

# Education inspection framework

Overview of research

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This paper presents the research evidence underpinning the education inspection framework. The review draws on a range of sources, including both our own research programme and a review of existing evidence bases. The review is structured to provide the evidence base that underlies each of the four key judgements for the proposed new framework: quality of education, personal development, behaviour and attitudes, and leadership and management.

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## Introduction

As Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has stated, we are committed to ensuring that our new education inspection framework (EIF) is informed by research evidence. This aim has underpinned the whole process of our framework development and has been supported both by reviews of existing research and by conducting our own research into areas such as the curriculum.

In this paper, we have summarised this work, explaining exactly what evidence on effective practice in schools and early years providers underpins the EIF criteria. The review therefore maps onto the framework criteria, and a large proportion of the research, for example on the importance of high expectations and vision in leadership, applies across remits. However, there is also a proportion of material that relates specifically to schools or early years. Where this is the case, we will set this out in the text (the relevant remit will be stated in bold).

The review draws on a range of sources. HMCI has commissioned a programme of research from our Research and Evaluation team, much of which has fed directly into the development of the framework. Sources of evidence include our research on curriculum and teacher well-being, which are summarised in this document in relation to the criteria which they have informed.

In addition to our own research, we have reviewed research related to the four key inspection judgements: quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management. We have drawn on the academic research literature, but also on research and guidance from the Education Endowment Foundation, the Department for Education (DfE), and our own research and guidance reports.

One thing to note is that the research reviewed here is in large part drawn from that done in schools and early years settings, rather than in further education and skills (FE&S) providers. This is largely due to the relative paucity of research in FE&S compared with the other sectors, and it may mean that not all of the research reviewed applies equally to FE&S.

We have attempted to summarise the evidence comprehensively, though we have not surveyed the whole field of educational research, limiting our review to what evidence is directly related to our inspection judgements and criteria. Of course, educational research is contestable and contested, and so are research summaries such as this one. We hope, however, that publishing our evidence base will provide transparency, both on the evidence we have consulted and how we have interpreted that evidence. For those who wish to consult the original documents, we have provided a full list of references.

This is not the end of our research work in relation to the framework. We are also looking at our methods of inspection, not least lesson observation and work scrutiny,

and we will be publishing our findings on these before the end of the consultation period.

## Overview of research feeding into the EIF

This overview presents a summary of the research evidence underlying the key judgement areas in the EIF. The review draws on a range of research conducted by Ofsted's research team:

- a review of the international educational effectiveness research base
- a programme of research on curriculum
- a study on teacher well-being
- a study on managing challenging behaviour.

The review is structured to provide the evidence base that underlies each of the four key judgements for the proposed new framework: quality of education, personal development, behaviour and attitudes, and leadership and management.

## 1. Quality of education

EIF grade criteria:

- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give learners, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.<sup>1</sup>
- The provider's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.
- The provider has the same academic, technical or vocational ambitions for almost all learners. Where this is not practical – for example, for some learners with high levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) – their curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs.
- Learners study the full curriculum. Providers ensure this by teaching a full range of subjects for as long as possible, 'specialising' only when necessary.

## Research on the curriculum

Our working definition of curriculum is that it is a framework for setting out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge and skills to be gained at each stage (intent); for translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative, within an institutional context (implementation); and for evaluating what knowledge and understanding students have gained against expectations (impact). The curriculum lies at the heart of education. It determines what learners will know

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'learners' is used for expediency throughout this document to encompass in a single word those attending education, skills and registered early years settings. It should be read as including: 'children' in early years provision, 'pupils' in all schools, 'students' in sixth forms and colleges, and 'apprentices', 'trainees' and 'adult learners' in the range of further education and skills providers. Greater distinction is made where the research is focused on a specific sector

and be able to go on to do by the time they have finished that stage of their education.

Curriculum matters, as it defines the knowledge and experiences that learners will receive beyond their home environment. To this extent, what is taught and how (Biesta, 2009), and who is included (Young, 2013), appear to be key principles of curriculum design.

Biesta (2009) argues that a lack of attention to the aims and ends of education has led to a reliance on a 'common sense' view of education. A focus on academic achievement in a small number of curriculum domains or subjects is one example of the common sense approach. In **schools**, there is evidence of curriculum narrowing.

International evidence indicates that a focus on only a few measurable outcomes has had some negative consequences for curriculum design. As a result, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds may be discouraged from taking academic subjects. A report for the Sutton Trust, for example, finds that pupil premium (PP) pupils are less likely to take English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects compared with non-PP pupils with similar prior attainment (Allen & Thompson, 2016). There are likewise indications that humanities subjects have been reduced or squeezed out of the primary curriculum (Barnes & Scoffham, 2017; Ofsted, 2002). Similar developments are recorded internationally. According to Berliner (2011), curriculum narrowing has become the norm across the United States in response to the pressures of high-stakes testing. The test anxiety felt by teachers and school administrators is leading to the study of the arts becoming increasingly diminished. In Australia, testing regimes are said to have led to a reduction in the time spent on other curriculum areas, and pedagogy (the method and practice of teaching) and curriculum content have been adjusted to mirror test-related content (Polesel, Rice, & Dulfer, 2014).

Several studies on the unintended consequences of school inspection in Europe associate inspection systems with the narrowing and refocusing of the curriculum on test objectives and with discouraging teachers from experimenting with teaching strategies (Ehren et al, 2015; Jones et al, 2017). However, weaknesses in curriculum design are not necessarily limited to countries that have high-stakes accountability systems. Stigler & Hiebert (1999) find common weaknesses across countries in their analyses of the 'Trends in international mathematics and science' (TIMSS) video studies, which include lack of a shared language to discuss curriculum and poor implementation of school policies in classroom practice.

To counter these developments and further develop our understanding of curriculum, HMCI commissioned a major research programme on curriculum, that to date consists of three phases. This research has taken place in **primary, secondary and special schools**.

## Phase 1

In the first phase, we conducted a study of 41 schools, reviewed inspection reports, ran focus group discussions in five regions with headteachers of good and

outstanding schools, used questionnaire responses from Ofsted’s parent panel and conducted desk-based retrieval from school websites. This study confirmed that there are a number of deficiencies in the system with regard to curriculum thinking. There is limited evidence of a thoughtful approach to curriculum, which is often equated with the timetable and discussed in a generic fashion. Schools reported that few teachers are trained in curriculum development or theory. There is evidence of narrowing curriculums, particularly in key stage 2, of teaching to the test, and, in secondary schools, of equating curriculum with the examination board syllabus or statutory tests ([www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmcis-commentary-october-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmcis-commentary-october-2017)).

## Phase 2

While a paucity of curricular thinking may now be widespread, there are schools that are highly invested in curriculum development and thinking. In the second phase of the research programme, we collected evidence from such schools ([www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-curriculum-and-the-new-education-inspection-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-curriculum-and-the-new-education-inspection-framework)). We carried out a qualitative study of 23 schools, which we visited between January and March 2018. The schools were selected because their leaders were identified as being ‘particularly invested in curriculum design’. They were all judged good or outstanding at their last full inspection. We tried to ensure that the sample covered a range of school types with a variety of different approaches to curriculum. In total, we visited 12 primary and 11 secondary schools. Visits involved a two-hour group discussion with curriculum experts at the school on their curriculum intent.

The study aimed to identify common factors associated with schools invested in curriculum development.

The findings from this phase of the study show, firstly, that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to curriculum design in these schools. Schools use different approaches, which can be categorised into three main groups:

- In **knowledge-rich** schools, the leaders see the curriculum as the mastery of a body of subject-specific knowledge defined by the school. Skills are generally considered to be an outcome of the curriculum, not its purpose. They emphasise big ideas and invaluable knowledge they want their pupils to acquire.
- In **knowledge-engaged** schools, knowledge is seen as underpinning and enabling the application of skills, although the latter are often taught alongside knowledge, and school leaders express a desire for both to be developed. Leaders and teachers in these schools do not perceive a tension between knowledge and skills, and instead see them as intertwined.
- Finally, we identified a small group of schools as having **skills-led** curriculums. In these schools, the curriculum is designed around skills, learning behaviours and ‘generic knowledge’. Leaders place an emphasis on

developing the skills that pupils will need for future learning, often referring to resilience, a growth mind-set and perseverance.

Most of the curriculum leaders stressed local needs and context, and were keen to ensure that, where knowledge and skills may not be acquired at home, they were developed in the school. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds were not provided with an impoverished curriculum, but instead given the tools, not least reading, to access a broad and rich curriculum.

Regular curriculum review is emphasised, and all leaders recognise the importance of progression. They have subject-specific progression models in place that focus on progression through the content to be learned, which appears to aid clear curriculum thinking. In these cases, the curriculum is the progression model.

In terms of sustainability it is important to ensure that leadership of curriculum is distributed, as when the headteacher is the sole source of curriculum thinking, it can be hard to sustain, for instance if the headteacher leaves ([www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-curriculum-and-the-new-education-inspection-framework#notes](http://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-curriculum-and-the-new-education-inspection-framework#notes)).

### **Phase 3**

The results from the phase 2 study were clearly valuable in terms of informing inspection but raised some questions about whether intentions are being followed through into implementation, as opposed to school leaders simply talking about a good idea, and about whether these are things that we could assess during inspection.

To explore this, phase 3 of our curriculum research programme tested a model of inspecting curriculum, based on our phase 2 findings, to determine whether and how we can collect valid evidence on curriculum intent and implementation, to form part of a broader quality of education judgement ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-research-assessing-intent-implementation-and-impact](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-research-assessing-intent-implementation-and-impact)).

Inspectors visited 64 schools (29 secondary, 33 primary and two special schools), which were selected to reflect a range in terms of inspection grades, attainment, type and demographics, and tested a series of curriculum indicators that could potentially underpin the quality of education criteria in the new inspection framework. We evaluated the effectiveness of a range of evidence collection methods, looked at what the practical limitations might be in the context of routine inspection, and evaluated whether the indicators and inspection practices allowed inspectors to distinguish between curriculum intent, implementation and impact. In each school, they looked at four subjects, ensuring that all subjects were covered in the full study.

In each visit, HMI:

- examined the school's unique curriculum offer, while being neutral on the specific style or curriculum model
- used the school's own model of curriculum to examine the extent and success of curriculum implementation in partnership with and alongside school staff
- considered the impact of leaders' 'deliberate actions' to implement their curriculum, particularly in the last 18 months
- conducted a series of activities alongside school staff to look at first-hand evidence
- examined a typical journey that pupils would undertake at the school, asking leaders to share the school's curriculum and what pupils learn from their first to their final year.

