

Seven Myths about Education

Appendix A – Lesson descriptions from Ofsted reports

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Explanation

The following table consists of 228 descriptions of lessons, curriculum units and schemes of work taken from Ofsted's subject reports. On average, reports will be published for each subject every couple of years, and each report draws on good practice from inspections conducted throughout this timeframe. I've included lessons drawn from the most recent subject report in Maths, Science, Religious Education, Art, History, Geography and Modern Foreign Languages and the two most recent English reports.

Ofsted, *Mathematics: Made to Measure*, May 2012 (18)

Ofsted, *Making a mark: art, craft and design education 2008/11*, March 2012 (26)

Ofsted, *Moving English forward: Action to raise standards in English* March 2012 (21)

Ofsted, *Excellence in English: What we can learn from 12 outstanding schools*, May 2011 (12)

Ofsted, *History for all: History in English schools 2007/10*, March 2011 (18)

Ofsted, *Geography: Learning to make a world of difference*, February 2011 (42)

Ofsted, *Modern languages: Achievement and challenge 2007–2010*, January 2011 (54)

Ofsted, *Successful science: An evaluation of science education in England 2007–2010*, January 2011 (18)

Ofsted, *Transforming religious education: Religious education in schools 2006–09*, June 2010 (19)

No.	Page no	Ofsted, Mathematics: Made to Measure, May 2012
1.	21	<p>The inspector observed four Year 9 lessons involving a 'newspaper comparison' task of seeking statistical ways of distinguishing newspapers, for instance by considering the average word or sentence length and hence reading demand. One lesson was taught well, two satisfactorily but with some important weaknesses and one inadequately. The good lesson was with a high set, the satisfactory lessons were with middle and low sets, and the inadequate lesson was with another low set. In the best lesson, the teacher gave the pupils enough direction that they all collected data systematically to support some analysis. They had data from contrasting texts, and were expected to choose how to illustrate the results, for example with a bar chart or a pie chart. In one of the satisfactory lessons, pupils spent time talking about what data they might look at, rather than focusing on an aspect that would allow analysis. They would have benefited from more guidance during this phase of the lesson. Pupils were encouraged to form a hypothesis before all had understood the task fully. The teacher's suggestion that the more-able pupils would need to look at Spearman's rank correlation was bizarre, given that the task did not lend itself to the generation of bivariate data, raising a question about the teacher's subject knowledge. In the second satisfactory lesson, the teacher and the teaching assistant were circulating as pupils worked but they did not spot some pupils' lack of understanding that their method for collating the data was inefficient and less reliable than some other methods. The teacher told pupils to use tally marks, but several were counting the number of occurrences of each word length and then making that number of tally marks, rather than just writing the number counted. Neither these pupils, nor the teacher seemed to realise that their method obviated the need for tally marks. Some pupils spent time recounting their tally marks to make sure that they agreed with the number of words that they had already counted. In the inadequate lesson, the teacher told the pupils that they could choose how to collect their samples. Some pupils decided to look at the first 100 words for each newspaper, which is an appropriate starting point. Other pupils picked 100 words 'at random' but neither they nor the teacher appeared to understand that this approach was likely to produce a biased sample, with few short words being included in the so-called 'random samples'. This reflected the teacher's insecure knowledge of statistical sampling. The teacher chose not to tackle this issue, even after it was brought to his attention.</p>
2.	23	<p>Whole-class teaching was dynamic with pupils collaborating extensively with each other. It challenged them to think for themselves, for instance by suggesting how to tackle a new problem or comparing alternative approaches. Teachers' explanations were kept suitably brief and focused on the underlying concepts, how the work linked with previous learning and other topics and, where appropriate, an efficient standard method. Their questions were designed to encourage pupils to give reasoned answers</p>
3.	23	<p>Critically, pupils were directly engaged in mathematics for a substantial portion of each lesson. As a result, they had time to develop a high degree of competence and to tackle challenging, varied questions and problems that helped to deepen their understanding. Pupils worked on a mix of group tasks, exploratory activities in which they tried to devise their own methods, and exercises completed individually. The exercises allowed pupils to progress from routine practice of skills to two-step questions, where the method was not immediately apparent, and questions with unusual twists that required some adaptation to the standard method.</p>
4.	24	<p>A common feature of the satisfactory teaching observed was the use of examples followed by practice with many similar questions. This allowed consolidation of a skill or technique but did not develop problem-solving skills or understanding of concepts. The teachers typically demonstrated a standard method, giving tips to pupils on how to avoid making</p>

		mistakes and, sometimes, 'rules' and mnemonics to help them commit the methods to memory. Many of their questions concerned factual recall so that pupils' 'explanations' often consisted of restating the method rather than justifying their answers.
5.	24	Pupils often spent a substantial part of such lessons listening to the teacher and, in secondary lessons, copying down worked examples. What was intended to be whole-class teaching typically engaged a small minority, who answered most of the teacher's questions, leaving the majority as spectators. These lessons lacked a close tailoring of support and challenge that would enable individual pupils to achieve their best.
6.	24	Better use of lesson time, which also led to stronger learning, included some simple steps such as selecting a sub-set of questions from an exercise to give variety and make pupils think more carefully. Occasionally, teachers allowed pupils to choose when to move more quickly away from routine exercises to problems that challenged and helped deepen their understanding and application of mathematics. The expectation that pupils should take responsibility for their learning in this way was a strength of secondary practice in Finnish schools. ⁷
7.	26	A feature of much of the satisfactory teaching was that teachers tended to talk for too long. Sometimes they were too quick to prompt or to answer their own questions. For example, in a bingo game based on percentages, the teacher asked '25% of 108?' but then followed her question immediately with 'What fraction is 25%?' rather than leaving time for pupils to work out the first step for themselves. Similarly she followed '20% of 240?' with 'Find 10% first.'
8.	28	Hands-on resources and visual images enabled low-attaining Year 10 pupils to gain a good understanding of nets of boxes in a meaningful problem-solving situation. This was the third lesson on nets and solids with a small set of eight pupils, five of whom had statements of special educational need. Except two pupils, who were following an entry-level course, all had gained Level 3 at Key Stage 3 and were studying GCSE. The lesson objective was to design a box in the shape of a cube or cuboid to hold an item of each pupil's choice. The main part of the lesson started with an animation on the interactive whiteboard, of a box unfolding into a net and folding back into a box, rotating to show different views. The pupils showed their understanding of the two-dimensional and three-dimensional images in discussing them and the various cereal and other boxes provided by the teacher, some of which had been cut along their edges to make nets. The pupils' comments and questions showed they could envisage a cuboid and knew which lengths in a cuboid were equal. Moving on to the design of their own boxes, skilled questioning by the teacher helped the pupils to realise that a 'good box' needed to be measured so that the object fitted well. The objects were irregular in shape and of interest to individual pupils, such as a toy ambulance for one boy. The pupils selected from a range of practical apparatus, including measuring equipment, plain and squared paper, card, and plastic shapes that clicked together to make two- and three-dimensional shapes. The teacher and teaching assistants circulated as pupils grappled with the task. With support, the two lowest attainers managed to make a net of a cube. The other two groups struggled to make cuboid nets but persevered very well, returning to the cut-up boxes at intervals to help their thinking. The good quality of dialogue between pupils and with the adults enabled the pupils to find their own way through this challenging task. The pupils worked enthusiastically together to complete their boxes, and insisted on finding the inspector to show them to her at break time.
9.	29	At the start of the day at a primary school, pupils registered on arrival at their classes using the interactive whiteboards. Year 2 pupils, for instance, placed their name in the correct quarter of a Carroll diagram, indicating whether they were a girl or not, and were having school dinners or not.

10.	29	In a Year 6 class, pairs of pupils used computers to draw acute and obtuse angles. The software allowed them to draw an estimate for a given angle, for example, 170° , after which it told them what angle they had created, and allowed further improved angles to be drawn. This aided pupils' conceptualisation of angles of different sizes.
11.	29	The teacher of a Year 7 class used ICT effectively to show the rotation of a shape around a point on coordinate axes. The movement of the original shape to its new position modelled the transformation clearly. The teacher also demonstrated rotation of the shape about different points including a vertex, a point within the shape and about the origin. This led into a good discussion about the relationship between images after different rotations.
12.	29	Year 2 pupils were learning about time. The hands of the clock that the teacher used for her demonstration did not have a proper winding mechanism so that the movements of the hour and minute hands were not synchronised. When she read times at half past, quarter past, and quarter to the hour, the teacher placed the minute hand in the correct position but not the hour hand. As she demonstrated and talked about the passage of time her explanation that, 'when the minute hand passes 12, the hour jumps to the next number' was not helpful. How might it be improved? The teacher could have used a clock with a proper winding mechanism so that the hour hand moved incrementally around with the minute hand. Some schools have sets of small clocks with winding mechanisms which enable pupils to gain experience of moving the hands for themselves. The use of software to demonstrate an analogue clock and the simultaneous movement of the minute and hour hands to show the passage of time would have provided a clear visual image to aid conceptual understanding of telling the time, calculating later and earlier times, and working out time intervals. Some such programs are available as free resources on the internet.
13.	30	The problem of too little problem solving The emphasis almost all of the schools in the good practice survey placed on pupils using and applying their arithmetic skills to solving a wide range of problems was striking. Diverse opportunities were provided within mathematics, including measures and data handling, and through thematic and cross-curricular work. Pupils' extensive experience of solving problems deepened their understanding and increased their fluency and sense of number. Many relevant problems involved using money in real-life contexts, such as calculating best value for different supermarket offers, or pricing new equipment for the school's playground from alternative suppliers who offered different discounts, while keeping within the given budget. The illustrations below show Year 5/6 pupils measuring sections of the school's playground and preparing an estimate for the cost of resurfacing.
14.	30	The problem was on a new topic, to find an area enclosed by two curves expressed in polar coordinates (as illustrated). The problem had multiple steps but was not broken down for the pupils by the teacher. The pupils thought out and discussed their ideas, realising that to solve the problem they had to sketch the curves, find where they intersected, figure out how to find the area, and then calculate it. At each stage of the problem the pupils' prior learning, though sometimes rusty, was brought into play, but for a purpose. Learning in this lesson made good links with new and earlier learning and the pupils had to think very hard for themselves.
15.	33	Prime practice: effective teaching Pupils first matched each of the diverse group of party guests (baby mice through to a giant) to various balloons. Then they had to measure string of differing lengths (5cm to 2m) for tying onto the balloons for each guest. The higher level teaching assistant encouraged good debate between the pupils around whether the string should be measured and cut before tying, or tied first and then measured. She did not steer them towards the other approach when they decided to measure and tie the string first. The pupils wrestled with measuring the string after tying it to the balloons which

		enabled them to appreciate the difficulty of measuring accurately once the string was attached to the balloon. They also realized that some of the string was used up in tying it to the balloon. This led to good discussion around which approach should be taken. The pupils revised their strategy for the task, which they went on to complete successfully.
16.	35	Teachers generally circulated to observe pupils as they worked independently or in groups. This is an important improvement since the previous survey. It has become relatively rare to see secondary teachers rooted to the front of the class.
17.	46	In the very best schools, 'using and applying mathematics' was integrated into day-to-day teaching. For example, new topics were introduced by presenting a suitable problem and inviting pupils to use their existing knowledge in innovative ways. More generally, the lack of emphasis on using and applying mathematics remained a weakness that is persistent.
18.	85	Three Year 1 pupils who had special educational needs worked with a teaching assistant on achieving their individual education plan target. The school has placed increased emphasis on the development of life skills for these pupils. In this session, they were engaged in buying items up to a value of 20p using the correct coins. The activity was well resourced. Pupils chose to buy from a colourful array of priced toys. With sensitive support from the teaching assistant, pupils were learning to use different coins to match the price correctly. They were encouraged to check each other's calculations, which ensured they were actively involved in the process all the time. One pupil was anticipating a cost before his turn. When the teaching assistant asked him to choose a priced item, he already had the correct coins set out on the table. The teaching assistant explained that this pupil had made remarkable progress and would not require prolonged intervention of this nature.

No.	Page no	Ofsted, Making a mark: art, craft and design education 2008/11, March 2012
1.	7	As the pupils entered the classroom their expectations were high. They passed a huge tower in the playground constructed with plastic fencing and intertwined with strands of fabric they had previously woven through the structure. A display of traditional weaving prompted the children to recall different weaves previously taught. Images of Maximo Laura's work prompted their analysis of colour and texture. Pupils reflected on the answers to a brief series of question cards on their tables. The teacher was soon able to assess pupils' levels of understanding about how a contemporary maker interpreted traditional methods in developing his or her own original ideas. She used this information to talk to particular children while they were working, to ensure that everyone understood the task. The pupils constructed their own 'looms', that is, structures that were suitable for weaving their own design and they also selected their weaving materials with great care. They did their weaving intensively until the sound of a wind-chime indicated it was time to stop and listen. Speaking quietly the teacher praised their creativity but posed an additional challenge by asking the pupils to consider how Maximo Laura's work had developed over time. They showed good knowledge and understanding, but developing their own creativity remained paramount.
2.	8	First, children explored the concept of traditional weddings in different cultures. This included: dressing up; acting out make-believe ceremonies; painting pictures of brides and grooms; making wedding paraphernalia; writing lists and table place names; and making cakes, wedding gifts and trinkets. Staff identified two children who repeatedly headed straight to the activities to immerse themselves in creative play. They were chosen as 'bride' and 'groom' to re-enact a traditional Christian ceremony at the nearby local church. The children sent out invitations to family guests and members of the local community who came to witness the marriage. The local vicar presided over the ceremony and awarded an 'official' wedding certificate to the happy couple. Afterwards the children led their guests back to school for the wedding reception. Marquees were adorned with decorations and foods including the three-tier wedding cake the children had made previously. Fizzy drinks were used to toast the bride and groom and mark the special occasion. Digital photographs by the 'wedding photographer' captured the moment and children later recorded the day's events in paintings. An exhibition of their work displayed in the school hall prompted much interest and discussion among the community and visitors.
3.	12	One student's project based on her family history involved exploring religious and racial persecution during the Second World War, the effect of immigration and internment and assimilation into a new, but foreign culture.
4.	12	A photography student used the theme of 'measurement' to explore highly personal and sensitive issues related to female body image, media representation and pressures experienced by teenage girls.
5.	15	Children in the Year 3 class had looked at boldly coloured images of Friedrich Hundertwasser's work as part of their 'landscape' theme. Their teacher successfully provoked discussion about the use of fluid lines, vibrant colour and overlapping shapes that characterised the images shared. Children were invited to draw and paint an interpretation of a chosen photograph of landscape in the style of the artist, taken from a discarded calendar. Most pupils found working in A4-sized sketchbooks restrictive, but some improvised successfully by working across two pages. Having made observational drawings in a previous lesson it was unsurprising when children situated near to the window asked if they could make 'Hundertwasser drawings' by recording their view. However, mindful of the comparative simplicity of the landscape photographs, pupils were

		asked to stick with the brief. This left unanswered a question posed by the pupils' request; about what connected the pupils' perception of their view to their perception of the artists' work. It was also a missed opportunity to teach the pupils how to use their sketchbook to revisit and refine skills used previously. Towards the end of the lesson the class plenary compared pupils' work with the images by Hundertwasser that had inspired the lesson. Keen to make sure that all pupils contributed, the teacher asked every child to evaluate their own work in turn. One piece of work clearly stood out; it resembled few of the features represented in the photograph but used flowing lines and imaginative representations of buildings filled with intricate patterns. However, the teacher did not draw the attention of the rest of the class to this particularly adventurous example which meant that the originality went unrewarded.
6.	15	Stimulating displays invited girls and boys to look at, manipulate and reassemble interesting objects, artefacts and materials that had inspired the work shown. They were curious, careful and creative, for example when using a display in school inspired by the artist Alfred Wallis, in exploring surfaces to paint on, tools to paint with, or techniques to try. At playtime the profound impact was evident. In the playground, children had ready access to an art table, art trolley, chalk boards and a sculpture box. Around half of the children participated in different forms of creative play. One group's activities demonstrated the benefits of active learning inside and outside the classroom. They independently used snow in the playground to build sculptures inspired by the natural forms they had seen in the sculpture box.
7.	16	The school seized every opportunity to provoke pupils' thinking, discussion and scope for personal and imaginative responses. Year 6 pupils used technology confidently and expertly to prepare a slide-show for a whole-school assembly. They selected breathtaking digital images of natural forms and set them to music to illustrate the beauty and intensity of colour in nature. The audience gasped with delight and clapped spontaneously.
8.	19	Students in Year 9 worked in teams of four, each team given the name of a contemporary artist, craftmaker or designer. They were set the challenge of finding out about their creative practitioner, and who or what had influenced their work. The teacher's grouping together of students with different interests and strengths paid dividends. For example one group deployed a student skilled in the use of digital media to present their findings graphically, and a different student who enjoyed experimenting made samples showing how technique had been refined. A particularly confident speaker in the group researched background information to use. The remaining student was confident in drawing. He made two portrait sketches of the artists that emphasised their character.
9.	19	Year 10 students were given a 'masterclass' in how to organise equipment and prepare resources through the workshop environment that welcomed them. All were excited about seeing their fused-glass tiles for the first time since firing. But business-like behaviour prevailed as students completed their 'firing log' to remember the processes used that had led to planned and accidental effects. They were equally keen to learn from other students' experiments by enquiring independently, noting information and recording with a digital camera. Their teacher observed, listened and contributed by using her expert glassmaking skills and knowledge to challenge students' further. She knew her class as well as her subject, drawing on the ideas and experiences of individual students for the benefit of all. Her timing was skilful when she invited students, who were fully informed by their previous experiences, to analyse sophisticated examples of fused glass made into panels and slumped, moulded bowls, which included her own work. She modestly used her own examples to show how to learn from mistakes or satisfy personal ideas and those of clients. The students' ideas were ambitious, fuelled by their knowledge and understanding about what might be practical, possible and commercial.

