in 14–19 education, such as Diplomas, Foundation learning, the effective planning for learner progression onto post-16 pathways, raising of the participation age and the development of personal learning and thinking skills into the curriculum?</p>

Further support for leadership in functional skills can be found at www.fssupport.org or by visiting www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies and searching for 'Leading functional skills'. Support is provided for each separate role, based on the success factors, where key questions, support text, video or case study exemplification and more resources are available.

Appendix B: Functional Skills Support Programme

Suite of functional skills e-learning materials for schools

The following six e-learning modules are available for the development of learning, teaching and leadership for FS.

An introduction to functional skills

The introduction covers the basic ideas in the development of applied learning skills that enable learners to use functional English, mathematics and ICT successfully in their lives, their further studies and in future employment.

1 Teaching functional skills: from skills building to application

This module focuses on successful pedagogy for skills development, as learners build and apply FS. During problem-solving, learners will be capable of using these skills when there are specific levels of demand.

2 Teaching functional skills: within real, purposeful and relevant contexts

This module defines what is meant by realistic, purposeful and relevant contexts. It then examines the teaching that enables learners to transfer the skills developed to solve problems in these contexts.

3 Assessing progress

This module examines the progression of learners as they learn FS. It shows how progression in learners' independence is planned for and how teachers' AfL strategies are used for development of FS.

4 Entry level to Level 1

This module focuses on pedagogies for developing FS with those learners who have barriers to effective learning, especially with these applied skills.

5 Securing functional skills

This module examines what is meant by the demonstration of security with FS and what opportunities need to be provided for this during problem solving. (Available from July 2010)

E-learning may well be an essential component of schools' CPD. These modules can be used within face-to-face training, in consortium-wide training, in whole-school training, in subject team meetings or by individuals. They will form part of a cohesive development plan with collaborative planning, coaching, blogs and networks being other options.

Also available are 11 booklets supporting and exemplifying **functional skills in subjects** across the full secondary curriculum and materials to support **effective CPD for functional skills**, of which the e-learning and leadership resource is part.

For post-16 and adult learning centres, LSIS have commissioned a similarly extensive suite of materials and support. These are listed in appendix C and are also available from www.fssupport.org

Appendix C: General resources

National Strategies

For examples of planning and practice, visit: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies, search for 'functional skills e-learning modules' and view the following modules: Module 1 Teaching functional skills: from skills building to application, Module 2 Teaching functional skills: within real, purposeful and relevant contexts, Module 3 Assessing progress and Module 4 From Entry level to Level 1.

DCSF

For more information about the Diploma, visit:
www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?go=site.home&sid=3&pid=224&ctype

QCDA

General Diploma website: www.qcda.gov.uk/5396.aspx

Functional skills section of the website: www.qcda.gov.uk/6062.aspx

Case studies for functional mathematics, functional English and functional ICT:
http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/case_studies/index.aspx

Functional Skills Support Programme

For FS support: www.fssupport.org

For functional skills in the Diploma lines of learning, a suite of 14 booklets can be found at:
www.excellencegateway.org.uk/functionalskills

At the same website you can also find materials to support:

- managing the delivery of functional skills
- teaching and learning functional skills for English
- teaching and learning functional skills for mathematics
- teaching and learning functional skills for ICT.

Diploma support

The following support programmes can be found under 'Services and Support' on the LSIS website,
www.lsis.org.uk/Servicesandsupport.aspx?id=6FDEF554-D745-4F92-8EB9-2380362197A0:

- Functional Skills Support Programme
- 14–19 Leadership and Management Development Programme
- 14–19 Workforce Support Programme.

Audience: Secondary school subject leaders, senior school leaders and leaders for functional skills across a consortium

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Copies of this publication may be available from:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

You can download this publication and obtain further information at: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk**

Copies of this publication may be available from:

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