They did this using an initial meeting with senior leaders, followed by a 50-minute meeting with subject leaders, and collected primary evidence through work scrutiny, curriculum mapping, lesson observation and discussions with pupils and staff. This was followed by a final meeting with senior leaders.

Looking at this broader and more representative sample of schools confirmed some of the issues we had highlighted in phase 1 of the study. In the primary phase, some schools have an imbalanced curriculum offer, which is not as challenging as that set out in the national curriculum 2014. The structure and timetabling of the school day in some cases further limits curriculum development across subjects. The curriculum is delivered much more effectively and with wider coverage in core subjects than it is in foundation subjects.

In primary and secondary schools, teachers' subject knowledge was found to be important, and support structures are needed for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and teachers teaching subjects they were not trained for (out of subject teaching). There were fewer opportunities for teaching staff to receive professional development in foundation subjects than in mathematics and English. As a result, some teachers lack the subject knowledge required, and this restricts the depth and coverage of curriculum on offer.

A positive finding was that leaders commonly ensure that the curriculum is appropriate to the context of the school. They are clear about how the curriculum meets the particular aims and values of their school. There is a growing understanding by leaders of the ways in which knowledge is acquired and is generative, and of how progression can be clearly planned in subjects, though this does not always filter through into subject-level implementation.

What is also clear is that leadership from the headteacher/principal and senior leadership team (SLT) is central both to curriculum development and accountability. Leaders in schools that prioritise the curriculum make it their business to ensure that the planned curriculum is implemented successfully across a wide range of subjects so that curriculum quality is high. By doing this, they ensure curriculum coherence,



which was found to be a key factor in curriculum effectiveness in the TIMSS studies (Schmidt et al, 2005). They hold leaders to account for checking the coverage and the depth of knowledge that pupils learn and see the curriculum as the progression that is taught. They assure themselves that leaders who have the responsibility for leading subjects have the right subject knowledge and skill set to carry out their roles well, and they recognise that high-quality professional development to develop teacher subject knowledge beyond the core subjects is essential. They insist that leaders at all levels have a solid understanding of the requirements of curriculum subjects, including the full component parts of each subject discipline. They ensure that middle leaders and teachers access specialist help and advice so that the curriculum is planned well. They do not allow teaching in foundation subjects to be reduced to time-filling exercises that do not develop pupils' conceptual understanding of subject disciplines.

EIF grade criterion:

- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise.

## Research on teacher subject knowledge and support

If curriculum lies at the heart of education, and subject lies at the heart of curriculum, then it follows that teachers need solid knowledge and understanding of the subject(s) they teach. As well as this, they need to know how to teach that subject, and, more generally, how to teach. These three types of essential knowledge are known as *content knowledge*, *pedagogical knowledge* and *pedagogical content knowledge*. Content knowledge can be defined as teachers' knowledge of the subject they are teaching, pedagogical knowledge as teachers' knowledge of effective teaching methods, and pedagogical content knowledge as teachers' knowledge of how to teach the particular subject or topic.

Research on teachers' subject knowledge has yielded mixed results, though the strongest studies tend to show the strongest relationship between subject knowledge and attainment. Some studies have used measures that are not very accurate indicators of subject knowledge. Studies in the US (which is where the majority of research in this area has been conducted) often use teacher certification (equivalent to qualified teacher status (QTS)) as a proxy. Such studies show mixed results; some show positive relationships (e.g. Clotfelter et al, 2010; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000), while others show no effect (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2000). However, where direct measures of teacher subject knowledge are used, the evidence is much more positive. For example, Metzler & Woessman (2010) used a Peruvian primary school dataset that contains test scores in two academic subjects for each student and each teacher. This allowed the researchers to look at the impact of teacher performance in the subject on the performance of their pupils. They found that one standard deviation in subject-specific teacher achievement increases student achievement by about 10% of a standard deviation. A caveat here is that the context of Peru as a

developing country is obviously very different to that in England. Baumert et al (2010) tested the content knowledge of German mathematics teachers. They found a small correlation between teachers' content knowledge and pupils' progress, and a much stronger one between teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and pupils' progress.

Another key finding is the extent to which content knowledge is associated with 'track', with teachers in academic track schools having far greater content knowledge than those in vocational tracks. The distribution of teachers' content knowledge across schools can thus have equity implications. Other studies have found a positive relationship between teachers' subject preparation, as measured by university courses taken in the subject taught, and achievement, although this mainly appears to be the case for mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science (Monk, 1994; Wayne & Youngs, 2003; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). As is often the case in educational research, this may be due to the greater volume and quality of research in these subject areas. Pedagogical content knowledge is consistently related to pupils' outcomes (Baumert et al, 2010; Wayne & Youngs, 2003). This evidence base, therefore, points to the importance of teachers either having the requisite knowledge or receiving strong support from their schools.

Teachers' subject knowledge is not necessarily *linearly* related to pupil attainment. It is not the case that more teacher knowledge is in itself directly related to more pupil learning. The exact amount of knowledge necessary will differ by age group and level taught, and there may well be a ceiling on the correlation between knowledge and attainment. In Monk's (1994) study using data from the 'Longitudinal study of American youth', he found a positive but curvilinear relationship between teachers' subject knowledge as measured by courses taken and pupils' achievement. This suggests that there may be a threshold effect operating, in that a certain level of subject knowledge is necessary for teachers to be effective, but that beyond this a law of diminishing returns may operate, which may explain the mixed findings in other studies. This has led some researchers to conceptualise a required level of knowledge for teachers teaching their subject at the grade level needed, which is closely aligned to teachers' knowledge of the relevant subject content of the school curriculum, what mathematics educators call 'mathematical knowledge for teaching' (Hill, 2010). This appears to be a highly relevant concept, when we look beyond academic subjects in primary and secondary schools where the bulk of this research has been conducted; early years educators require specific curricular knowledge of the early years foundation stage (EYFS), and further education draws on the specific knowledge and skills of practitioners in much vocational teaching.

There is also evidence that teachers' content knowledge affects their teaching practices. Baumert et al (2010) found that teachers with greater content knowledge have higher levels of pedagogical content knowledge, which itself leads to greater attention to cognitive activation (developing pupils' conceptual knowledge through, for example, summarising and questioning strategies) in their teaching. Muijs & Reynolds (2002) found that teachers who rate their own subject knowledge more highly show higher levels of effective teaching behaviours and better pupil outcomes.

Of course, teachers may have to teach outside of subjects that they are most knowledgeable in. In these cases, the role of support and development are crucial. Well-designed schemes of work are important to support teachers who are teaching out of subject as well as NQTs. In the section on leadership and management, we will discuss some of the evidence that shows that effective continuing professional development (CPD) can play a role in improving subject knowledge.

**Early years** educators need a wide range of specific knowledge, including on children’s physical and mental development, communication, and learning and teaching in specific subjects and areas of development. To teach early mathematics effectively, educators need to know how children develop mathematical understanding and how to assess this development. They need to know how children develop language and literacy, and how to teach early phonics (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018b). The types of knowledge early years teachers need are therefore similar too, but also distinct from those of teachers in the later years of primary and beyond. Like other teachers, they require subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (though the latter of course here refers to early years pedagogy), but there is a greater stress on knowledge of learners, learning and child development, due to the rapid development of children at this age, and on communication. Teachers need to know how children develop and learn and have a clear understanding of possible next steps in their development and learning. A study in the USA found that quality of the classroom environment was lower in classrooms when teachers lacked formal training in early childhood education (Pianta et al, 2002).

Knowledge of context, in particular suitable learning environments, has also been put forward as particularly important to this phase of education (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018b). There is some evidence that teachers who are confident in their subject knowledge are better at recognising learning opportunities in children’s play (Anning & Edwards, 1999).

The Effective Pedagogy in Early Years study highlighted the importance of qualified staff in the early years. This study found that, while the most highly qualified staff provided the most direct teaching, they were also the most effective in their interactions with the children. Furthermore, less qualified staff were significantly better pedagogues when they were supervised by qualified teachers (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2002).

EIF grade criteria:

- Teachers present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught. They check learners’ understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback. In so doing, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary without unnecessarily elaborate or differentiated approaches.
- Teachers create an environment that allows the learner to focus on learning. The resources and materials that teachers select – in a way that does not create unnecessary workload for staff - reflect the provider’s ambitious intentions for the

course of study and clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.

## Research on effective teaching

We can draw on decades of research in **school** and teacher effectiveness to underpin the importance of effective teaching. Classroom practice, and in particular *teaching effectiveness*, is the single most important factor in school effectiveness. Teaching effectiveness is a strong predictor of pupils' progress throughout school, and having a succession of strong or weak teachers can have lasting effects (Muijs et al, 2014; Reynolds et al, 2014; Kyriakides & Creemers, 2008; Muijs & Reynolds, 2003; Sammons et al, 2009).

The most consistently replicated finding in this field is that pupils' attainment is strongly affected by the *quantity and pacing of instruction*. Having the opportunity to learn correlates particularly positively with attainment (Stallings, 1985; Muijs & Reynolds, 2003; Scheerens & Bosker, 1997).

The concept of *opportunity to learn* is a measure of content coverage, which aims to look at what content has actually been taught to pupils. It is determined by the curriculum, but it is also closely connected to factors such as the length of the school year (Raudenbusch & Wilms, 1995). It is influenced by *time on task*, the amount of time that pupils are actively engaged in learning during the lesson, as opposed to engaging in social and other non-educational activities. In their study of teacher effectiveness in the UK, Muijs & Reynolds (2003) found these two factors to be among the most strongly related to pupil outcomes.

### Effective teaching

Research on teaching effectiveness suggests that achievement is likely to be maximised when *teachers actively present material* and *structure* it by:

- providing overviews and/or reviews of objectives
- outlining the content to be covered and signalling transitions between different parts of the lesson
- calling attention to main ideas
- reviewing main ideas.

Summary reviews are also important as they integrate and reinforce the learning of major points. These structuring elements not only facilitate the memorising of information but allow pupils to understand it as an integrated whole, and to recognise the relationships between the parts. This does not, of course, mean that lessons need to follow a particular structure or sequence. These elements can occur at different points in a lesson, or over a sequence of lessons, and can be integrated in different ways and at different times (Rosenshine and Stevens, 1986; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008).

*Clarity of presentation* is consistently related to pupils' attainment. Effective teachers are able to communicate clearly and directly with their pupils, without going beyond pupils' levels of comprehension (Smith & Land, 1981; Walberg, 1986; Muijs & Reynolds, 2003; Muijs et al, 2010).

