



Guidance

Curriculum and
Standards

Primary
National Strategy

Leading teachers:
leading the way

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Leading teachers: leading the way

This flier builds on some of the areas of discussion in which you may have been involved at last year's leading teacher conferences, recognising that since that time you have probably developed further expertise. It offers suggestions for ways in which you can support staff within your own school in your shared aim of securing children's progress and raising achievement through strengthening learning and teaching. You will also find some examples of how leading teachers have worked with colleagues in other schools to disseminate their own good practice more widely.

At the beginning of the conference, you had an opportunity to reflect on the possible roles you might perform as a leading teacher or advanced skills teacher (AST).



As a reflective practitioner engaged in extending your expertise, you may well have taken from the conference an area to work on in your teaching: assessment, for example, or effective use of ICT in literacy and mathematics lessons.

A skilled colleague who not only shares and discusses what they currently do and how they do it, but who is also openly and actively involved in developing their own skills, can play a key role in helping their school establish and maintain an ethos of continual improvement in teaching and learning.

Leading the way – working within your own school

You have a unique contribution to make to the whole school's drive to improve achievement throughout the school and raise attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. If your school is participating in the Primary Leadership Programme, you will have a vital part to play in working closely with the leadership team and the Primary Strategy consultant leader.

In one or more of the roles identified, you might already be supporting your colleagues as part of a whole-school focus on any of these crucial areas:

Creating a learning ethos

e.g. demonstrating the use of interactive strategies such as talk partners, whiteboards, text-marking and making jottings in literacy hours and daily mathematics lessons; explaining how to establish a system of peer review.

Setting curricular targets

e.g. helping colleagues pinpoint the key areas for improvement for the whole class or groups; identifying specific targets for the children and suggesting ways to focus on these aspects in day-to-day teaching.

Using ICT in literacy or mathematics

e.g. sharing your experience of using the mathematics interactive teaching program (ITP); demonstrating at a staff meeting what you have learned so far about the interactive whiteboard; recommending websites that offer useful resources for literacy across the curriculum.

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Assessment for learning

e.g. demonstrating the effective use of questioning and how to plan for it in whole-class and group work; sharing successful ways of giving children feedback that both encourages them and raises expectations.

Developing subject knowledge

e.g. support in planning work on a non-fiction text-type and recommending effective ways to teach the key language features; advising on activities and resources to help children practise mental skills in mathematics.

Leading the way – working with other schools

“ I visit each of my priority schools on a regular basis, and tailor my support to their literacy priorities and the specific needs of the school, for example: newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in Year 6, staff changes, challenging cohorts. I teach demonstration lessons, team-teach with a class teacher or work with a booster group. I thoroughly enjoy working with all my new classes and their teachers and also benefit from a two-way exchange of good practice.”

Leading teacher, Wakefield LEA

In **Tower Hamlets**, leading teachers work flexibly in order to meet the specific needs and school contexts of colleagues.

Leading pupils – supporting positive behaviour and learning

A group of pupils join their teacher in observing in the classroom of a leading teacher. The visiting pupils use an observation sheet which prompts them to observe specific learning strategies, e.g. ‘thinking thumbs’, partner talk. This is followed by a reciprocal visit by the leading teacher and a group of his/her pupils who use the same checklist. Feedback is given by both teacher and pupils.

Support for teachers new to Year 6

Teachers new to Year 6 attend a demonstration lesson, supported by a consultant. During the follow-up discussion, aspects of practice are agreed for the visiting teacher to work on in their classroom. These are noted and the form sent to the headteacher, who will ensure support from within the visiting teacher’s own school – this is in addition to any consultant support. There are often further visits in order to facilitate ongoing development.

Leading teachers also share copies of annotated plans and pupil workbooks, as well as leading sessions at the annual Year 6 teachers’ conference.

In **Hertfordshire**, leading teachers run termly forums for specific groups of teachers on a network basis, each with a focus on the particular issues and needs identified by the participants. Follow-up work in school may be supported by a leading teacher or consultant and link advisers are often closely involved.

Literacy networks for Year 6 teachers

September’s network took a focus on the outcomes of analysis of the 2003 tests, linking this to the assessment focuses. Participating teachers then went on to identify target groups of pupils for additional support, using curricular targets based on the assessment focuses.

January’s network involved a review of progress of the target groups and discussion of the NLS Year 6 planning exemplification and revision plans.

In **Warrington**, leading teachers fulfil a number of roles. These include:

Demonstration lessons

Visiting teachers are carefully matched to the identified strengths of the leading teachers and visits always include pre- and post-observation discussion and evaluation.

Networks for Year 6 teachers

Led by leading teachers, these include planning for strategies to support booster groups and appropriate preparation for testing. Individual support from leading teachers is also available.

Leading teachers also contribute to training sessions, facilitate subject leader networks and engage in their own continuing professional development (CPD), for example by attending Primary National Strategy updates and developing specific areas of expertise such as ICT, Assessment for learning and thinking skills.

Further examples of the ways in which leading teachers are working in other LEAs can be found on the Primary National Strategy website: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary.

Leading the way in Year 6

Who might need support?

Year 6 is a crucial year for both pupils and teachers. It is the final year of primary education and it is the year when the Key Stage 2 tests take place. How well pupils perform by the end of Key Stage 2 will determine their future success in secondary and beyond. Every year, a number of teachers join Year 6 for the first time: NQTs, returners to teaching, overseas-trained teachers, and others who have moved up from another year group. These colleagues will benefit particularly from your support, **whether or not you are currently teaching in Year 6.**

How can you best support them?

They might need your help in any of the critical areas listed below, or indeed in other areas specific to your school's context – if they are unused to teaching children who are new arrivals to England, for example, or have not previously taught in a small rural school with classes that include several year groups.

Suggestions for supporting them with teaching and learning

- Annotating and adapting the Year 6 unit plans and planning exemplification materials to meet the needs of their pupils.
- Confirming their assessments of the children's ongoing work and helping them select the target group(s) who will benefit from specific booster sessions.
- Identifying areas that children are finding problematic and helping them to plan focused teaching that will address these.
- Encouraging them to maximise opportunities to use cross-cutting skills that have been taught in literacy or mathematics, e.g. applying children's knowledge of explanation texts when writing in geography; applying their knowledge of bar graphs when interpreting information in science.
- Advising on the most effective way of working with teaching assistants.

Supporting them in teaching literacy and mathematics

Last year, approximately 85,000 children attained level 4 in either mathematics or English, but not both. Many of these children narrowly missed level 4 and may have achieved a more rounded result if they had been able to transfer crucial skills from the subject they found easier to the one they had difficulties with.

For instance, children who can readily deduce and infer from a written text can be shown how to apply deductive skills to word problems in mathematics. Using a word problem from mathematics alongside questions from a text in a literacy session would enable children to see the common ground between the two.

Similarly, those children (many of whom are boys) who are able to cope with the amount of reading presented in the maths papers, but who struggle with longer texts, will benefit from being shown how to 'chunk' a longer text into sections and annotate them with a word or two as a way of making the reading more manageable. Using diagrams, 'skeletons' and other visual representations of text-types will greatly support these children's writing, as will teaching them how to text-mark the key words in a writing prompt.

It is important that you don't underestimate the impact you can have, both within Year 6 and across the school. Children need and deserve consistent 'Quality First Teaching' if they are to make good progress and achieve their potential in their primary years, and this is what you are so skilled at providing. Don't be hesitant about sharing it!

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