10.	20	In Year 7 the students had evaluated their work using 'Spinney' the spider and its web. Each section of the web encouraged students to note words that described successful or less effective features of their work, against different criteria. As their skills and confidence increased more extended writing was used in the outer parts of the web. More academically able students started to dispense with 'Spinney' by creating their own evaluation structure. By Year 8 the teacher used a series of prompts, encouraging the students to add to their collection of words by reading reviews where stories about art had been in the news. A change of emphasis in Year 9 used students' experience of evaluating their own work to reflect on and criticise the work of other artists, craftmakers and designers. By Years 10 and 11 students had internalised these processes, using annotation regularly and building a critical vocabulary systematically. In the sixth form teachers used the '4 Rs' framework – react, research, respond, reflect – to extend students' critical responses further and encourage fluent writing that incorporated accurate and powerful use of technical vocabulary.
11.	21	Students in Year 8 were first asked to copy into their sketchbooks the lesson objective written on the whiteboard: 'To make an abstract painting inspired by the work of Frank Stella.' Following discussion about the meaning of 'abstract' and 'expressionism' definitions were provided by the teacher and glued into sketchbooks. A biographical summary of Frank Stella's life was also provided. This reading was followed by questions focused on students' recall of factual information. Laminated images of Stella's work were used to stimulate the practical activity that followed. Students were given only 20 minutes and access to A4-sized card, paints and brushes, to explore Stella's definition of a painting as 'a flat surface with paint on it – nothing more'. Students' responses were used to stimulate discussion about the meaning and purpose of the artists' work. In preparation for the next lesson, students were asked to select one of the images of Stella's work provided earlier, to write an evaluation. The scheme of work indicated that students would progress in subsequent lessons to larger surfaces, more personalised ideas and further written analysis explaining connections between the students' work and Stella's.
12.	22	In the first example, the teacher, recognising in the student's work some stylistic similarities with the work of Chuck Close, brought a study of the artist's approach to portraiture into her teaching. The teacher sensitively supported the student, exploring how light and different materials distort, fragment and reflect. Practical experiments used the organising principle of the grid, allowing the artist to set warm against cold, circle against square, light against dark. Interest naturally emerged into the nature of pixilation as a primary compositional feature of digital photography and video in contrast to other techniques, and how this changed our way of seeing the world. The teacher and the student were taken on a highly personal journey of discovery.
13.	22	In the next example, a partially sighted student working in an independent specialist college could only see images very close up because his crisp focus was limited to the centre of any image; the edges were blurred. He was keen to paint a large self-portrait from a photograph, but was unable to see the whole image in sufficiently clear detail. The work which followed was stunning because it reflected the student's perspective so accurately. With the help of his teacher he enlarged the photograph and dissected it into sections on a grid. By masking all but the central section he wished to capture in paint, and by moving the mask over the grid section by section, he was able to work across the whole photograph in squares until finally the whole face was painted. At no point could he see the entire image, and even when finished he was not able to see the picture as a whole, except from a considerable distance. As a direct consequence of the technique he had to adopt due to his sight loss the final painting was fragmented and distorted by the grid composition. It had a remarkable power as an image because it reflected, literally, the disconnected way in which the young artist saw the world.

14.	24	Lessons were stimulating, successfully involving students physically from the start, and building their knowledge and understanding incrementally. In one lesson inspired by 'Japan', images of people wearing kimonos were brought to life by opportunities for the Year 9 students to wear kimonos that were richly decorated with block-printed patterns. Opportunities to handle printing blocks enabled the students to work out for themselves how to create a design that used the background effectively.
15.	27	A local artist was commissioned to create with pupils of all ages a huge lasting canvas based on the colours and shapes of the Wye Valley to act as a backdrop for the many events held in the school hall. The artist was employed to work on the project over a three-week period. This, he said, was a rare opportunity because often expectations were too ambitious within the time available. The extended timescale enabled the artist to spend valuable time on the planning process with the pupils. Reflecting a real-life design process, they developed ideas over time until a solution emerged. Good-quality canvas and acrylic and fabric paints were a heavy investment that contributed to the lasting impact. Pupils learnt how to mix, apply and layer colour. As only primary colours were purchased, pupils were expected to experiment and mix their colours as an interpretation of the local landscape. Every pupil contributed, using age-appropriate tools to apply the paint, including sponge, feet and fingers, sticks and printing materials. Music played for extra inspiration as pupils worked. The final challenge was to apply a strong, black calligraphic line to depict the meandering River Wye. The artist generated the shape using computer software then replicated the line on the canvas in chalk. Three agile pupils were chosen to apply the paint. Reducing the margin for error was critical at this stage. The dense black paint was applied as the final layer on top of other pupils' painstaking work. The pupils rehearsed painting actions (without paint) in the hall, dancing to music using decorators' brushes before applying the paint from buckets using bold flowing movements. The rehearsal boosted pupils' confidence to work without inhibition. Once the canvas had dried, pupils watched as the canvas panels were hung and the enormity of the painting unfurled. All pupils attended the formal signing of 'Atom Heart', a name chosen to represent every pupil's joy in creating the painting. Their names were included on the canvas. The mark of this project's success was the significant investment
16.	32	Graphic design students were set a brief to design suitable packaging for an accessory that had been designed by students specialising in fashion. The fashion students presented their designs and maquettes to the graphics specialists, who then developed a number of design ideas based on each product. Professional-standard presentations invited feedback. Modifications gave students real experience of compromising some of their design ideas and principles in order to satisfy different needs. Students taking both courses gained practical knowledge and expertise from this 'client-designer' relationship.
17.	37	In this school, a group of Year 9 students took part in a pilot initiative in which they were trained as guides to help gallery visitors interpret the work in the gallery. This was used as a springboard for further initiatives. After the success of the initial project they helped train students from other schools to undertake the same role. The students thoroughly enjoyed the project saying that it developed their knowledge of contemporary arts practice, improved their social skills and confidence, boosted their ability to learn independently and increased their pride in their community. With budgets tight, the headteacher allocated funds judiciously, enabling staff to benefit from professional development, students to enjoy the motivation of a 'live' project and the wider school community to taste the raised aspirations associated with regeneration. For example, a newly qualified teacher who played a significant role in coordinating activities learnt much about project management and how students can reach high expectations.

18.	38	<p>Students had been thinking about the lesson in advance. They arrived with an artefact of personal significance that remained a mystery to the teacher or other students at the start of the lesson. Their attention was immediately attracted to a large cardboard box sitting in the middle of the classroom. Small movements and strange sounds emerging from the box promoted intense curiosity. The students were quick to accept the teachers' challenge to record their ideas and feelings, using paper and drawing tools arranged around the box. Observing a tendency to draw animals that might sit inside the box, the teacher demanded that they push their imagination to the limits; 'If there is a creature inside, how frantic is it? Are your drawings frantic? If it is dark and scary inside, how dark and scary are your drawings?' Encouraged to use words, the students explored how to represent 'trapped', 'intimidated', 'cornered', by gesturing more through their drawing. Lively, expressive drawings emerged showing layers of meaning. Ten minutes into the lesson the depth of students' thinking, and fluency in the use of drawing, had progressed significantly. Continuing with minimal teacher talk, the students returned to their chosen objects, reflecting on and explaining their significance. Listening carefully, the teacher again used minimal questioning to promote deeper analysis. Building on their experience of drawing from imagination, the teacher encouraged the students to use drawing to represent the meaning of their object, getting 'into the mindset of an artist'. The teacher challenged the students further, by asking them to reflect on what the drawings revealed about the significance of objects chosen by other students. Moving speedily from drawing to drawing every student was expected to add further emphasis to the meaning. Returning to drawings of their own object, now enriched by drawing additions by other students, the teacher linked the activity to that of an artist seeing their work in a gallery evaluated by others, through the experience every individual brings. Half an hour into the lesson the teacher shared the objective; 'To increase understanding about purpose and meaning in artists' work.'</p>
19.	43	<p>Successful collaboration between art and design, and design and technology departments enabled students taking the BTEC First diploma course to design imaginative and ambitious sculptures inspired by bugs and insects. Staff shared specific areas of expertise in designing and making that enabled students to translate observational drawings of bugs and insects into exciting three-dimensional designs. Working with metal enabled students to produce highly accomplished sculptures that used processes similar to those used professionally. Not all students had found it easy to maintain interest in their academic studies in the past. However, designing and making large-scale sculptures of commercial quality proved a turning point in their motivation to succeed.</p>
20.	44	<p>The project started with a business and enterprise workshop that helped the boys understand products, pricing and market forces in ceramics. They visited art galleries and museums where the contemporary work of their craftmaker could be put into an historical context. The project was rooted in practical, hands-on activities and the impact on the boys involved was remarkable. One boy commented, 'Because I enjoy these sessions I make sure I am always on time.' Another added, 'Since starting this project my behaviour has improved. I'm listening a lot more to people so I can do the work more easily. Before, I just doodled or talked to someone. I know now I have to listen to find out how to do stuff.'</p>
21.	47	<p>Students regularly visited 'the making room' with different teachers. Here, a classroom had been converted into a studio, suitably equipped and resourced with a tempting array of materials. Two creative practitioners were permanently based here, providing support for staff and students across the curriculum and outreach for primary schools in the area. Teachers timed their visits to 'the making room' with their classes to coincide with when students' learning in the subject was most likely to benefit from additional stimuli. The creative practitioners, sensitive to the teachers' objectives and students' stage of development, prepared imaginative ways of working, often including practical 'hands on'</p>

		activities supported by challenging dialogue. The role of the teacher in this environment enabled them to observe students, intervene where appropriate, or provide additional challenge through questioning and discussion related to the process of thinking and making. During their time at the school many students benefited from their work with creative practitioners through different subjects and teachers. The sixth formers, who were observed presenting their research in science perceptively and imaginatively, were excellent ambassadors of this initiative. Achievement in the sixth form was exceptional.
22.	52	In this school there was a particularly strong strand within pupils' work in which they combined unusual materials such as wire, bottles or natural forms to draw images. This provided a solid foundation for mixed-media work as they progressed through the school. Pupils explored with enthusiasm the relationship between their own intentions, for example to create a self-portrait or a scene from a story, and the possibilities offered by the materials available for making the drawing. The resulting blend provided a powerful message for them that the materials they used influenced the visual qualities of what was made. In another school, the scale of pupils' mark-making ranged widely from their huge chalk drawings on the playground outside and on rolls of wallpaper inside, to tiny drawings inside their journals and the lids of boxes that were displayed as ready-made frames. The class museum, created in a corner of the classroom following a school visit, contained many drawings of interesting things found in the school grounds and drawings made with found objects which the teacher used as an opportunity to introduce chalk and charcoal. There were regular opportunities to draw in response to different stimuli, including activities that started with listening, looking, reading and problem-solving. The children developed their drawing discretely and through their literacy and numeracy work; handwriting and accuracy in presenting number work were integral to the teacher's approach to teaching drawing.
23.	52	The subject leader worked well with the EYFS leader and Key Stage 1 staff to ensure that children progressed well in drawing. Staff recognised that children's early mark-making was on the cusp of developing into writing. They also recognised that mark-making contributed to children's continuous growth and development in different visual art forms. Exemplar materials about the expectations of children's performance helped to ensure that children across the school were offered activities which enabled them to make good progress in both areas. They also fostered useful dialogue and professional development among staff in this complex area in which the bulk of available curriculum guidance centres on developing writing rather than drawing as a creative activity.
24.	53	Drawing was seen by the staff as central to the subject. Clear planning for progression in skills across different approaches to drawing was mapped into schemes of work and cross-curricular work throughout the age range. Staff worked with pupils in the feeder primary schools to improve drawing here too. Pupils understood that they could use drawing in different ways because staff explained this and got them to use different approaches. Establishing this early was central to their success and Key Stage 3 provided a strong foundation for later work. The subject leader kept up-to-date with new initiatives involving drawing. Professional development for staff included innovative activities such as drawing alongside visiting artists. Artists accompanied school visits, to model the use of drawing to record transitory experiences. Support for primary school staff, in response to their perception that their drawing skills were weak, included confidence-building techniques that enabled staff to reinforce the outreach provided by secondary specialists. Their sessions with primary school pupils had reinvigorated their passion for drawing and had raised expectations of secondary school students.
25.	54	Pupils responded to stimulating starting points, for example one school used Captain Scott's journey to the South Pole. Here, pupils made drawings from imagination and memory in response to the story and to sounds and images. They made their own journey

		around their school site, using drawing to select and record from what they experienced. Finally the pupils made large-scale collaborative drawings to communicate time, space and events. Pupils, teachers and school leaders felt strongly that the projects had been revelatory experiences, transforming their view of the subject through drawing.
26.	55	The teacher set the students a challenging and dramatic pose from the start. The model was seated high up at the top of a step ladder to provide opportunities for the teacher to explore viewpoint, foreshortening and extreme perspective with the students. A sequence of well-constructed, speedy tasks ensured that students were soon able to use composition dramatically. Large scale enabled them to draw physically and freely with brush, pen and ink. Using layers of wash and line, students built up their drawings, capturing the pose and perspective as well as the tonality and form of the figure. They frequently stepped back from their work to evaluate their progress, interspersed by mini critiques with their teacher. But the studio was quiet for much of the time. The teacher was expert at quietly and sensitively advising the students about when to stop; the powerful impact of incomplete drawings was exploited. Blank areas of students' drawings contrasted with intricate details exquisitely observed.

No.	Page no	Ofsted, Moving English forward: Action to raise standards in English March 2012
1.	12-13	<p>The missed opportunities noted in many of the satisfactory lessons, and some good lessons, related in part to teachers' assumptions – frequently mistaken – about what inspectors 'want' to see in a lesson or what constitutes effective teaching. Over recent years, some myths seem to have developed about what makes a good or outstanding lesson in English. This can be illustrated through the following lesson with Year 9 students. The lesson involved a Year 9 class working on techniques of persuasive writing. The lesson was planned in detail. The first phase involved an explanation of the learning objectives and a starter activity where students worked in groups to complete a card-sort activity. In the next phase of the lesson, students used a grid to identify persuasive devices on mini whiteboards. The teacher then took them quickly through the criteria for assessment at Levels 5–7 and gave students examples of extracts from two essays on capital punishment. Students were asked to choose the more effective piece, linking it to the assessment criteria. They were then asked to produce at least one paragraph of writing on the topic of capital punishment. In the final part of the lesson, students were asked to peer-mark two other students' work, then to look at and review their own work and check the comments. One further activity was introduced before students were asked to say what they had learnt in the lesson. The lesson closed with a final activity where students revised persuasive techniques on the board. There were many positive elements in this lesson. Students were fully engaged and certainly learnt more about persuasive techniques. However, a number of things struck the inspector. First, the person who worked hardest in this lesson was the teacher! The lesson involved seven or eight activities completed at speed. It was as though the teacher felt that the more she did, the better the lesson would be. In the course of the lesson, the teacher managed a number of potentially interesting tasks effectively. However, the sheer quantity of activities limited students' learning since they had insufficient time to complete tasks or consolidate their understanding. Attempting to understand the assessment criteria for three different Levels in five minutes was unrealistic, as was the time allowed to analyse the two extracts of writing. Only 10 minutes were provided for the students' writing. As a result, few were able to complete the task. The teacher in this lesson concentrated on the pace of activities rather than the pace of learning. The centre of this lesson should have been the opportunity for students to show what they had learnt about persuasive techniques by producing a piece of their own writing. The desire to complete all elements of the planned lesson meant that the writing task could not be completed and the fast movement from one activity to another limited students' development of new learning or their consolidation of existing learning. This pattern is noted regularly by inspectors.</p>
2.	15	<p>The following Year 9 lesson was judged by the inspector to be a well-structured and well-planned lesson. However, issues arose about the progress made by students. The main objective of the lesson was to compose an effective argument using the point/evidence/explanation (PEE) model, often used in schools, in response to a poem by Seamus Heaney. Students were presented with the poem, with the title removed, and asked to select an appropriate title from 10 alternatives provided by the teacher. Students were then expected to develop an argument supporting their choice of title. At the end of the lesson, they were asked to say what they had learnt during the lesson and recorded that they now felt much clearer about using the PEE technique. Although the inspector noted strengths in the lesson, he remarked that the poem itself appeared to be incidental. Most students had chosen a title that suggested a literal interpretation of the poem at best. None had chosen the original title (and the teacher didn't reveal it at the end of the lesson). Discussion had not touched on the themes of the poem and how this informed the</p>