As far as actual teaching is concerned, research shows that, although there is a significant amount of teacher talk in the classes of effective teachers, most of it is focused on academic content, and much of it involves asking questions and giving feedback rather than extended lecturing (Kyriakides & Creemers, 2008). The focus on teachers actively presenting materials should, therefore, not be seen as lecturing. Questioning of pupils by the teacher, and of the teacher by pupils and by pupils of each other, can be used to check pupils' understanding and can help them clarify and verbalise their thinking. This will help them develop a sense of mastery (Smith et al., 2004; Brophy and Good, 1986; Creemers, 1994). Information is best presented with a degree of repetition, particularly in the form of repeating and reviewing key concepts (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Seidel & Shavelson, 2007).

*Effective questioning* is one of the most widely studied aspects of teaching. We therefore have considerable evidence in this area. Teachers provide substantive feedback to pupils, resulting either from pupils' questions or from answers to teachers' questions. Most questions can elicit correct or at least substantive answers. Correct answers need to be acknowledged in a positive but businesslike fashion. When a pupil answers a question partially correctly, the teacher can prompt that pupil to find the remaining part of the answer before moving on to the next pupil. When a pupil answers a question incorrectly, the teacher needs to point out swiftly that the answer is wrong. If the pupil has answered incorrectly due to inattention or carelessness, the teacher can swiftly move on to the next pupil. If the answer is incorrect due to lack of knowledge, the teacher needs to try and prompt the pupil to answer correctly. Teachers need to make sure that girls and shy pupils, who may be less assertive, have the chance to answer questions (Kyriakides & Creemers, 2009; Muijs & Reynolds, 2017; Brophy & Good, 1986; Askew & William, 1995).

The types of questions asked are typically varied and depend on the knowledge and skills to be mastered. The best strategy would appear to be to use a mixture of recall and higher-order questions, increasing the latter as the level of understanding increases. This does not mean that a mix should be used in all lessons; depending on where the lesson sits within a sequence of lessons about a particular topic, the balance can be strongly towards one or the other. Teachers can use both product questions (calling for a single response from pupils) and process questions (calling for explanations from pupils). Again, the balance will depend on the lesson and topic. Pupils can be encouraged to ask questions, which can be redirected to the class before being answered by the teacher. Relevant pupil comments can be incorporated into the lesson (Smith et al., 2004; Muijs et al, 2010; Kyriakides & Creemers, 2009; Muijs & Reynolds, 2017; Evertson et al, 1980; Brophy & Good, 1986; Askew & William, 1995).

*Group activities and paired work* can contribute to learning, but to work together effectively pupils will require support, and tasks must be clearly structured. If it is to

have benefits, group work requires both that pupils are sufficiently prepared, and that the activity is sufficiently structured, both things that place demands on teachers. Pupils need to be able to share, participate, listen and communicate, and tasks need to be structured so that every pupil has a clear and distinct role (to avoid 'free rider' effects). Pupils are therefore likely to benefit from explicit guidance on how to work collaboratively, from practising routines needed in effective groups and from having clearly assigned roles within a group work task. Teacher prompts and questions need to structure discussion, and active involvement is required to avoid misconceptions being reinforced. Group work should be carefully sequenced alongside other lessons and activities to ensure that pupils have sufficient prior knowledge (Capar and Tarim, 2015; Kutnick and Blatchford, 2014; Education Endowment Foundation, 2018d; Kirschner et al., 2018; Cohen & Lotan, 2014; Muijs & Reynolds, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Pupils are likely to make progress at different rates. As a consequence, they may require different levels and types of support from teachers to succeed (Hattie, 2009; Kriegbaum et al., 2018). *In-class differentiation*, through providing differentiated teaching, activities or resources, has generally not been shown to have much impact on pupils' attainment. In Scheerens and Bosker's (1997) meta-analysis of school effectiveness research, for example, this factor showed no or a very weak relationship with pupils' outcomes. Hattie (2009) likewise found the effect of differentiation to be among the weakest in his influential work on 'Visible Learning'.

On the other hand, *adapting teaching* in a responsive way, for example by providing focused support to pupils who are not making progress, is likely to improve outcomes (Deunk et al., 2018; Education Endowment Foundation, 2018e). However, this type of adaptive teaching should be clearly distinguished from forms of differentiation that cause teachers to artificially create distinct tasks for different groups of pupils or to set lower expectations for particular pupils. In addition, it should be clearly stated that there is no evidence that pupils have distinct and identifiable learning styles (Pashler, 2008; Willingham, 2010). Trying to design tasks with this misconception in mind will increase teachers' workload but is very unlikely to improve learning.

There is similar evidence of the importance of effective teaching from large-scale studies in **early years**. The 'Effective provision of pre-school education' (EPPE) study (Sylva et al, 2010) shows that good early education has significant lasting effects across primary schooling. The recent 'Study of early education and development' (SEED) (Melhuish et al, 2018) confirms this. Other studies using data from Germany (Anders et al, 2013), New Zealand (Wylie & Thompson, 2003) and the USA (Ruhm et al, 2007) show similar effects. This is true for both cognitive and social-emotional outcomes and is particularly important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Melhuish et al, 2018). Most studies suggest that high-quality provision includes both play and adult-directed activities, and minimises time spent on classroom management (e.g. transitions, children waiting for their turn to do an activity) (Hall et al, 2013; de Haan et al, 2013). Moreover, play and adult-directed activities are distinct, and can fulfil different aims. Well-planned play is important to help children practise the use of knowledge and build up skills, to explore and make sense of the

world around them, to learn impulse control and the importance of rules, and to learn to communicate and cooperate with others (Ofsted, 2015; 2018b).

Effective pedagogy consists of both teaching and the provision of instructive and stimulating learning environments and routines, and the latter need to be well planned and developed with clear goals on what learning is intended. There is also evidence of the importance of creating a language-rich environment, teacher sensitivity, smaller child–adult ratios and lower staff turnover. Communication and responding to children is a particularly salient skill for early years practitioners, especially with the youngest children. Sustained shared thinking, where adults engage in longer two-way communication with the child to develop their thinking, has been found to characterise effective EY settings (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2002). Practitioners need to be able to observe children and respond to what they see, based on their knowledge of child development. As for older pupils, teaching and curriculum need to build on the existing knowledge and skills of children (Stipek & Ogana, 2000; Hall et al, 2013; Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2002; Ofsted, 2015).

Both early reading and early numeracy have been found to have a positive impact. Early numeracy aims to develop number skills and improve young children’s knowledge and understanding of early mathematical concepts, through a combination of structured and more informal approaches. The most effective practice combines direct teaching and child-led activities, focuses on a particular discrete skill (such as counting) and allocates a set amount of time to this. In early literacy, a similarly varied approach is required, including activities that aim to develop letter knowledge and early phonics, storytelling and reading to the group. Communicative approaches, in which adults help to develop children’s talking, and verbal expression through modelling language and reasoning have been found to have significant positive effects. These approaches focus on reading aloud, talking about what was read, extending spoken vocabulary by introducing new words in context, and drawing attention to letters and sounds (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018b). Early reading and numeracy are particularly important in settings serving disadvantaged communities (Ofsted, 2015; 2018b).

EIF grade criterion:

- Over the course of study, teaching is designed to help learners to remember in the long term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts.

## Research on memory and learning

Learning is at least in part defined as a change in long-term memory. As Sweller et al (2011) have pointed out, ‘if nothing in the long-term memory has been altered, nothing has been learned’, although there are, of course, other aspects to learning. It is, therefore, important that we use approaches that help pupils to integrate new knowledge into the long-term memory and make enduring connections that foster understanding.

For this, we can draw on a growing evidence base from the 'learning sciences'. Learning sciences is a relatively new interdisciplinary field that seeks to apply understanding generated by cognitive science to classroom practice. While more evaluations in English schools would be valuable (e.g. O'Hare et al., 2017), this field is increasingly generating moderate to strong evidence of practices that can be used to enhance learning across phases and remits (Willingham, 2008).

It is, for example, becoming increasingly clear that using *spaced or distributed practice*, where knowledge is rehearsed for short periods over a longer period of time, is more effective than so-called *massed practice*, where we study more intensively for a shorter period of time. It is therefore good practice to block learning and repeat practice over time, as this leads to better long-term retention of knowledge (Rohrer & Taylor, 2006; Rawson & Kintsch, 2005). A related practice is *interleaving*. Traditionally, most schools use blocking, where practice of particular knowledge happens in blocks (e.g. AAABBBCCC). In interleaving, we instead mix practice of A, B and C (e.g. ABCABCABC). There is growing evidence that this can improve retention, and research in mathematics is particularly promising (Richland et al, 2005; Rohrer et al, 2015).

Another important practice for effective retention of knowledge in the long-term memory is *retrieval practice*. Retrieval practice involves recalling something you have learned in the past and bringing it back to mind; it is far more effective than more frequently used strategies such as re-reading. Retrieval practice strengthens memory and makes it easier to retrieve the information later (Barenberg Roeder & Dutke, 2018; Roediger & Karpicke, 2006). Retrieval practice needs to occur a reasonable time after the topic has been initially taught and needs ideally to take the form of testing knowledge, either by the teacher (for example questioning using flash cards, a test or getting pupils to write a concept map) or through pupil self-testing. It is important that feedback on accuracy is provided either by the teacher or by the pupil checking accuracy for themselves.

What is less clear from the evidence is the amount of time that needs to elapse before retesting or spacing, which appears to depend in part on the lag between when the content was initially taught and when it was tested (Kupper-Tetzel & Erdfelder, 2012).

*Elaboration* is defined as describing and explaining something learned to others in some detail. Ideally, this involves making connections among ideas and connecting the material to one's memory and experiences. It can also be useful for learners to ask themselves or each other questions that require making connections between ideas or explaining them. This can clearly be built into classroom activities (Bisra et al, 2018; Willoughby & Wood, 1994; Weintin, 1978; Pressley et al, 1987; McDaniel & Donnelly, 1996).

In presenting material, teachers can make use of *dual coding*. Dual coding theory suggests that representing information both visually and verbally enhances learning and retrieval from memory. The principle underlying this is that visual and verbal information are processed through different channels in the brain, creating separate



representations for information processed in each channel (Paivio, 1990; Clark & Paivio, 1991). This means that, when recalling information, we can use either the word or the picture associated with it, thus increasing the likelihood that we will remember the concept, as using one representation does not mean we lose the opportunity to use the other. This principle of two memory systems has received experimental support (Mayer & Moreno, 1998; Kounios & Holcomb, 1994; Holcomb & Kounios, 1999). In terms of classroom practice, dual coding theory suggests the use of visuals to support teaching (Paivio, 2006).

