

The post-lockdown curriculum

Some questions for Primary leaders

These questions are intended to support Primary leaders in reviewing the post-lockdown curriculum, and in guiding ongoing, professional conversations in schools and providers, now and over the next few months.

They are designed to complement national guidance, such as the DfE's [guidance on the 'Catch-up Premium'](#) and the EEF's [planning guide](#), which suggests a three-tiered approach to post-lockdown support: [teaching](#), [targeted support](#) and [wider strategies](#). The focus here is on the first two tiers.

Teaching

Is there determined and visible leadership of the post-lockdown curriculum?

Is there an identified senior leader keeping an overview of issues around the resumption of the curriculum and of how subject leaders and teachers are managing this transition?

Is there a forum for subject leaders to work together to clarify strategy and thinking around the post-lockdown curriculum?

Is there agreement and clarity around the short, medium and long term priorities for all post-lockdown curriculum planning?

Has there been a focused consideration of any lessons learned from the resumption of education in September, and how pupils adapted back to classroom teaching?

Are teachers, pupils and parents being given positive messages about the post-lockdown curriculum?

Is there an agreed language which avoids exaggeration or catastrophising about "lost learning"? (Are teachers talking about 'reconnection', 'keeping up', 'stepping up', 'moving forwards', 'building on', 're-establishing', 'securing', 'consolidating', 'opportunities to revisit', 'onward', and so on?)

Is there planning for how a sense of ambition and exciting forward momentum can be generated, even where learning needs to be consolidated or repaired?

How is wellbeing being kept central to curriculum planning and review?

Is there an understanding of how the taught curriculum can and will contribute to pupils' wellbeing post-lockdown?

Is the PSHE curriculum being reviewed and rewritten to address specific issues arising from the pandemic and from lockdown?

How are pupils' learning behaviours impacting on their ability to access the curriculum

Is there an understanding of how each pupil's learning behaviours have been impacted by the lockdown?

Is this knowledge being used to review school practice and support the re-establishing of motivation, resilience and self-regulation?

(See also, the EEF's [report](#) on Improving Behaviour in Schools.)

Is ‘quality first teaching’ at the heart of the post-lockdown curriculum?

Is there a shared understanding of the central importance to any ‘recovery curriculum’ of strong classroom teaching as usual – of setting high expectations and of pitching high, but also of being ready to modulate the pace of learning and to scaffold responsively?

Is there careful analysis of any gaps and weak spots in what has been taught?

What conversations are happening around what hasn’t been taught, what may have been learned but not securely, what may need re-embedding or re-consolidating, and what may need connecting to other learning? Are subject leaders and teachers mapping this carefully, and is this informing planning?

How are pupils’ new, individual ‘baselines’ being assessed?

Is there a flexible plan for assessing where pupils are in their learning? Is this usefully diagnostic? Are pupils being assessed after they have had time to settle back into learning? Does it include observation over time? Do teachers have the training and support to carry out assessments with confidence?

Also, is teachers’ accrued knowledge of pupils and their work during lockdown being given due value?

Are subject leaders and teachers considering how the curriculum might need some streamlining or refocusing?

Do subject leaders and teachers have ‘permission’ to edit the planned curriculum, focusing on what is essential to future progress? Are such decisions emerging from careful evaluation and analysis?

Is there a deliberate focus on core knowledge, on key aspects of disciplinary thinking and on threshold concepts?

Is there flexibility in the pace and pattern of new learning, in the weeks and months following pupils’ return to school?

Are subject leaders and teachers considering how to build in revision, so that prior learning is consolidated and any insecure learning can be shored up? Are they planning for how the teaching of new material will be interleaved with the spaced revisiting of previous learning?

For example: new content delayed until after a sustained period of revision; new content introduced gradually, during a sustained period of revision; new content begun straight away, with a sustained, parallel period of revision; new content introduced rapidly, during a short period of revision; new content begun straight away, with a brief, parallel period of revision

Is there a coherent plan for teacher assessment in the summer of 2021?

Is there a plan for the collection of appropriate evidence, and for the standardisation and moderation of judgements?

Is this plan bespoke to each subject?

How will the assessment plan support the collection of information to ensure effective transition at the end of summer 2021?

Are subject leaders and teachers considering how knowledge of the pandemic might be integrated into learning?

How might pupils’ new awareness of societal and global issues, new knowledge of medical and political language, and new sense of their personal relation to world events be processed in subject learning?

How might teachers find opportunities in this, in terms of hooks for learning, texts and contexts for teaching, and a new and important lens for looking at the world?

What place does literacy have in the 'recovery' curriculum?

Are subject leaders and teachers considering how to mitigate across the curriculum any widening of the 'literacy gap', and any general loss by pupils of stamina, confidence and basic accuracy in their reading and writing? Do subject leaders have access to specialist advice on how to build these things back up quickly?

