

Reading, writing and communication (literacy)

Distance learning materials for inspection within the new framework

Guidance and training for inspectors
October 2011

Version 4

Published: October 2011

Reference no: 110125



Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication

361

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 110125

© Crown copyright 2011



Contents

Introduction	4
How to use these materials	5
Distance learning 'site map' and record of activities	7
Part 1: Background	9
What is literacy?	9
How is literacy different from English?	10
Where do Functional Skills fit in?	11
Progression from Year 3 to Year 11	11
Floor standards and the English Baccalaureate	12
The revised GCSE framework for English	13
Standards in writing – Year 6 to Year 11	13
Part 2: What to look for	25
Promoting and developing reading	25
Speaking and listening	29
Spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting	33
Literacy across the curriculum	34
Special educational needs, boys, English as an additional language, intervention and alternative provision	37
Part 3: How to plan your inspection	40
Selecting inspection trails – using data	40
Deciding on inspection activities	41
Tracking and meeting pupils and groups of pupils	42
Observing lessons and reviewing literacy across the curriculum	43
Reviewing pupils' work and scrutinising teachers' marking	44
Narrowing the gap?	46
Part 4: Annexes and responses	48
Annex A. Where do Functional Skills fit in?	48
Annex B. Floor standards and the English Baccalaureate	49
Annex C. The revised GCSE framework for English	50
Annex D. National Curriculum levels and their point score equivalents	51
Annex E. Responses to activities	52
Part 5: Further reading	54

Introduction

In the White Paper, *The importance of teaching*,¹ (November 2010), the government outlined its intention for Ofsted to concentrate in the new school inspection framework on the teaching of reading and on pupils' literacy skills by the time they leave primary and secondary education. This expectation has been built into the pilot inspection framework used in summer 2011. Ofsted has published the new framework in draft and, subject to legislation, the final version will be published in the autumn of 2011.²

Ofsted has undertaken to provide distance learning training for all inspectors to extend their knowledge and understanding of inspecting literacy. One set of training materials covers early reading, including the use of systematic phonics, and you should have already worked through it.

This set of materials covers expectations, standards and inspection methodology related to literacy in schools from Year 3 to Year 11. The training refers regularly to two recent Ofsted publications, *English at the crossroads* (2009), www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/english-crossroads-evaluation-of-english-primary-and-secondary-schools-200508, and *Excellence in English* (2011), www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/excellence-english. It will be helpful to open both these documents, using the hyperlinks, for ease of reference later.

The government has stated its intention to raise the expectations for 'floor standards' in secondary schools by 2015 to 50% of students achieving five or more Grades A* to C including English and mathematics.³ It has also indicated that the primary school floor standard should be raised at some point in the future. The government's response to the Wolf Report on vocational education also identifies as a problem that:

students without a solid grounding in the basics (are) allowed to drop the study of English and maths – the most vital foundation for employment – when these are precisely the subjects that they most need to continue (P3).⁴

¹ *The Importance of Teaching – The Schools White Paper 2010* (Cm 7980), DfE, 2010; www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/CM%207980.

² Ofsted published a draft of the new inspection framework and a draft evaluation schedule on 30 September, pending legislation; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/draft-framework-for-school-inspection-january-2012; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/draft-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-maintained-schools-and-academies-january-2012.

³ 'Floor standards' will include attainment and the proportion of pupils making at least expected progress.

⁴ The government published its formal response to the Wolf Review on 12 May 2011; www.education.gov.uk/a0074953/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report.

It goes on to state that it will:

ensure that all young people study and achieve in English and mathematics, ideally to GCSE A* to C, by the age of 19 (P4).

Clearly, the government's intention is to raise the importance of basic literacy skills at the end of primary school and throughout secondary education. It has also set a new challenge for those who continue to study to 19.

This set of training materials provides:

- the background to these changes in expectations of schools and inspectors
- opportunity to review pupils' work and the criteria used to assess performance at ages 11 and 16
- an outline of what to look for in primary and secondary schools
- suggestions for how to structure an inspection to ensure that outcomes and provision in literacy can be evaluated accurately.

The materials have been developed for all inspectors – HMI and Additional Inspectors. The programme is also being published on Ofsted's website so that it is available to schools and others.

How to use these materials

This programme is divided into five modules. After this section, a two-page site map of all the modules (pages 7 and 8) gives an overview. It would be useful to preview the site map before beginning to read the materials. It also provides you with a way of noting what sections of the training you have read and the activities you have completed. You may find it helpful to print the two pages for reference straightaway. Click the hyperlink [here](#) to do that now. Another hyperlink will bring you back to this point.

You do not have to do all the activities in order: you may prefer to return to some later. There are hyperlinks from the site map to individual modules in case you want to return to any of them later and there are other hyperlinks throughout the materials to help you navigate. The hyperlinks require you to hold down 'control', select the link and left click your mouse.

You are asked to read the materials and any follow-up references, watch illustrative video clips, and complete activities.

The modules have been designed to reflect and accommodate, as far as possible, inspectors' varying levels of knowledge and understanding.

Inspectors who have high levels of knowledge and expertise in this area should not find any surprises in the materials. Reading the main text is likely to provide enough revision and consolidation. These inspectors might still find it helpful to consider how they might apply what they know to inspecting under the new framework.

Inspectors for whom this is less familiar territory may wish to follow up all or most of the examples and activities. There are plenty of visual and auditory illustrations. The training materials conclude with a list of publications by Ofsted and others.

Make sure that you are reading this document in 'Print layout' and not 'Normal'. If you find you cannot see the scripts referred to above, check first that you have set the document in 'Print layout'. Occasionally, problems occur because of the way you have saved the document. If the scripts still do not appear, open the training materials again directly from Ofsted's website. This usually resolves the problem.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the headteachers of the two primary schools in Peterborough who gave their permission for Ofsted to reproduce the Year 6 scripts on pages 18–21 for the purposes of this training.

The two Year 5 scripts on pages 14 and 15 are reproduced from the mark schemes for the Year 5 optional tests in English, *Teachers' guide*, QCA, 2006.

Distance learning 'site map' and record of activities

You might want to print this page and the next one, to check your progress on it as you work through the training. To return to where you were, [click here](#).

