

30 Questions for Departmental Heads

| Prompt Questions | Objectives |
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| <p>1. To what extent do your subject's aims, policies and practices reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Curriculum • The School Aims • The School Management Plan? <p>Can you describe where and how?</p> <p>Test-yourself questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could I say what the school's 'Mission Statement' is? • What Community involvement has the school? What role do I play in this? • Do I know the targets in the school management plan? Which of them is my dept directly contributing to and how? • What are my Perf. Man. targets, & how do they fit into the whole-school picture? | <p>Clear vision, shared by all the team. Conformance to school priorities.</p> |
| <p>2. How up-to-date adequate is your knowledge of the following 'whole school' issues, and how your subject contributes to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts status/ specialist school targets, • Creativity, • The Secondary Strategy, • AfL: soft and hard target-setting, • 14-19, • Behaviour and attendance, • Thinking skills, • KS3 and KS4 Raising Achievement Strategies • Improving boys attainment, • Literacy and Numeracy, • Social Inclusion, SEN and MAT • ICT, • Other initiatives: Every Child Matters, NEETS, Omega 3, Citizenship, Careers, Health Education, Equal Opportunities, Multi-cultural Issues, how your subject contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental & physical devl., <p>What systems do you have to monitor how effectively teachers in the dept are doing what they should in these areas?</p> <p>Test-yourself questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key elements of the school's Raising Achievement initiative? What role do I play? • How does the school's inclusion work impact upon my dept, and how does the dept contribute to it? • Could I describe the new KS4 curriculum/ options system, its philosophy and structure (especially liaison with other providers), and my subject's contribution to it – why do pupils choose/not choose my subject? • Do I know the latest requirements of the Secondary Strategy for my subject? • What are discipline/ punctuality/ attendance like in the dept, within the school STARS system? • Overall, how 'up-to-date' am I you with recent developments in my subject/ in the school/ in education? | <p>Adequate personal knowledge and understanding to run a modern department.</p> |
| <p>3. Do you know enough about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your subject's statutory curriculum requirements, • characteristics of good teaching in your subject, • how to use comparative data to assess achievement, • how your subject fits pupils for the world of work, • school governance, employment law, finance, • the SEN Code of Practice, • classroom health and safety requirements, <p>to run the department effectively?</p> | |
| <p>4. Is the department united in its support of its aims and policies? Are all the teachers in the department equally committed to its success? How did/do you monitor this?</p> | <p>Indicator of good HoD. Collegiate approach to policy and practice. Good staff attendance and morale.</p> |
| <p>5. Do all members of the department have the opportunity to contribute to departmental policy and planning? How?</p> | |
| <p>6. Do you have regular departmental meetings? Are minutes available?</p> | <p>Frequent meetings, effective communication</p> |

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| 7. Are all the teachers in your department clear about their role and responsibilities within the department? Have you discussed their job descriptions with them? Are they fulfilling their role adequately? How do you monitor their work? What do you do if they are not effectively carrying out their role? | Regular monitoring of standards. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching. |
| 8. Are all the rooms in which your subject is taught suitable, tidy, well-organised, clean, with up-to-date, appropriate displays. When did you last check? Would a visitor who walked in be impressed? | |
| 9. Does your Departmental Handbook include up-to-date information about staff qualifications and staff INSET? | Staff have good subject knowledge, and are seeking to improve their knowledge and skills. Staff support, development and training receive a high priority. Need to get value for money from INSET. |
| 10. What procedures do you employ to decide/ allocate INSET? How do you evaluate the effectiveness of INSET within the department? Test-yourself Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the staff qualifications and recent INSET? How do I decide what INSET staff need/ do (have I evidence)? How do I evaluate the effectiveness of that INSET (have I evidence)? If I have a new member of staff in the department, what measures do I take to 'bring them on board'? | |
| 11. Do you possess up-to-date information about groups, time allocated, timetables for classes and teachers, room available, stock and resources, exam board information and other methods of accreditation. | Efficient administration Good policy formulation, especially on pedagogy and learning. Suitable examination syllabi, to match the needs of the pupils. |
| 12. Does your Departmental Handbook contain an up-to-date statement of the concepts, knowledge and skills which pupils should acquire? When, and how, are they delivered? How do you know? | |
| 13. Professional Standards: does your Departmental Handbook contain an up-to-date statement of the attitudes, behaviour, attendance and punctuality which the teachers will encourage in the pupils? Do your teachers consistently promote these attitudes? How? How do you know? Test-Yourself Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are dept classrooms tidy, with appropriate displays of pupils' work? Are dept staff punctual to lessons (inspectors will ask the pupils) and well-prepared? Are dept staff polite to pupils? Do they welcome the pupils into the classes? What extra-curricular work/activities are dept staff involved in? What do I do to cultivate professional standards in the department? | Appropriate expectations, communicated to pupils. Good relationships. Pupils kept 'on task'. |
| 14. Does your Departmental Handbook contain an up-to-date statement of procedures for assessment for learning (formative and summative), marking, recording and reporting? Do your teachers consistently assess and record in this way? How do you check? How and where are records kept? Test-Yourself Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the dept SoW/ medium-term planning include formative and recorded summative 'assessment opportunities' (linked to learning outcomes)? Are pupils/parents informed? How is KS4 coursework developed and monitored? To what extent do dept staff consistently assess in the required way? How do we arrive at TA judgements at the end of KS3 and how do they fit against actual SAT results? How appropriate are accreditation arrangements (GCSE/VCE) at KS4? How good are dept staff with target-setting? Are all the teachers setting/ using targets? Is the process of assessment and target-setting adequately negotiated/shared with the pupils by ALL dept staff? Does the subject have high teacher expectations and high pupil aspirations. | Marking is focused and provides immediate and detailed formative feedback. Target-setting |
| 15. What mechanisms have you put in place to set challenging targets with individual pupils: What use do the teachers in your department make of Yr7 on-entry data? Do the pupils know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what NC level they are working at? what their targets are? what progress they are making? How do you monitor pupil progress against their targets? | |

