

Handy Guide to...

Evaluating your Curriculum



In Partnership with



Introduction



With the introduction of the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and its particular focus on the effectiveness of a school's curriculum, we know many schools are looking again at what their curriculum looks like in terms of its intent, content, breadth, delivery and assessment.

To support this process, Pearson have worked with their partners at SSAT to provide a framework of questions that help schools audit their existing curriculum:

- ▶ identifying areas of strength and development
- ▶ helping inform the school's action plan for strengthening its curriculum.



How to use this resource?



Pearson and SSAT believes that schools are best placed to formulate a curriculum offer that works for their community. On this basis, this resource does not attempt to tell you what your curriculum should look like, rather it poses the questions that you need to ask and be confident in answering.

We recommend that you work through the questions, initially as a senior team, and then in discussion with your whole staff, your students, governors and all stakeholders. Highlight any areas that you need to look at in more detail and use these as the basis for the ongoing review of your curriculum.

As you build a better picture of your current position, consider the pros and cons of your approach. For example, if decisions about content are driven by what you feel students will find most interesting, are you confident that you are providing sufficient stretch and challenge?

Note: We've purposely avoided using lots of colour and images to make this guide easier to print!

1. Intent – What is your curriculum intent/vision?



What principles underpin your approach to curriculum?

- ▶ Growth mindset?
- ▶ Belief in a traditional academic curriculum?
- ▶ Achievement for all?
- ▶ Preparation for work? Developing future skills for employability?
- ▶ Developing cultural capital?
- ▶ Social justice?
- ▶ Nurturing confidence and wellbeing?

What is distinctive about your offer?

- ▶ All students learn a language? Which languages and why?
- ▶ Creative curriculum in KS3?
- ▶ Global perspectives?
- ▶ High degree of challenge?
- ▶ Focus on cultural capital?

Who informs your vision?

- ▶ Headteacher?
- ▶ Senior leaders?
- ▶ MAT leaders?
- ▶ All staff?
- ▶ Students?
- ▶ Parents?
- ▶ Governors?
- ▶ National policy makers?

1. Intent – What is your curriculum intent/vision?



How do you shape your vision?

- ▶ What processes do you have for engaging stakeholders?
- ▶ How do they feed into the ongoing review of your curriculum intent?

Who owns your vision?

- ▶ Who knows what your curriculum intent is?
- ▶ Could they describe it in one sentence?
- ▶ Do all stakeholders buy into your vision?

What does a broad and balanced curriculum look like in your context?

- ▶ Curriculum content?
- ▶ Subject choices?
- ▶ Wider learning?

2. Content



Who makes the decisions about content/specifications?

- ▶ Heads of department?
- ▶ Teachers?
- ▶ Students?
- ▶ Senior leaders?
- ▶ Parents?
- ▶ Governors?

On what basis are decisions made?

- ▶ What is most interesting for students?
- ▶ What will challenge students?
- ▶ What students will find easiest?
- ▶ Teacher subject knowledge?
- ▶ Teacher preference?
- ▶ Whole school curriculum intent?
- ▶ Requirements of exam specs at a later key stage?

How will you decide on what to teach and when?

- ▶ What content is most important?
- ▶ What content will you leave out?
- ▶ Is the sequencing of your curriculum based on a clear logic?
- ▶ Does everyone understand that logic?

2. Content



How is curriculum content quality assured?

- ▶ What metrics are used?
- ▶ How are curriculum choices measured against your curriculum intent?
- ▶ How consistent is quality assurance?
- ▶ Whose job is it to approve decisions about curriculum choice?
- ▶ What are the risks/benefits of the way that you make decisions about curriculum – e.g. if you are led by student preference, is there sufficient challenge?

How does curriculum content meet the needs of all learners?

- ▶ Is the content sufficiently challenging for all students?
- ▶ How do you plan for and monitor the wider curriculum (beyond lessons)?
- ▶ Do all students find the content motivating and interesting? How do you know?

What goes before and afterwards?

- ▶ How do you build on prior learning in the previous key stage?
- ▶ How far is decision making at earlier key stages driven by needs at later stage?
- ▶ More specifically, how far is decision-making at KS3 driven by the demands of KS4?

3. Delivery



How does your pedagogy support your curriculum intent?

- ▶ Do all staff have a shared understanding of the kind of learning that will support your vision?
- ▶ How does professional learning support successful delivery of your curriculum?
- ▶ Do all students have a clear understanding of where they are and what they need to do to improve?

How far do departments work collaboratively to support curriculum delivery?

- ▶ Do departments work together to contextualise learning for students?
- ▶ Do teachers know what is being delivered elsewhere and when?

3. Delivery



How does your use of curriculum time support your curriculum intent?

- ▶ How does the structure of your school day support successful delivery?
- ▶ Do you use time creatively to enhance students' experiences?

How far do departments work consistently to support curriculum delivery?

- ▶ Are there shared approaches to teaching key skills and techniques – e.g. literacy and numeracy?

Do teachers have the subject knowledge required to deliver your vision for curriculum?

- ▶ Who reviews teachers' subject knowledge?
- ▶ How is teachers' subject knowledge supported?

3. Delivery



How is delivery of your curriculum quality assured?

- ▶ What benchmarks do you use to quality assure your offer?
- ▶ Who decides whether curriculum choices and delivery are good enough?
- ▶ How is best practice celebrated and shared?
- ▶ What happens when it is not good enough?

How does your curriculum accommodate the needs of different students?

- ▶ How much flexibility is there for personalisation?
- ▶ How far does formative assessment drive adjustments to the curriculum to meet the need of classes and individuals?
- ▶ What opportunities do students have to direct their own learning?
- ▶ Is the quality of delivery the same for all students?

4. Experience



How far is your curriculum intent lived out in students' experiences?

- ▶ Who informs your view on this?
- ▶ How engaged and motivated are students?
How do you know?
- ▶ What metrics are used to measure this?

How is the entirety of students' experiences monitored and evaluated?

- ▶ How do you look at students' wider development?
- ▶ How do you monitor engagement in activities beyond lessons?
- ▶ How do you intervene to ensure that all students are accessing the full offer?
- ▶ How do you recognise the entirety of students' achievements, within and beyond lessons?



4. Experience



What processes do you have in place for ongoing review of your curriculum offer?

- ▶ How often do you revisit your vision for curriculum?
- ▶ Whose job is it to assess how far your curriculum intent is being achieved?
- ▶ Who feeds into this evaluation?
- ▶ What happens when there are concerns?
- ▶ How do you ensure that all middle leaders are making decisions that support your curriculum intent?
- ▶ How does data analysis and review of assessment practice feed into quality assurance of your curriculum model?

How far are you willing to adapt your curriculum where needed?

- ▶ How often do you change what you deliver?
- ▶ When changes are made, what drives those changes?
- ▶ How have you amended your curriculum over time – e.g. embedding learning technologies?

About Pearson

Pearson UK are an awarding body and publisher. We work with schools, teachers and experts in education to understand the principles of an effectively designed curriculum and create the very best resources and tools to help deliver it. From 'off-the-shelf' courses that promote a broad and balanced curriculum to a bespoke curriculum created using intelligent planning tools, we can support you through the planning, implementation and evaluation.

Learn more: go.pearson.com/curriculum

About SSAT

SSAT is the Schools, Students and Teachers network. We exist to help improve outcomes for all young people. As a membership organisation of schools and academies across the UK and internationally, we work with leaders, teachers and students to drive school improvement and innovation, and celebrate their successes. We believe in a truly school-led system, with schools working in partnership across and beyond the education sector.

Learn more: www.ssatuk.co.uk



In Partnership with