		choice of title. In addition, no student volunteered in the discussion about learning that they understood the poem better or that they had enjoyed it. There was no exploration of ideas, language, technique or impact within the poem. In a way, the text could have been a railway timetable with the title removed. This led the inspector to question how much learning about English actually went on in the lesson.
3.	15-16	Another lesson observed also included an inappropriate use of the PEE approach with a Year 7 class. This was their first lesson on a play script of Frankenstein and included many good features, including effective use by the teacher of film clips and visual images to engage students. However, the first task for students after they had read a mere three pages of the play was to produce a PEE paragraph on the features of Gothic horror observed in the opening of the play – of which there were, in truth, very few examples this early in the script. In a third lesson, a new class novel was introduced by the teacher to a Year 8 group. After reading a few pages, which failed to engage many students in the class, they were asked to write a PEE paragraph on the author’s presentation of characters in relation to the historical context of the novel. There had been no opportunity for students to provide a personal response to the opening of the novel; to discuss its impact; whether it worked; what they liked/disliked; what might happen next; or what reaction they had to characters or events.
4.	22	The use of ICT and media technology is a key strength in teaching and learning. In every class there were impressive examples of how this had supported students’ understanding of, and enthusiasm for, English. Particularly effective examples included: an online newspaper written by students; animations written, directed and produced by students; radio plays written, directed and acted by students, including one based on Macbeth n homework emailed to teachers n video conferencing involving local authors and students in other local schools.
5.	22-23	The department has introduced a ‘Home & Away’ programme in Year 9. Students have a ‘home’ English teacher who works with them throughout the year and ensures steady attention to language skills and National Curriculum requirements. Every half term, a number of options are offered, each run by an English specialist, from which students may choose. Students then work on their option for the other half of the English time, which is known as ‘Away’ time. Examples of ‘Away’ topics include ‘Short stories; reading and writing’, ‘Gothic in film and literature’, ‘Reading and writing thrillers’. Teachers and students are very enthusiastic about this programme and there is evidence that it increases motivation for both staff and students and encourages more independent learning.
6.	23	A year 9 lesson had objectives related to ‘working considerably’ as a group and providing positive and constructive feedback on each other’s work. The teacher highlighted these points and gave examples of effective feedback just before the class watched a group of students presenting their own television documentary. He modelled the process by taking notes during the presentation. Spontaneous applause followed the group presentation, and students gave positive comments and some sensitively expressed criticism. Another Year 9 lesson explored the relationship between Pip’s adoptive parents in Great Expectations. The teacher’s plan included family relationships and resolution of family issues. Students chose to explore these ideas by role-playing marriage guidance sessions and hot-seating different characters. In the work and plenary which followed, students displayed unusual seriousness and trust in each other as they explored complex issues including family abuse. In this way, the study of texts was constantly related to contemporary life and students’ own experiences.
7.	25-26	Some weaknesses in the writing curriculum have been noted earlier in this report or in other reports on English published in recent years by Ofsted. They include: too few opportunities for pupils to complete extended writing; too little time in lessons to

		complete writing tasks; too little emphasis on creative and imaginative tasks; too little emphasis on the teaching of editing and redrafting; too little choice for pupils in the topics for writing; too few real audiences and purposes for writing.
8.	26	The school has recently rewritten its handwriting policy. This does not rely on any one commercial scheme but identifies clearly the type of script to be used in all classes. There is a detailed progression chart for teachers giving examples of handwriting patterns, families of letters and so on. Guidance is also provided on how pupils should develop pencil grips, and how to teach single letters and joins. The frequency of handwriting sessions is laid down in policy. For example, there is expected to be one weekly teacher-taught session for all Key Stage 2 classes. Sessions are to be linked to the spellings taught that week. A long-term plan for spelling identifies what is to be taught each year. Teachers are advised on the different strategies to be used such as analogy, mnemonics, word banks, displays and interactive games. Pupils all have a spelling book and are encouraged to 'have a go' before seeking advice. Pupils are taught how to proofread and to correct their own errors. Spelling is tested on a weekly basis and differentiated for groups of pupils. Teachers are expected to identify mistakes in spelling in pupils' work and pupils copy the words out a number of times, using the 'look, cover, write, check' approach.
9.	27	The department has a detailed spelling policy describing teaching approaches and linking key words with each unit of work. Spelling is consciously reinforced when students are reading and sharing texts. For example, key words or unfamiliar words in texts are put up on the board and students discuss their meaning, their derivation, and the logic shaping their spelling. Clear guidelines have been provided for teachers, setting out expectations for the marking of written work. Teachers are expected to identify patterns in misspelling, either by individuals or by groups, as the basis for targeted interventions. Students are taught strategies for the specific reinforcement of correct spelling through tests, dictionary work and the direct linking of spelling and handwriting. A guidance booklet explains how parents can support spelling at home. The school deals with spelling problems as early as it can through grouping targeted Year 7 students for an additional programme of five to six weeks' intensive additional support. This involves a multi-sensory approach to spelling that has proved successful, with most students making at least twice the standard rate of progress. Some students are withdrawn for additional work on handwriting, for example where students have previously worked in Arabic or Mandarin script, although the school accepts that more needs to be done in teaching and supporting handwriting.
10	28-9	The department is developing some innovative units of work at Key Stage 3 that are explicitly designed to make students work independently, use initiative, collaborate together, make decisions and review what they have learnt. Planned units in Year 7 include: organising a lunchtime or after-school club; improving the English department; and planning and teaching a unit of work for Year 6 pupils. The unit on 'improving the English department', for example, aims to give students the opportunity to consider the best way to use an allocated amount of money in order to improve the department. As part of this work, students are expected to research and audit the resources currently available and to conduct a survey to discover how teachers and students would like to see the department improved. The unit includes meetings of students in order to narrow the range of options, research possible cross-curricular initiatives, and prepare proposals for the chosen projects to include costings and technical advice. Groups of students will present their ideas to the rest of the class. This will lead to a whole-class decision about the best proposals which will then be presented formally by students to the rest of Year 7 and to the school's senior leadership team and English department. This emphasis on independent learning also extends to enrichment activities provided by the department...The inspector observed an interesting lesson in the school described above. The content, writing a letter to a third party, was similar to many other lessons observed;

		what was different was the way that, in this school, the teacher withdrew from the learning and handed responsibility to the students for deciding how they were going to do this. 64. Inevitably, there were disagreements and time was wasted but the students came to realise that they would have to compromise, agree and accept different roles, listen to others, and work effectively together. The teacher supported and guided this work of course, but many of the key decisions were taken by the students. The outcome was a high-quality and effective letter. The students learnt a good deal about the language and tone of writing formal letters but almost as much about working independently and collaboratively to solve problems and reach an acceptable outcome.
11	30	Inspectors have observed lessons at Key Stage 3 where, for example, a Shakespeare sonnet has been taught without the poem once being read aloud to the students.
12	30	too few schools currently develop reading skills effectively across the curriculum. Inspectors rarely see the direct teaching of skills such as skimming, scanning and reading for detail (including on the internet); using the index and glossary; identifying key points and making notes; summarising; or using more than one source.
13	31-32	In the first school, the literacy coordinator (in a school where 90% of students speak English as an additional language) has launched a 'Language Focus' component in the programme for tutorial work. The intention is to provide staff with the skills and understanding of language issues needed for the programme, which will then be followed up in the teaching of their own subjects. The first unit was based around oral language used in telephone calls. The teacher responsible identified that their students had difficulty adopting a range of transactional tones and registers and switching between informal and formal language. A range of materials was produced to support analysis of the language used in different conversations, leading to modelling by teachers and students practising different language for different contexts. Students then applied these newly learnt language approaches in role plays or real telephone calls. In the other school, the whole-school literacy coordinator, a historian, was appointed in September 2008. She has developed a programme to support tutorial work. This provides tutors with a scheme of work and a 'Literacy Toolkit' to aid them. The Key Stage 3 programme in all subjects focuses on spelling. Students have a booklet which contains key spelling rules, tips to improve spelling, and strategies to help them recall difficult words. The booklet also contains lists of key subject terms which students are asked to work through. There is also space for recording their own set of words to act as a mini dictionary. The literacy coordinator carries out regular observations of these sessions and also reviews students' books. The whole of Year 7 are given tests to evaluate their progress in reading and spelling, leading to the identification of each student's misspellings so that these can be addressed in a systematic way by all staff.
14	32-33	The school library is at the centre of many of the initiatives to promote reading. The librarian is encouraged by senior leaders to promote a wide range of initiatives, often working in partnership with other local schools. She also works increasingly closely with students to promote reading. The weekly reading group has been particularly successful and draws in many keen and able readers. However, the promotion of reading extends far beyond the school library and includes all of the major departments. Senior leaders and managers are fully committed to improving reading and have led a number of developments themselves, including teaching an additional weekly reading lesson with all Year 7 students. Early assessment identifies a large number of students who need extra help with their reading. Two particular initiatives have been introduced to help them make rapid progress. First the weakest readers receive additional support through a phonic-based reading programme taught by the Learning Support department. Second, the school has developed an approach based around small groups of guided readers. This session is in

		<p>addition to timetabled English lessons. The groups meet weekly to work on a particular text, reading aloud, talking about the book and following the session up with homework activities. The sessions are popular with students, who strongly believe that they gain greatly in confidence as readers working in these small groups. The English department fully supports these initiatives and promotes the importance of reading for enjoyment within its taught curriculum. Early lessons in Year 7 involve students working in the library and learning to use all the resources. Activities on texts are devised to ensure enjoyment of reading, with lots of emphasis on speaking and listening, and practical tasks such as making and using puppets as part of the Romeo and Juliet work. The department has also developed its own approach to guided reading in Year 8, involving students in choosing the texts. Another interesting approach has been for all homework in English in the first term of Year 7 to involve independent reading by students at home in order to get the reading habit integrated early.</p>
15	34	<p>Senior leaders and managers have overseen an improvement in attainment in English as well as the development of an innovative and effective curriculum. This is directly the result of very effective subject leadership. The headteacher is an English specialist and previously worked as a consultant within the borough. She works very closely with the enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader. As a result, the school has a strong vision and sense of direction for English. The headteacher's view is that the curriculum needs to be lively, practical and challenging if it is to engage their pupils. English is viewed as a creative, interactive subject and teachers are encouraged to make regular use of drama, information and communication technology, and media texts to motivate pupils. The subject action plan identifies well-chosen areas for development, all related to outcomes for pupils. Self-evaluation is secure. The school monitors pupils' performance effectively and has detailed evidence about the achievement of the different groups. Evidence from monitoring is used well to provide feedback to teachers on areas for improvement. This feedback is honest and challenging, and is focused directly on improving the quality of pupils' learning. The subject leader has been very well deployed over the past year on a range of tasks including providing training for colleagues, moderating standards, supporting individual teachers and developing the school library.</p>
16	45	<p>Regular events such as 'Flexible Fridays' ring-fence time for extended projects organised across departments. For example, a Renaissance project had Year 9 pupils writing in the first person as a protégé of Leonard da Vinci, with a Renaissance murder built into the narrative. To encourage reading and discussion, as well as to develop useful life/social skills, a fortnightly 'library coffee morning' is organised by the librarian for Year 10 pupils. Pupils are put into mixed-ability groups and given an assortment of journals and newspapers to trawl through. They select an item that interests them – any item – and put together a brief presentation about its content for the plenary session. Pupils have to learn how to cope socially as well as being effective at speaking, listening, reading and presentation. It is a hugely popular event. Pupils see it as a treat; they do not identify it as preparation for their GCSE examination. For some, it dismantles the preconceptions and inhibitions that would otherwise keep them out of the library.</p>
17	49	<p>The school places huge emphasis on developing and promoting language skills in the nursery and building on these skills through the subsequent key stages. In the Nursery class, there was constant dialogue as children engaged in chosen activities at the start of the day. Both the teacher and the teaching assistant interacted with children as individuals and in small groups, using questions to encourage talk. The classroom assistant modelled transactional language, explaining clearly how to set up a program on the computer. She matched verbal instructions to the movement of the mouse and activity on the screen. When the program failed, she moved the children to another activity and they carried on this form of talk with a boy explaining to a girl how to fill various beakers with water and</p>

		commenting on changes in colour. Two boys were talking with the teacher. One started telling a story about finding a skeleton. The teacher modelled questions which were imitated by his friend: 'Was it big?'; 'Was the head at the top?' The whole classroom had a persistent buzz as adults and children talked as they learnt.
18	50	There are generally four adults in the Nursery and Reception classes. Their priority is to get children talking and to model effective talk themselves. What is particularly effective is the school's use of role play. This is identified as a priority and planned accordingly. Children are not left to 'get on with it' themselves. The teacher joins the role-play area and uses talk constantly to question, explain, motivate and model. On the day of the visit, both boys and girls enjoyed visiting the 'Baby Clinic' and maintained their interest for a considerable period, supported by the teacher. Literacy was built into their play as pupils took it in turns to act as receptionist, writing notes in a file while the doctor frequently consulted his/her clipboard to write things down or check the daily programme. At all stages, the teacher was directly involved, often in role, asking questions and using language, including technical language, for pupils to imitate. Plans ensure that there is always a member of staff working with pupils in one of the role-play areas...The approach is 'to bathe children in language all the time'.
19	52	One simple example was work in Year 7 on a letter to the headteacher about school uniform. This was followed by a visit by the headteacher to discuss the issues with the class. The pupils commented that this had given a real sense of meaning and value to work in English. This does not mean that work always had this kind of very practical focus or that the department did not fully explore the creative elements in the subject. Indeed, poetry was very popular in this school partly because it was often explored through presentations to audiences, group work, and competitions. When Shakespeare plays were studied, the work stressed the dramatic and presentational elements and these were showcased through collaborative work and film making. All aspects of the English course were seen by students to have a definite outcome, with a clear reason for the work and a real audience.
20	52	In a second school visited, Year 9 students had been invited to provide feedback to the local college on a video presentation designed to encourage school leavers to choose one of their courses.
21	52-53	This type of approach to English often goes hand-in-hand with the effective development of pupils' independent learning skills, an additional weakness identified earlier in this report. This is because pupils are more likely to be working together, deciding on individual roles, preparing presentations, interviewing others, carrying out research and so on. One school visited linked independent working very effectively with a strong sense of purpose and audience in their enrichment activities. A group of more able students was producing a school radio programme. The students had decided to create a soap opera, using a range of characters to explore issues of interest to a teenage audience. It was to be presented as part of the daily broadcasts for students. The inspector observed a writers' meeting, where students (supported by the teacher) worked on a script for one of the programmes. An earlier version of the script had been presented to members of the school's pastoral team who had suggested changes. As a result, members of the writing team worked closely together to introduce some new elements to the script. The meeting was a remarkably successful and realistic one, taking on all the elements of the kind of writers' meeting that you might get as part of a real TV or radio soap opera. One of the students described it as 'creative writing mixed with reality'. There was a very open discussion, with students making suggestions and editing as they worked. The inspector noted that the normal roles of teacher and learner appeared to have merged. The teacher offered very sensitive leadership, prompting students all the time but rarely offering her own direct opinion: 'What do you think?'; 'How are you going to do that?' The later development of this project, once scripts had been written, would be for other students in the school to take

		on roles as producer, director and actors. A start had already been made, with a theme tune having been composed by another student in the school.
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No	Page no.	Ofsted, Excellence in English: What we can learn from 12 outstanding schools, May 2011
1.	15-16	During one visit, the inspector observed different classes all engaged in identifying and practising skills in persuasive speaking and writing. In the two higher-ability sets, election leaflets were distributed among students working in small groups. Students identified techniques used in the leaflet they were given and then the groups were reformed so that experts in each group were able to talk about similarities and differences and evaluate their relative impact. Finally, the students, working individually, tried their hand at the first section of an election leaflet, taking into account their understanding of points made earlier in the lesson when discussing a speech by Winston Churchill.
2.		The middle-ability set applied skills, identified earlier in the unit, to the business of persuading the head teacher to introduce improvements to the school, such as a shorter working week. The boys in particular clearly relished the challenge; their command of techniques, including rhetorical questions, ascending sets of three, repetition of key phrases and well-judged humour was impressive and persuasive. As one student explained, 'If you want to get on, you've got to do this kind of thing.'
3.		The class with less able students worked together, looking first at a Gary Lineker webpage, then at a news item about his impending divorce. Working in pairs, they highlighted a range of techniques used, including graphics as well as language, and identified the target audience and the intended effect. There was vigorous, informal discussion about the rights and wrongs of the case. Prompted by the teacher, students progressed from casual and ill-considered comment to thoughtful argument well supported by relevant information. The momentum that this created carried students into the final phase of the lesson when they were required to work independently and distil their point of view into a short paragraph.
4.		On another occasion, several GCSE classes were seen working towards a view of Steinbeck's <i>Of mice and men</i> as a tragedy. They approached the central question from different starting points. The most able students began with theory. Through pair work and whole-class discussion, they developed a working definition of tragedy which they then tested against a plot summary of <i>Othello</i> and, finally, against plot and characterisation in Steinbeck's novel. Less able pupils worked the other way round, beginning with discussion of a teacher-selected passage that showed key characters in conflict. Skilfully guided rather than directed by the teacher, students were able to draw out strands which they wove into a definition of tragedy that made sense to them and gave them a more complex view of the novel.
5.		Students in the middle-ability class also worked from the novel outwards but made their own decisions about which characters to focus on and which parts of the novel best illustrated their point of view. They were presented with two concepts: loneliness and dreams. Prompted by pictures representing key characters from the novel, students worked in small groups to build a case for a character of their choice as the novel's loneliest. Students then explored links between the themes of loneliness and dreams with their chosen character. Finally, students considered how definitions in Northrop Frye's <i>The five stages of tragedy</i> might be applied to <i>Of mice and men</i> . The sense of a worthwhile journey successfully completed was shared across these different classes. What these examples illustrate is the department's thoughtful and well-planned approach to ensuring that common themes and experiences for all students are taught in ways that engage the interests of all students and enable them all to make appropriately high levels of progress.
6.		Another key feature in the department's success is that students, as well as all staff, contribute directly to planning schemes of work in English. Topics and approaches are proposed and evaluated through discussion in lessons and through consultation with students representing the range of ability and aspiration. The curriculum has also been