An important contribution to learning science is made by *cognitive load theory (CLT)*. CLT is concerned with the architecture of memory and the brain, and in particular the capacity of the short-term memory to process information. The long-term memory consists of a range of schemata, which are complex structures that link knowledge and create meaning and which are built up over time. Experts possess far more detailed and complex schemata than novice learners. Learning is essentially about changing those schemata, through acquiring knowledge and making connections with different schemata. However, before entering long-term memory and developing schemata, information must first be processed by the short-term or working memory. As this has limited capacity, retention of knowledge and development of schemata will not happen if the working memory is overloaded (Kirschner et al, 2006). In educational terms, this suggests teaching in small chunks and not organising activities that require too much memory capacity, until learners acquire the knowledge that allows them to spend less time processing content. The theory has significant empirical support (Kirschner, 2002; Paas et al, 2003), although it needs to be tempered by an understanding of the *expertise reversal effect*. This shows that, among expert learners in a particular subject, enquiry-based approaches work better than the more explicit teaching that works best with novice learners (Kalyuga, 2007).

EIF grade criterion:

- Teachers and leaders use assessment well, for example to help learners embed and use knowledge fluently or to check understanding and inform teaching. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff or learners.

## Research on assessment

There is clear evidence that, if judiciously and effectively employed, assessment can have a positive impact on learning and teaching.

### Formative and summative assessment

*Formative assessment* is designed to inform the teacher about their pupils' performance, knowledge and skills, and this information is then used to plan lessons or remediation to improve pupils' learning. A key part of this type of assessment is feedback to pupils to help them to learn more effectively. Formative assessment has been found to have a significant positive effect on attainment in schools, colleges

and early years settings (Black and William, 1998; Hattie, 2009; Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2002). *Summative assessment* is more useful for general quality control and to provide a picture of how well a pupil (or group of pupils) has performed over a time period on a set of learning goals in a particular subject. In contrast to the view that the two are diametrically opposed, in practice many forms of assessment can be used for both purposes.

Formative assessment involves using assessment in the classroom to raise pupils' achievement. It is based on the idea that pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim (or close the gap in their knowledge). There is a range of evidence that suggests that formative assessment and feedback can improve pupils' learning and attainment. Of course, formative assessment, like most other educational interventions, will not always work for all pupils, and not all studies find positive effects (Bennett, 2011). This is partly because implementation can vary widely, not least as there are a lot of misinterpretations of what formative assessment means. In order for it to have a positive impact, two conditions need to be met:

- pupils are given advice on how to improve
- pupils act on that advice by using the materials provided by the teacher, going to the teacher for help, or working with other pupils (William, 2011).

## Testing

There is a popular misconception that testing and quizzing are detrimental to learners and should be replaced exclusively by formative assessment. This is a mistake, as use of low-stakes testing can contribute to learning in valuable ways. The importance of retrieval practice has been demonstrated (Barenberg, Roeder & Dutke, 2018), and this research shows strong evidence for the *testing effect*, that is, the positive impact of the mental process of learners working to recall knowledge they have previously learned. This has been demonstrated in a large number of experiments, which show that learners who take a test shortly after studying a piece of material do better on a final test than those who do not, even if no feedback is given on the initial test. For that to be the case, the test needs to have a medium to high success rate (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006). Difficult but successful retrievals work better than easier successful retrievals (Pyc & Rawson, 2009). The fact that testing is useful for memory does not of course mean that it needs to be formally recorded as part of data collection or as a form of internal accountability measure.

## Using assessment to guide teaching and curriculum development

Formative assessment is not just about what learners know or can do, but also about the way that *teachers themselves use assessment*. Teachers can use assessment to help them plan lessons, adapt lessons to measured gaps in knowledge and skills, and if necessary re-teach where problems persist. To do this effectively requires pupils to be assessed at the start of a unit of learning, so that instruction can be adapted to the level that pupils are starting from. Assessment needs to be regularly repeated,

and instruction adapted to the results of each assessment (MacCallum, 2000; Muijs et al, 2014).

Assessment emerged as a key factor in phase 2 of our curriculum research programme. In the schools that were particularly invested in curriculum development, most of the leaders we spoke to valued the use of both formative and summative assessment for capturing pupils' progression through the curriculum, although the ways in which they applied this varied. In the best cases, schools used ongoing assessment to check pupils' understanding of the main curriculum elements. They then responded appropriately through adapting their teaching. There was an expectation that the information captured from assessment was to be used for identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and depth of understanding, and to inform and improve future curriculum design.

### Overuse of assessment

The overall value of assessment should of course not obscure the fact that overuse and questionable practice have emerged as major issues in the English education system, and have contributed to overly high workloads among teachers, who report spending eight hours a week on marking (Higton et al, 2017). A misconception has arisen that assessment needs to consist to a large extent of the provision of detailed written feedback and so-called 'deep' marking (Independent Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016), or of the production of photographic evidence on every aspect of child development. As the review above suggests, this is far from the case, and verbal feedback is an appropriate form of feedback in many cases. In early years settings, feedback provided during activities has been found to be particularly effective (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2002).

There are a number of issues associated with the overuse of assessment for measuring progress, which should lead to some caution in their use. Existing tests and systems used in **schools** have been found to be only partially accurate predictors of actual attainment at school level and tend to provide little information on the progress of individual pupils. Data on small groups of pupils is highly susceptible to the effect of one or a small number of individuals with unusually high or low scores; so-called 'outlier effects' (Allen et al, 2018). Therefore, overuse of such data is unlikely to have many benefits, while contributing to increased workload.

### Research on reading

Reading is an essential element of all stages of education. This is underlined by the inclusion of the following EIF grade criterion:

- A rigorous approach to the teaching of reading develops learners' confidence and enjoyment in reading. At the early stages of learning to read, reading materials are closely matched to learners' phonics knowledge.

However, the research in this section relates specifically to the **schools** remit, and in particular to EYFS, key stage 1 and key stage 2.

School inspection handbook criteria:

- Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer.
- A rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading. At all stages, reading attainment is assessed and gaps are addressed quickly and effectively for all pupils. Reading books connect closely to the phonics knowledge pupils are taught when they are learning to read.
- The sharp focus on ensuring that younger children gain the phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read, and the skills to communicate, gives them the foundations for future learning.

If pupils cannot read, they will not be able to access the curriculum, and will be disadvantaged for life. Early deficits can persist throughout primary education, and children who lag behind in reading during pre-school will typically continue to do so for the rest of their schooling (Olofsson & Niedersoef, 1999; Foorman et al, 1997; Sparks et al, 2014). Therefore, while at the later stages – essentially from the start of key stage 2 onwards – we have stressed the importance of a broad curriculum, this is not necessarily the case in key stage 1 or below, where mastering the basic knowledge and skills is crucial.

There is an extensive body of evidence on teaching reading, much of it conducted under the auspices of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in the USA. The NICHD has conducted a large number of systematic studies over almost five decades, involving over 350,000 children. In addition to conducting its own studies, NICHD also conducts extensive syntheses of existing research (e.g. NICHD, 2000).

These studies show that explicit and systematic teaching of the manipulation of phonemes (the smallest unit of sound in a language) and phonemic awareness (the ability to identify phonemes in written words) is crucial and should be continued until children can automatically process this information. Direct instruction in reading comprehension strategies was found to be effective. Children's reading development is also aided by a literature-rich environment and practice in reading authentic literature and familiar materials. Reading aloud is a good way of developing vocabulary, language expression and expressive and receptive language skills. However, while important, authentic literature and rich contexts are not a suitable replacement for explicit teaching of phonics decoding skills (Lyon, 1999; Moats, 1996). The NICHD research has shown that guessing words from their context (the text in which they are embedded) is only accurate about 10% to 20% of the time.

The evidence therefore states that children need to be taught:

- phonemic awareness (the sounds that make up words such as c/a/t)
- the sound–spelling relationships in words

- how to say the sounds that make up words

and to do this by:

- using texts that are made up of words that use the sound–spelling relationships children have learned
- using interesting and authentic stories to develop vocabulary and language comprehension.

Early intervention for pupils with reading difficulties is crucial, as the intensity and duration of reading interventions need to increase as children get older (Lyon, 1999).

These findings in favour of phonics instruction have been replicated in a large number of subsequent studies and syntheses, including in the UK (Torgerson et al., 2006; Gorard et al., 2014; Machin et al., 2018; EEF, 2018; McArthur et al., 2012). Phonics instruction would appear to be particularly beneficial to pupils from disadvantaged and ethnic minority backgrounds (Jeynes, 2007).

There is evidence that the *systematic synthetic* approach is particularly effective. In an influential study in Scotland, Johnston and Watson (2004) compared a group of children taught using synthetic phonics with a group taught using analytic phonics; they found the former to be more effective. A Dutch study reported similar findings (de Graaff et al, 2009). There is also some evidence of long-term effects. A follow-up study in Scotland compared 10-year-old boys and girls who had learned to read using analytic or synthetic phonics methods as part of their early literacy programmes. The pupils taught using synthetic phonics had better word reading, spelling and reading comprehension (Johnston et al, 2012).

The research summarised above clearly points to the crucial importance of direct instruction in phonics for developing pupils' reading ability. This is especially the case for pupils from lower socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds and pupils who are having difficulties reading. Phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle need to be explicitly taught until they become automatic.

Phonics is only one component of learning to read, however. Effective evidence-based reading instruction has five essential components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, all of which matter, providing phonemic awareness and decoding skills are acquired as an essential precondition. (Buckingham et al, 2013). Generating enthusiasm for reading and developing pupils' contextual understanding through exposure to interesting, authentic literature are also important.

Fluency is an important contributor to reading comprehension, after children have achieved secure knowledge of phonics. Fluent readers can read quickly, accurately and with appropriate stress and intonation, which aids comprehension by freeing pupils' cognitive resources to focus on meaning (Swanson and O'Connor, 2009; National Reading Panel, 2000).

There is clear and consistent evidence about the importance of vocabulary development. In addition, a range of studies highlight the extent to which there can be a vocabulary gap between children from disadvantaged families and their peers (e.g. Huttenlocher, 2010 and Gilkerson, 2018). While some older studies have been challenged (e.g. Hart and Risley, 1995; Sperry et al., 2018), the majority of studies, including a recent study surveying teachers in English schools (OUP, 2018), suggest a strong relationship between vocabulary and social background, in addition to finding similar differences related to other communication and language skills, such as turn-taking during talk (Romeo, et al., 2018).

