

Subject Leader Guide for English

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National Curriculum for Key Stages 1–3

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Introduction

The new National Curriculum for 2014 places particular pressures on subject leaders in primary and secondary schools in maintaining high quality teaching, effective use of resources and improved standards at a time of curriculum change.

Scholastic Education, publisher of the bestselling *100 Lessons* series, has partnered with Babcock Learning and Development Partnership, one of the UK's leading school improvement services, to develop these essential subject guides, which can be used to support your colleagues in understanding and responding to the curriculum changes.

For the first time, the Department for Education has made the new National Curriculum for 2014 available in digital format only. We understand that a printed copy of the Curriculum is a useful tool in communicating these changes and as such a complete printed programme of study for English Key Stages 1–3 has been included in each Subject Leader's Guide.

Each guide also offers:

- Explanation of the changes to the curriculum in England and the subject leader's role in implementing these changes
- Information on Ofsted's expectations and role in inspecting English teaching in your school.
- Advice on the priority areas for Key Stages 1–2
- Support for structuring the curriculum including advice on lesson planning and creativity in the new curriculum.
- A checklist for managing the move towards the new National Curriculum is also supplied.

We hope this Subject Leader's Guide proves to be a useful tool and wish you every success in implementing the new curriculum in your school.



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The subject leader's role **KS1–3**

What will Ofsted inspectors expect to see?

Judgements about the curriculum will be made as part of the wider review of the quality of leadership and management. Inspectors will consider how well leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum:

- focuses on the necessary priorities to ensure that all pupils make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- is broad and balanced (in the context of the school) and meets the needs, aptitudes and interest of pupils including pupils in the sixth form
- promotes high levels of achievement and good behaviour
- promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils, including the extent to which schools engage their pupils in extra-curricular activity and volunteering within their local community
- is effectively planned and taught
- does not compromise pupils' achievement, success or progression by inappropriately early entry to public examinations.

English subject leader's role

The main role of the subject leader is to manage the change to the new English curriculum, within the context of the changes to the whole curriculum, while maintaining and improving standards. In many ways, the school needs to have a clear direction about how the wider curriculum will be managed, before fundamental changes to English are made.

In supporting subject leaders with identifying the changes to English provision and practice, different schools will need to address different aspects. The order below is a suggested pathway, but it will depend on each school's priorities. Use it to focus review and development of the provision and practice of the English curriculum by clearly identifying current achievements as well as areas for improvement.

- Evaluate attainment and progress:
 - How well are pupils doing in relation to national standards?
 - Are pupils making good or better progress?
 - Are there differences in attainment or progress across the school?
 - Groups of pupils, such as FSM/boys/girls?
 - Key stages, cohorts or classes?
- Identify pedagogical approaches which are effective:
 - How do we teach this area currently?
 - Is the teaching approach consistent across the school?
 - Are there areas of significant expertise or weakness?
 - How do staff feel about teaching in this area?
 - How do pupils feel about their learning in this area?
- Identify staff subject knowledge strengths and areas for development:
 - Does everyone feel confident to deliver the expectations of the new curriculum?
 - What evidence is there that staff are confident about their subject knowledge?

Overview of changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum **KS3**

It is highly unlikely that many English teachers will find the new KS3 curriculum objectionable, mainly because its slimness leaves little room for prescriptive detail. For example, the expectation that pupils will be taught to draw on their *knowledge of literary and rhetorical devices from their reading and listening to enhance the impact of their writing* is hardly going to outrage any practitioner. After all, the requirement does not come with a list of approved devices.

However, there are some interesting details, emphases and implications in the new, slim curriculum.

The approved authors who have haunted secondary English for so long have finally been laid to rest. Teachers are now given free choice of – for example – *high-quality works from...pre-1914*. Although pupils must read two plays by Shakespeare, no other author is named.

The status of literature has been reinforced in the opening section, the ‘Purpose of study’, which asserts that *through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development*.

The curriculum has a renewed ‘traditional’ emphasis that no longer finds room for the multi-modal texts that are required study in the current curriculum. On the other hand, the new curriculum does insist on a *wide range of...non-fiction* as part of a pupils’ reading diet.

The new curriculum’s emphasis on ensuring pupils *develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information* is likely to be welcomed by all teachers, even if students also have to *read increasingly challenging material independently*.

Consistent with the new curriculum’s privileging of formality and accuracy, ‘speaking and listening’ has been replaced by ‘spoken language’. Within this aspect of English, teachers are expected to give due emphasis to succinctness and structure – for example, *giving short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the point* – but discussion and drama are still present, and the introduction to ‘Spoken language’ recognises how speech *continues to underpin the development of pupils’ reading and writing* and how the skills of *working collaboratively* remain essential.

How do the changes to Key Stage 2 affect Key Stage 3?

The new curriculum includes an explicit ‘Grammar and vocabulary’ heading, whose leading requirement is that teachers extend and apply *the grammatical knowledge set out in Appendix 2 to the Key Stage 1 and 2 Programmes of Study*. This statutory appendix is designed to support and guide the expanded detail in the Programmes of Study for KS1–2. Inevitably, this will mean that students will arrive in Year 7 with an increasing knowledge of grammar, and automatic expectations about how that knowledge will be secured, developed and applied in KS3. This is an important consideration for secondary English.