		constructed so that there are clear, shared priorities that directly address local and community needs, such as: to explore themes relevant to students' experience, for example, looking at how media target and manipulate children; to reflect the school's growing diversity and tackle south-east London issues such as refugees, racism, and street culture.
7.	18	The subject leader described her view of English as 'getting out the plasticine and paint'. This is not to be taken literally but encapsulates the need to make English an active and discursive experience for students, one which engages their interest and gives them a voice. Teachers were given the scope and confidence to do this while making learning interesting. Teachers who were in the department at the time describe how 'English came alive again'. They recognised the immediate sense of clarity of direction and gained the confidence to try approaches to see if they were successful. They confirmed how the professional culture in the department changed and how this moved teaching forward.
8.	27	The curriculum is also constructed so that it appeals to all students, with clear, distinct outcomes and links to the world beyond school. Some of the Key Stage 3 units of work are innovative and highly distinctive. For example, younger students especially enjoy the 'Mr Men' unit of work. While this might seem on the surface to make limited demands on the ability of secondary-age students, the work involves a great deal of grammatical and linguistic analysis. The unit begins with an exploration of the notion of stereotypes. Students then review and extend their knowledge of grammar focusing on the use of adjectives, onomatopoeia and alliteration. This leads into an analysis of Mr Men characters, analysing the author's use of these techniques before students create their own new character. Students also study the various plot lines in existing Mr Men stories, for example the way that a negative character is made good by the actions of a second character or the focus on the typical events of one day. They plan and write their own story and then self- and peer-assess the completed tales. At this point, the focus turns on to how to give constructive criticism and how to improve speaking and listening skills. The unit ends with the opportunity for students to read their story to children in a local primary school. Boys especially enjoy the purpose and direction of this unit, which involves a clear outcome and audience for their work. There are many opportunities for students to work in groups and discuss or role-play issues. The wit and humour in the Mr Men books also engages them and the grammatical and linguistic analysis is firmly rooted in the need to study and then imitate a familiar text.
9.	27-28	The lesson began with the students watching a video message from one of the senior teachers. Students were invited to contribute to redesigning the school library to make it more eco-friendly. This was a highly effective start to the lesson and the students were very keen to help. It was explained that the task for students in the following week would be to 'pitch' their design ideas to the rest of the class using persuasive language and presentations involving information and communication technology. Students were put into pairs and asked to come up with one idea for 'greening' the library. They were later placed into one of four research groups to consider different environmental issues. Students acted as experts and moved to different groups to present the ideas from their first group. The lesson ended with some discussion of the linguistic features of emails as students were to compose email replies to the senior teacher outlining some of their initial ideas. A number of features made this lesson successful, especially in engaging boys: the effective use of modern technology; a task that had a clear audience and purpose, which showed students how the use of language can help to get things done; an emphasis on well-planned oral work with clear and specific roles for students.
10.	28-29	A creative, thematic approach to planning makes good use of pupils' interests to inspire and stimulate learning. The activities provide rich opportunities for high-quality learning which are fun and activity-based.

11.	34	This was seen in one very successful lesson observed with a middle-ability Year 11 class working on love poems. This lesson was judged to be outstanding because the (male) teacher: engaged students with a starter activity the moment they entered the classroom; used physical objects (chosen from a bag) to intrigue and provide a starting point for writing; modelled the whole process unselfconsciously himself (first through his own metaphor based on 'My love is like an old trainer...' and later his own full sonnet); used visual images to pre-figure the poem and arouse discussion; selected students in advance to provide a careful reading of Shakespeare's My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun.
12.	34-35	Although the department is very successful with boys, this is not because it targets specifically male interests. As the head of department said, 'We ignore that they are boys.' What she meant by this was that they do not provide a curriculum heavily dependent on football and war. However, it is the nature of the curriculum more than anything else that has had the most impact on attainment in the school. In discussion, boys listed a number of common features of English lessons that appealed to them, including: lessons that build on what students like and do outside school; breadth and variety of approach in lessons; lots of opportunities to use modern technology in English; emphasis on drama in English

No.	Page no	Ofsted, History for all: History in English schools 2007/10, March 2011
1.	13	The students across Key Stage 3 were adept in using and evaluating sources. A mixed-ability Year 7 lesson was particularly successful in helping the students to use sources to establish different viewpoints. A stepped approach enabled students to: identify types of questions look at the reliability of different sources in relation to the questions apply their learning through extended writing. What they had to write varied, reflecting the needs and abilities of the students. Peer- and self-assessment were used well in most cases to evaluate progress. The students understood clearly that all sources of evidence, including biased ones, were valuable to historians because, as one student put it, 'Once we've worked out a source might be biased, we then need to ask why it is biased, and look at the motives of the person who produced it.'
2.	14	Students in Year 7 considered why people's interpretations of King John have changed over the years. Students in Year 8 analysed the changing attitudes towards Oliver Cromwell from the 17th to the 20th centuries and, in Year 9, they looked at changing attitudes to the British Empire. The work on Cromwell used the writings of Victorian and 20th century historians as well as contemporary historians. In the work on the British Empire, the students designed an Empire plate, having looked at contemporary and modern sources of information, including the work of historians such as Niall Ferguson. Through these approaches students developed a clearer understanding of the context in which history is written, created and interpreted.
3.	16	Students in Year 13 were analysing a range of source materials to discover factors to explain the achievement of independence of countries in East Africa between 1956 and 1980. The lesson had been carefully structured so that students were obliged to consider and reflect on the possible factors, from all points of view, before drawing valid and sustainable conclusions.
4.	17-8	The planning and preparation for a Year 1 lesson were outstanding. Clear objectives were linked to the levels of attainment and to graduated success criteria. The pupils were to learn about things that might be found in an old house and the rooms in which they might be used... The focus of their work was also explained: together they were going to make a book: 'What you need in a Victorian Kitchen.'
5.	19	Year 4 pupils debated perceptively whether both Guy Fawkes and King James were bad men and how the differences between them could be resolved
6.	19	In Year 5 pupils investigated life in Victorian boarding schools by studying letters written by children at the time
7.	19	In an excellent Year 2 lesson, pupils acted as 'penny lick' and ice cream sellers and explained confidently why ice cream was a luxury in Victorian times
8.	19	Imaginative use of the internet and the interactive whiteboard to bring variety to lessons but also to gain access to a wealth of resources
9.	19	Opportunities to use and evaluate artefacts and real historical evidence; for example, Year 3 pupils investigated the impact of the Blitz on the local area by studying newspaper reports and old photographs.
10.	19	a creative balance between teacher-directed learning, which set the guidelines in which the learning took place, and independent learning, which allowed the pupils to get to grips with historical questions

11.	19	In the best lessons, pupils started to become historical detectives.
12.	24	A mixed-ability Year 7 class was looking at what happened to people in Nazi Germany who had been involved in perpetrating the Holocaust and why. At the start of the lesson, the teacher had focused the students effectively by asking them to consider what happens to criminals today. Moving on to the events in Europe, the students read extracts which told them about what happened to Goering, Hess and the people who lived near and worked in the death camps. When the teacher said that some Nazi scientists were 'let off' and 'spirited away to work for the Allies', several students expressed surprise and could not understand why this had been the case. However, there was no discussion of this issue and the teacher moved swiftly to the next activity, missing an opportunity to explore why some Nazi scientists had been treated this way. As the lesson progressed, the students became less and less focused.
13.	25	Year 11 students were studying the treatment of the Sioux Indians as part of the Schools History Project depth study on the American West. An effective activity at the beginning of the lesson reminded students of what they knew so far about the homes and lifestyle of the Sioux Indians, especially in relation to buffalo hunting. Using this knowledge, students, working in groups, devised criteria to judge any modern interpretation of what happened to the Sioux. In this case, they considered a Hollywood film. Once the draft criteria had been discussed, reviewed and re-drafted, the students watched several sequences from the film. At key points, prompted by the students, the teacher stopped the film to review this interpretation. Close checks were made against the criteria. Gradually a view emerged of the reliability of the film's interpretation. Good questioning helped the students to develop their own ideas and all of them were involved in the discussions.
14.	30	The features of an outstanding curriculum were well displayed in this school: The history curriculum is a real strength within the school. It more than meets the basic requirements. It is based on capturing pupils' imaginations through creative activities, stimulating stories and adventurous re-enactments, such as drama day when pupils become Vikings, or Knights debating around the huge wooden round table in the school grounds. Also in the grounds are two large stockades which are regularly used to enable pupils to learn about sieges, military tactics and settlement life at different times.
15.	34	Each year group chose a period of history and spent the whole week studying it. The week was a mixture of in-school activities with teachers and visitors, for example a theatre company, visits and role play. This was a highly successful community event. Over 300 parents, grandparents and carers took part during the week and attended the presentation by each year group: children in the Foundation Stage on the history of toys; Years 1 and 2 on Victorian children; Years 3 and 4 on exploration; and Years 5 and 6 on the 1960s, including a 'Peace' demonstration with parents all dressed in period costume. Pupils said how much they enjoyed the week and teachers spoke of the positive impact the activities had had on pupils' knowledge and understanding.
16.	50	Students' understanding of conditions in the First World War was enhanced in one school through the use of an online trench simulation. In another school, short DVD clips, together with digital flipcharts and a PowerPoint presentation, were used to build students' understanding of the causes of the Vietnam War. In a Year 12 lesson, students gained an excellent understanding of the key events of the Korean War because the teacher skilfully combined short media clips, digital maps and electronic timelines with good-quality questioning.

17.	54	The most effective subject pedagogy, which ensured high achievement in history, was shown by teachers whose approach focused on well-structured enquiry, embracing independent thinking and learning... The following example illustrates highly effective practice in developing pupils' enquiry skills. Students in Year 9 were given the task of investigating changes in bombing strategy, comparing the First and Second World Wars. They devised their enquiries and structured them appropriately with individual guidance from the class teacher. Each student had her or his own laptop and used both academic and general interest websites to research data and find different interpretations. This valuable exercise led to some valid independent work. It was enhanced by the fact that, although students were given a broad framework and a key question which they were required to answer, the structure of the enquiry was not prescribed and the students were able to develop their own styles and structures.
18.	56-7	Plans were in place for pupils in the school and in a partner school in Pakistan to study a comparative historical event in each country. The pupils in Pakistan would investigate the Viking invasion of Britain in AD 759 and those in England would study the Arab invasion of 712 CE. The project relied on using a range of digital resources for the pupils to share their findings with each other across both of the schools. At the heart of the planning, however, was a desire to improve pupils' understanding of the role of local history within a framework of national and international events. It focused on helping pupils to appreciate the similarities and differences in human development and activity and thus create greater understanding of the interrelationship between communities in different parts of the world.

No.	Page no	Ofsted, Geography: Learning to make a world of difference, February 2011
1.	10	Mapwork was threaded into teachers' plans wherever possible and mapwork skills were developed sequentially through the school. Beginning in the Reception class, pupils used photographs of rooms and features in school and could place them accurately on a blank map of the corridor. They could describe a journey along the corridor, using appropriate vocabulary such as 'opposite', 'next to', 'forward', 'right' and 'left'.
2.		In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were able to locate a number of physical features using coordinates and follow accurately a number of routes to enable them to arrive at destinations. By Year 6, pupils were able to recall the route they had taken to the Pennines, particularly the roads, towns and villages visited on the journey. They had then used Ordnance Survey maps to trace the route, revised key symbols and used this to draw their own maps accurately, complete with keys.
3.	11	In Reception, pupils were confident in finding routes and used a programmable toy (Beebot) to develop a sense of direction and directional language. They had learned about a variety of places and how they differed. They used maps with increasing confidence to find out where they had been on holiday. They had also looked at Costa Rica in general terms as part of a fund-raising activity.
4.	11	In Year 1, pupils had studied their school and considered how to make their local area safe.
5.		By Year 2, most pupils were working at levels broadly average for their age. They had used Barnaby Bear to study places around the world.6 They had used maps to compare and contrast the imaginary island of Struay, well-known through the Katie Morag stories and based on the Isle of Coll, with Weston-Super-Mare. They were able to use simple grid references and could locate key features on a map. The pupils were keen to study geography and liked learning about maps and other countries. They could describe, for example, the Brazilian rainforest and the habitat of monkeys
6.	11	Year 3 pupils moved on to studying their local environment, visiting the local shopping area and using maps of the locality, considering social problems such as graffiti. They were able to locate their place in the United Kingdom and in the world. They had also visited the local park and a hill farm and had compared and contrasted where they lived with the countryside.
7.	11	By Year 4, pupils extended their learning further afield, with a good development of mapwork. Good opportunities for extended writing had been provided through their developing study of the Brazilian rainforest. They used resources and photographs effectively to support their understanding of contrasting locations.
8.	11	Year 5 pupils had compared and contrasted differing localities and used fieldwork to support their learning. They had studied themes such as Antarctica and the tropical rainforests to consider issues of conservation and global warming.
9.	11	In Year 6, the major focus of their learning had been on rivers and valleys. Pupils visited Dovedale which supported this learning well. Topics such as sustainability and conservation were covered effectively. Homework was used to support learning, with some pupils extending their learning to study other rivers around the world. They had gained awareness of how we cause flooding. By the time they left school, most of the pupils were working at National Curriculum Level 4 with an increasing number at Level 5. This represented good to outstanding progress from their starting points on entry.
10.	12-13	The lesson was an introduction to a unit on London and focused on developing mapping skills, as well as raising awareness of London as a diverse place. The lesson started with a quick sharing of ideas on what pupils already knew about London and their thoughts were

		<p>summarised on the interactive whiteboard. The class teacher then focused on identifying where London was and used the interactive whiteboard excellently to support this. The teacher initially looked at the location on a global scale and quickly had pupils identifying and naming continents. This was followed by working down through continental, country and regional scales. Pupils were invited to come out to the whiteboard to locate London at each scale. Pupils were given some additional information about London and introduced to the map of the London Underground. About five minutes were spent on asking some very clear questions about what each part of the map showed and what was useful and what was not. The underground map was linked to Google maps which showed the locations of stations so that pupils gained an understanding of the location of stations and the contrasting patterns between the two types of map. Introductory questions, becoming progressively more difficult, introduced them to using the underground map. This activity thoroughly engaged them. Careful questions checked their progress and learning at each stage. Pupils then moved on to exploring a treasure map based on the map of the Underground. This generated high levels of engagement and excitement and included good basic numeracy as well as a range of map skills. Pupils really enjoyed this and worked well in pairs and small groups to solve the clues. By the end of the lesson pupils had gathered some basic information about London and could locate the city on maps of various scales. They had gained considerable knowledge and understanding of the Underground map and how to use it, as well as identifying various places of interest in London. They had developed their map skills and an understanding of travel, time and distance. They had made excellent progress. Very high-quality questioning by the teacher always challenged the pupils and encouraged them to check their responses.</p>
11.	13-4	<p>In the starter activity, the children had been issued with flight tickets for their journey to Mexico. Carlos (an imaginary character) left them messages under his poncho and sombrero. The use of Carlos really held the children's imagination. Visual images on the interactive whiteboard and the storyline involving Carlos had been used very effectively to introduce children to the village in Mexico. Their perceptions about what the village might be like as well as questions about their journey were used well. Pupils knew what they had flown over to get to Mexico and discussed their journey home in the final part of the lesson. They all mimed packing their bags, putting on their seat belts and flew back (noises and arms like aeroplanes) on their long journey. They knew they had flown over the Atlantic Ocean and had to land in England. The final stage was used effectively to share findings and enable the children to begin to make comparisons with their home town. Expectations and levels of challenge were high but all the pupils responded well to these. The teaching, supported by the teaching assistant, was dynamic and inspirational. Both the teacher and the teaching assistant constantly encouraged and supported the children's learning and made excellent use of opportunities for the children to talk in pairs. At the end of the lesson, the teacher ensured that the pupils knew what they had learnt and how and what they would be learning next.</p>
12.	14	<p>The teacher asked pupils to consider the increase in water usage but looked only at domestic changes. She tended to stereotype Egypt. When planning the task, she only considered asking for a description or lists of ways of saving water rather than a more challenging activity. Her lack of expertise in the subject affected the precision and challenge of the questions she asked pupils.</p>
13.	15	<p>The Year 4 lesson began by looking at what the pupils already knew about India. These observations were very basic and not always accurate: 'They are famous for their camels'; 'they do yoga'; 'they are famous for their food'; 'they ride on elephants'; 'they wear colourful clothes'. Stereotypes and misconceptions were not challenged by the teacher. Pupils gained an understanding of the distance to India by creating a map of the world on the school field, reinforcing their sense of scale. They then wrote a postcard from India.</p>

		However, it was very difficult to identify what this was based on, since pupils had little understanding of what India was really like. The focus was on the quality of the writing rather than the quality of the geography: 'Dear mum and dad – I am having a wonderful time in India because it is extremely hot. Today I visited the Taj Mahal. There is a picture of me at the Taj Mahal at the front. It is super – exciting. Lots of love, M.' In this example, the geography was providing the context for some weak work in literacy and did little to develop an understanding of place.
14.	15-16	In Year 6, as part of the 'Blue Planet Unit' which focused on water and rivers, pupils were given the opportunity for self-directed learning, although the teacher provided an outline for the task. This set out clearly what pupils should do and ensured that it had a suitable geographical focus. The pupils were given about six weeks to complete the project. This was mainly done in their own time, but if they finished work in lessons they were allowed to work on their project in school. The pupils were allowed, in discussion with the teacher, to choose the area to research and report upon and the style in which they would produce the work. Examples seen included: a standard report of European rivers including computer-generated data and descriptions and explanations related to the differing characteristics of these rivers; a standard report on a single river; a large poster display on the River Thames from source to mouth including details of flooding and river management; a report on the River Danube which included a contour model of the centre of Budapest; a DVD and note cards of a simple experiment made at home to produce a hydro-electric power machine and a written report setting out the advantages and disadvantages of hydro-electricity. The pupils spoke very enthusiastically about their projects and had very good understanding about their chosen topics. They really appreciated the freedom to decide what they wanted to learn within the framework given.
15.	16-17	One hour a week was spent on teaching ICT skills. These skills were then built on progressively and linked to different curriculum areas. The school researched and invested in innovative technology and assessed its potential for geography fully. Teachers also used ICT very effectively to stimulate learning and produce resources for teaching and assessment. As a result, in the Reception class, the children were familiar with and regularly used the interactive whiteboard, computer programs and a visualiser. ⁷ They were confident and able to trace routes and use directional language using a programmable toy (Beebot). Year 1 pupils were observed using a smart touch table for finger walking around their locality which enabled them to develop a sense of scale and location. Year 2 pupils were working on Fizzbooks to research what they could find out from the internet about Tocuaro (a Mexican village). They had been introduced to this new technology the day before and could use it with ease and explain what it was and how you used it. They made good use of the stylus to zoom in on pictorial images. Pupils worked in pairs to produce their own notes of their findings. Higher-ability pupils were working independently using images to answer questions from the 7 A visualiser is a camera that enables teachers or pupils to display an object such as a page of text or a child's work on the interactive whiteboard or screen. This image can then be captured, annotated and saved for future use. Tocuaro pack. Some pupils with learning difficulties worked on the carpet with the teaching assistant; they looked at picture maps, recreated them using two-dimensional images and then undertook Beebot journeys between them. Year 3/4 pupils used emails and laptops to share information about the weather here and in Europe; Year 5/6 pupils were familiar with this wide range of technology and used it extremely effectively for investigations and to present their findings.
16.	26	In a Year 9 lesson, students worked in groups through a range of different activities to determine whether Olympic regeneration would benefit east London.

