

You Can... Evaluate planning

Planning is arguably the backbone of good teaching. Effective planning demonstrates that a teacher is aware of the learning needs of the children in their class and the various strategies that they need to engage in order to meet them. It should identify where other adults are being directed, what resources are required and how the lesson should be adapted to meet the various levels of learning. Clear planning makes use of all the strengths of the class and avoids 'down periods'. It is no coincidence that the first 'P' in 'PPA' refers to planning; good planning is crucial when maximising learning opportunities.

Thinking points

The ICT revolution has been a great bonus to teachers, particularly when it comes to planning. With little effort, colleagues are able to produce professional planning documents that can be circulated electronically as well as physically. However, as a subject leader you should aim to have a core question in the back of your mind when evaluating these documents: does this planning meet the needs of every child in this particular class? It is too easy to produce planning that does not. Encourage colleagues to write on the plans, which not only shows that they are engaging with some form of evaluation but demonstrates that they are actively editing a document to respond to the needs of their own class.



Tips, ideas and activities

- When evaluating planning you should ask yourself a number of questions:
 - What is it that you want from colleagues' planning?
 - Does it meet the needs of the class?
 - Does the planning explain how other adults are being used within the classroom?
 - What provision is there for SEN, and gifted and talented pupils?
 - What does the school's planning policy state and does it reflect current thinking?
 - Are there any common themes occurring within the planning such as teachers identifying good use of adult support?
 - How are you going to feed back to colleagues?
- Colleagues may demonstrate the same type of anxiety to a planning scrutiny as they do to lesson observations. In reality, a foundation subject may only be scrutinised two or three times a year. Consider how you could minimise this anxiety. It may be useful for phase groups, such as key stages, to review each other's planning and provide feedback to you. That said, you are ultimately responsible for the subject you lead and need to be fully aware of the standard of planning for it.
- Planning is time-consuming. The thinking point above highlights the dangers of cloned electronic planning but, if used wisely, a downloaded lesson plan can be a great time saver and provide a useful perspective on the learning objective. There are many websites available (try a quick search for 'primary planning') and some notably useful ones include:
 - www.primaryresources.co.uk
 - www.tlfe.org.uk
 - www.teachingideas.co.uk
 - www.google.co.uk/intl/en/schools/
 - www.teachers.tv