Schooling is central to increasing pupils' vocabulary, as up to 90% of vocabulary is encountered in reading and not in everyday speech. Vocabulary is particularly important to text comprehension, as children's books tend to deploy far less common vocabulary than is found in day-to-day speech (Snow et al, 1998; Stanovich, 1993). However, fiction often does not give access to the more academic vocabulary used for high-level GCSE, A level and beyond. It is therefore concerning that evidence suggests that, while in primary school pupils tend to read books appropriate for their age, this is often not the case in secondary school. Boys in particular tend to read material appropriate for those below their chronological age. Non-fiction texts appear most likely to use overly simple language, and on average are two years behind readers' chronological age (Topping, 2018).

In addition to explicit vocabulary instruction, there is clear evidence that teachers can support comprehension by modelling how expert readers read actively, including by monitoring their understanding, asking questions, making predictions and summarising (Rosenshine, 1997; Oakhill et al., 2014; Davis, 2010; National Reading Panel, 2000; Stuart and Stainthorp, 2015). However, it important to note that the effects of any type of strategy instruction will be limited if pupils lack the requisite vocabulary or background knowledge to engage with a text (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017).

Another central, but often underestimated, aspect of reading comprehension is prior knowledge about the topic of the reading. The more knowledge readers have about the topic of a text, the better they will understand it (Willingham, 2012; Lipson & Cooper, 2002). This may appear just common sense, but in some cases educators have focused on developing generic reading comprehension strategies rather than the subject knowledge required for understanding.

## 2. Behaviour and attitudes

EIF grade criteria:

- The provider has high expectations for learners' behaviour and conduct and applies these expectations consistently and fairly. This is reflected in learners' behaviour and conduct.
- Learners' attitudes to their education or training are positive. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.

- Learners have high attendance and are punctual.
- Relationships among learners and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture. Learners feel safe and do not experience bullying or discrimination.

## Research on high expectations and creating a positive culture

High expectations and a positive climate characterised by respectful interactions are two strongly supported elements of educational effectiveness. The importance of expectations is demonstrated most forcefully by the Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) study 'Pygmalion in the classroom', conducted in the 1960s, in which teachers' expectations were experimentally manipulated. At the start of the school year, teachers were provided with a list of pupils who were said to be expected to bloom intellectually in the coming years on the basis of a test, but who in fact did not differ from their peers at baseline. Pupils were retested on three occasions during that school year and during the following year. Results indicated that 'bloomers' gained more in IQ than did control group children. The effect then wore off among the younger subjects, but grew in strength among older pupils. Grades in reading ability also improved significantly among the experimental group children, who were also rated more positively by their teachers on factors such as intellectual curiosity. Since then, the effect has received considerable empirical support, although the ethical problems with Rosenthal and Jacobson's research mean that the actual study has not recently been replicated (Covington & Beery, 1976; Mortimore et al., 1988; Reynolds et al., 2015; Keirin & Gold, 2000).

Expectations have been found to be related to pupils' ethnic, gender and background characteristics. (Liu & Wang, 2008; Ross & Jackson, 1991). These expectations can affect pupils in a variety of (often subtle) ways. Teachers communicate their expectations to them through:

- verbalisations
- paying closer attention to high-expectancy pupils
- spending more time with them
- failing to give feedback to responses from low-expectancy pupils
- criticising low-expectancy pupils more often
- not waiting as long for the answers of low-expectancy pupils
- calling on them less frequently to answer questions
- asking them only lower-order questions
- giving them more seatwork (e.g. completing worksheets) and low-level academic tasks
- leaving them out of some learning activities (Brophy and Good, 1986).

Although very important, high expectations are not always easy to create in an often data-driven culture, in that teachers may interpret data in a deterministic way that suggests to them that, given a particular baseline, the child is not likely to achieve

highly. As mentioned above, there may also be stereotypical expectations of particular groups. Ways to help alleviate these issues may include a sensitive and informed approach to data use, combatting stereotyping through exemplars and being aware of unconscious bias. Expectations need to be embodied by staff in their day-to-day interactions with pupils and in the way they conduct themselves in and outside of school. All pupils should be held to high standards of behaviour. It is important to remember that expectancy effects can manifest themselves through allowing pupils of whom the teacher has low expectations to behave worse and be off task more often than high-expectancy pupils, and through giving them more punishments and fewer rewards than are given to high-expectancy pupils. In a high-expectancy culture, school leaders emphasise that all pupils can learn and communicate that belief to pupils and staff. Teachers are aware of how often they call on different pupils and what tasks they give them (Muijs et al, 2004; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008).

A positive culture also means creating a positive and empathic environment, in which staff know and care about pupils, and share their vision of the goals of the organisation and of the means of achieving these goals (den Brok et al, 2004).

## **Research on attendance and attainment**

There is a clear link between attendance and attainment. Research by the DfE, for example, shows that, in 2013/14, while 51.5% of pupils with no absences reached level 5 or above at key stage 2 (at the time of the study, a measure suggesting that pupils were achieving above expectations in English and mathematics), this declined to 25.7% among pupils who missed more than 10% to 15% of lessons. Similarly, at key stage 4 there was a linear decline from 78.4% of no-absence pupils attaining five or more A\* to C grades to 35.6% attaining this among pupils with 10% to 15% absence. When the researchers controlled for key pupil characteristics such as prior attainment, SEND, free school meal (FSM) eligibility and gender, the relationship was weaker but still statistically significant. For pupils with the same prior attainment and background characteristics, there was a reduction of around 1.8% in the likelihood of achieving five A\* to C grades at GCSE, and a reduction of around 2.1% in the likelihood of achieving the EBacc for each one-session increase in overall absence across key stage 4. At key stage 2, there was a weaker but still significant decrease in the likelihood of reaching level 4 and above of 0.2%, and of reaching level 5 and above of 0.4% among pupils with high levels of absence (DfE, 2015).

In terms of ways of improving attendance, the strongest evidence appears to be around providing clear pathways from education to next steps such as higher education or employment and providing a high-quality curriculum and teaching experience. There is a relationship between increased temporary drop-out from, and poor behaviour in, class and subsequent chronic non-attendance, so early identification of pupils and targeted intervention may be helpful, though the evidence is rather mixed (Institute for Education Sciences, 2017). Work with parents is particularly helpful in primary and early years (Taylor, 2012). In further education, early identification of poor attenders and those disengaged in class, high-quality



teaching, and a whole-provider ethos and focus on attendance have been found to be effective strategies (Ofsted, 2013).

As well as attendance, time on task is a key predictor of attainment (as mentioned in the section on effective teaching). Time on task is maximised by ensuring that lesson time is fully used for teaching, and that during that time pupils are on task (Muijs et al, 2014). To ensure the former, punctuality is important. While little data exists, one methodologically strong study using a longitudinal dataset for primary school pupils in Philadelphia shows not only that tardiness has a negative impact on the attainment of the tardy pupil, but also that there is an overall effect of peer tardiness on the attainment of pupils in the class (Gottfried, 2014).

## **Research on behaviour and attainment**

Behaviour is obviously crucial to maximising time on task, and to minimising bullying and violent behaviour outside as well as inside the classroom. Creating a sufficiently disciplined environment in **school** and classroom is a prerequisite to any learning taking place. This is not primarily an individual classroom issue, however, but a whole-school one, as consistency and ensuring that the school supports teachers who follow its policies are crucial to effective behaviour management. Behaviour policies need to be set for all aspects of school life, not just classroom practice, and increasingly need to cover certain types of behaviours outside of school, such as interaction on social media (Reynolds et al, 2015; Doyle, 1986; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2014) as this often spills over into school life. Good whole-school behaviour management policies provide a clear framework of policies and procedures that need to be rigorously applied; they include attention to school culture, leadership, and pupil and teacher behaviours (Nobile et al, 2015). Implementation that includes clear leadership support for teachers and buy-in from key stakeholders is essential to making whole-school behaviour policies work (Sugai et al, 2000).

### **The importance of consistency**

For behaviour management, as much as for effective teaching, consistency is vital. Consistency across practices is important for pupils, who benefit from clear expectations of what is typically going to happen in lessons and of what is expected of them behaviourally. One of the reasons for this is that young people, in particular adolescents, are developmentally attuned to concepts of fairness that may be challenged by differential treatment by different teachers or of different pupils (Crone, 2013; Guroglu et al, 2009).

Behaviour norms need to be set at the start of school attendance and reinforced frequently. Some secondary schools are using intensive programmes that aim to instil behaviour expectations in pupils before they start school. While more evaluations of such approaches would be valuable, there is evidence that confusion about standards is likely to lead to worse behaviour (Luiselli et al, 2005). Involving pupils in setting rules can enhance ownership and thus buy-in, and typically does not result in less stringency as sometimes feared (Rudduck & Flutter, 2003; Coe et al, 2014).

Consistency in terms of behavioural expectations is also important in **early years** settings. Young children benefit from a warm and empathic but also rule-based environment. Developing self-regulation and the ability to follow direction are important elements of early child development and are assisted by an environment in which clear rules are consistently enforced. There is evidence that clear discipline and behaviour policies that prioritise talking through conflicts characterises effective behaviour management in early years settings (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2002). In their study of effective pedagogy in early years, Siraj-Blatchford et al (2002) found that in less effective settings there was often no follow up on children's misbehaviour. Children were instead 'distracted' from interfering with other children, or simply instructed to stop.

### **Different approaches to managing behaviour**

A range of different behaviour management models exist, from 'no excuses'/'zero tolerance' systems in which all behaviour transgressions are immediately dealt with, on the principle that not doing so may lead to escalation and a culture of uncertainty and freedom from consequences, to systems that recommend ignoring minor misdemeanours, as constantly dealing with misbehaviour may reduce effective learning time (Arends et al, 1998). Evidence of the relative effectiveness of these different approaches is currently inconclusive, and likely to depend on context, although there is some, albeit limited, evidence of a positive relationship between zero tolerance approaches and attainment (Krowka et al, 2017).

For a 2017 DfE study (Bennett, 2017), a number of English schools were visited, which were identified as having very effective behaviour management or had shown rapidly improving pupil behaviour. The study involved interviews with practitioners, advisory panel round-table discussions with experts and 20 independent case studies. This study identified the following features as contributors towards effective behaviour management in schools:

- committed, highly visible school leaders, with ambitious goals, supported by a strong leadership team
- effectively communicated, realistic and detailed expectations understood clearly by all members of the school
- highly consistent working practices throughout the school
- a clear understanding of what the school culture is and what values the school holds
- high levels of staff and parental commitment to the school's vision and strategies
- high levels of support between leadership and staff, for example in staff training
- attention to detail and thoroughness in the execution of school policies and strategies

- high expectations of all students and staff, and a belief that all students matter equally

(Bennett, 2017, p. 7).

In light of the relatively limited evidence base on managing behaviour in England, Ofsted has carried out a research study on this topic, the findings of which will be reported in early 2019.