17.	26	Year 11 students made plasticine models of different peri-glacial features, photographed them and used the images to help them prepare a response to an A-level examination question.
18.	27	The students were asked to empathise with the trauma associated with living through a natural hazard, in this case an earthquake. Students in the lower-attaining class were given a photograph of earthquake damage and asked to consider what was happening, suggest what individuals might be saying and how they were feeling. This opened task involved students in expressing their own opinions. Weak literacy skills, however, prevented some of the students from writing down their ideas. The teacher noticed this and, instead, used oral questions that allowed them to express their ideas and emotions. Following this, the teacher read the poem 'After the Earthquake' by Angela Topping. The students were asked to work in pairs to consider the questions: 'Who has written the poem?'; 'What is the poem about?'; 'Where is this child and why can't he/she speak out?'; 'Why does this child want to speak out?' At first, the students were reluctant to get involved but, gradually, they warmed to the task. Real discussion began to develop, both among the students and between them and the teacher. The poem and the discussion provided a stimulus which helped them to use additional photographs later to complete some creative writing based around the earthquake. Despite their weak literacy skills, the discussions had stimulated the students' engagement and higher-order thinking.
19.	27	In contrast, very closed questioning of the higher-attaining students in the other Year 9 class limited the quality of the discussion. Rushed tasks provided no time for reflection and no real development of thinking. The focus was, instead, on factual recall about what happens during an earthquake. The students in the lower-attaining group were achieving more and were able to add detail to their accounts of an earthquake, despite their obvious difficulties with spelling.
20.	28	The students collected laptops on entry and logged in. In the opening activity the students were shown a photograph of an Indian slum. Google Earth was then used to zoom in and study slums in Mumbai, encouraging the students to discuss whether or not it would be appropriate to make the slums legal. Reference was made to two contrasting less economically developed countries and linked to previous learning. The teacher's questions were challenging, with a strong emphasis on sharpening geographical vocabulary and the skills of interpreting photographs and maps, needed for work at AS level. The very effective use of satellite technology for data interpretation engaged all the students. In the final part of the lesson, the teacher referred to the learning objectives and linked them to the next lesson when students would be expected to consider contemporary urbanisation in Britain. The students' responses showed their detailed understanding and good prior knowledge as a result of a well-planned curriculum. The teacher had very good subject knowledge, taught confidently and challenged and supported individual students. The students' learning at home was used well. As a result, they gained a good understanding of where and how to access different types of satellite images and different types of maps for a range of purposes.
21.	28-9	In one of the schools visited, a wide array of activities, games and competitions was available on the school's website under the heading 'Mission Geography', much of it written in-house. The variety attracted students because there was something for everyone. An online blog, 'Geography Rocks', was maintained by the head of department, and further stimulated learning. This included up-to-date revision materials as well as interesting ideas to explore. Many of the GCSE students had downloaded material from the blog onto their iPods for revision which helped them to fit extra learning into busy schedules.

22.	29	The Year 9 assessment on earthquakes, for example, expected the students to design an earthquake emergency bag and an earthquakeproof house, as well as to write an extended essay on whether 'Chrissy and Mike should emigrate to Australia or New Zealand?' Students were expected to draft their response in note form, within a given framework and then to write their final answer, using the information, under timed conditions.
23.	29	Students practised the writing skills that they needed to be successful. A lesson on 'brilliant conclusions', for example, was used to show how this could be achieved. Students were also told what was expected in order to reach a particular National Curriculum level, and this was exemplified in the context of specific tasks.
24.	36	During the introduction to the lessons, there was a strong focus on questioning and speaking. Initially, the pupils reviewed their previous work linked to the Gaza conflict. They recognised that the conflict was in the Middle East and they could locate important countries and areas such as Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza strip. Pupils understood what was meant by 'empathy' ('feel what they might feel like'). Two pupils, in role, acted as newsreaders during an introductory simulation of a newscast. This used a PowerPoint backdrop and updated the rest of the class on the conflict. The teacher sat in the 'hot seat', acting as an expert to reflect on and clarify the issues. The pupils had a very good understanding of the differences between Hamas and Fatah and the tensions between Arabs and Israelis in the conflict. Having exemplified the role of an 'expert witness', three pupils who had prepared scripts sat in 'hot seats'. Groups of pupils interviewed these experts – 'Is this an Arab/Israeli child?'; 'What are their concerns and worries?' and so on. This enabled pupils to develop a fresh perspective on the conflict and use their speaking, listening and questioning skills. They were able to explain the conflict through the eyes of children living within it today.
25.	36	In another school visited, Year 6 pupils took on a wide variety of roles, and therefore of viewpoints, in relation to the possible introduction of a wind farm to a Scottish community. Two pupils were councillors, evaluating the evidence and arguments and giving feedback on their decision. There was a good opportunity for an appeal. The whole event was set up as if it was in a local village hall and the atmosphere was tense as the results were awaited. This gave the pupils an excellent insight as to how eco-developments have an impact on members of a community.
26.	39	In a Year 8 lesson about the causes and effects of volcanoes, students quickly shared what they already knew and listened to an eye-witness account to identify key vocabulary. In pairs, they began an exercise to sequence the account, in order, before sorting a set of words and statements into 'causes' and 'descriptions' and finally sharing with the class what they had learnt. The discussion revealed a very good understanding of how and why earthquakes occur, linked to clear details about their impact on both physical and human environments.
27.	40	In one of the schools visited, the pupils were expected to answer questions in full sentences. The lessons were seldom quiet because the pupils often worked in pairs, sharing what they knew and understood through working conversation. They also developed good social skills. They were expected to write in a variety of ways. For example, empathy with the people of Sicily was expressed through writing a newspaper report on a volcanic eruption; vivid poetry expressed deep feelings about child workers in economically less developed countries.
28.	40	Year 3 pupils investigated the quality of the school's environment and its immediate locality. They used their findings to write to the local council requesting the installation of a litter bin and repairs to a bus shelter. As a result of their suggestions and interest, both initiatives were implemented.

29.	40	In their topic, 'Space to Play', Year 4 pupils researched a local area of waste land to find out how it might be used for a local park. The pupils produced questionnaires with which they interviewed local people. Based on their findings, pupils drew plans of their proposals to convert the waste land into a park. They completed a wide variety of writing including letters to the local council about their proposals. Many were of a very high quality, at least Level 4. They produced a script for a possible discussion with a councillor to discuss the issue.
30.	40-41	Year 4 also benefited from excellent teaching of debating skills. During a geography lesson, pupils staged a meeting which was attended by a councillor. The pupils adopted different viewpoints about whether or not to install speed cushions in a local road. This was excellent use of a geographical context to enhance learning in geography as well as speaking and listening skills.
31.	41-2	Learning and outcomes in geography were underdeveloped on a Year 6 residential visit. There was a strong focus on walks, but observation was low-level. The pupils also participated in orienteering and although they used map and geographical skills, opportunities to learn about the area's geography were lost. Most of the activities were linked to physical and team-building activities such as caving and archery and much of this work had little to do with geography. In other classes, fieldwork was limited. Visits to the local woods in Key Stage 1 tended to focus on science by looking at leaves, seeds and plants. The visits provided a context for writing in various genres, but there was no real evidence of learning in geography.
32.	42	Residential field trips built up from an overnight stay in Year 2 to a full week for older pupils. The work was often related to geography. For example, the pupils visited the source, middle stage and estuary of the River Avon. They saw how the river changed from the spring on Dartmoor to the wide estuary. They observed the River Test to see how fast it flowed at various points. They helped to analyse the contents of the river, used the information to gauge the health of the eco-system and began to understand the impact of pollution on dolphins and other wildlife in the estuary. This first-hand work was extremely effective in promoting their skills of observation, field recording and debate. They recollected vividly measuring the speed of the River Test using an orange, and the creatures that they observed along the river. They were able to describe the land use at each stage of the river with references to water meadows and sand banks.
33.	42	During the first half of the autumn term, work in geography for Year 1 pupils was based on fieldwork in the local environment. They explored the human and physical features in and around the school and local area. Work on aerial photographs, Google Earth and digital photography determined which features were most common. They studied the advantages and disadvantages of human and physical features, discussed which were most prominent and whether it was better to live in an area with more human or more physical features. The unit culminated in the pupils selecting and improving a derelict local shop which formed the focus of their fieldwork. The fieldwork and the subsequent activities provided opportunities to explore environmental issues such as recycling, sustainability and graffiti and gave the pupils the opportunity to learn about the effect of individual actions on the local area as well as the global community.
34.	43	Year 3/4 pupils completed field observations with the teacher and teaching assistant. Discussion had taken place about health and safety and care of equipment as pupils moved from the classroom to practical activities. They measured wind speed, wind direction, rainfall and temperature using thermometers, a weather vane and anemometers and recorded findings on small whiteboards. The school emphasised pupils' learning by requiring them to present their findings in writing rather than fill in worksheets. Pupils also

		<p>photographed and described the sky at halfhour intervals during one day. In the classroom, the pupils read an email from a pupil in their partner school in Barcelona displayed on the whiteboard. This was also available as a paper copy and in a large print version. Pupils had to interrogate the email to find out the same four pieces of information (wind speed, wind direction, rainfall and temperature) about the weather in Catalonia. Findings were then recorded as a comparative table. The older pupils had more comparative data from several other locations and used laptops to present their findings. They also made their own hypotheses to explain the differences. The plenary session of the lesson focused on where they would prefer to be and why. Was the weather the same in all European countries? The questions presented a good level of challenge and atlases were available for pupils to consult. The pupils exchanged their findings and hypotheses with their partner school at the end of the day; these were of a high quality. Classroom displays and previous work on weather also demonstrated high quality.</p>
35.	43-4	<p>A unit on settlements and mapping skills in Year 3 focused on the school environment. Pupils began by exploring various maps, aerial photographs and satellite imagery of the surrounding area. Homework activities were linked to the classroom display, plotting each pupil's address on a map of the local area. The pupils researched different types of settlements, making comparisons and developing fact files. Later, a focus on the local town looked at classifying land use and services. Year 3 also completed fieldwork linked to their settlement study, focusing on the school and grounds to produce individual plans. The pupils designed map symbols for the key features of the school and directional language was explored. Digital imagery was used as a starting point for designing the symbols. Further fieldwork was carried out to determine the correct location of each symbol before they created a final colour-coded plan, including a key. Subsequent lessons explored the pupils' knowledge and understanding of change and sustainable development. They discussed how people could improve or damage their local environment and how this could affect the quality of people's lives. References were made to the school's current plans to improve the school environment, such as by providing a second adventure playground and extending classrooms.</p>
36.	44	<p>Fieldwork was integrated into most units of work. Where first hand experience was not appropriate, pupils benefited from visitors and visits such as to the post office and fire station. They worked on weather in the school grounds and linked this work to environmental action. They undertook traffic surveys linked to environmental quality. Moving further afield, they used public transport to investigate changes in land use along a main road. They visited a local river to study its features and the environmental impact of human and economic actions on it. Further afield, a visit to Holy Island provided a contrast. Geography was also planned into visits for other purposes, such as to outdoor activity centres. Map work, for example, supported orienteering. The pupils also conducted surveys and questionnaires in school, at home and in their local area which they used for investigations, some of which arose from questions they had posed themselves.</p>
37.	44-45	<p>Year 3 pupils in a junior school studied the local area, which included comparing their school with one in Southampton. In Year 4, pupils considered how the local area was being developed. In Year 5, they studied Verderes Court in the New Forest, linked to their work on rivers and Southampton Docks. The Year 6 residential visit to the Isle of Wight involved pupils in looking at Ordnance Survey maps of the Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight areas, identifying routes and using six-figure as well as four-figure references. They also completed fieldwork at the residential centre where they contrasted the Isle of Wight with Chandler's Ford. Pupils examined the geology of the area, completed field sketches and beach studies linked with science, and also looked at cliff formation, the impact of erosion along the coast and longshore drift. They considered the settlements at Bonchurch and Ventnor, essentially from a historical perspective, but they also reflected on the</p>

		impact of tourism on their development. The units of work placed a heavy emphasis on developing and applying geographical skills.
38.	46	In the last few years, more pupils had joined the school from different countries. In Year 2 it was decided to study life in a Turkish village, as a child had recently arrived from there. The pupils interviewed her and used photographs, maps, atlases, weather forecasts and clothes effectively to explore similarities and differences between their own locality and a locality in Turkey. The pupils had very specific knowledge and understanding. They were enthusiastic, interested and respectful of differences. They were also able to recognise that they had changed some of their views about Turkish weather, lifestyle and religion.
39.	46	Year 4 pupils used drama to consider the impact of loggers and tourists on the native population of the Brazilian rainforest. Small groups of pupils presented their cameos and the others listened carefully to the viewpoints.
40.	46-7	Year 6 pupils considered the impact of tourists on the Peak District National Park. A small group had written a song summarising their views and performed this confidently. Later, pupils had to consider a new building project on the flood plain of the River Dove and present a balanced argument to support their viewpoint. Through such activities, pupils increased their geographical knowledge and understanding. They were able to link local and global concerns and recognised how difficult it is to achieve a balance when faced with conflicting demands.
41.	48	Two students presented the ideas of a Fairtrade school to the governors. They explained how this would benefit people around the world who were being treated unfairly and could not speak out. The governors approved the initiative, committing the school to using Fairtrade products wherever possible. The whole of the Fairtrade group took to the streets of the local shopping centre to encourage shops and cafés to sell Fairtrade products. They wore brightly decorated Fairtrade T-shirts and distributed leaflets with information about Fairtrade products. The students saw that a lot of the shops were already selling products to help those in developing countries but those that did not needed convincing. After the event, one of the students said, 'I feel that we have made a big difference to the attitudes of managers and bosses of many of the shops and cafés. Even if people did not want to listen, I am sure our leaflets and T-shirts made an impact and made them more aware of what is really going on in the world.'
42.	48-49	Year 7 students watched a news item showing secondary school students in a London school being interviewed about whether they felt British and discussed what Britishness meant to them. Initial discussions reflected their immediate heritage but began to broaden to include grandparents and great grandparents. Perceptive points emerged: 'You don't have to be born here to be British'. The teacher skilfully linked the points being made to the diversity of places in the United Kingdom. The students considered whether images shown on the interactive whiteboard were from the UK or elsewhere. The pictures were actually of the Notting Hill Carnival, China Town in Manchester, a back street in Bradford, the London Eye and the London Mosque. Perceptive questioning challenged the students' thinking and perceptions as they explored the images and began to look beyond the obvious. For example, one student felt that the image of the Notting Hill Carnival was not in the United Kingdom. However, the majority of the students disagreed. They identified it as a festival and noted background details, such as brickwork and burglar alarms, as typically British. The teacher then presented a range of stereotypical images, such as a bulldog, fish and chips, Big Ben, a London taxi and so on. One image, however, was of a girl wearing a hijab whose face was painted with a Union Jack. Students discussed questions such as, 'Is it a British image?'; 'Does it surprise you?'; 'Would you remove it?'; 'Is anything missing?' The students created a 'word wall', with sticky notes, to answer with one word the central question of the lesson: 'What is Britishness?' The students considered the