Part number and title	Sub-section title	Tick if read ✓	Activities	Tick if done ✓
Part 1 Background (Click here)	Introduction			
	What is literacy?			
	How is literacy different from English?			
	Where do Functional Skills fit in? (optional)			
	Progression from Year 3 to Year 11			
	Floor standards and the E-Bacc (optional)			
	The new GCSE framework for English (optional)			
	Standards in writing – Year 3 to Year 11		1.1 Improving the playground - assessing writing in Year 5	
			1.2 Assessing writing in the Year 6 end-of-Key Stage tests	
			1.3 Examples of writing in Year 11	
Part 2 What to look for (Click here)	Promoting and developing reading		2.1 Building a reading community	
			2.2 Using questions to analyse adverts in Year 10	
	Speaking and listening		2.3 Interviewing Mr Wolf: Year 2 paired talk	
			2.4 Developing ideas at Key Stage 3	
	Spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting			

Part number and title	Sub-section title	Tick if read ✓	Activities	Tick if done ✓
	Literacy across the curriculum			
	SEND, boys, EAL, intervention and alternative provision		2.5 Learning with Charlie – what aids or blocks writing?	
Part 3 How to plan your inspection (Click here)	Selecting inspection trails – using data		3.1 Framing questions on achievement	
	Deciding on inspection activities			
	Tracking and meeting pupils and groups of pupils			
	Observing lessons and literacy across the curriculum			
	Reviewing pupils' work and teachers' marking			
	Narrowing the gap?			
Part 4 Annexes and responses (Click here)				
Part 5 Further reading				

Part 1: Background

What is literacy?

In the early discussions of the intended changes to Ofsted's inspection of schools, 'literacy' was used as a catch-all term. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it simply as 'the ability to read and write'. The recent White Paper perhaps puts it into context better: 'When young people compete for jobs and enter the workplace, they will be expected to communicate precisely and effectively.' (Para. 4.50) There is a clear expectation, when taken with the response to the Wolf Report quoted above, that young people leaving the education system at 16, or more likely 19, will have the requisite literacy and communication skills to be employable and to be effective in that employment. It is not coincidental that the government has also asked Ofqual to:

advise on how mark schemes could take greater account of the importance of spelling, punctuation and grammar for examinations in all subjects (Para 4.50).

In case the intention is not clear, the recently published *Teaching Standards*⁵ make it plain that all teachers should:

demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject (Part 1, point 3).

The inclusion of standard English here, along with the full sense of 'communicate', suggests that the definition of literacy should be taken to include the ability to speak and listen effectively alongside the skills of reading and writing.

The White Paper is explicit about inspectors' duty to report on the effectiveness of the teaching of phonics and early reading. This has been covered in the training you have already undertaken. It is clear from these other references that there is an expectation that schools should ensure that all pupils communicate effectively. This plainly includes their ability to apply their reading and writing skills successfully and to speak articulately in a range of contexts and for different purposes.

⁵ The new Standards apply 'to all teachers regardless of their career stage'. For further information, see: *Teachers' Standards* (DfE V1.0 0711), DfE, 2011; www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/reviewofstandards/a00192172/review-of-teachers-standards-first-report.

How is literacy different from English?

The easy way to answer this is to refer to the current National Curriculum programmes of study. These are organised according to the skills of speaking and listening (attainment target AT1), reading (AT2) and writing (AT3). However, the actual programmes of study are set in a context of study which goes beyond 'the ability to read and write', taking in skills of analysis and response to literature and other texts, and exposure to the work of particular authors and poets. It is reasonable to suggest that literacy is a very important element within the English curriculum but that the two are not wholly the same. The curriculum and programmes of study for English extend far more widely than the acquisition of literacy skills.

When reading the White Paper, it is clear that assessment of English at various stages is seen as central to judgements on pupils' attainment and progress in 'communication, reading and writing'. The pilot inspection framework uses these terms rather than 'literacy' to ensure clarity in what is being judged. For inspectors, inevitably, outcomes in English assessments, especially at the end of Year 6 and Year 11, will be essential both in forming hypotheses before inspections and in making judgements during them. Nevertheless, the consideration of pupils' literacy skills and, particularly, the effectiveness of provision for literacy are likely to extend beyond the teaching and outcomes in English alone.

This is no great shift from what we see now in many effective schools. It is common to see good primary schools using opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their reading or writing skills in tasks located in 'thematic' units or in other subjects. Although not as common, effective secondary schools often have a policy for teachers to consolidate basic literacy skills in other subjects. Certainly, this appears to be the expectation in the new Teaching Standards (see above). A recent report on behalf of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education, *Overcoming the barriers to literacy*, recommends that secondary schools should develop cross-departmental strategies to improve literacy.⁶ It also recommends that Ofsted should look more closely at this and include it in the new inspection framework. Thus inspectors should expect to collect evidence about literacy (communication, reading and writing) from more than just English lessons and assessment data. Literacy teaching and the application of literacy skills will be a focus across the school and in a range of different subjects. Schools might be expected to have comprehensive policies on the teaching and application of literacy skills within subjects.

⁶ *Report of the inquiry into overcoming the barriers to literacy* (no ref.), All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education, 2011; www.educationappg.org.uk/inquiry/.

Where do Functional Skills fit in?

QCDA began to develop functional skills assessments in communication, number, and information and communication technology (ICT) in 2004. A full-scale pilot commenced in 2007 and was completed in August 2010. To read about Functional Skills see Annex A towards the end of these materials. ([Click here](#))

Progression from Year 3 to Year 11

The teaching of early reading, including the use of systematic phonics, has been covered in the earlier training. This part of the training picks up English in Year 3 and looks at progression through to the end of Year 11. It covers writing on page 13 and reading on page 25. Speaking and listening are covered on page 30. In each of these later sections, the National Curriculum level⁷ or GCSE grade descriptions⁸ for each area of skill are provided and the average performance at Years 6, 9 and 11 identified. (Annex D provides the point score equivalents.)

First of all, the current situation: the National Curriculum programmes of study cover all four key stages. Pupils are assessed at the end of Year 6 using national tests for reading and writing. The recent enquiry into testing at the end of Key Stage 2 by Lord Bew recommended that the writing test should be replaced by moderated teacher assessment and that the reading test should continue with modifications. It also recommended that reading and writing be reported separately at Key Stage 2 as they are currently at the end of Key Stage 1. Speaking and listening will continue to be assessed by teachers. The government has accepted Lord Bew's recommendations in full.⁹ Teacher assessment of pupils' writing will begin in 2013, as will a separate test of spelling, grammar and vocabulary.

National tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were discontinued in 2008. The results were last published nationally in 2007. The recent White Paper includes the intention to provide: 'a suite of tests for this key stage and age group. The tests will be based on National Curriculum expectations of where children should be at 14, and will be for schools to use on an entirely voluntary basis.' (Para 4.46)

GCSE syllabuses have recently been reviewed and new versions began in September 2010, that is the current Year 11 (as at September 2011). The major change in these syllabuses has been the move from coursework to the use of controlled assessments which may be prepared in advance but which are then written in school under strict conditions. Also, pupils may now enter **either** for GCSE English **or** for GCSE English Language **and** GCSE English Literature. Thus pupils will gain either one GCSE grade or two, depending on the entry.

⁷ Available online at <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/english/attainmenttargets/index.aspx>.

⁸ Available online in paragraph 7 of the document at: www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/gcse_engcriteria2002.pdf.

⁹ This response is available at: www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208144.

Assessments from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 3 are made using the attainment target descriptions set out in the National Curriculum programmes of study¹⁰, from Level 1 to Level 8. There is also a description of 'exceptional performance'. Assessment for GCSE is made using detailed grade criteria which are related to, but not identical to, the National Curriculum descriptions. There is no direct numerical equivalence between assessment at age 11 and at age 16. However, pupils who achieve Level 4 at age 11 are generally expected to achieve at least Level 5 by Year 9 and at least a grade C at GCSE. RAISEonline currently equates those who achieve Level 5 at age 11 with a grade B or better at GCSE. They would be expected to achieve at least a Level 6 at age 14.

Levels in the National Curriculum are identified by a points score (see Annex D). For example, Level 3 represents 21 points, Level 4, 27 points and Level 5, 33 points. Level 7 represents 45 points. The levels are six points apart and schools often subdivide the levels into three divisions, for example 4a (29), 4b (27), 4c (25).¹¹ This allows the school to monitor a pupil's progress. It also enables the school to set a general target for improvement in the course of a year, commonly two levels across Key Stage 2 (over four years) and so 12 points in total (Level 2 to Level 4), and three points per year or half a level. (Faster progress is expected during Key Stage 1 to enable pupils to attain Level 2b by the end of Year 2.) At Key Stage 3 those at Level 4 by age 11 were expected to reach Level 5 or better by age 14, and those at Level 5 were expected to reach Level 6 or 7. Converting points into progress beyond Year 9 is more complex because GCSE grades are not expressed on the same numerical basis. In 2010, 83% of Year 6 pupils made the expected two levels of progress from Year 2 and 70% of Year 11 pupils made the three levels of progress expected from Year 6.¹²

Of course, the most significant factor affecting this is the government's intention to review the National Curriculum. There is no clear picture yet of what this may bring and whether it would affect either the level descriptions or the expectations for achievement and progress. However, these areas were covered by questions in the Department for Education's recent consultation.¹³

Floor standards and the English Baccalaureate

The government has announced its intention to revise upwards the expected standards achieved by pupils at the end of Years 6 and 11, the floor standards. It has also introduced a new measure of performance for secondary schools based on

¹⁰ Available online at <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/english/attainmenttargets/index.aspx>.

¹¹ There is an atypical gap between Level 2c (13 points) and Level 3. Level 1c is 7 points.

¹² The data for progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 are taken from the Statistical First Release, published by the DfE on 29 September 2011; <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001023/index.shtml>.

¹³ Details of the consultation on the National Curriculum are available at: www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/nationalcurriculum/b0073043/remit-for-review-of-the-national-curriculum-in-england/consultation.

pupils achieving five grade Cs at GCSE in selected subjects, the English Baccalaureate. To read more about floor standards and the E-Bacc., see Annex B. ([Click here.](#))

The revised GCSE framework for English

Revised GCSE courses in English began in September 2010 with 'controlled assessments' completed under supervision replacing coursework. To read more about the revised GCSE framework see Annex C. ([Click here.](#))

Standards in writing – Year 6 to Year 11

The current and changing arrangements for teaching and assessing English in primary and secondary schools provide the background to the next exercise. The main purpose of this training is to equip inspectors with an understanding of general expectations of pupils at Year 6 and Year 11 to use in their first-hand evaluation of pupils' ability to communicate, read and write. The materials also encourage inspectors to apply the assessment criteria and compare the requirements for differing levels, in Key Stages 2 and 3, and grades in Key Stage 4.

First, here are the levels within AT3 (for writing). You might want to print these for ease of reference.

Attainment target (AT) 3: Writing

Level 1

Pupils' writing communicates meaning through simple words and phrases. In their reading or their writing, pupils begin to show awareness of how full stops are used. Letters are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated.

Level 2

Pupils' writing communicates meaning in both narrative and non-narrative forms, using appropriate and interesting vocabulary, and showing some awareness of the reader. Ideas are developed in a sequence of sentences, sometimes demarcated by capital letters and full stops. Simple, monosyllabic words are usually spelt correctly, and where there are inaccuracies the alternative is phonetically plausible. In handwriting, letters are accurately formed and consistent in size.

Level 3

Pupils' writing is often organised, imaginative and clear. The main features of different forms of writing are used appropriately, beginning to be adapted to different readers. Sequences of sentences extend ideas logically and words are chosen for variety and interest. The basic grammatical structure of sentences is usually correct. Spelling is usually accurate, including that of common, polysyllabic words. Punctuation to mark sentences – full stops, capital letters and question marks – is used accurately. Handwriting is joined and legible.

Level 4

Pupils' writing in a range of forms is lively and thoughtful. Ideas are often sustained and developed in interesting ways and organised appropriately for the purpose of the reader. Vocabulary choices are often adventurous and words are used for effect. Pupils are beginning to use grammatically complex sentences, extending meaning. Spelling, including that of polysyllabic words that conform to regular patterns, is generally accurate. Full stops, capital letters and question marks are used correctly, and pupils are beginning to use punctuation within the sentence. Handwriting style is fluent, joined and legible.

Level 5

Pupils' writing is varied and interesting, conveying meaning clearly in a range of forms for different readers, using a more formal style where appropriate. Vocabulary choices are imaginative and words are used precisely. Simple and complex sentences are organised into paragraphs. Words with complex regular patterns are usually spelt correctly. A range of punctuation, including commas, apostrophes and inverted commas, is usually used accurately. Handwriting is joined, clear and fluent and, where appropriate, is adapted to a range of tasks.

Level 6

Pupils' writing often engages and sustains the reader's interest, showing some adaptation of style and register to different forms, including using an impersonal style where appropriate. Pupils use a range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary to create effects. Spelling is generally accurate, including that of irregular words. Handwriting is neat and legible. A range of punctuation is usually used correctly to clarify meaning, and ideas are organised into paragraphs.