Use of exclusions is an essential part of behaviour management systems, used as a last resort when behaviour becomes unmanageable, misbehaviour is persistent, or behaviour is threatening the safety of other pupils or adults in the school. While exclusions in England have been rising over recent years, they are historically still relatively low compared to rates from the mid-1990s up to the mid-2000s (DfE, 2012; 2017). They are, however, significantly higher than in the rest of the UK nations (Evans, 2010). The impact of exclusions on the excluded pupil can be negative, and some studies report correlations with mental health issues, lower rates of future involvement in education, employment and training, and offending (Ford et al, 2018; Daniels, 2018; Sanders et al, 2018; Hayden, 2003). Excluded pupils are more likely to be boys, eligible for FSM and with SEND (Department for Education, 2018a).

## Research on bullying and discrimination

Bullying and discrimination remain persistent and worrying phenomena in and outside of schools. While there is no convincing evidence that the overall prevalence of bullying is increasing, there is also little evidence of a decrease, notwithstanding the range of initiatives that have sought to address it (Smith, 2015). Bullying can target 'protected characteristics', such as race, religion or sexual orientation, and has been found to particularly affect pupils with protected characteristics (O'Malley et al, 2014; Connell et al, 2016; Scherr & Larson, 2010; Brown & Taylor, 2008).

While obviously a major issue in itself, there is also evidence that bullying can have a negative impact on pupil attainment, and that reducing bullying can be associated with improved attainment (Brown & Taylor, 2008; Fonagy et al, 2005). There is increasing evidence that **schools** can and do have an impact on the prevalence of bullying. Although the number of studies is still limited, international evidence suggests that schools may explain at least some of the variance in prevalence rates of bullying (Galand et al, 2014; Kyriakides & Creemers, 2013; Kyriakides et al, 2014). In a recent study of primary schools in England, 17% of the variance in bullying prevalence was explained by differences between schools (Muijs, 2017). There is also significant evidence that some school-level interventions have had a significant impact on reducing the prevalence of bullying (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011).

In terms of the school and classroom factors that contribute to differences in levels of bullying, research suggests that physical characteristics such as school and class size are less significant than is often suggested, while intake characteristics and attainment are significant in some, but not other, studies (Swearer et al, 2010;

Galand et al, 2014). The main factors related to prevalence of bullying appear to be associated with school and classroom culture. Cook et al (2010), in their meta-analysis, suggest that bullying is more prevalent in 'schools with a negative atmosphere', while a recent large-scale study in Colorado found perceptions of a negative school climate measured at 'time 1' to be significantly related to self-reported bullying perpetration one year later ('time 2'), controlling for time 1 bullying (Gendron et al, 2011). Kyriakides & Creemers (2013) found that teacher–student relationships, policies for behaviour outside the classroom (for example, fighting in the playground), partnerships between school and parents, and evaluation of the quality of the school learning environment are significantly related to lower levels of bullying. In a study of UK primary schools, levels of bullying were found to be lower in schools that have created an environment in which equality of opportunity and social cohesion (the willingness of pupils from different backgrounds to cooperate with each other) are strong. Consistent implementation, evaluation and adaptation of policies, and recording of incidents are also related to lower prevalence of bullying (Muijs, 2017).

### 3. Personal development

EIF grade criteria:

- The curriculum extends beyond the academic, technical or vocational and provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents.
- The curriculum and the provider's wider work support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence – and help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.
- At each stage of education, the provider prepares learners for future success in their next steps.
- The provider prepares learners for life in modern Britain by: equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society; developing their understanding of fundamental British values; developing their understanding and appreciation of diversity; celebrating what we have in common and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.

Character, resilience and British values such as tolerance are important characteristics, which we want to develop in children and young people. Education should help prepare learners to lead ethical, productive and fulfilling lives and to contribute positively to society.

#### Research on self-belief, resilience and character

*Self-belief*, an overarching term for a set of often overlapping and highly correlated concepts such as self-confidence, self-concept and self-efficacy, has been found to be slightly but significantly related to subsequent attainment (Valentine et al, 2004), while, conversely, there is a significant effect of attainment on self-belief, and the latter effect is typically stronger than the former (Marsh & Martin, 2011; Pinxten et al, 2013; Muijs, 1997). There is also evidence of a significant if not particularly strong

effect of school on self-belief (e.g. van de Gaer et al, 2009). This raises the question of what educators can do to enhance learners' self-confidence and self-belief. There are, of course, a number of interventions in existence, supported by varying levels of evidence, but, in terms of what factors in the day-to-day life of a provider can make a difference, it is again the case that the main factor seems to be climate. Creating a supportive environment with clear boundaries is particularly important. This means that, while supportive and caring, schools, for example, should also be disciplined, orderly environments with clear, though not stifling, rules and procedures (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017). There are clear benefits to providing pupils with responsibilities and roles through which they can develop self-confidence. Expectations, as mentioned in the section on effective teaching, can also affect self-belief (Podesta, 2001). However, as the impact of achievement on belief appears stronger than the reverse, the key to promoting positive self-belief is to ensure that pupils experience successful learning in school.

*Resilience*, alongside its related concept, 'grit', has become a popular concept in education over recent years. In general, resilience is about adjusting to adversity when it happens and bouncing back afterwards. It has been defined as: 'The process of effectively negotiating, adapting to sources of stress, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma' (Rook et al, 2018; Windle, 2011). There is general agreement that resilience is both a *trait*, i.e. a relatively stable aspect of personality, and a *dynamic process*, i.e. a personal behaviour that changes over time and therefore can be influenced by training and development (Chmitorz et al, 2018; Windle, 2011). Resilience develops through interaction between the person and the environment (Beltman et al, 2011). It is closely related to a range of other concepts in mental health and well-being. In education, the term 'resilience' has been used in a number of ways. 'Academic resilience' is typically used to refer to the extent to which pupils recover from setbacks in attainment, or overcome disadvantages of low prior attainment or social background (e.g. Borman & Rachuba, 2001). 'Resilience' is also used in the broader sense defined above, however, either to refer to children who have overcome a non-school-related trauma (e.g. Masten et al, 1988), or more generally as a life disposition that can in part be developed through education (e.g. Olsson et al, 2003). There is evidence that resilience, along with optimism and self-control, can help explain why some pupils from highly disadvantaged backgrounds do better in terms of educational and life outcomes than others from the same background (Tough 2012).

Research on resilience as overcoming non-school-related trauma typically focuses on specific interventions in high-trauma contexts (e.g. Ebersohn & Ferreira, 2011, in the context of schools experiencing high levels of AIDS/HIV). In terms of academic resilience, evidence again supports climate-based models over the effect of peers or the more traditional school effectiveness factors. Caring and supportive teachers, a safe and orderly school environment, high expectations, opportunities for pupils to become involved in the life of the school, and good relationships between school and parents appear to be part of a 'community'-oriented climate that can foster academic resilience, in particular among disadvantaged pupils (Borman & Rachuba, 2001).

Most recent interest has been on the extent to which **schools** can foster resilience as a disposition. Here there is, however, relatively limited evidence of a school effect, with school factors explaining 3% of the variance in resilience between pupils in one of the few studies to have looked at this (Gutman & Feinstein, 2008). The school factors that seem to make a difference within this limited amount of variance are ensuring that pupils achieve academically, or in areas such as sports or arts (Hill et al, 2007). A supportive climate, good relationships between school and parents and a whole-school approach to tackling physical and mental health (see below) have also been advocated as promoting resilience, although the evidence for this is modest (Public Health England, 2014).

In **early years**, resilience is often linked to competence and the development of positive relations with adults and peers. Parenting is seen as key, but early years settings can contribute to the development of resilience through creating opportunities for the development of positive relations with peers and the creation of a warm but rule-governed structure (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

Resilience is sometimes discussed alongside the concept of character. As with resilience, there are definitional challenges with this term, and research in this area can explore a wide range of outcomes (Gutman and Schoon, 2013). The evidence base in this area is underdeveloped. However, intentionally investing in character education using a whole-school approach, modelling desired behaviours at both school and teacher level, integrating character development with a strong curriculum rather than doing this as a standalone separate activity, developing pupils' intrinsic motivation, shared core values and positive relationships have been posited as key ways in which schools can develop pupils' character (Lickona et al, 2002; Berkowitz et al, 2016).

## **Research on physical and mental health**

There is little research on the effects of schools or other settings on *physical health*, although there are a number of intervention studies. There is existing evidence that **schools** vary in their pupils' use of drugs and smoking. Differences between schools in this respect tend to be related to pupil intake characteristics and school culture (Aveyard et al, 2004). In a longitudinal study of Scottish pupils who were followed from the end of primary school (age 11) to age 16, West et al (2004) found that the school attended explains the difference between 2% (drugs in primary schools) and 7% (healthy diet in secondary schools) of the variance in four health outcomes (drug use, drinking, smoking, healthy diet). The main school-level predictors of health outcomes are pupils' levels of engagement with education and the perceived quality of pupil–parent relationships. In our own study on obesity in primary schools, we found a relative lack of variance in practices between primary schools, which results in limited differences between schools (Ofsted, 2018a).

In terms of promoting healthy behaviours, holistic whole-school interventions focusing on including healthy behaviours in the curriculum, providing a healthy and safe environment, and involving health services and the community, are most likely to have a positive impact on health outcomes, although effects tend to be small

(Langford et al, 2014). Ofsted's study on obesity in primary schools identified that individual schools can have little impact on children's levels of obesity. That said, it suggests that it is right for schools to focus on those things they do well, such as:

- planning a challenging and well-sequenced curriculum, including learning about the body in physical education (PE), and about healthy eating and cooking in science
- providing opportunities for children to take physical exercise during the school day, including lots of opportunities to 'get out of breath'
- teaching particular skills like how to cook or how to dance
- updating parents on their children's physical development, such as agility, balance and coordination (Ofsted, 2018a).

School effects on *mental health* have been widely argued, but there is far less empirical research on whether the school attended makes a difference to the mental health of pupils. In their study of school and classroom effects on mental health in Sweden, Modin & Ostberg (2009) found that school and classroom explain around 2.5% of variance. The main factor that predicts different school-level effects is school climate, measured through variables such as pupils' opinions being taken seriously, pupils getting help from teachers, and teaching being interesting (as reported by pupils). Schochet et al (2006) meanwhile found a significant relationship between adolescents' feelings of belonging in school and their mental health. A recent study of adolescents in 40 secondary schools in England shows that, compared to schools with an excellent Ofsted rating, those rated requires improvement report lower well-being (McGowan et al, 2018).

