



Resource 2

Preparing for a subject 'Deep Dive'

'A deep dive... involves gathering evidence on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact over a sample of subjects, topics or aspects. This is done in collaboration with leaders, teachers and pupils.'
'Inspecting the curriculum, Ofsted, May 2019'

This document is one of four that have been written to support subject leaders in preparation for a 'Deep Dive' as part of an Ofsted inspection.

Resource 1: *Ofsted and the subject leader* outlines the key areas from the *Ofsted Inspection Handbook* that relates directly to the role of the Primary School Subject Leader in an inspection.

Resource 2: This document: ***Preparing for a 'deep dive'*** aims to support a subject leader in preparation for either an internal / external 'deep dive'.

Resource 3: ***'Deep dives' in a foundation subject / area*** – provides advice for subject leaders across all foundation subjects, with subject specific advice / guidance.

Resource 4: **Subject Leader checklist / annual monitoring / review timetable**

Preface:

I have edited below those paragraphs from the School inspection handbook to refer to those bullet points that refer directly to a subject leader. (I have highlighted in ***bold / italics*** what I consider to be the key points.)

I have also drawn from another publication – *which is well worth a read*:
Education inspection framework: overview of research, Ofsted, July 2019; www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-overview-of-research

As ever, if you have any comments, edits, recommendations, please do not hesitate to send them through to me at: andy@apa-ec.co.uk

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March 2021



Resource 2: ‘*Preparing for a deep dive*’ is a document which aims to support a subject leader in preparation for either an internal / external ‘deep dive’.

Sections:

Part A: The ‘Deep Dive’ (Page: 3)

Part B: The Process of a ‘Deep Dive’ (Pages 4 & 5)

Part C: Research by Ofsted (Page 6)

Part D: Questions for you to consider in advance of a ‘Deep Dive’ (Pages 7-9)

Part A: The ‘Deep Dive’

So, what is a ‘deep dive’?

A ‘deep dive’ is the term used to ***describe an in-depth review of a subject as part of an Ofsted inspection.***

As well as inspecting ‘all’ aspects of a school, inspectors will also undertake a small number of ‘deep dives’ in different subjects / areas, to help them gain an in-depth understanding of the quality of education (the 3 I’s – Intent; Implementation; Impact).

What will it include?

- evaluation of senior / subject leaders’ intent for the curriculum in this subject or area, and their understanding of its implementation and impact
- evaluation of subject leaders’ long- and medium-term thinking and planning, including the rationale for content choices and curriculum sequencing
- visits to a connected sample of lessons
- work scrutiny of books or other kinds of work produced by pupils who are part of classes that have also been (or will also be) observed by inspectors
- discussion with teachers to understand how the curriculum informs their choices about content and sequencing to support effective learning
- discussions with a group of pupils from the lessons observed.

What should I prepare in advance?

Clearly, it would be helpful if you were to have, or be in the process of completing, some or all of the following:

- your most recent subject self-evaluation based on any monitoring activities (learning observations; book scrutiny’s; discussions with pupils);
- your subject development (action) plan (making links between this and the school’s development / improvement plan;
- a copy of your subject statement of Intent;
- a copy of your long / medium term plan showing how pupils learning from one topic / year is built on in the next year;
- how your subject contributes to pupils’: cultural capital / their personal, social, health and economic development; any other planned cross-curricular links.

Throughout this document you will find a series of questions which have been designed to support you as you prepare / refine any / all of the above.

Part B: The Process of a 'Deep Dive'

How does a 'deep dive' contribute to inspecting the Quality of Education (QoE)

In Diagram 1, below, on page 4, below you will see that it's set out in 3 stages:

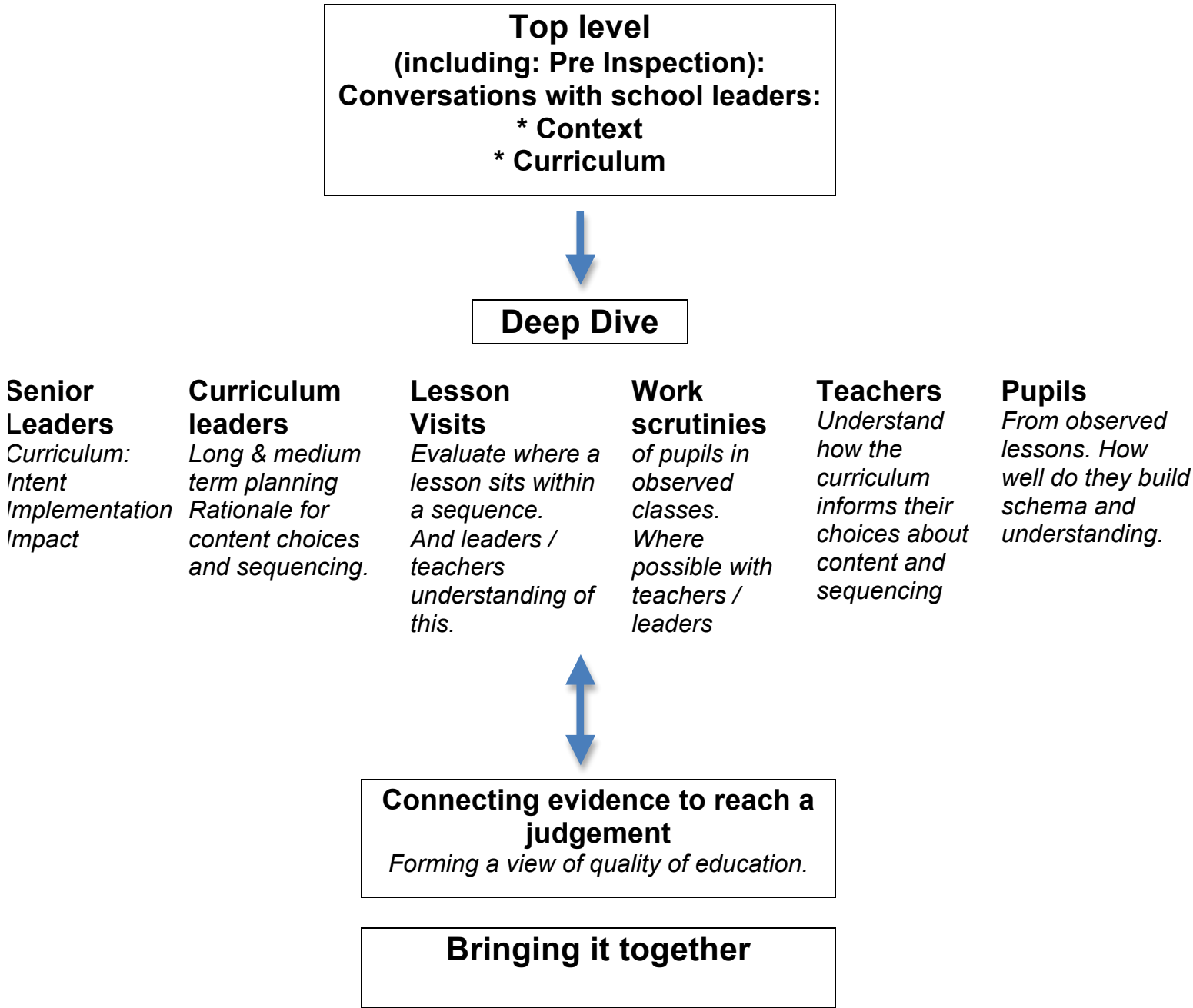
- **Top-level:** inspectors and leaders start with a top-level view of the school's curriculum, exploring what is on offer, to whom and when, leaders' understanding of curriculum intent and sequencing, and why these choices were made.
- **Deep dive:** this involves gathering evidence on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact over a sample of subjects, topics or aspects. This is done in collaboration with leaders, teachers and pupils. The intent of the deep dive is to seek to interrogate and establish a coherent evidence base on quality of education.
- **Bringing it together:** inspectors will bring the evidence together to widen coverage and to test whether any issues identified during the deep dives are systemic. This will usually lead to school leaders bringing forward further evidence and inspectors gathering additional evidence.

Inspectors will not reach judgements on the basis of any single inspection activity; rather, inspection judgements will be reached once inspectors have connected the different types and pieces of evidence in the manner set out above.