		responses they had all made and, as a whole, tried to define Britishness. A small minority of the students reinforced stereotypes, but other students were more evaluative: 'It's how you feel and not where you come from.' This excellent lesson raised awareness, challenged stereotypes and left the students with food for thought.
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1.	10	Pupils wrote words and phrases accurately, and they could use a framework to write about a familiar topic. Year 5 pupils could describe their daily routine by combining familiar phrases with a small number of commonly used connectives.
2.	10	Year 5 pupils wrote simple letters about themselves to the French school with which they had established a link.
3.	10	Pupils read, matched and wrote words accurately from early on and later there were some good examples of sentence formation. There was evidence of a small amount of free writing, such as describing Christmas. Progression throughout Key Stage 2 was clear.
4.	10	Reading and writing were well developed. Pupils were introduced to books and understood the story with support from the teacher. Pupils copied words and phrases accurately and were learning to experiment with writing in a foreign language. Pupils had access to dictionaries and were beginning to learn to use them, for example, by putting words into alphabetical order.
5.	10-11	Pupils' understanding of basic grammar and structure was developing so that they knew about gender and the position of adjectives. In one Year 4 class they spontaneously made up phrases about animals, for example, 'un grand lion jaune', using their prior knowledge and having been taught 'grand' and 'petit' in the lesson. They were sufficiently involved to query why the adjective was suddenly in front of the noun.
6.	11	A good example of pupils showing understanding of sound-spelling links occurred when two Year 4 boys wrote 'un chat blue' on their mini whiteboards and read it out to each other. They immediately realised that they could not pronounce 'blue' as 'bleu' and that they had used the English spelling. They quickly corrected their work. In this class pupils instantly took to spelling in French, and were conversant with how the alphabet sounds in French.
7.	11	Pupils' cultural understanding was excellent. They had regular contact with other cultures through trips and visits, such as a recent visit to France. Pupils also learnt about the culture of other countries through topics in school. For example, a topic on China covered many aspects of the Chinese way of life, including festivals and traditional songs, as well as the language itself. One pupil said 'I can talk to different people all over the world... although it takes a long time'. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about what they had learnt from talking to trainee teachers from Switzerland and Belgium. They were keen to learn about life in other countries and were fascinated to know that Swiss people often knew how to speak several languages.
8.	11-12	Pupils' knowledge and understanding of heritage and home languages were good because the staff worked hard to promote respect for the school's cultural diversity. Pupils enjoyed the recent Languages Day during which they learnt short phrases in a wide variety of languages spoken by members of the school community, including Italian, Mandarin, Norwegian, Welsh, Japanese and Portuguese. Each week, all pupils learnt and practised a greeting word in a new language. As a result, they appreciated the diversity of languages spoken in the school, racial harmony was promoted well and intercultural understanding was good.
9.	12	Teaching was led by the languages coordinator. She was a graduate in Spanish, trained as a secondary teacher, who had switched to primary teaching a few years before. Here subject knowledge and primary teaching skills were excellent. She was supported on some days by the local authority outreach teacher, who helped her coach other colleagues who were less confident. The result of this well-planned developmental work meant that class teachers and teaching assistants were increasingly confident and pupils experienced a high

		standard of teaching.
10.	13	The class teacher recycled prior learning when introducing new work. So, for example, when learning words for animals, pupils also used colours and numbers, learnt in earlier classes, to make phrases. The class teacher devoted a lot of time to the subject; she regularly took opportunities during the week to reinforce work done in the dedicated French lesson. Pupils regularly reinforced their learning with simple exercises on the computer. They had been encouraged to speak and sing the language confidently so they had plenty of practice in using French in different contexts.
11.	13	One school made good use of authentic children's materials on the Internet. One group used a French toy shop website to research what they could buy for 100 Euros and then produced a graph of the results. They had also had the opportunity to record themselves digitally performing a puppet show in French. This allowed them to work from memory and to perfect their pronunciation and fluency.
12.	13	In another school, pupils watched a video of a native Spanish speaker describing a weather forecast. Useful words and phrases were displayed on the wall. Pupils were to use hand-held video cameras to record themselves making a weather forecast covering South America in Spanish. Pupils planned it quickly on paper in Spanish and made recordings. They edited their work on the computers in the ICT suite and then watched another group's video. This video they assessed against criteria, on using Spanish and pronunciation, that had been set by the teacher.
13.	17	The 'Teach a friend a language' day was a rich event, with participating pupils showing high levels of enthusiasm for, and commitment to, languages. The pairs of pupils worked to develop high-quality dialogues and clearly enjoyed the process of sharing a language. The 'peer teachers' (pupils) spoke about how they had discovered more about their home language by demonstrating it and explaining it to their friends. The 'learners' talked about the insights they gained into culture, as well as language. The performance of their dialogue on stage demanded significant courage; the growth in their confidence and self-esteem was tangible.
14.	17-18	Links with a leading local football club resulted in the Spanish-speaking goalkeeper visiting the school and answering pupils' questions. A number of the pupils also participated in a visit to the stadium for an event linking languages with international football.
15.	24	Because teachers consistently used the target language for managing lessons and because the students had well-developed linguistic skills deriving from their bilingualism, they made excellent progress in listening and were confident speakers with good pronunciation. They routinely used the target language for communication, using drama, the school's performing arts specialist subject, to enhance their performance.
16.	24	Students showed a willingness to speak; the way in which they had been taught to manipulate the language and to cope with 'information gaps' ensured they could react spontaneously and enjoyed doing so. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher pushed them hard to respond to different parts of a dialogue where the content kept changing. They could do this only by listening hard and having the confidence to 'have a go'. Their knowledge of verb paradigms and how to apply these in communicative contexts was particularly worth noting.
17.	25	'Understanding of grammatical structures is very impressive. For example, students in a Year 8 class, just beginning their second term of German, demonstrated a firm understanding of accusative case endings. Year 9 lower-attaining students used perfect and present tenses in French confidently and accurately.'

18.	25-6	However, students' written work in Key Stage 3 was often too short, with single words, filling gaps in worksheets, and very little extended creative writing because students did not know, or could not apply, grammatical rules. In many of the classes observed, inspectors did not see students progressing from writing words, then sentences and then paragraphs, and written work did not underpin the spoken word.
19.	26	Students' intercultural understanding was very strong and was well-supported by the activities in which the school was involved through its specialist status. Students had had a wide range of contact with speakers of other languages and their cultures. A group of Year 11 students won a regional competition called 'Do you speak European?' Independently, they planned and created a presentation, taking as a starting point the students in their own schools who spoke other languages. A Year 9 student spoke at some length and with enthusiasm about the fact that there were students in his school who spoke a number of languages. There was a real feeling that, in their words, it was 'cool' to speak languages in the school.
20.	26	Students developed a very good understanding of the culture of other countries as this was a frequent part of the curriculum. They were well aware of the similarities and differences between different cultures as this was celebrated widely across the school in language lessons as well as in assemblies and other events. Students were encouraged to take part in many cultural activities, including watching a play in Spanish, talking to the many foreign visitors and visiting important exhibitions and venues.
21.	28	Teachers presented very good role models for speaking as they used the target languages consistently, using English only when appropriate to do so. They also ensured that students had the building blocks of grammatical knowledge so that they could say what they wanted to say. A Year 9 Spanish lesson and a Year 10 French lesson showed how well students had grasped verb forms, and what a lot they knew about them.
22.	28	Foreign language assistants were integrated into lessons and supported students as well as providing a different 'voice'. In a Year 7 lesson in the multimedia lab, the foreign language assistant took one half of the class while the teacher took the other. The two groups were not split by ability. In this lesson, the foreign language assistant also played games later on with the students on the interactive whiteboard to consolidate the earlier presentation of new language by the teacher.
23.	28-9	As a result of a problem-solving session in small groups, the students in a Year 11 French lesson rapidly increased their range of language and structures to express their views on a variety of topics. They shared these with the rest of the class before preparing a short résumé of their views and presenting it to the class. Very high expectations and a brisk pace were maintained throughout.
24.	29	Several students in a small class had special educational needs and/or disabilities. The teacher had to have regard to a number of behaviour support plans and was skilled at keeping the students on task. The resources were well-prepared and supported a wide range of activities which ensured that the students were enthusiastic about language learning.
25.	29	The teacher allowed the students to set their own targets for how many of the new language items they were going to memorise by the end of the lesson. When that was done, she told one or two of the more academically able students: 'I want you to add two to your target'. From the French music playing quietly as the students entered the room to the management of all activities and routines, the teacher maximised the opportunities to use French and create a French atmosphere. As a result, there was total engagement. Students rose to the challenge of the imaginative and well-differentiated tasks.
26.	29	In a small group of Year 7 students who had special educational needs and/or disabilities, the teacher used Spanish at all times for managing the lesson and resorted to English only after other strategies to help the students to understand, such as mime and

		demonstration, had been tried. As a result, the students, who were still in the very early stages of learning the language, were at ease with hearing Spanish and were developing excellent accents and very good intonation.
27.	30	There was weak planning for one-hour lessons; a lack of differentiation for the more and less academically able students; activities that were too simple for the level of the class and, in one lesson seen, the management of behaviour was poor.
28.	30	In a Year 7 lesson, good language learning strategies were planned but the teacher had not discovered that half the students had covered these at primary school; the department had not found out what its Year 7 had learnt before and reviewed its provision in the light of this.
29.	30	In a good Year 10 Spanish lesson, students were encouraged to draw on both their knowledge of English and French cognates to decode the meaning of vocabulary and phrases about parts of the body.
30.	30	In another lesson, cognates from both English and another language which students had already studied were usefully drawn upon to help them understand the meaning of new vocabulary. Word association strategies were also deployed to help students remember new words.
31.	30-31	There was an explicit focus on helping students to learn strategies to make sure they understand how they learnt. This was mostly effective in Key Stage 4, when it was linked to examination preparation, but in Key Stage 3 there were occasions when students were not required to apply the strategy in the foreign language and so did not make enough progress in using the language itself. For example, students were asked to work out how to learn some adjectives but were not actually expected to remember them or to use them accurately.
32.	31-2	Students were given regular little tests in all four skills. Any dips in performance were discussed with them and their parents or carers. The school's excellent assessment and tracking system allowed potential problems to be identified early and these were tackled swiftly and effectively. For example, in the previous year, the tracking showed that some students studying French were not achieving as well as they should in speaking and writing. Procedures were put in place to help them and the department then attained its highest-ever GCSE results in French.
33.	32	Students completed work in 'best books' which was then marked in great detail. Feedback was extensive, indicating clearly what students had to do to improve. Students said this was very useful as they knew how well they were doing and the particular areas they needed to improve.
34.	33	One language college visited had pioneered a number of innovative ways to improve language learning, including podcasts, a language college blog and a wiki virtual learning system. The blog contained many ideas and resources on language teaching and received about 150 hits per week, approximately half of which were from students and half from other schools, some of them abroad. The wiki system enabled students to store their work online and staff to check and mark it. It also enabled students to communicate rapidly with staff about language learning. The college had also begun to use a social networking service to remind students about coursework deadlines.
35.	34	In one lesson seen, the teacher worked with the published scheme used by the primary school. She told the class most of a story about a pig and a sheep. This was well supported with gestures and visuals. She then asked the students to guess how they thought the story might end. They made some creative suggestions and the teacher gave the students an ordering activity to see if they could remember more detail. They did this well. Finally, the teacher used the text of the story to practise sound-spelling links. Students approached the new words confidently and read them accurately.

36.	36	'Schemes of work are detailed and helpful for all key stages. The French schemes for Key Stage 3 clearly take account of the revised National Curriculum and highlight the development of thinking skills.'
37.	36	'The school has modified its curriculum in Year 7 and the subject is contributing to Year 7 projects related to independent learning and thinking skills, Themed days are to be organised and projects for the summer term, linking with 'food', are planned. The link with citizenship is excellent.'
38.	43	A variety of texts was used from Year 7 onwards, including texts of different lengths from a variety of authentic and web-based sources. Opportunities for reading were identified in schemes of work. Students were confident when reading aloud; their pronunciation did not hinder communication. In speaking and writing tasks, the students were able to re-use language they had read.
39.	43	A teacher of a Year 10 French class used a poster effectively to develop students' speaking, listening and writing skills and as a stimulus for them to practise recently learned structures. The students were able to use their knowledge of English or other languages to work out meaning. The teachers planned their work carefully, using cognates effectively to increase students' confidence in the reading tasks, and the students were encouraged to explain the strategies they used themselves in remembering or working out the meaning of new vocabulary.
40.	43	Reading was used to develop intercultural understanding. For example, in the lessons seen, students explored the differences and similarities between places in a town and different kinds of holiday accommodation. In a Year 9 lesson students were able to skim the text for general information and scan it to find specific detail. They were able to explain to others the techniques they had used. The students used dictionaries and reference material actively and proficiently to understand text. Homework tasks were used well to reinforce and extend the reading techniques practised in the lessons.
41.	44	Pupils in Key Stage 3 were aware of different strategies for understanding texts, such as using cognates and similarities with other languages. In several lessons, the teachers made this very explicit by asking pupils to explain what strategies they could use. In one lesson seen, however, the teacher focused solely on listing the strategies and did not allow pupils time to see if they could use them when reading the text. Pupils generally had good pronunciation when reading aloud as they were taught systematically about the relationship between sounds and spellings and had pronunciation guides to help them remember the rules. Texts used for reading were regularly used as a model for writing, for example, pupils prepared a model answer for an examination question using a text that they had read and analysed. There were, however, fewer examples of pupils using creative texts to produce their own work.
42.	44	Students were mostly well prepared for the reading test at GCSE. They had good strategies to help them understand the meaning of unfamiliar words and to get the gist and main points of a passage. However, when their grasp of important key words, such as subject pronouns, was poor, this got in the way of their full understanding of what they were reading.
43.	44	In the good provision seen, teachers used stimulating materials to encourage students to read for personal reasons or research; dictionaries and reference sources were used well. However, the majority of the 33 schools visited relied heavily on short texts from the course books and past examination papers for reading, except in sixth forms, and the students used glossaries rather than dictionaries to look up words. There was very little evidence that students had access to authentic materials, even via the internet. In discussions with inspectors, students said that they rarely used materials such as newspapers, magazines, comics or novels.

44.	45	In one of the schools, the teachers used ICT well used to present new language and to make the learning more interesting and enjoyable. For example, a teacher took photographs of well-known staff and students and put them into a presentation on the interactive whiteboard to illustrate the difference, in speaking Italian, between greeting children and adults. However, students did not use the whiteboards often, despite programs which were interactive.
45.	46	ICT was also used to give students opportunities to complete extended writing tasks. In one lesson seen, it helped them understand the world of business: they prepared a PowerPoint presentation in French on the theme of introducing their business to new clients.
46.	46	A few schools - but not many - used email to connect to schools abroad, for example, where emails were sent to make initial contact, then a virtual tour of their school was made for the exchange visitors, and presentations were made on return from visits. However, using email to contact young people in other countries was not widespread, even though many young people are very confident users of email, texting and the internet outside school.
47.	46	One of the schools visited used ICT to facilitate learning Latin through video-conferencing with Cambridge University at lunchtimes, as well as younger students learning it through an electronic course in the network room. One girl described to inspectors how useful Latin was because it helped her with the grammar of the other languages she was learning.
48.	46	Another school used electronic hand-held assessment technology well in Japanese lessons to enliven learning and to assess students' progress in a swift and efficient way from which everyone benefited.
49.	47	All the teachers in the language team used electronic whiteboards to present new language and activities. Most used this facility highly creatively, enabling students to work interactively and develop their understanding of language in challenging, fast-paced and very enjoyable ways. Language games were highly developed and almost all the lessons seen included activities where students competed against the clock. Since the students were carefully grouped for these activities, they supported each other fully and so were all winners! Students' very good understanding of grammatical structures was a clear outcome of this high-level, interactive work. One lesson ended with the focus grammar points for the lesson encapsulated in a delightful animated short story. One of the students said, as she left the room, that she intended to try it out for herself through the internet that evening.
50.	48	Students used different applications to improve their language learning, for example, to develop reading skills through a wider range of materials available on the internet. Teachers used the interactive whiteboards to present new language and to engage students well. Students themselves used them to present their own ideas and to practise using new language. All students used ICT purposefully and regularly to develop their language knowledge and skills and to find out more about the countries and communities of the language they were studying. The subject leader had a very good vision for the use of ICT and led by example. The departmental website provided effective materials for teachers and students. The department's access to resources was excellent: it had its own ICT suite exclusively for languages and this and the department's materials were used regularly and routinely to improve learning and achievement.
51.	51	The teacher spoke Spanish for almost the whole lesson and provided explanations in Spanish to students about any aspect they found difficult. This encouraged them to ask questions of the teacher in Spanish and also to discuss among themselves in Spanish when completing written work. The teacher also peppered the lesson with useful idioms and phrases which extended students' language knowledge. The use of resources—_videos, worksheets, games, textbooks—_ was very good.