In terms of intervention, it would appear that the most effective approaches focus broadly on well-being and promote strengths rather than primarily focusing on poor mental health. A whole-school approach that incorporates these factors in the curriculum as well as targeted support, staff development, working with parents and developing a positive climate, has been found to have a positive effect on both physical and mental health (Public Health England, 2015). Again, school climate appears to be the predominant factor, with connectedness to the school, a respectful and warm climate, positive relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils, consistency and use of routines, and low levels of disruption and conflict found to promote well-being (Weare & Nind, 2011; Weare, 2015; Greenberg & Jennings, 2009; Public Health England, 2014). Early identification is often seen as crucial (Weare & Nind, 2011), although there is little evidence for the effectiveness of early screening programmes (Anderson et al, 2018).

### **No contradiction between a focus on learning and well-being**

There is often a tendency to see a focus on well-being as being in contradiction to a focus on the academic curriculum. There is, however, little evidence for this. Certainly, within Western education systems there is limited support of a negative correlation between measures of well-being and a focus on learning in most studies, with either no relationship or a weak positive relationship typically found

(Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2000; Vignoles & Meschi, 2010; Van Petegem et al, 2008). It is important in this respect to remember that academic achievement itself can lead to positive socio-emotional outcomes for pupils, such as enhanced self-concept and attitudes to learning (Muijs, 1997; Marsh et al, 2011).

## Research on citizenship

There is a longstanding tradition of research into the relationship between education and *citizenship* – being actively involved in society, and carrying out one’s duties and responsibilities as a member of that society – including such factors as attitudes to democracy and tolerance. Generally, this research points to a clear correlation between education, typically defined by highest qualification achieved or number of years spent in education, and attitudes. This is both at the individual and societal levels (Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009; Hoskins et al., 2008). When it comes to the actions of individual schools, school and classroom climate appear important. An open school and classroom climate, in which there are opportunities for debate and discussion, matter as much as formal teaching of particular values or political knowledge (Hoskins & Mok, 2017). In addition, participation in activities (e.g. debating societies) and organisations both inside and outside of school offers unique training in civic practices (Youniss and Yates, 1997). If these activities and development are to have a positive effect, it is important that they are not limited to pupils studying politics or associated subjects, as sometimes appears to be the case (Liu, 2017).

## In summary

In drawing together research across these aspects of personal development, it appears that it is not so much individual actions of the school, but attention to climate and culture that matter. School climates that are supportive and nurturing, while also promoting discipline and boundaries, and that actively nurture belonging to school and pupil involvement, show widespread benefits. Where specific interventions are adopted, it is important to make sure that they fit the context of the school and are implemented thoroughly, consistently and with fidelity. Interventions most often work if they are implemented in full (Weare & Nind, 2011). Evaluations typically show that well-coordinated whole-school approaches are most likely to have an impact, while uncoordinated small-scale interventions are not. Support from the senior leadership team is essential (Weare, 2015; Banerjee et al, 2014).

## 4. Leadership and management

Leadership is the most important school-level factor in most effectiveness studies (Reynolds et al, 2014; Sammons et al, 2011). While this may seem obvious, for a long period effectiveness research showed a rather mixed picture, as not all studies found an effect of leadership on pupil outcomes. Primarily, this was because direct effect models were used, which suggested that what leaders do has a direct impact on pupil attainment. However, theoretically, leadership does not have this direct effect, but rather helps create the conditions under which teachers can be optimally



effective, which in turn should result in higher levels of pupil performance. This is indeed what most studies that have looked at more subtle and indirect ways of measuring the impact of leadership have found (Muijs, 2011; Hallinger, 2011). School leadership explains 5% to 7% of the variation in pupil attainment, but about one quarter of the variation explained by school factors in total (Leithwood et al, 2006). Leadership effects are primarily indirect, and they appear mainly to work through the organisational variable of school mission or goals and through variables related to curriculum and instruction (Leithwood et al, 2010).

There is no single appropriate way of leading a school. Effective leadership is dependent on school context and phase, and influenced by the current conditions of the school (Day et al, 2010). Nevertheless, there are common features identified in the literature on effective school leadership.

EIF grade criteria:

- Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice.
- Leaders focus on improving staff's subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge of staff are built up and improve over time.

## Research on vision and a focus on the quality of education

Leadership starts with *vision*. School effectiveness research has long shown that a factor that distinguishes highly effective **schools** is that they are underpinned by a clear, shared vision, which is driven by (but does not have to solely originate from) the headteacher or principal (Teddlie & Reynolds, 1999). In their three-year study of effective school leaders, Day et al (2010, pp.5) found that effective headteachers have 'a strong and clear vision and set of values for their school, which heavily influenced their actions and the actions of others, and established a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school. These were shared widely, clearly understood and supported by all staff. *They were a touchstone against which all new developments, policies or initiatives were tested.*' Building vision and setting direction are also identified as one of seven key leadership strategies in Leithwood et al's (2006) review, which also suggests that staff involvement in setting direction can aid ownership. However, in the early stages of school turnaround, a more directive approach may be required.

School effectiveness research has put a lot of emphasis on *instructional leadership* as a key driver in effective schools. Instructional leadership is characterised by hands-on involvement with teaching and learning processes, and by leaders leading on pedagogy, curriculum and instruction, rather than taking a more hands-off role and concentrating on administration. Instructional leadership has been described as 'those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in pupil learning, make instructional quality the top priority of the school, and bring that

vision to realization' (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Instructional leaders have a pedagogical and curricular vision and expertise. An instructional leader promotes common approaches to factors such as teaching and behaviour management in the school, monitors teaching, and makes sure that professional development focuses on teaching and learning. In many cases, instructional leaders start the process of school improvement by implementing a particular initiative promoting a particular curricular or pedagogical approach. Leaders focus on enhancing teaching and learning, which includes improving the physical conditions for learning. Teachers are supported in developing teaching approaches (Day et al, 2010).

The importance of vision and instructional leadership can be found across phases. In the EPPE study of effective **early years** settings, for example, leadership was characterised by a clear vision, especially with regard to pedagogy and curriculum. This vision was shared by all staff in the provider. This is facilitated by having a trained teacher as leader or manager of the EY setting (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2006). What the content of the vision and focus of instructional leadership is will differ across phases. In early years, for example, there is a need for leaders to have a good understanding of the particular child development needs at this stage. Leaders in early years typically understand and emphasise the importance of both formal teaching and play, and make sure that early literacy and mathematics learning lie at the heart of practice and development, and that teachers have the knowledge and professional development to teach across these areas (Ofsted, 2015; 2018b). They tend to have a strongly child-focused orientation, though in the most effective settings a focus on educational development predominates (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2006). In further education there is a particular emphasis on distributed leadership, with much of the instructional leadership residing at programme level in the large and dispersed providers in this phase (Muijs et al, 2004).

The role of senior leaders is also clear in Ofsted's curriculum study. In curriculum-engaged schools studied in phase 2, as well as in the most engaged schools studied in phase 3, senior leaders had a clear vision for the overall curriculum of the school, and ensured accountability for the curriculum. They cannot, of course, be expert in every aspect of curriculum, so they ensure that subject leaders are given autonomy to lead on subject curriculum within the shared vision and accountability framework of the school. This distribution of leadership is crucial to sustainability. Day et al (2010) likewise stress curriculum leadership in their review, finding that the heads in their study focus on redesigning and enriching the curriculum. Leaders in our curriculum study were also clear that access to a high-quality curriculum is a right for all pupils.

What can be unhelpful in current definitions of instructional leadership is the way they can suggest an opposition between instructional leadership and administrative and other management tasks, which are a key component of the leadership role (Hallinger, 2011). In fairness to authors in the field, instructional leadership is usually seen as a matter of degree rather than an absolute, and it is acknowledged that administrative functions remain an important component of leaders' work. There is significant empirical support for instructional leadership, and the relationship between instructional leadership and educational outcomes is quite well established

(Day et al, 2016; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993; Hallinger, 2011; Horng & Loeb, 2010; Marks & Printy, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

## Professional development

Essential to instructional leadership is professional development. There is clear evidence that both the quantity and quality of professional development are related to **school** effectiveness and improvement, and that in countries that are high performing on international tests such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), teachers spend more time on professional development (Higgins et al, 2014; Schleicher, 2018). The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) found that teachers who take part in curriculum-focused professional development are more likely to report using a variety of the instructional methods considered in this review (European Commission, 2014). In the EPPE study of **early years** settings, staff members in the effective settings were encouraged to attend staff development, although what these looked like differed quite markedly (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2006). There is evidence that well-designed CPD programmes can have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes (Higgins et al, 2014). However, we also know that a lot of professional development has no effect, or at least none that influences pupils' learning and attainment. There is a body of research on what constitutes effective professional development, and a number of major reviews have summarised these studies.

A major 'review of reviews' by Cordingley et al (2015) for the Teacher Development Trust in England found a number of factors that characterise effective CPD programmes:

- Longer programmes tend to be more effective than short-term interventions, and most effective CPD has to last at least two terms to have an impact. However, time in itself is not the most important factor; it is what is done within that time that really matters.
- Effective CPD requires follow-up, practice and support. Just as with pupils, you cannot just teach something and expect it to be remembered and implemented.
- CPD needs to be relevant to the everyday work of teachers for it to have impact.
- CPD needs to be differentiated by teachers' starting points, and should not just have a one-size-fits-all approach.
- CPD can allow teachers to engage in peer learning and collaboration.
- Subject knowledge and pedagogy (effective teaching) are equally important, although generic topics (e.g. assessment for learning) are best embedded within a particular subject.
- CPD has to have clear goals and progression.
- The most effective CPD has some external input. External providers can:
  - make the knowledge base in their field available to participants

- introduce participants to new knowledge and skills
  - help teachers believe they can make a difference to pupil outcomes, even those of pupils in the most disadvantaged circumstances
  - make links between professional learning and pupil learning explicit through discussion of pupil progression and analysis of assessment data
  - act as mentors and facilitators, not just as teachers or lecturers.
- CPD activities can build in classroom practice and experimentation, to ensure that transfer of learning to the classroom occurs.
  - Teachers need to understand the underlying theory of or rationale for what they are being taught.
  - Effective CPD fosters teachers' metacognitive skills.

Teachers' professional development needs to be built on and into subject content and often develops both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Ideally, it should be curriculum aligned, be of substantial duration, and actively involve the teachers in learning and reflection. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development TALIS survey, which is a large-scale international survey of teachers and principals, found that teachers in England spend a lot of time on short courses and in workshops, but little time on more in-depth activities (Micklewright et al, 2014).