One deep dive is insufficient to form a view of the school's provision, but a collection of deep, connected case studies of subjects, topics or aspects can enable inspectors to form a valid and reliable view of the education on offer.

In primary schools, inspectors will always carry out a deep dive in reading and deep dives in one or more foundation subjects, always including a foundation subject that is being taught in the school during the time that inspectors are on-site. The total number of deep dives will vary depending on the size (called the tariff – i.e. the number of pupils = the number of inspectors) of the inspection.

Diagram 1



Part C: Research by Ofsted

Ofsted¹ research suggests that the following are important considerations for inspectors looking to ensure a robust view of the quality of education:

- **Context matters** – carrying out lesson visits or work scrutiny without context will limit validity. It is important that, in order to make lesson visits and scrutiny more accurate, inspectors know the purpose of the lesson (or the task in a workbook), how it fits into a sequence of lessons over time, and what pupils already knew and understood. Conversations with teachers and subject leads can provide this contextual information.
- **The sequence of lessons, not an individual lesson, is the unit of assessment** – inspectors will need to evaluate where a lesson sits in a sequence, and leaders'/teachers' understanding of this. Inspectors will not grade individual lessons or teachers.
- **Work scrutiny will form a part of the evidence we use to judge whether the intended curriculum is being enacted.** Do the pupils' books support other evidence that what the school set out to teach has, indeed, been covered? Work scrutinies can provide part of the evidence to show whether pupils know more, remember more and can do more, but only as one component of the deep dive which includes lesson visits and conversations with leaders, teachers and pupils. Coverage is a prerequisite for learning, but simply having covered a part of the curriculum does not in itself indicate that pupils know or remember more. Work scrutinies cannot be used to demonstrate that an individual pupil is working 'at the expected standard' or similar, and it is not valid to attempt to judge an individual pupil's individual progress by comparing books from that pupil at two points in time.
- **Inspectors can make appropriately secure judgements on curriculum, teaching and behaviour across a particular deep dive when four to six lessons are visited** and inspectors have spoken to the curriculum lead and teachers to understand where each lesson sits in the sequence of lessons. The greater the number of visits, the more inspectors can see the variation in practice across a deep dive. However, there is a point after which additional visits do little to enhance the validity of evidence. Since an inspection evidence base will include multiple deep dives, the total number of lessons visited over the course of the inspection will substantially exceed four to six.
- **In each deep dive, inspectors should review a minimum of six workbooks (or pieces of work) in lessons they visit, and scrutinise work from at least two year groups in depth** in order to ensure that evidence is not excessively dependent on a single cohort. Normally, inspectors will repeat this exercise across each of the deep dives, subjects, key stages or year groups in which they carry out lesson visits.

¹ Inspecting the curriculum May 2019, 190024

Part D: Questions for you to consider in advance of a ‘Deep Dive’

1 *Top level / whole school curriculum questions*

These are some questions inspectors may ask at this ‘top level’:

- How have you designed and planned your curriculum? And why?
- What are you trying to achieve with your curriculum?
- How does your curriculum support your school’s aims?
- How have you decided to sequence your curriculum? Why?
- How do you know that children are learning the curriculum content?
- What is the school’s action plan for curriculum development?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum?
- How do you ensure clear subject coverage; progression and sequencing in your curriculum?
- Does actual taught and learned coverage match intended coverage?
- Are transitions smooth between year groups?
- Does the provision meet the same standards across different subjects?
- Do children retain prior learning?
- Are subject misconceptions addressed?
- How do teachers and children record learning? Can this be easily accessed?
- Do teachers teach, and children learn, key subject vocabulary?
- Do teachers have sound subject knowledge / what are you doing to support them in this?
- Do senior leaders, subject leads and teachers have good pedagogical content knowledge? And if not how is this being addressed
- If you are using an off-the-shelf scheme, how does this link with the National Curriculum?
- What would you say are the strengths and areas for improvement of the school’s curriculum?
- What interventions are carried out in the school and how?
- How do you support subject leaders in their roles?
- How are pupils with SEND as well as those entitled to PP funding supported?

2 *Questions for subject leaders*

Inspectors will ask questions in order to gain a deeper understanding of how a subject has been planned across the school, the rationale behind it, how the pupils learn it, and how you (as subject leader) know this.