Level 7

Pupils' writing is confident and shows appropriate choices of style in a range of forms. In narrative writing, characters and settings are developed and, in non-fiction, ideas are organised and coherent. Grammatical features and vocabulary are accurately and effectively used. Spelling is correct, including that of complex irregular words. Work is legible and attractively presented. Paragraphing and correct punctuation are used to make the sequence of events or ideas coherent and clear to the reader.

Level 8

Pupils' writing shows the selection of specific features or expressions to convey particular effects and to interest the reader. Narrative writing shows control of characters, events and settings, and shows variety in structure. Non-fiction writing is coherent and gives clear points of view. The use of vocabulary and grammar enables fine distinctions to be made or emphasis achieved. Writing shows a clear grasp of the use of punctuation and paragraphing.

Exceptional performance

Pupils' writing has shape and impact and shows control of a range of styles maintaining the interest of the reader throughout. Narratives use structure as well as vocabulary for a range of imaginative effects, and non-fiction is coherent, reasoned and persuasive. A variety of grammatical constructions and punctuation is used accurately and appropriately and with sensitivity. Paragraphs are well constructed and linked in order to clarify the organisation of the writing as a whole.

The following activities cannot be exhaustive in terms of giving each inspector all she or he needs to know about judging the quality of pupils' writing but they aim, at least, to illustrate some writing at different levels and ages.

Activity 1.1: Improving the playground – assessing writing in Year 5

Look at the two extracts from different responses to the Year 5 optional standard assessment task: 'Improve your playground'. Pupils were asked to 'write about the changes you would like to see and why these would make things better'. Look at the National Curriculum criteria for writing (Level 1 to Level 4). What level would you award for each piece? Remember that pupils are expected to reach Level 2 by the end of Year 2 and Level 4 by the end of Year 6. It would be reasonable to expect Year 5 pupils to be working at Level 3.

I would like to improve lots of things
~~I would like to change about our playground.~~
 I would like to change the floor of the
 playground from concrete to astro turf and an area
 of sponge for the little ones. I would like to have
 a roof to stop the rain coming in the playground
 and I would prefer some football goals for 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.
 For years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

I think we should have an adventure
 playground because it will help the children
 have more fun at playtimes. I think the
 children will like my idea because it
 will have lots of fun activities to play
 on. This would be good for the children
 because it will help them socialise
 with other children instead of playing
 by themselves or with the same
 people all the time. I think this is a good
 use of the money because it will help

(Please note that this extract finishes in the middle of a sentence.)

Now check your application of the level descriptions against the suggestions in the 'Responses' section. ([Click here](#))

Activity 1.2: Writing in the Year 6 end-of-key-stage test

This section is based on four pupils' work from the writing tests in 2011. Pupils were asked to write a short speech to persuade their class to support their choice of charity. They were given the suggestions of endangered animals, buying books for children in other countries, and a local children's club. They could also choose a charity themselves.

Read the four scripts and put them into rank order. You may wish to refer again to the National Curriculum level criteria, this time for Level 3 to Level 6, and use them to assign each script a level. Remember that Year 6 pupils are expected to be working at Level 4 or better.

Once you are confident in your ranking of the scripts, check your assessments against the brief explanation in Annex D. [Click here](#).

Charity Choice

I would like the money we collect to go to fantastic charity A.N.S (animals need saving). This charity saves endangered animals.

A.N.S will use the money for plane tickets to go to western Borneo to save the endangered blue back orangutan. Without this money they cannot afford plane tickets; consequently the blue back orangutan will die! In addition the money will be used for food, supplies, wages, toys and vet bills for there endangered animal hospitals, across the world. Surely the blue back orangutan's don't deserve to die because of us?

So obviously this charity needs the money. So why deprive them of it, and let these endangered animal die. After that I hope you agree the money should go to A.N.S.

Charity Choice

My Charity choice is Water aid because some people are not drinking clean water so we're going to help them we're going to make money by selling what we made in our mini enterprise groups.

All of year six are going to take part in it to make money we are going to sell outside of school we are going to make as much money as we can to give.

My group is going to make door hangers to sell they will cost 50p each on the door hangers it going to say do not disturb or say anything else I know one group is making oragami and another group is making trinket boxes to sell.

Charity Choice

Pupil N

Fellow classmates,

I am speaking to you today about the horrifying amount of endangered ~~and~~ animals that live in the wild/captivity.

Many species of animals are endangered or getting dangerously near to becoming that way; the way these animals are is extremely saddening. Habitats of animals are being cut down every day for our use!

How would you feel if your house was destroyed?

Also, Poachers are killing so many animals off to eat and ~~and~~ for fabric and I don't like it!

However, there is a way we, as humans, can help these animals to stay alive. In the wild there are less than 30 of the siamese lion and if we do not come up with a solution they could extinct within a matter of months (or even weeks) Cutting their habitats down can seriously distress animals and can make them become anxious and ferocious.

We can help by: donate^{ing} every spare penny we receive, also by sponsoring the animals and by joining the W.W.F to help the animals of our planet.

Charity Choice

Come on everybody, there are too many endangered animals in this world! Who loves tigers and elephants? Tigers and elephants are two of the many hundred of endangered animals. This can't be right. Beautiful animals are being hunted/killed for their skins, tusks and other body parts. Who are we to be hunting and ruining their home? I imagine walking home from school; and there is a crumbled up ruined area where your home was. Unfortunately this is what has happened already, it is happening now and will carry on to do so, unless we put a stop to it!

Why must animals go through this pain? We all love them. It would be so sad, to hear that there were none of your favourite animals anymore they were just in captivity. Please help the animals.

Exemplar scripts for GCSE are more difficult to source, especially as the new courses have not yet completed the first cycle of assessment, with the first grades awarded in summer 2012. To give some idea of the standards inspectors might see in Year 11, here are some exemplars of writing from the website of one of the examination boards.¹⁴

Activity 1.3: Examples of writing in Year 11

First, review the range of Year 11 controlled assessment scripts from the WJEC website, with their associated commentaries, showing examples of narrative writing from controlled assessments. (The link you need is at the foot of this task.) You might want to look particularly at the second, fourth and seventh scripts which exemplify grades A, C and F. These are the grades for which specific grade descriptions are available.

The commentaries give information based on the examination board's mark bands, correlated with a GCSE grade. Look at the GCSE grade descriptions below, specifically the third paragraph (on writing) for each grade, and match them with the grades awarded to the scripts you have looked at. It is probably easier to print out the grade descriptions so that you can apply them as you look at the scripts on screen.