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| <p>16. Does your Departmental Handbook contain an up-to-date statement of the strategies the department uses for teaching and learning (inc. VAK)? How effectively has your department put into use the Framework for Teaching? Do your teachers consistently teach in the agreed way? How do you monitor the quality of teaching in your department?</p> <p>Test-Yourself Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence have I of collaborative planning within the dept? • Is T&L the FOCUS of all the work in my department (it ought to be!) • Are my dept staff all following the Greenfield <i>Framework for Learning</i>? (And if they/ the dept do not, can they explain where and why?) • Are Learning Outcomes ALWAYS written on the board/explained to pupils? • Do dept staff when planning lessons ALWAYS try to get Visual and Kinaesthetic, as well as Auditory, learning strategies into the lesson? • What is the dept policy on homework and is it implemented (will what you say fit in with what the parents have said)? • How effectively do dept staff use ICT in their lessons?. | Appropriate T&L planning and methods. |
| <p>17. Does the department use assessment to inform planning of lessons/ setting of targets for individual and groups? By what process do you achieve this?</p> | |
| <p>18. Does your Departmental Handbook contain an up-to-date statement of the departmental policy on homework? Do all your teachers consistently follow the policy? How effectively do they use homework in their teaching? How do you monitor this?</p> | Homework is set regularly and used effectively. |
| <p>19. Does your Departmental Handbook contain an up-to-date statement of the department's strategies for progression and continuity, especially KS2–3? How successfully does your department achieve progression – for able pupils, less able pupils?</p> <p>Test-Yourself Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I monitor that progression and continuity are being achieved? • How do I know what is happening at KS2? • How aware am I of what is happening post-16? • What plans have I made for the coming of 14-19? | Suitable 'enabling' curriculum for individual progress. |
| <p>20. Does your Departmental Handbook contain an up-to-date statement of the department's strategies for differentiation? Do all the teachers differentiate every lesson for the less able and the more able within each teaching group? How do you monitor this?</p> | |
| <p>21. How effectively does your department meet the special education needs of SEN pupils? How effective is your liaison with the SENCO? Does the department get the most from the LSAs?</p> <p>Test-Yourself Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do staff in the department know who the SEN pupils are, and what their special needs are? Do they list/ accommodate the names & needs of SN pupils in their lesson plans? • Do staff in the department know who the SpLD pupils are, and what their SpLDs are? • What use does the department make of SEN pupils' group EPs? Do all members of the department use these in their teaching? Does the department set its own subject individual education targets for SN pupils? • What special T&L styles does the department use/ are we developing? • How do we monitor SEN pupils' progress? How successful is the department? • What SN teaching expertise does the department possess? Are all members of the department equally competent? • Are LSAs ALWAYS involved in the planning of lessons/ are they briefed before lessons etc.? | |
| <p>22. What provision do you have for MAT pupils?</p> <p>Test-Yourself Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we identify them? Do all staff in the department know their names? • What extension activities have been devised? • How do we monitor MAT pupils' progress? • How successful is the department? | |