Don’t forget:

- Inspectors will not make final judgements on individual subjects, but on the curriculum as a whole.
- Collection and scrutiny of internal data is not a part of the inspection. In fact, Ofsted have stated that inspectors won’t look at internal progress and attainment data. (See pages 3 & 4 of *Resource 1: Ofsted and the Subject Leader*).

a) Big picture / overview questions:

1. How long have you been in this role (as subject leader for X) and what support (CPD) have you received either internally or externally?
2. What resources do you use to support you as leader of subject X?
3. How have you designed your curriculum?
4. What are you trying to achieve in your curriculum?
There will no doubt be some follow-up questions specific to your subject and these are covered in Resource C 'Deep Dives in a foundation subject / area'.
5. What are your aims for this subject in the school?
6. What schemes do you follow (published or your own)?
7. How is this subject taught, and way?
8. How do children progress in this subject from one year to the next?
(Remember that progress is knowing more, remembering more and being able to do more.)
9. How do you ensure that pupils retain their subject knowledge?
10. How do you ensure that pupils with SEND (as well as those entitled to Pupil Premium) benefit from the curriculum in this subject?
11. What would you expect an inspector to see when they visit lessons and speak to the pupils?
12. How do teachers clarify any misconceptions by pupils?
13. What links are made with other subjects does – can you give me an example of where this works particularly well?
14. Can you tell of any examples where you have supported other teachers / assistants in subject X and the impact that this has had on their teaching / pupils' learning?

b) The progress pupils' make

- How do class teachers know what went before in previous years / or what pupils are going to learn 'next' year?
- How do you plan for pupils to make good progress/
- How do you know there is progression throughout the school?
- How do you know what is happening across the different year groups?
How do you monitor the quality of teaching, learning & assessment in your subject?
- How do you make sure that if a topic is repeated (e.g. mapping skills in Gg; forces in Sc) that all teachers build on pupils' prior knowledge?
- How are teachers assessing pupils learning in your subject and how do you moderate this to ensure consistency of practice amongst all teachers?

c) Provision for pupils with SEND / those entitled to Pupil Premium funding

- What provision do you make for pupils with SEND / those entitled to Pupil Premium funding, and how do you ensure that they make good progress in their learning?
- How do you assess and monitor the learning of pupils with SEND?
- How do you know that this is happening in all classes?
- How do you support pupils' cultural capital in your subject?

d) Joint learning observations

- How does this lesson fit in with the overview for your subject?
- Is the correct vocabulary being used?
- Are the pupils learning new knowledge and skill?
- Does the teacher have good subject knowledge? How have you ensured this?
- What will we see in the lesson we are about to observe?
- If there is a teaching assistant in the classroom – what will you be expecting them to be doing?
- Will the pupils be learning new knowledge / skills? How is this being evidenced?

e) Book scrutiny

Inspectors will take a selection of books from a range of classes to scrutinise subject learning.

See the additional guidance in Resource 1 (pages 3 & 4) regarding what inspectors will / not expect.

- Explain how the tasks taught link to your subject overview and what would come next?
- Is there consistency across all year groups?
- How do you ensure cultural capital in subject X?
- How do you ensure that pupils remember what they have learnt?
- Can you describe how this individual lesson fits into the sequence of lessons?
- Can you take me through 'this pupil's learning' (book; folder; etc) and tell me what is the quality of this pupil's learning in this subject? What would you envisage this pupil's next steps to be?
- Can you identify any examples of how the teacher has addressed any misconceptions?
- Can you show me any evidence of what you, as subject leader, have put in place and the impact it has had? Is there a link to your development plan?
- What weaknesses do you identify and what do you think you will do as a result of this?

f) Talking to teachers

- What support have you been given to support your teaching of subject X?
- How do you know what pupils learnt in the previous year and what they will be going onto learn 'next' year?

g) Talking to children

- Can you tell me what you are going to learn in this forthcoming lesson? And do you know how it builds upon your learning in your last lesson of subject X?
- Can you tell me what you learnt in the lesson we have just been in? Can you describe how this built on what you learnt in your previous lesson? Can you tell me what you are going to learn in your next lesson?