52.	53	In many cases, a good range of activities not only engaged learners but also helped them to develop their interest in the foreign language and culture and to remember what they had learnt. Colleges supported their learners very well by making sure that the work was matched well to their needs. The teachers knew the learners very well and worked hard to ensure that they were able to build on their language skills effectively. For instance, analysing and correcting mistakes in a focused way helped learners to understand the error and how it could be eliminated. In the best provision, this was done systematically so that learners were not overwhelmed, but could concentrate on just a few relevant points, using support from their peers to reinforce learning.
53.	53	In one college, learners used video-conferencing successfully to speak to their peers in France. They heard up-to-date colloquial language and learnt about issues that were important for French students. The ability to interact through this medium gave them a better understanding of body language, gesture and facial expression.
54.	53	In another college, the tutors used their first-hand experience of different countries and cultures well to introduce interesting and appropriate realistic items into their teaching. The target language was used effectively for classroom business, instruction and interaction. In most cases, teachers modelled language very well at a level that was appropriate for their learners

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1.	17	A teacher introduced her Year 7 students to the practical work, using the words 'macerate', 'extract', 'mortar', 'pestle', 'indicator', 'pH', 'acid', 'alkali' and 'filtration' in her description of extracting vegetable colour from a beetroot in order to determine whether solutions were acid or alkali. She gave the students a worksheet that described what they needed to do. They were required to fill in missing words in the gaps on the worksheet. One girl, when asked by the inspector what she was doing, said, 'It's a bit like cooking.' She mashed her beetroot into a pulp and carried out the instructions on the worksheet but could not describe why she was doing each stage of the procedure. She was aware she had to fill in the gaps and set about doing so by asking the teacher or copying from others. She almost completed the gap-filling but could not say why she had used the words in each gap. At the end of the lesson she, and many others who were asked, did not understand what they had done and why. Their grasp of the new vocabulary was very shaky. The students had, in the words of one, 'done things with stuff' but had learnt very little.
2.	17-18	Year 8 students were completing a unit of work on acids and alkalis that had involved them in research on the effect of acid rain on limestone. They had worked in groups to generate their own questions to pursue. Many of them had taken the time to form hypotheses and had planned and carried out their own practical work. The students had presented the outcomes of their research to the class in the form of high-quality PowerPoint presentations. Discussion with the students showed how varied these presentations were. At the end of the final presentation, the teacher invited the presenter to stay at the front of the class and to use the computer to gather the data from the investigations. Using the wireless laptops, each group transmitted its tabulations of data to the teacher's computer and the student displayed these on the interactive whiteboard. As soon as data started appearing, the students began to spot anomalous figures, compare patterns of data, summarise trends, account for differences, evaluate data and suggest improvements. There followed a rich time of discussion and clarification that allowed students access to the ideas and work of others and to build their own knowledge and understanding, not only of the chemistry but of the way that science works.
3.	32	Primary example 1: Reception class During their time sitting on the carpet, the teacher engages the children in describing the mini-beasts they had seen in their investigation of the school's grounds. In pairs the children talk about their mini-beasts and then share their ideas with the whole class. The teacher brings the teaching assistants into the conversation and they remind the children of their experiences. This helps them to arrive at an understanding of the wide range of living things in their environment. A sense of ownership and care for the environment is generated. The teacher shows a video of a butterfly and its way of life. The presentation is interactive on the whiteboard and teacher skilfully uses questions and the children's answers to establish what was alive during the observation and the characteristics of living things. The children's level of interest and engagement is very high. The teaching is animated and enthusiastic and the teacher has a detailed knowledge of the needs of individual children. She shows the class the caterpillars that they observed during the previous week and the children can see how much they have grown. Careful prompts from the teacher are effective in helping the children cooperatively to relate the characteristics of living things to their observations of the caterpillars. During this time the teacher works with individuals or small groups to promote further thought to extend their learning. The teaching assistants are similarly engaged in a purposeful way. A session of summarising questions and answers leads to pupils demonstrating the caterpillar/butterfly life cycle to reinforce their knowledge and understanding. A child is dressed in a cagoule to represent the 'skin' of the caterpillar and

		is then wrapped in toilet paper to represent the cocoon. When the pupil breaks out of the cocoon the back of the costume shows the wings of the butterfly. To reinforce the learning, the teacher then takes on the role of the child and the pupils become the teacher in explaining the life cycle of the butterfly.
4.	33	Primary example 2: Year 3 The lesson begins with an effective question and answer session in which pupils describe what they know about light. This clarifies the pupils' understanding of key vocabulary such as 'translucent', 'opaque' and 'transparent'. There are high levels of response, application and attention. The teacher uses a penguin puppet to ask about shadows of objects in relation to an overhead projector, discussing size, shape, position and clarity. The pupils have recently been learning about energy and how the environment can be harmed by the poor management of energy. A pupil comments on the heat from the overhead projector and the teacher takes the opportunity to consolidate the pupils' thinking on energy and conservation; not wasting electricity; noise and heat as waste energy from such devices; and the dangers of overheating by poor use. More discussion follows on what can be seen or not seen in a shadow, and talk of shades of grey, not just black and white, shows that light is dispersed in the atmosphere. The pupils then move around a series of well-planned and well-resourced activities at different stations in the room. Pupils' levels of application and good collaboration are very high. The teacher is very effective at monitoring progress and managing activities so that all the pupils visit all the work stations, consolidating and extending their knowledge and understanding of light.
5.	34	Primary example 3: Year 5 Pupils collaborate well on an investigative task about friction. They are working on the question, 'Which is the best shoe for gripping the floor?' Pupils have been planning their investigation, taking decisions on what to measure, the equipment needed and the procedures they will carry out. The teacher has worked with the teaching assistant to plan and anticipate the range of activities that might be proposed. The assessment strategy for the activity was also agreed with the teaching assistant. The teacher and the teaching assistant have considered the 'knowledge and understanding' content of the activity and the science skills, such as the consideration of variables and the need for accurate measurement. The pupils work in groups of four and discuss their plans. Discussions with pupils show that they understand fair testing clearly and can describe why they chose to carry out the investigation in the way they planned. Their attitudes to science work are very positive. They cite 'doing practical' as one of the things they enjoy most. They have considered the different surfaces on which they do not want the shoe to slip. They demonstrate their understanding of the need for accuracy and the purpose of repeating procedures and measurements to raise reliability. They choose a scale for measurement that will be most appropriate and they agree on their roles in the procedure. Overall, the groups investigate a good range of variables and measurements and the outcomes are shared effectively with others. The process is very well managed by the teacher. A plenary discussion demonstrates the pupils' good and developing knowledge and understanding of forces, friction, surface area, changing mass to change force, and the range of variables considered.
6.	35	Primary example 4: Year 6 The pupils' behaviour is excellent, they are engaged well. The teacher teaches enthusiastically and confidently through a well-planned lesson. She uses ICT effectively to illustrate a view of the future as she sets the scene to learn about evolution. The simulation shows the world in five million years' time. She uses questions and answers well, with many of the questions directed at individuals for specific reasons: keeping attention, building selfconfidence, encouraging, and checking understanding. She explores ideas such as plate tectonics through the effective ICT presentation. Evolution and adaptations are talked about with high levels of interaction with pupils. They make suggestions and answer questions confidently. Pupils then carry out a 'beak experiment' very successfully. They use forceps of different shapes as model beaks to tackle four

		different samples of living things: small seeds, walnuts, apples, worms. They work in groups and their enjoyment of the activity is very evident. They discuss spontaneously how the shape of the beak affects what they can do with it and hence affirm the ideas of adaptation, the shape of the beak affecting how successful they were at feeding on particular food items. Finally, pupils watch a video of an evolving lizard that lives on the salt flats, catching flies on its frills and so on. Pupils not only enjoy the video but they readily identify the key features of the lizard and how these help it to survive in that environment.
7.	35-36	Secondary example 1: Year 7 A very enjoyable and engaging starter activity involves the class in calling out the names of electrical components represented by symbols on flash cards. This not only reviews previous learning but introduces new symbols effectively in preparation for other tasks in the lesson. The teacher carefully explains the objectives of the lesson. She describes electrical current and its unit, the ampere, using a PowerPoint presentation during which she elicits the students' own ideas; for example why the unit was represented by a capital A. The teacher gives a very clear description of the practical procedures and checks students' understanding by effective questioning and answers. The description is very detailed and draws on students' contributions; this results in very secure understanding. The practical work involves series and parallel circuits. Some students predict less current in the parallel circuits compared with that in the series circuits; others are challenged to agree or to make other predictions. The practical work that follows demonstrates good understanding of the underlying theory. The students apply themselves well and there is no offtask activity. Good collaboration ensures successful practical work and students' full involvement. The teacher is very effective in actively checking on progress and providing additional challenge.
8.	36	Secondary example 2: Year 10 Throughout this session, levels of application and engagement are high. The students are sorting photo cards into sets representing selective breeding and natural selection. Discussion in groups about the task and the decisions being made is very good. The teacher is very effective in challenging ideas and promoting further thought through targeted questioning and intervention. The additional challenges are made seamlessly; they 'stretch' students effectively. The groups then carry out one of two research tasks, using ICT and printed sources, on natural selection and how this accounts for adaptation and speciation. Groups are engaged in self-evaluation and explain their successes in learning to the others. The plenary session is managed very effectively so that the learning within the groups becomes available to the whole class.
9.	37	Secondary example 3: Year 10 The session begins with the teacher's lively presentation of the task. His well-targeted questions check the students' understanding skilfully and he uses some of their light-hearted responses effectively to motivate them and clarify the task. All the students are engaged. The revision of ecology as part of the preparation for the International Baccalaureate in biology becomes an enjoyable task that promotes high levels of application and activity. The research-based activities are managed well and the pace of learning is good. Good reflective practice is used to bounce back students' ideas to them for further refining. The students, including those who are learning English as an additional language, are challenged to use appropriate language. They present their findings in a range of ways. One student's research presentation on Charles Darwin is of high quality, accurate, and reported with obvious understanding. When he is challenged by fellow students, his explanations are lucid. The students are clearly used to debate and discussion. They pose questions well and respect the views of others. The atmosphere is one of fair debate. The teacher's close monitoring is effective throughout the lesson and provides additional challenge. The plenary session involves the students in using ICT to test their own understanding.

10.	38	<p>Secondary example 4: Year 13 The teacher gives a very clear explanation of particle vector motion which is illustrated well using ICT. The students are engaged by effective question and answer techniques in preparation for tackling A-level questions. The work is challenging. The teacher gives the students excellent advice about how they might set about answering the questions by outlining a response using their ideas. The following session includes a good balance of individual, paired and whole-class work with all the students contributing to an effective response to the set question. The teacher uses the interactive whiteboard very well to capture the different ideas and responses. The teacher is very effective at monitoring students' progress and demonstrates his very secure subject knowledge. His responses to the students' questions are effective and, in turn, these provide additional challenge. Students begin to spot anomalies in the responses of others and in the data presented. They are well-tuned to the requirements of the questions and correctly understand what they need to do to maximise their marks. Relationships between the teacher and students are very positive and humour is used on both sides to good effect.</p>
11.	38-39	<p>Primary example 1: Reception Class The teacher begins to outline the activities for the morning. During their time sitting on the carpet, the children are restless and their attention is only satisfactory. The range of activities is quite prescribed and there is little evidence of the teacher using suggestions the children make. There are two teaching assistants who do little to encourage the children's engagement with what the teacher is explaining. The class splits into different activity groups: work on floating and sinking, use of computer programs, and water play, filling plastic bottles and plastic containers of different shapes and sizes. The experiences are wellplanned but not carried out fully in practice. The teaching assistants are not taking a full part in the learning activities but tend to child-mind and concentrate on mopping up water spills and so on. The children are active and engaged for much of the time. In the main, they are focused on the tasks they have been set. They are learning but the pace is only moderate. There is some good development of language because the teacher interacts with the children during their activities. There is no plenary work by the teacher in the groups, so the learning is not shared as well as it might be.</p>
12.	39-40	<p>Primary example 2: Year 2 At the start of the lesson, many pupils respond to the teacher's question and answer session but not all pay good attention. Vocabulary such as 'photosynthesis' arises but there is no overt checking of understanding by the teacher. Clearly, some pupils have used the word and associate it with plants making food from sunshine. For some their understanding is not secure and this is not recognised or challenged by the teacher. During the questions and answers, the teacher describes the roots 'taking up food'. This is inaccurate and can lead to misconceptions, as it is water and minerals/nutrients that are taken from the soil by the roots. Pupils' attitudes are good and most are keen to answer the teacher's questions. The notion of fair testing is understood by many and their responses to questions, expressed in their own language, indicate good understanding. There is an ICT display of seasonal pictures with different forms and stages of life, which provides a rolling presentation of living things and growth. The class is organised into groups efficiently and the teacher uses ICT effectively to set out procedures and instructions for the work to be done. She elicits their ideas well but does not respond effectively to a couple of the more inventive ideas that she was not expecting. The pupils set up apparatus to investigate water absorption, but the equipment provided is not well-matched to the activity; for example, one-litre jugs are used for measuring 100ml. Spillages and inaccuracies are not challenged and nor are the pupils spotting the problem that this poses. The teacher's main concern seems to be to complete the activity, and there is insufficient focus on the quality of the practical work and the refining of the pupils' thinking. They enjoy the work and behave responsibly, even if the accuracy and the pace of</p>

		learning are only satisfactory.
13.	40-41	Primary example 3: Year 4/5 The pupils are working on planning an investigation of materials suitable for making a model ship. The work is set within a theme involving Tudor ships. The teacher leads a class discussion on fair testing, changing variables and measuring. This goes on for too long and pupils begin to lose interest. The class is split into groups depending on their attainment. The different groups have different questions to tackle related to the strength, flexibility and floating properties of the materials. The pupils are using a standard planning sheet to provide focus and minimise the language required to plan their work. When the pupils move on to their own planning, many find it difficult, particularly in setting up a fair test. The materials provided include a cardboard cereal box, a foil tray, a length of wood, cardboard tubes, felt and other materials. All these are of different sizes and shapes and no means is provided of cutting the materials to the same shape and size. Some pupils are puzzled by this and teacher passes over the questions they ask about it. The teaching assistant does some very good work with a group of low-attaining pupils by asking pertinent questions and giving clear guidance to move their ideas along. The teacher circulates around the groups, checking on their progress but a few groups struggle to come up with a plan for an investigation they can undertake. The teacher's lack of direction does not help the pupils to make suitable progress and it allows some less committed pupils to wander off-task.
14.	41-42	Primary example 4: Year 6 The theme of the lesson is the rate at which a solid dissolves. The teacher asks the pupils to put their ideas about the variables involved on sticky notes and to place them on laminated cards, in groups, to see how many and what types of variables are identified. Some confusion begins as the pupils start work. Out of the six groups, two have not understood the challenge and are reinforcing misunderstanding through their discussions with one another. Teaching assistants had watched the initial 'start up' but do not challenge the misunderstandings sufficiently and it is some time before the teacher gets round to all six groups. The pupils are well-motivated and keen to take on the task. They have satisfactory practical skills. There is confusion among some of them as to what they are to measure; some are measuring the independent variable rather than the dependent variable. The idea behind the practical work is sound and simple, but the execution is weaker than it could be because the teacher and teaching assistants are not tuning pupils into the work with sufficient clarity, and intervention is limited by the inefficient deployment of the teaching assistants. While learning is progressing satisfactorily, the rate could be quicker. The phrasing of the questions to investigate is difficult for some pupils and the teaching assistants become more active in helping pupils to clarify their ideas and language as the lesson proceeds. The teacher refers to dissolving, inaccurately, as a change of state. Some pupils decide to measure how much sugar is added to the water by measuring the volume of sugar. The teacher uses 'volume' in talking to these pupils while with others she refers correctly to the 'mass' of sugar, and pupils set about measuring the sugar by using electronic scales. Some pupils do not understand what the difference is between mass and volume and this also leads to some confusion.
15.	43	Secondary example 1: Year 7 The inspector observes the second half of a lesson, in which the students are engaged well in making 'fruit batteries'. They have been following satisfactory printed instructions, but some students start on the activity without sufficient reference to the written instructions and so waste time. The teacher has to call repeatedly for attention, and partially succeeds, but some students continue their practical work quietly and do not pay attention to what she says. The teacher is active in circulating around the class and checking progress, and she makes some effective interventions with

		<p>individual students, most often the more voluble ones. Quiet students do not attract her attention sufficiently. Overall, the students' application is good. Their practical skills are satisfactory and they are clearly enjoying the practical work. However, the process of measuring current does not get as far as repeating measurements for reliability. The teacher manages behaviour by chivvyng individuals rather than creating a more purposeful environment for learning. These interventions are effective for a limited time only and then need repeating. The plenary session is aimed at finding which fruit produced the highest reading on the voltmeters. However, some students refer to 'current'. Their contributions are not challenged, with the result that 'voltage' and 'current' become interchangeable in the class's vocabulary. The question and answer session is not well-targeted, so some students have a quiet time compared with the majority who readily offer answers to the teacher's questions. The final part of the plenary is a well-run session on evaluating the experiment and making improvements; this involves more students and engages them better. The activity and involvement of the teaching assistant in the room are minimal. She has the lesson plan but clearly had not engaged with it or with the teacher. Overall, the pace and challenge are only satisfactory.</p>
16.	44	<p>Secondary example 2: Year 9 The teacher explains the aims of the lesson in general terms and refers to the pupils' earlier knowledge and experience from Year 7. However, the lesson plan underestimates the time needed for an effective starter activity. The teacher's amusing example of a clockwork frog illustrates energy transfers, and the questions and answers are effective during the demonstration to engage the students. When the teacher gets on to the main topic, the teaching is enthusiastic but slightly unfocused at times, allowing the students' concentration to drift. He draws some simple electrical circuits on the interactive whiteboard and involves the students in including voltmeters and ammeters into the circuits. The emphasis on the differences between series and parallel circuits is good. The teacher organises the class into small groups but they have to wait to collect equipment in turn. This gives much scope for off-task chat. The teacher's instructions to draw a circuit, build it and record meter readings are rambling and unfocused. The instructions therefore need to be repeated and time is lost. A few students ignore the supplementary instructions and continue to fiddle with the equipment. A few spend an inordinate amount of time drawing their circuit diagrams. They do not generally carry out the measurements in parallel and series circuits as planned. Although the students enjoy the lesson and make a variety of circuits, the learning is only satisfactory.</p>
17.	45	<p>Secondary example 3: Year 10 The students have an introductory word search to settle them down. The teacher does not make connections between the word search and the main objectives of the lesson which are concerned with food additives. The teacher directs students into groups without engaging them through questioning or discussion of the topic. Each group is given different information and is told to use not more than 15 words and drawings to communicate the information to other groups. Groups get straight into the activity, but not all read of them the briefing material thoroughly. They work on flipchart paper but the hexagonal connected benches in the room make it difficult for the whole group to see what is going on. In most of the groups, one student does the reading and suggests ideas while the others occupy themselves in drawing the pictures and colouring in letters, or just sit and watch. The learning is not rapid, although some students are clearly acquiring vocabulary and knowledge. The teacher moves around the groups, stressing the time and the constraints of the word count. The teaching assistant does some constructive work with two groups by giving clues as to the direction to take. The final flip charts are thin on detail and have an elementary treatment of the issue of additives in food. Conversations between students show that not all have understood terms such as 'emulsifier' or 'antioxidant'.</p>