Here is the link you need:

www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/12888.pdf

¹⁴ The WJEC examination board's website includes a range of information, exemplar scripts and guidance for teachers. Ofsted acknowledges the access provided to these materials; www.wjec.co.uk

Grade descriptions for GCSE English

A

Candidates select suitable styles and registers of spoken English for a range of situations and contexts, showing assured use of standard English where appropriate. They confidently vary sentence structures and choose from a broad repertoire of vocabulary to express information, ideas and feelings in an engaging manner.

They initiate conversations and demonstrate sensitive listening through contributions that sustain and develop discussion. They recognise and fulfil the demands of different roles, whether in formal settings or creative activities.

Candidates respond personally and persuasively to a variety of texts, developing interpretations and evaluating how details of language, grammar, structure and presentation engage and affect the reader. They identify and discuss writers' perspectives in narrative, argument, explanation or analysis. They choose apt quotations and make telling comparisons and cross-references that illuminate the purpose and meanings of texts, explaining the impact of their social, cultural and historical contexts where appropriate.

Candidates' writing shows confident, assured control of a range of forms and styles appropriate to task and purpose. Texts engage and hold the reader's interest through logical argument, persuasive force or creative delight. Linguistic and structural features are used skilfully to sequence texts and achieve coherence. A wide range of accurate sentence structures ensures clarity; choices of vocabulary, punctuation and spelling are ambitious, imaginative and correct.

C

Candidates adapt their talk to the demands of different situations and contexts. They recognise when standard English is required and use it confidently. They use different sentence structures and select vocabulary so that information, ideas and feelings are communicated clearly and the listener's interest is engaged. They explain and evaluate how they and others use and adapt spoken language for specific purposes. Through careful listening and by developing their own and others' ideas, they make significant contributions to discussion and participate effectively in creative activities.

Candidates understand and demonstrate how meaning and information are conveyed in a range of texts. They make personal and critical responses, referring to specific aspects of language, grammar, structure and presentational devices to justify their views. They successfully compare and cross-reference aspects of texts and explain convincingly how they may vary in purpose and how they achieve different effects. They comment on how social, cultural and historical contexts affect readers' responses to texts.

Candidates' writing shows successful adaptation of form and style to different tasks and for various purposes. They use a range of sentence structures and varied

vocabulary to create different effects and engage the reader's interest. Paragraphing is used effectively to make the sequence of events or development of ideas coherent and clear to the reader. Sentence structures are varied; punctuation and spelling are accurate and sometimes bold.

F

Candidates talk confidently in familiar situations, showing some awareness of purpose and of listeners' needs. They convey information, develop ideas and describe feelings clearly, using the main features of standard English as appropriate. They listen with concentration and make relevant responses to others' ideas and opinions. They show some awareness of how they and others use and adapt spoken language for specific purposes. In formal and creative activities, they attempt to meet the demands of different roles.

Candidates describe the main ideas, themes or argument in a range of texts and refer to specific aspects or details when justifying their views. They make simple comparisons and cross-references that show some awareness of how texts achieve their effects through writers' use of linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational devices. They are aware that some features of texts relate to their specific social, cultural and historical contexts.

Candidates' writing shows some adaptation of form and style for different tasks and purposes. It communicates simply and clearly with the reader. Sentences sequence events or ideas logically; vocabulary is sometimes chosen for variety and interest.

Paragraphing is straightforward but effective; the structure of sentences, including some that are complex, is usually correct. Spelling and basic punctuation are mostly accurate.

Finally, you might like to look later at effective ways to promote pupils' writing skills. Ofsted's report, *English at the crossroads*, provides a summary of best practice in teaching writing in paragraph 115.¹⁵ In addition, the more recent report, *Excellence in English*, presents a case study from a primary school where pupils are encouraged to enjoy their writing.¹⁶ They use a 'workshop' approach to writing and become familiar with a range of different strategies for improving their writing. Read the case study on Castle View Primary School, page 8. The hyperlink to both reports is provided in the footnotes on this page and also in Part 5 (Further reading).

¹⁵ *English at the crossroads: an evaluation of English in primary and secondary schools 2005/08* (080247), Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/english-crossroads-evaluation-of-english-primary-and-secondary-schools-200508

¹⁶ *Excellence in English: what we can learn from 12 outstanding schools* (100229), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/excellence-english

Part 2: What to look for

Promoting and developing reading

You will already have completed the training on teaching phonics and early reading which covered what to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. As pupils develop their reading skills in Key Stage 2 and secondary school, they are increasingly expected to show their understanding of and response to what they have read. These responses may be elicited and assessed in class through speaking and listening activities but they are usually assessed formally in writing. As readers develop, they are expected to select, analyse and synthesise information from what they have read and to comment on the thematic, structural and linguistic elements of texts. While applying phonic knowledge helps pupils to decode words accurately, reading is far more than this, even at Key Stage 1, as you saw in the 'simple view of reading' in the first set of training materials. Reading fluently and accurately, along with the ability to skim or scan¹⁷ texts for information, becomes increasingly a vital part of pupils' learning across a full range of subjects.

English at the crossroads, which summarised findings from inspections of English between 2005 and 2008, suggested that although schools, especially primary schools, devoted a considerable amount of time to reading, few had a coherent and consistently articulated policy on developing reading skills. They used a range of strategies but, often, in a fragmented way. For example, 'guided reading' (targeted reading activities in small groups, often adult-led) was often taught as a discrete activity and not linked to reading in English lessons. If anything, provision to encourage independent reading in secondary schools was even less developed.

Excellence in English highlighted case studies from successful schools where promoting reading is a high priority. The report identified a curriculum which gives high priority to reading for pleasure as one of the key components in producing excellence. The case studies from Clifton Green Primary School, page 12, and St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School, page 37, show different ways of developing a culture in which pupils enjoy reading and improve their skills.

One of the key aspects of effective reading in primary schools, as shown in these case studies, is the determination of staff to promote a culture which encourages pupils to enjoy reading, share their views on what they have read and develop the ability to compare texts and express opinions about them.

¹⁷ 'Skimming' means to browse across the text picking up a general impression. 'Scanning' means to read in order to locate something explicitly.

Activity 2.1: Building a reading community

In this film clip from Teachers' TV, now hosted on the Times Educational Supplement website, a skilled teacher describes 'building a reading community' with Year 5 pupils.

Watch the clip (approximately five minutes) and identify the strategies which the teacher uses for increasing pupils' experience and enjoyment of reading.