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| <p>23. Does the department have a detailed and up-to-date scheme of work which identifies for each topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the pupils will learn, • links with other areas of the subject/ curriculum, • resources available, • appropriate teaching strategies for all pupils – ‘average’, SEN, MAT • ideas for differentiation, • assessment opportunities and • homework expectations | <p>Dynamic schemes of work, detailed, modularised, with built-in assessment. Efficient deployment of (scarce) resources. Effective planning of lessons</p> |
| <p>24. How does the department do/ oversee lesson planning? Do teachers keep records of their lesson plans? How do you monitor these?</p> <p>Test-Yourself Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all dept classrooms an appropriate literacy display, inc. eg. subject-words, connectives, spelling hints, examples of good practice in relevant text-types etc. • Does EVERY dept staff member have a literacy element in MOST lessons? • Do ALL dept know and try to teach the school’s 4 Literacy Objectives? • Do ALL dept staff know and try to teach the 8 text types? • Has the dept meeting considered marking for literacy? • <u>Are numeracy</u> matters highlighted in lesson plans? • <u>Is citizenship</u> explicitly addressed in a range of lessons? | |
| <p>25. How does your department perform – at GCSE, at KS3, and in each year group against national standards, against the benchmark schools, against last year’s results, against its own departmental targets?</p> <p>How do you calculate ‘value added’?</p> <p>How do you hold staff to account for their results?</p> <p>Have you specifically considered BOYS’ learning?</p> | <p>Analysis and evaluation of pupils’ progress and achievement. Development planning – focused on teaching, training and standards. Clear priorities, avoiding unnecessary innovations. Climate of continuous improvement.</p> |
| <p>26. Has the department undertaken any audit/ self-evaluation?</p> <p>When/ how does it review/ formally analyse its progress/ success in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its results • the quality of the teaching • its popularity with pupils? <p>How does it do this – what qualitative and quantitative data does it use?</p> <p>Are all departmental staff involved in this?</p> | |
| <p>27. When and how does the department carry out its subject forward planning? How are the results of the departmental self-analysis translated into departmental targets for action for next year/ the next 2–3 years? Does the department clearly identify for each target :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • objective, • present position, • target, • action required, • staff responsible, and • criteria for success? | |
| <p>28. Does your dept show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leadership, giving direction and inspiring a shared vision; • Consistent aims, values and policies held by ALL dept staff; • Development planning, leading to priorities and targets, and to implementing an monitored and evaluated action plan; • Collaborative/ collegiate/ affiliative work and planning; • Clear lines of communication; • Staff who are clear about their role, expectations, job description; • Positive ethos, good morale, good attendance, committed staff and professional relationships. <p>Test-Yourself Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do my dept staff know the current dept targets? What are they doing to implement them? • When did I last see your link governor? • Do all dept staff to calculate their personal residuals/ discuss these with me, negotiating targets/ strategies for improvement? • How effectively do I monitor/enforce standards, particularly T&L standards? Does my monitoring translate into action/ improved standards? • Have I assessed whether my dept is giving best value for money – and if so, how did I do so, particularly re <u>capitation/ INSET</u>? • Have I used the self-evaluation exercises them to initiate improvement? How were dept staff involved? | <p>Good leadership</p> |

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| 29. How do you inform/ involve parents? | Parental support and involvement Education as a partnership. |
| <p>30. Is your Departmental Handbook a 'live', up-to-date document which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Aims and Objectives Knowledge, Skills and Concepts b Department Administration & Standards Communication, Forward Planning, Self-evaluation, Monitoring c Teaching and Learning Styles, Differentiation, Homework d Resources and Environment, including: Resources, Environment, Display, Library, Health and Safety e Pupil Response Attitudes & Behaviour, Attendance, Punctuality f Assessment, Marking, Recording, Reporting, Target-setting g Cross Curricular Skills and Issues – contribution to: Creativity, 14-19, The Secondary Strategy (including the AfL, Literacy & Numeracy, Behaviour & attendance, and Thinking skills strands), KS3 and KS4 Raising Achievement Strategies, Improving boys attainment, Social Inclusion, SEN and MAT, ICT, Every Child Matters, NEETS, Citizenship, Careers, Health Education, Equal Opportunities, Multi-cultural Issues, how your subject contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental & physical devl., h Cross Curricular Dimensions Special Needs & Learning Support, SpLDs, MAT i Liaison, Continuity and Progression Primary, 16+, Other Agencies, Parents j Appendices Stock list, Staff qualifications and INSET, Timetable and Pupil Groupings, Syllabus and accreditation, Option Lists, KS3 and GCSE results, Dept Meeting Minutes, Development Plans, LEA and OFSTED inspection reports, SoW | |