18.	46	<p>Secondary example 4: Year 12 The teacher initiates a discussion with students about pigments in leaves, the changes that are observed with time and what might account for the changes. There is no visual stimulus but simply recollections of experiences. Not all students seem to have such recollections, as their lack of contributions makes clear. The teacher's questions are not directed towards particular students. Half the class seems very keen to answer questions and discuss ideas but the other half is not drawn in. The exchanges with the teacher are loosely organised, resulting in more than one participant talking at once. Descriptions of the following practical work are given and read, but not discussed. Students carry out the practical work appropriately, but with some gaps in their knowledge of details, such as different rates of translocation in chromatography, which they covered in Key Stage 4. These are not discussed again with the teacher at this setting-up stage of the lesson. The teacher had not established the consideration of accurate measurement sufficiently well to challenge students in the way that they carried out the procedures. Some students raise some good questions; these are answered rather superficially and then set aside. The atmosphere in the class is friendly but, at the same time, unchallenging, particularly for the most academically able. By the end of the lesson, learning had taken place but not at a pace or depth that could be regarded as more than satisfactory.</p>
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No.	Page no	Ofsted, Transforming religious education: Religious education in schools 2006–09, June 2010
1.	12	In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children were able to talk confidently about key features of the festival of harvest and
2.	12	By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils linked their learning about the Torah to a wide range of other features of the Jewish faith. Following an opportunity to talk to a Jewish visitor, they offered a range of reasons why the rules are still important to Jews. They also produced their own rules for living and took great pride in trying to create their own scroll without making a mistake.
3.	12	Pupils in Year 3 could write a letter as if they were Christian children explaining what happened at Eucharist and why it was important to them, showing they could interpret different parts of the celebration for themselves.
4.	12	Pupils in Year 4 were undertaking an extended enquiry into the theme of creation, exploring a range of questions including: 'Why might creation stories be important?'; 'What similarities and differences are there between different creation stories?'; 'Are creation stories true?'; 'What do we think caused the world to begin?'
5.	12	In Year 6, pupils engaged in a detailed investigation into worship within the Christian and Sikh religions, using a variety of media to explain their findings. All this related to the 'big' question: 'What does it mean to have a faith?'
6.	13	During the unit, the students had used an enquiry-based approach to learning. In the final lesson, the teacher aimed to extend their understanding and provide an opportunity for them to connect their study of Buddhism to wider aspects of exploring religion. To begin with, the teacher explained briefly the following dimensions of religion: ritual, mythical, experiential, doctrinal, social and ethical. In groups, they considered how they could use these to structure their learning about Buddhism and which aspects of the religion would link with which dimension. The main group task was to select one of the dimensions and develop an argument to support the view that it was the most important in interpreting Buddhism. They were very successful in drawing their learning together and in structuring their thinking to improve their understanding. One group, for example, selected the dimension of ritual and developed an argument that practice is crucial to the Buddhist way of life as it expresses belief and prepares devotees for their life in the outside world.
7.	13-4	The students were comparing the Hindu and Christian perspectives on salvation and focusing on a number of key questions: 'Is there a bigger picture of which we are a part?'; 'Is there anything to escape from?'; 'Are there any ideas in the Christian or Hindu view of the world which appeal to us?' They watched an extract from a science fiction film and considered how it related to the idea of salvation. They then examined the Hindu concept of 'samsara', the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Working in groups, they analysed and annotated a text, highlighting the key features of the concept. The whole class pooled its ideas before comparing the Hindu and Christian perspectives. During this, good use was made of the views of students with known religious affiliations. At the end, the students were asked to write an account of reality from their own perspective. They engaged enthusiastically with what they saw as a challenging task. Some offered a view which reflected their own sense of living in a diverse world, where people no longer believe in certainties.

8.	18-19	<p>A unit of work for Year 5 on the creation stories was carefully sequenced into a series of stages which ensured clear progression in the pupils' thinking. Stage 1: Formulating questions The teacher helped the pupils identify what they wanted to know about creation stories. They agreed on five questions: 'Who or what created the world?' 'Can we identify similarities between different creation stories?' 'Why are creation stories important to people?' 'What might have caused the world to begin?' 'How do we know what is true?' These questions were displayed prominently in the classroom and regularly referred to during subsequent activities to check on the pupils' progress. Stage 2: Planning the enquiry The pupils were asked to think how they might find answers to these questions, to identify what resources they needed and to decide how best to sequence the activities. Stage 3: Conducting the enquiry; comparing and analysing evidence The pupils read and listened to a range of stories to identify what they had in common and how they differed from each other. They also found out what different people's opinions of the stories were; for example, whether they thought they were true. Stage 4: Presenting findings They were involved in a number of debates to consider the questions they had asked at the beginning. In doing so, they were able to develop arguments and offer explanations and interpretations. Stage 5: Reflecting and responding Finally, they were asked to think about their own ideas about these stories by considering whether they would agree with the idea that the stories should be banned. This carefully designed unit of work enabled the pupils to understand that creation stories had some common features and often used similar but Transforming religious education different kinds of symbolism. It also enabled them to identify how science and religion had different ways of trying to explain the idea of creation.</p>
9.	19	<p>In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher wanted to build a significant challenge into the pupils' study of the Christian nativity story and to raise their understanding to a new level. After quickly recalling the main elements of the story, the teacher introduced the word 'covenant' and presented a cartoon account of Noah and the Flood. The pupils were asked to work in groups to research the meaning of 'covenant', to decide what they thought the story of Noah was about and what the relationships to the nativity story might be. The lesson proved highly successful, with pupils offering their own interpretation of the ideas and explaining how both stories represented a fresh start, a chance to put things right and an agreement between God and his people. In arriving at their conclusions, they were involved in the higher order skills of analysis, interpretation, evaluation and the development of an argument.</p>
10.	21	<p>The unit started with the question: 'Why does the English cricketer Monty Panesar wear a turban?' This was used to make a connection to students' experiences but not to provide a focus for learning. The rest of the unit consisted of a series of lessons, each based on a key question such as: 'What do Sikhs believe?'; 'What are the five Ks?'; 'Why is the Khalsa important?' In practice, each lesson was similar in structure, focusing on a range of different ways to gather and record information relating to the question. Each lesson demanded a similar level of skill to the previous one, with no increase in challenge or integration of learning into a bigger picture. The final task required the students to produce a booklet which Monty might give to his friends to explain why he wore a turban. They put a great deal of effort into presenting the work but the content was no more than a recycling of the information they had already gathered. There was no attempt to encourage them to apply higher order learning. The work was not differentiated and, because the students had not been given the opportunity to conduct their own research and analysis, they could not see ahead and work at their own pace. How might it have</p>

		<p>been improved? The teaching needed a challenging key question to drive the learning. For example, the students might have been asked: 'Why is it so important for Sikhs to preserve their sense of identity?' As a result, they might have been prompted to explore the concept of 'identity' and how it related to their own lives. This would have provided a context for investigating Sikh belief and practice to see how each area might help to answer the over-arching question. This could have been done in differentiated groups to ensure that each student was given an appropriate challenge. The progress in their learning could have been evaluated by asking the students to explain their response to the key questions and to show how it built on previous responses. They could also have been given the opportunity to extend their discussions and investigations further by exploring what provided them with their personal sense of identity and how religion might be a central element in some people's view of who they are and what they might become.</p>
11.	22-23	<p>The lesson focused on the meaning of the story of Noah. The students heard a number of versions of the story, including one from the Qur'an. The teacher asked them to ask any questions they had about the stories. These included: 'How did the world get people again?'; 'How did they get the elephants on board?'; 'Did the flood cover the whole world?' 'Why aren't all the stories the same?' The teacher asked them to think about what the purpose of the story might be. This led them to ask further questions about what God was trying to do. One suggested that the story might be a myth. The teacher introduced a DVD of the Babylonian Gilgamesh story. The students were encouraged to ask questions and think about what might happen next. This stimulated a whole range of questions with several very interesting references to floods that had happened recently in Cornwall. Throughout the discussion, the teacher returned to the questions about whether the stories might be true and why different people might have different ideas about them: 'What might an atheist think?'; 'What might a Christian think?'; 'Which story is more believable?' At the end of the lesson, the students were asked to write a short piece using the word 'because'. 'An atheist might think the story is untrue because...'; 'A Christian would say the story might be true because....' The students were successful in offering their ideas and seeing the possibility of different viewpoints. They finally contributed well to a discussion on whether a story has to be true to have a special meaning.</p>
12.	23-4	<p>A lesson on the story of Rama and Sita came at the end of a sequence of lessons exploring aspects of Hinduism. The aims of the lesson were ambitious and focused on how Hindus use prayer, songs, dance and stories in their celebrations. To extend the challenge further, the teacher also wanted to involve the pupils in a range of creative activities. Therefore, after hearing the story being re-told, they were divided into four groups where they worked on: - producing a short play based on the story - creating a poster about one of the key characters in it - using pictures with speech bubbles to sequence the events - developing a simple celebratory dance, using Indian music. Transforming religious education 23 24 They participated well, enjoyed the activities and used a variety of creative skills. However, these skills were developed at the expense of the RE-related learning because the teacher did not ensure that during the activities the pupils focused sufficiently on the main objective, namely to understand the role of celebration within the Hindu religion. How might it have been improved? The teacher could have ensured that, from the beginning, the activities were placed firmly in the context of Hindu practice, for example by showing a picture of a Hindu girl in front of a shrine to Rama and Sita. The main focus would then be on understanding why Rama and Sita were so important to her and thinking about ways in which she might celebrate the stories.</p>

		The pupils could decide what information they needed and what questions they could formulate to find the relevant answers. The story-telling and creative tasks could then proceed as planned but, rather than pursuing them in isolation, they could relate them to specific questions such as: 'Who are Rama and Sita and what can the story tell us about why they are important to a Hindu child?' 'What different ways might a Hindu use to celebrate or remember the story?'
13.	27	Traditionally, the school had organised RE into six half-term units a year, taught by the class teacher once a week. The lessons were adapted from a scheme of work published by a neighbouring local authority. After careful reflection, the school decided to try a new approach, organising the subject into two or three more substantial units each year. These units were to be taught as the main class topic for four or five hours each week for four or five weeks. The positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning was immediate and significant. From the beginning, the pupils were encouraged to ask pertinent questions about the topic and to use their skills of investigation to find the answers. The way that the units were organised gave them time to conduct extended research and to produce work of a high standard. For example, Year 1 pupils who were studying celebrations confidently linked different aspects of their work and used subject-specific vocabulary to present their conclusions. Pupils in Year 4 developed their own enquiries into key aspects of belief, based on key questions they framed in relation to the topic 'What do we believe?' The teachers, who had previously often felt restricted by over-structured schemes of work, became much more effective in promoting good investigative work. Learning was managed skilfully to promote successful group work and independent research. More effective links were made with other areas of the curriculum, most notably English and the arts. Teachers were much more confident in asking questions and intervening to ensure that they maintained and extended the main focus of the learning.
14.	34	The teacher began by asking what a miracle was. She offered 'something unexpected' as a definition. The pupils were not given the opportunity to consider what questions they might want to raise about miracles. Instead, they were asked if they knew of any examples. One pupil offered the story of the healing of the 10 lepers. The teacher explained what leprosy was and suggested that people believed that illnesses were caused by evil Transforming religious education 33 34 spirits, so Jesus forgave sins to heal people's illnesses. The pupils were confused and began to lose interest. The story of the healing of the blind man was told. The teacher explained that the purpose was to understand what it would feel like to be blind. The pupils were shown a Braille alphabet and used a 'feely bag' to explore how difficult it is to be blind. The main task was to write a poem about what they would miss if they were blind. The plenary session involved talking about how people cope with being blind and how lucky the children were to have their sight. The lesson ended with a moment of quiet reflection when the pupils were invited to say thank you to God for their sight. How might it have been improved? The main problem was that the purpose of the lesson was unclear. Was it meant to help the pupils understand what it feels like to be blind? Or was it meant to extend their understanding of miracles and what they represent in terms of belief? Specifically, the planning reflected confusion about the two attainment targets. The teacher thought that attainment target 2 'learning from religion' could be achieved by increasing pupils' empathy with blind people. However, this was not related to any understanding about the religious significance of the story. Therefore, nothing was being learnt 'from' religion in this context. If the focus was on 'miracles', the teacher needed to give the pupils the opportunity to identify relevant questions such as: -

		'Are miracles the same as magic?'; 'Do miracles still happen today?' - 'Why doesn't Jesus or God just cure everyone?' - 'Did Jesus really perform miracles or are these made-up stories?' - 'What do Christians believe about Jesus?' These questions might have helped to place the miracles in context and focus the pupils' attention on central elements of Christian belief.
15.	34	Each year group chose a period of history and spent the whole week studying it. The week was a mixture of in-school activities with teachers and visitors, for example a theatre company, visits and role play. This was a highly successful community event. Over 300 parents, grandparents and carers took part during the week and attended the presentation by each year group: children in the Foundation Stage on the history of toys; Years 1 and 2 on Victorian children; Years 3 and 4 on exploration; and Years 5 and 6 on the 1960s, including a 'Peace' demonstration with parents all dressed in period costume. Pupils said how much they enjoyed the week and teachers spoke of the positive impact the activities had had on pupils' knowledge and understanding.
16.	34-35	Lower-attaining students in Year 7 were following a unit on Christianity as part of an integrated humanities programme designed to promote their learning and literacy skills. Within the programme, RE was taught for up to six hours a week in blocks of three to four weeks. Transforming religious education The unit began with a review of what the students already knew about Christianity and what areas they wanted to explore further. Their knowledge was fragmentary and they decided that the key question they wanted to pursue was what Christians believed. To focus their enquiry, they were introduced to a resource entitled 'The Christian Story' which provided a simple version of the basic Biblical narrative from chaos, creation and fall to redemption and hope. Drawing on new and existing knowledge, they related the birth, death and resurrection of Christ to the stories of Adam and Eve, Noah and Moses and to the four key ideas of chaos, creation, fall and hope. They then reflected on how aspects of their own lives and the modern world might also relate to the key ideas. This enabled them to explain how Christians might believe that the Christian story is useful in helping to make sense of the world. Finally, they worked in groups to prepare presentations on their findings and ideas.
17.	45	The syllabus identified five key skills which were built systematically into any conceptual enquiry which the pupils undertook. These skills, in sequence, made up a process of learning. For example, pupils might start by enquiring into the meaning of a specific concept relevant to the study of religion and belief. From there, they would move to exploring how the concept might be placed in the context of one or more specific religions or beliefs. They would then evaluate the concept, looking at it from different viewpoints. The next step would be to communicate their responses to the concept and finally to apply the concept to their own experience. Pupils' progress in RE was assessed in relation to their increasing competence in using these skills.
18.	46	Lesson 1: The teacher focused the enquiry by explaining to the pupils that they were on a quest for angels and asking them what thoughts and questions came to their minds when they heard the word 'angels'. They were then given a number of questions to discuss in groups including: 'What might/do angels look like?'; 'What is their job?'; 'Are they real or imaginary?'; 'Are they like fairies?' 'What would you do if you met an angel?'; 'What difference could an angel make?' The outcomes were shared and recorded. Lesson 2: The pupils contextualised their learning by considering how angels figured in Christianity. They were asked to work out the meaning of the Greek word 'angelos'. To help them do so, they examined two stories from the Bible: the first about the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus; the second about an angel telling Gideon that he

		<p>would save the Israelites from their enemies. The pupils were asked to consider a number of questions: 'What did the two stories have in common?'; 'Was the angels' role similar in the two stories?' Through such questions, they came to the conclusion that 'angelos' meant 'messenger'. The lesson ended with a written activity where the pupils were asked to select a moment from one of the two stories and explain why it was important. Lesson 3: The pupils developed their understanding by examining artists' images of angels, annotating the pictures and adding their own thoughts. They then selected questions that they might ask the artists about their works. Finally they decided on questions they would like to ask the angels depicted. Lesson 4: This lesson focused on evaluating what it would be like to believe in angels and pupils were asked to think about the question 'as if you were a Christian'. Working in pairs, they discussed what 'being a Christian' meant. Then, in groups, they examined sets of statements about angels such as 'Angels are messengers from heaven'; 'Angels are around us all the time, watching us'; 'Angels are an artist's way of showing how God talks to us'; 'Angels are frightening.' They sorted the statements into those which were most or least likely to reflect a Christian's view. Lesson 5: During this lesson, the pupils communicated their own views of what angels were by drawing their own representations, discussing them with each other and writing comments to go with each picture. Lesson 6: Finally, the pupils applied their learning by interviewing each other and reporting back on their views on such questions as: 'Do you ever think of angels?'; 'What would you do if you saw one?'; 'What difference could an angel make to you?'; 'Do you believe in angels?'</p>
19.	48	<p>A school decided to invite representatives from the local faith communities to its training on RE where they were introduced to the process of enquiry-based learning. As a result, they gained a greater appreciation of their role in supporting the overall programme for RE and were therefore able to make a richer contribution to it. Instead of simply imparting information, their meetings with pupils became conversations and discussions where they shared their experiences and views and contributed to the process of research and enquiry. Pupils' visits to local places of worship focused less on facts about the building and more on religious commitment and living.</p>