Try either of these links to watch it: ¹⁸

www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Primary-English-Reading-Community-6044187/

or

www.schoolsworld.tv/videos/reading-community

Now have a look at the level descriptions for reading from the current National Curriculum. These are reproduced on the next page. You may find it easier to print them out.

¹⁸ The clips from Teachers' TV are hosted by six companies which provide free access. If you find that the TES version is unreliable, try these alternatives: www.schoolsworld.tv; www.teachfid.com/; www.teachersmedia.co.uk/; www.laserlearning.com/tv/; or www.prometheanplanet.com.PDTV. Where possible, alternative hyperlinks are given in the training materials.

Attainment target (AT) 2: Reading

Level 1

Pupils recognise familiar words in simple texts. They use their knowledge of letters and sound-symbol relationships in order to read words and to establish meaning when reading aloud. In these activities they sometimes require support. They express their response to poems, stories and non-fiction by identifying aspects they like.

Level 2

Pupils' reading of simple texts shows understanding and is generally accurate. They express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction. They use more than one strategy, such as phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual, in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning.

Level 3

Pupils read a range of texts fluently and accurately. They read independently, using strategies appropriately to establish meaning. In responding to fiction and non-fiction they show understanding of the main points and express preferences. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information.

Level 4

In responding to a range of texts, pupils show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters, beginning to use inference and deduction. They refer to the text when explaining their views. They locate and use ideas and information.

Level 5

Pupils show understanding of a range of texts, selecting essential points and using inference and deduction where appropriate. In their responses, they identify key features, themes and characters and select sentences, phrases and relevant information to support their views. They retrieve and collate information from a range of sources.

Level 6

In reading and discussing a range of texts, pupils identify different layers of meaning and comment on their significance and effect. They give personal responses to literary texts, referring to aspects of language, structure and themes in justifying their views. They summarise a range of information from different sources.

Level 7

Pupils show understanding of the ways in which meaning and information are conveyed in a range of texts. They articulate personal and critical responses to poems, plays and novels, showing awareness of their thematic, structural and linguistic features. They select and synthesise a range of information from a variety of sources.

Level 8

Pupils' response is shown in their appreciation of, and comment on, a range of texts, and they evaluate how authors achieve their effects through the use of linguistic, structural and presentational devices. They select and analyse information and ideas, and comment on how these are conveyed in different texts.

Exceptional performance

Pupils confidently sustain their responses to a demanding range of texts, developing their ideas and referring in detail to aspects of language, structure and presentation. They make apt and careful comparison between texts, including consideration of audience, purpose and form. They identify and analyse argument, opinion and alternative interpretations, making cross-references where appropriate.

As pupils progress through Key Stages 2 and 3, they should become more fluent and sophisticated readers. Look at the level descriptions. For Level 2 (the level expected at the end of Year 2), pupils show understanding of what they read and express opinions about major events in different types of texts. At Level 4 (the level expected at Year 6) they show understanding of ideas, themes, events and characters. They also begin to use inference and deduction. At Level 5 (expected for Year 9) they understand a range of texts and select essential points, using inference and deduction where appropriate.

As they progress through Key Stages 2 and 3, pupils should extend their ability to respond to texts, particularly using deduction and inference. In the NFER report, *Effective teaching of inference skills for reading*, the skills are defined as follows:

‘The ability to make inferences is, in simple terms, the ability to use two or more pieces of information from a text in order to arrive at a third piece of information that is implicit... Inferencing skills are important for reading comprehension, and also more widely in the area of criticism and other approaches to studying texts.’¹⁹

The paper stresses the importance of teachers using a range of questions to draw out pupils’ understanding of the text in depth. It also identifies the skills that pupils need to develop in applying questions to texts and probing to gain a full understanding.

The next film clip from Teachers’ TV shows a Year 10 class ‘reading’ a television advert. Although the lesson has media content and focuses on the development of understanding of media techniques, the questions used by the teacher and the focus on analysis is very similar to the skills needed to review and interpret text. The clip will also be useful later to assess pupils’ speaking and listening skills.

¹⁹ A. Kispal, *Effective teaching of inference skills for reading* (RR031) DCSF, 2008; www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/RRP/u015200/index.shtml

Activity 2.2: Using questions to analyse adverts in Year 10

Look at the clip below which lasts for around 13 minutes.

Look at the ways that pupils develop an understanding of the advert. See how the use of targeted questions helps them to identify how the advert affects the audience. You might want to look back at the Levels 6 to 8 descriptions to see if the pupils exceed the expectations for Key Stage 3.

www.schoolsworld.tv/videos/ks3-ks4-english-and-media-analysing-an-advert

or

www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Teaching-Media-Analysing-an-Advert-6083072/

For further understanding of how reading is assessed at GCSE, see the 'Responses' section. ([Click here.](#))

Reading skills in other subjects are covered in the section on 'Literacy across the curriculum'.

Speaking and listening

In the last few years, teachers have become increasingly aware of the importance of talk in developing vocabulary and language awareness in the Early Years Foundation Stage and later as a stimulus for writing. *English at the crossroads* recognised that, increasingly, teachers planned opportunities for pupils to practise speaking but that they rarely taught the skills of speaking effectively in an explicit way. Have a look at the work illustrated in Activity 2.3 below.

Activity 2.3: Interviewing Mr Wolf – Year 2 paired talk

In this next clip, a Year 2 teacher uses a 'chat show' format to ensure that all pupils contribute orally and to explore character and response to a familiar story.

Although the pupils do respond to the teacher's encouragement, listen carefully to the difference made by 'closed' questions (questions requiring a 'yes' or 'no' answer) and 'open' questions (which seek an extended explanation) to the contribution from the boy in role as the wolf.

Watch the clip here:

www.schoolsworld.tv/videos/speaking-and-listening-activities

or

www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Primary-English-Speaking-and-Listening-Activities-6084447/

Here are the National Curriculum level descriptions for speaking and listening. You may wish to print them out to help apply them to film clips.

Attainment target (AT) 1: Speaking and listening

Level 1

Pupils talk about matters of immediate interest. They listen to others and usually respond appropriately. They convey simple meanings to a range of listeners, speaking audibly, and begin to extend their ideas or accounts by providing some detail.

Level 2

Pupils begin to show confidence in talking and listening, particularly where the topics interest them. On occasions, they show awareness of the needs of the listener by including relevant detail. In developing and explaining their ideas they speak clearly and use a growing vocabulary. They usually listen carefully and respond with increasing appropriateness to what others say. They are beginning to be aware that in some situations a more formal vocabulary and tone of voice are used.