## Consistency

Consistency is one of the key factors that distinguish more effective from less effective schools and is a central part of models of school effectiveness. It is, for example, not typically the case that schools that are ineffective do not have any effective teachers. Rather, they tend to show great variation in effectiveness, while highly effective schools have largely eliminated any ineffective practice and reduced variation (Reynolds, 2010; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2010; Ko & Sammons, 2014).

Creating coherence means ensuring that practices at different levels are aligned, so, ideally, school-level policies should be mirrored in departmental policies and in classroom and school practices (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008). Key ways of achieving this are through creating a strong, shared vision and ethos in the school, ensuring accountability within the school, and creating learning within the school, so best practice can quickly spread throughout the organisation. In these ways, schools can *reduce within-school variation (WSV)*. This necessitates focused leadership and an openness to learn within the organisation. Reducing WSV should not of course result in inflexibly uniform practice regardless of a school's culture, traditions and existing improvement plans. Rather, it is intended to ensure that practices that the school has identified as effective for improving learning and raising pupil achievement are adopted as widely as possible across all subjects. In short, reducing WSV can help to ensure that effective practice becomes everyday practice for all (Reynolds, 2012).

In part by creating coherence and consistency, leaders play a key role in ensuring that schools are able to introduce and implement change effectively. This also includes ensuring that implementation is a structured process, where leaders actively plan, resource, monitor and embed significant changes, such as the introduction of new curriculums or behaviour management systems (Dyssegaard et al., 2017; Education Endowment Foundation, 2018f).

School inspection handbook grade criterion:

- Leaders aim to ensure that all learners complete their programmes of study. They provide the support for staff to make this possible and do not allow gaming or off-rolling.

## Research on off-rolling

The practice of off-rolling, whereby pupils are removed from **school** rolls before they can take part in national examinations, is one that is causing increasing concern as evidence of the scale of the problem grows. Removing children purely for the purposes of boosting results is illegal. Of course, there may be a need for individual pupils to move to a more appropriate provider, but wholesale moves suggest that in some cases schools are using the process to 'game' accountability measures, with possible detrimental effects on pupils (see section on exclusions in 'Behaviour and attitudes'), and on the validity of accountability measures. Research by Education Datalab (2018) shows clearly that there is a spike in the number of pupil moves in Year 10, the year before they usually take GCSEs. Its analyses also show that the problem appears to be increasing.

Ofsted conducted an analysis of pupil-level data from the DfE's school census and tracked pupils that were in Year 10 in 2016 and would be expected to be in Year 11 of the same school in 2017. More than 19,000 pupils did not progress from Year 10 to Year 11 of the same state-funded secondary school (Bradbury, 2018). Many of these 19,000 pupils moved to another state-funded school, but approximately half did not appear in the census of any state-funded school. We found that pupils with SEND, pupils eligible for FSM, children looked after and children from some ethnic minority groups were more likely to be affected, which illustrates the equity issues involved with this practice.

Off-rolling is more likely to occur in London and is more prevalent in academies than local authority schools. Conversely, local authority schools seem to be taking on proportionately more pupils. We developed a statistical model that used pupil characteristics to predict 'typical' levels of off-rolling. This allowed us to then identify those schools that have significantly higher levels of off-rolling than would be statistically expected. We identified 300 schools with significantly higher than predicted rates of off-rolling over the past two years, which suggests that the problem is highly concentrated in a small number of schools (Bradbury, 2018).

School inspection handbook grade criterion:

- Leaders engage effectively with learners and others in their community, including – where relevant – parents, carers, employers and local services.

## Research on parental and community engagement

That the extent to which parents care about and are involved in their children’s education matters is undisputed. The clearest evidence is on the impact of the involvement of parents in their children’s learning (Desforges, 2003; Higgins & Katsiparasis, 2015). In most studies, greater parental involvement is associated with better outcomes. In a meta-analysis of 37 studies, for example, Castro et al (2015) found a positive moderate relationship between parental involvement and pupil attainment. However, while the value of parental involvement is clear, less is known about how to effectively engage parents with their children’s education, particularly for children from disadvantaged families. For example, engaging parents can be challenging if they feel they did not succeed at school. It tends to be easier to get parents involved at the earlier stages of their children’s education (especially early years and primary) than later on (Desforges, 2003; Higgins & Katsipataki, 2015).

There is some evidence that providing practical advice on how parents can support learning at home can be effective. For example, for younger children schools might promote shared book reading, while for older children an emphasis might be placed on developing homework routines and effective study habits (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018c). In addition, some schools have successfully improved parental involvement by focusing on the way they communicate with parents. For example, there is some evidence that tailored weekly text messages can be effective in improving attendance and attainment (York et al., 2014; Miller et al. 2016). In some cases, targeted work with parents may be productive, but care needs to be taken not to engage in overly time-consuming activities where pay-off may be limited (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018c).

The EPPE study of **early years** settings showed that home educational provision and consistency across home and early years setting (and between parents and early years staff) promotes achievement for young children (Sylva et al., 2010), a finding also reported in a number of other studies (e.g. Arvizu, 1996; Epstein 1989). In the EPPE study the most effective settings provided parents with regular information through records of achievement and monthly meetings with key workers. They focus on what they are teaching the children and report regularly on the children’s achievements. This allows parents to complement the learning done in the setting and enhances consistency between home and provider (Sylva et al, 2010; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2006).

The leaders in Day et al’s (2010) study clearly recognise the importance of relationships with the local community. They see building and improving the reputation of the school and engaging with the wider community as essential to

achieving long-term success. They work to build strong links with local organisations and have links to key stakeholders in their communities.

EIF grade criterion:

- Leaders engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way they manage staff including their workload.

## Research on staff well-being

Staff well-being and workload are central concerns in the education sector. According to the 'Labour force survey' (LFS), teaching is one of the three professions with the highest reports of stress and depression, at a rate of 2.64 cases per 100 professionals compared with 1.23 cases for all occupational groups (UK Health and Safety Executive, 2017). A National Audit Office (2017) report revealed that, in 2016, 35,000 teachers left their jobs for reasons other than retirement. Sixty-seven percent of **school** leaders reported that workload is a barrier to teacher retention. Similarly, in a study commissioned by the DfE, classroom teachers and middle leaders reported that they worked, on average, 54.4 hours during the reference week in March 2016, including the weekend (Higton et al, 2017). Research suggests that teachers in England work longer hours than those in other countries, and there is evidence that occupational well-being can be low (Sellen, 2016). In a large-scale survey by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) (2017), 79% of teachers reported that their job had impacted negatively on their well-being, and 60% stated that they felt that their well-being was not considered important by their school. More than half (55%) of teachers stated that the job had adversely affected their mental health in the last 12 months, and half said that the job had adversely affected their physical health.

These issues led Ofsted to conduct a research project on occupational well-being in **schools and colleges**. This project consists of three main parts: a literature review on occupational and teacher well-being, a survey and a series of case study visits to schools and colleges.

The survey took place in two phases: it was run in June/July 2018 and again in November 2018. The survey measured overall occupational well-being as well as specific aspects thereof and contained questions on key predictors of teacher well-being. The survey was sent out to a random sample of schools and colleges to be distributed to leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.

In June/July, we received responses from 499 teachers, 94 members of SLTs and 88 classroom assistants. The findings from the first phase of the survey confirm the picture that has emerged from other studies. Fifty-nine percent of teachers, 35% of senior leaders and 47% of classroom assistants reported low to medium levels of overall occupational well-being. Over 50% of teachers and senior leaders disagree or strongly disagree that they have an acceptable workload (the percentage for classroom assistants was 13%), and 70% of leaders and 48% of teachers work out

of hours every day. This points to a lack of work–life balance and confirms findings from the NASUWT (2017) survey, in which over 80% of teachers said that they felt too tired to enjoy doing the things they like to do and only 10% said that they had enough time and energy for hobbies. However, 50% of teachers and 65% of leaders agree or strongly agree that their workload is suitable for their skills set.

There are also some more positive findings: 78% of teachers, 89% of classroom assistants, and 85% of school leaders agree or strongly agree that overall they are satisfied with their job, and over 80% of teachers and leaders agree that their job gives them a feeling of work well done.

When asked what factors have a negative impact on their well-being, respondents pointed to a lack of support (from senior leaders), pupils’ behaviour, workload and marking pupils’ work as key factors.

Respondents were also asked what things have the most positive impact on their well-being in school. The responses highlight the importance of relationships, in particular those with colleagues and pupils.

Similarly, in the NASUWT survey, when teachers were asked which aspects of their job they enjoyed most, they highlighted interacting with pupils (90%), seeing young children progress (86%), teaching (83%), making a positive difference (77%), and support from colleagues (40%). In Day et al’s (2010) study, effective school leaders were found to strive to develop positive relationships with staff and ensure that relationships between members of staff were positive. They developed close working relationships with their SLT and showed a genuine concern for staff well-being.

Research on teacher well-being shows that relationships with pupils and pupil behaviours matter greatly. Student misbehaviour and a disruptive classroom can lead to emotional exhaustion for teachers (Osher et al., 2007). This can result in a vicious circle, since teachers tend to express negative emotions in response to student misbehaviour, which then leads to a detrimental classroom climate (Pianta et al., 2003).

Overly high *workload* has been associated with aspects of teacher burnout such as exhaustion and the coping mechanism of distancing oneself emotionally and cognitively (Malasch et al, 2001). Furthermore, workload has been linked to teacher drop-out. Workload is related to *work-life balance*, which has been highlighted as an important predictor of well-being in a number of studies (Ford, Heinen & Langkamer, 2007; Frone, 2000; Judge & Colquitt, 2004).

*Autonomy and agency*, including control by a professional of their own working environment, are positively associated with professional well-being. Control can be conceptualised as both an environmental condition (e.g. the authority to take actions) and as a perception of those conditions (Eatough and Spector, 2014 p. 92). There is evidence suggesting that perceived control is a better predictor of well-being than actual control. In relation to autonomy, a form of control, a distinction has been made between control over how the work is done (‘method autonomy’), the working



hours ('schedule autonomy') and about what should be done ('criteria autonomy') (Breugh 1999, as cited in Eatough and Spector 2014, p. 93). Positively, evidence from the international comparative TALIS study suggests that most teachers in England either disagree (56%) or strongly disagree (15%) with the statement that they lack the autonomy they need to do a good job as a teacher (Micklewright et al., 2014). This, however, will always need to be balanced with the need for whole-school consistency as discussed above.

*Self-efficacy* is an individual's belief in their capability to exercise control over challenging demands (Bandura, 1997). There are a number of studies showing that low self-efficacy is related to teacher stress and a higher likelihood of leaving the profession (i.e. Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2007; Klassen and Chiu, 2011). The TALIS study suggests that UK teachers have relatively high levels of self-efficacy (Micklewright, 2014).

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