For example, will there be more time than usual allowed for reading, especially of more challenging texts? Might there be extra emphasis on the proofreading, editing and presentation of written work? Might teachers break written work down more than usual, and model clear, precise expression at sentence-level? Might they provide more scaffolding than usual for written work, including model texts, sentence stems, paragraph plans and helpful vocabulary.

Could a useful thought-experiment for subject leaders be to consider which words pupils may have 'missed', and which may need to be woven purposefully into the resumed curriculum? Might these include not just specialist terminology, but less subject-specific language which is also essential to academic success?

Is pupil talk and oral language being given enough emphasis?

Have subject leaders and teachers assessed the likely impact of lost talk on learning?

Should lessons and learning be planned to be as rich as possible in talk, in conversational turn-taking and in thinking aloud, driven by strong, teacher-led questioning? In planning, might there need to be a conscious avoidance of a rush to write, at the possible expense of essential oral expression?

Targeted support

Is there careful attention to what individual pupils may not have learned *securely*, despite it having been covered during lockdown?

Is there ongoing discussion of the barriers (emotional, cognitive and contextual) that may have hindered progress by individuals?

Do teachers have a picture of any 'gaps' or insecure learning at an individual level? How is this being mapped or built into planning?

SEND strategy

Have the barriers to learning for pupils at SEND support been carefully analysed and are they reflected in differentiated provision right across the curriculum? Is this evident in SEN support plans?

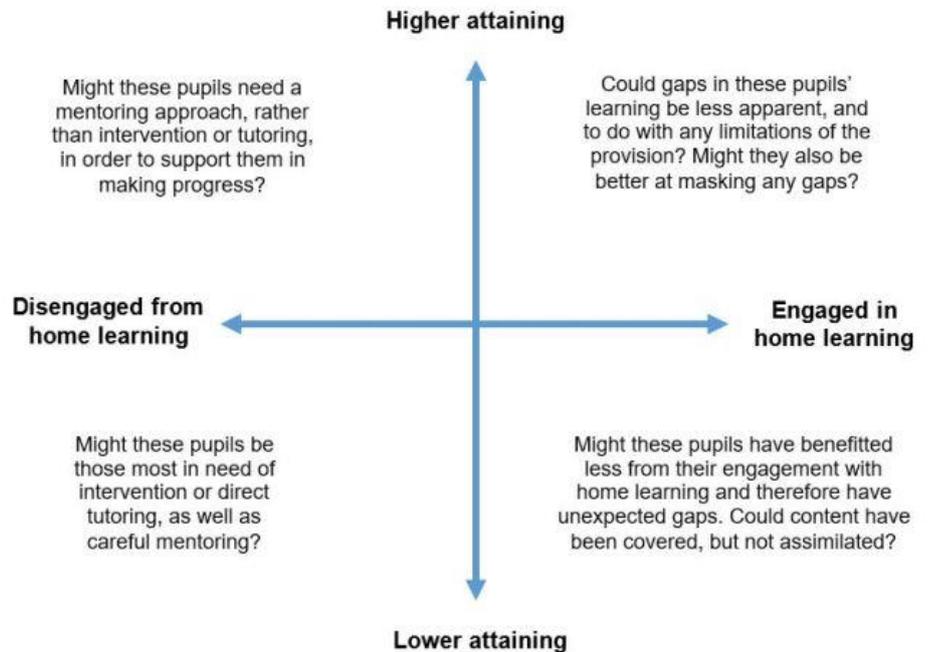
Is support for SEND pupils being provided by expert teachers rather than trained TAs?

Have the targets in EHCPs been at the forefront of planning?

Is there an understanding of why and how some individual pupils may have engaged less with home learning?

Is there a conversation in the school or provision about the differences between pupils' *participation* and pupils' *investment* in home learning? Will there be an analysis of why and how some individuals have been less engaged or less invested than others, and what this means for how they might 'catch up'?

Is it helpful to think in terms of the following quadrant?



Is there a clear strategy around intervention?

Is there a coherent strategy for identifying individuals who could benefit from programmed interventions?

Is there an understanding of the difference between specialist 'intervention' and additional teaching? Is intervention work linked coherently to the learning which is happening in classrooms? Is there planning for how careful pre-teaching of content to individuals or small groups might be used to avoid them falling behind in lessons?

Is any intervention personalised enough to have genuine impact, for example through 'precision teaching'?

How is the impact of intervention being monitored and evaluated?

(See also, the EEF's [evidence summary](#) on one-to-one tuition, and its [evidence summary](#) on small group tuition.)

What might the National Tutoring Programme offer?

Has there been a careful consideration of how the [National Tutoring Programme](#) might support identified individuals?