Level 3

Pupils talk and listen confidently in different contexts, exploring and communicating ideas. In discussion, they show understanding of the main points. Through relevant comments and questions, they show they have listened carefully. They begin to adapt what they say to the needs of the listener, varying the use of vocabulary and the level of detail. They are beginning to be aware of standard English and when it is used.

Level 4

Pupils talk and listen with confidence in an increasing range of contexts. Their talk is adapted to the purpose: developing ideas thoughtfully, describing events and conveying their opinions clearly. In discussion, they listen carefully, making contributions and asking questions that are responsive to others' ideas and views. They use appropriately some of the features of standard English vocabulary and grammar.

Level 5

Pupils talk and listen confidently in a wide range of contexts, including some that are of a formal nature. Their talk engages the interest of the listener as they begin to vary their expression and vocabulary. In discussion, they pay close attention to what others say, ask questions to develop ideas and make contributions that take account of others' views. They begin to use standard English in formal situations.

Level 6

Pupils adapt their talk to the demands of different contexts with increasing confidence. Their talk engages the interest of the listener through the variety of its vocabulary and expression. Pupils take an active part in discussion, showing understanding of ideas and sensitivity to others. They are usually fluent in their use of standard English in formal situations.

Level 7

Pupils are confident in matching their talk to the demands of different contexts. They use vocabulary precisely and organise their talk to communicate clearly. In discussion, pupils make significant contributions, evaluating others' ideas and varying how and when they participate. They show confident use of standard English in situations that require it.

Level 8

Pupils maintain and develop their talk purposefully in a range of contexts. They structure what they say clearly, using apt vocabulary and appropriate intonation and emphasis. They make a range of

contributions which show that they have listened perceptively and are sensitive to the development of discussion. They show confident use of standard English in a range of situations, adapting as necessary.

Exceptional performance

Pupils select and use structures, styles and registers appropriately in a range of contexts, varying their vocabulary and expression confidently for a range of purposes. They initiate and sustain discussion through the sensitive use of a variety of contributions. They take a leading role in discussion and listen with concentration and understanding to varied and complex speech. They show assured and fluent use of standard English in a range of situations and for a variety of purposes.

You will see from the level descriptions that at Level 2 (expected at Year 2), pupils begin to show confidence in talking, speak clearly and show some awareness that a formal vocabulary and tone is used in some situations. At Level 4 (expected at Year 6), pupils now talk with confidence in a range of contexts. They adapt their talk to purpose and convey opinions clearly, using some features of Standard English vocabulary and grammar appropriately. At Level 5 (expected by Year 9), they talk confidently in a wide range of contexts, including some formal situations where they use Standard English. They engage the listener and vary expression. They also use their listening skills to question others and develop their ideas, taking the views of others into account.

Before doing the next task, you might want to print the level descriptions for speaking and listening that you have just read.

Activity 2.4: Developing ideas at Key Stage 3

Watch the first five minutes of the clip below. Here the teacher uses a range of strategies to get Key Stage 3 pupils to discuss issues arising from a novel. Use the level descriptions, especially Levels 4 to 6, to assess pupils' speaking and listening abilities in the clip.

www.schoolsworld.tv/videos/speaking-and-listening

or

www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Great-Lesson-Ideas-KS3-Speaking-and-Listening-6043655/

In Key Stage 4, speaking and listening is formally assessed as part of the GCSE English or English Language courses, usually as 20% of the final marks. In the new GCSE frameworks, pupils also have to complete a study of spoken language. More information about this task is available in the 'Responses' section. ([Click here.](#))

Spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting

The White Paper, *The importance of teaching*, contains a request that Ofqual advises on how mark schemes could take greater account of the importance of spelling, punctuation and grammar for examinations in all subjects. Currently, these aspects comprise two or three marks in GCSE examinations at most. They are a significant element of assessment only in writing in GCSE English. They have far less prominence in GCSE English Literature. In the Key Stage 2 national test mark schemes, spelling, punctuation and grammar are not explicitly marked in the reading test. In the writing tests, marks are awarded for sentence structure and punctuation – up to eight marks out of 31 in the longer writing task and up to four marks out of 12 in the shorter task. There is also a spelling test of 20 words which equates to seven marks.

During 2009, HMI investigated the teaching of spelling and handwriting in Years 6 and 7 as part of Ofsted's regular subject survey visits to schools.²⁰ In the 50 schools visited, the focus on spelling and handwriting was greater in primary than in secondary schools. Inspectors saw relatively little formal teaching of spelling. Teachers' marking of spelling was inconsistent in most schools and it was usually not clear how pupils should respond to any spelling errors that teachers identified. There was little formal teaching of handwriting in the latter stages of Key Stage 2 and in secondary schools, despite many pupils not writing cursively.

Among the concerns inspectors raised in these visits was the inconsistency of marking right through the key stages. It is not clear how pupils will improve their spelling skills and understanding of grammar and punctuation without explicit teaching. However, it is even more doubtful if teachers do not have a clear strategy for helping pupils to improve through a close review of their work. There was little rigour in the identification of spelling errors, especially of common words which pupils at different ages might be expected to spell correctly. Not only were misspelt words not identified but there were few occasions where teachers required pupils to correct errors, practise spellings or apply them in new contexts. Teachers often corrected punctuation errors but, again, there were few occasions when pupils practised correcting errors or evidence that any recurring problems were followed up through explicit teaching. In light of the expectation in the new Teaching Standards that all teachers will promote high standards of literacy and the correct use of standard English, inspectors might expect to see a more formal approach to correcting basic errors extended to pupils' speech and to writing across the curriculum. (See the 'Literacy across the curriculum' section, below.)

When looking at pupils' work, it is helpful to review the type of errors made in the early pages against those in the middle and nearer the end. It is reasonable to expect repeated errors to be identified as targets for improvement and followed up by explicit teaching, focusing particularly on the parts of words that the pupils found

²⁰ The report, *Moving English forward 2008–11*, will be published in early 2012.

tricky. It is also reasonable to expect that there would be improvement overall in the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar over a period of time.

In the early stages of the National Strategies, especially in secondary schools, it was common to see particular basic skills covered in self-contained starter activities.²¹ These varied considerably in quality and effectiveness. However, some teachers managed them well and used them to support a progressive scheme for improving writing. These short inputs are now rarely seen and teachers do not necessarily take opportunities to tackle problems as they arise, for example when giving back marked work.

You may wish to revisit the examples of Year 6 and Year 11 writing from Part A to look at the scripts from the point of view of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Look for common words misspelt, absence of or incorrect sentence punctuation, weak grammar and lack of paragraphing. Would these affect the level you might have awarded based solely on the content and style of the writing? You can return to the scripts using this hyperlink. ([Click here.](#))

Literacy across the curriculum

Since the publication of *A language for life* (known as the Bullock Report), in 1975, there has been strong support for all teachers to act as teachers of literacy. This approach was a central tenet of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, promoted as 'literacy across the curriculum'. In the latter stages of the Primary National Strategy and in recent guidance on making the curriculum more integrated, Key Stage 2 teachers were encouraged to embed literacy activities in themes or other subjects so that pupils might develop and apply skills and knowledge which they had learnt in English in a range of different, but relevant, contexts. The recently published Teaching Standards enshrine the expectation that all teachers will promote 'high standards of literacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject'. The government has signalled in the recent White Paper (para 2.10) its intention to make the test of teachers' literacy skills on entry to the profession both more challenging and to limit the number of times it can be taken. It is clear that literacy within the primary curriculum and across the secondary curriculum will once again have enhanced status as part of the drive to raise literacy standards for all pupils, but particularly for those for whom literacy levels are below those expected for their age.

In the best practice in primary schools, teachers have considered carefully where pupils might apply their writing skills either in other subjects or through thematic or topic-based work. For example, a middle school with pupils in Years 5 and 6 expected subject teachers to identify exactly which type of writing pupils could use in end-of-unit assessments. Teachers also used key subject terminology from English

²¹ Materials and resources from the National Strategies have been relocated to the National Archive and are currently not available while they are being catalogued. Further information is available at: www.education.gov.uk/schools/toolsandinitiatives/nationalstrategies.

and set common expectations so that pupils would clearly recognise that they were expected to apply skills learnt in English to the concepts and knowledge acquired in the subject.

This approach is less common in secondary schools. For example, pupils in a Key Stage 3 geography lesson were asked to write a letter to persuade people to support the campaign to reduce logging in areas of rainforest. However, the teacher gave no guidance either on how to write the letter or how to write persuasively. No reference was made to any skills learnt in English. In a Year 7 history lesson, pupils were given a short passage to read about King John and the Magna Carta. The passage was badly photocopied with the end of each line missing. Pupils were given no guidance on the purpose of the reading. They were not directed to the questions that they would be expected to answer. The teacher did not mention any reading approach such as skimming or scanning.²² The subsequent exercise required pupils to fill in gaps in a paragraph with the words provided below it (a cloze passage). As a task, pupils would not need to understand the passage. In many cases, they could find a similar sentence in the original passage and simply copy the key word across. Good examples of literacy schemes in secondary schools are more difficult to find. This clip on Teachers' TV, www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/KS3-Teachers-6083821/, shows a school that is trying to ensure that all teachers support pupils' literacy.

The most effective schools often have a whole-school marking policy which emphasises the importance of literacy and is applied consistently. However, in many primary schools, teachers' marking in other subjects is less detailed than in English and rarely focuses on key basic errors. This can be most obvious in subjects like science where pupils often write one-sentence answers to questions or short paragraphs evaluating experiments. In humanities, pupils often write extended pieces in diary, news report or letter forms. All of these lend themselves well to marking for literacy but often this is not the case. In secondary schools, similar work is rarely marked for accuracy. In extreme cases, even terms specific to the subject are not corrected, never mind other spellings or punctuation errors.

Around the school, an attractive and well-stocked library is often an indicator of effective support for pupils' wider reading and information retrieval skills. As you saw in the earlier clip of the Year 5 class, the teacher's attitude to reading is central to increasing pupils' enjoyment of and participation in reading. In secondary schools, an enthusiastic librarian often raises the profile of reading and provides good opportunities for pupils to share their views on books and widen the range of authors and genres they experience. Secondary schools sometimes set aside time in tutor periods for individual reading. These sessions can encourage pupils to read, but many lack any consistent focus, have no guidance for pupils on what to read or ensure that the material is at the right level, and no opportunities for them to discuss what they have read. *English at the crossroads* has a case study of effective provision to encourage reading in a girls' comprehensive school (see page 24).

²² 'Skimming' means to browse across the text picking up a general impression. 'Scanning' means to read in order to locate something explicitly.

The forthcoming report, *Moving English forward*, emphasises the importance of headteachers and senior leaders in providing the context for effective provision for literacy across the school. Successful strategies include:

- appointing a coordinator with a clear role and status
- using staff working groups and expertise
- developing whole-school policies and a specific literacy action plan
- encouraging teachers across different subjects to lead on literacy in their areas
- monitoring outcomes in literacy and evaluating the effectiveness of actions and provision.

Although it is right that key literacy skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening should be taught primarily in English lessons, there is a clear intention in recent government statements of policy for these skills to be reinforced and applied with accuracy across other subjects. This is particularly important for pupils who may be working below the levels expected for their age and who are finding it difficult to master basic elements of spelling, punctuation and grammar. For many, using fluent, clear and legible handwriting is also a problem.

Special educational needs, boys, English as an additional language, intervention and alternative provision

The importance of teaching stresses the need to consider the progress of the lowest 20% of pupils. The Wolf Report also recommends that all young people should have literacy skills which enable them to be employable when they leave school at age 16 or, in the future, 19. Inevitably, with the enhanced focus on the performance of a range of potentially vulnerable pupils in the new school inspection framework, inspectors will need to review both the provision and outcomes for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, and a range of other groups of pupils.

At the height of the National Strategies, schools used a range of intervention support packages for pupils who were considered to be working below the level expected for their age. In primary schools these were mainly Early (Year 1), Additional (Year 3), and Further (Years 5/6) Literacy Support.

In secondary schools, pupils followed the Literacy Progress Units in Years 7 and 8. These packages were usually delivered through small withdrawal groups, often led by teaching assistants. In the early stages of the programmes they were provided outside lesson times but this gradually changed as schools recognised that pupils did not always respond well when missing assemblies or time with their peers.

In recent years, the use of these packages as complete programmes has broken down and most schools now use a range of resources and approaches which they deem to be most suitable for their pupils and their particular needs. These include commercial packages, especially those focused on the acquisition of phonics and spelling. Other programmes, such as Every Child a Reader (ECAR) and Every Child a Writer (ECAW), have also been funded to provide individual tuition in primary schools. However, these grants are no longer ring-fenced and headteachers will be expected to decide whether or not to continue to support these programmes.

In secondary schools, there have been fewer central initiatives although individual tuition was available, linked to the National Challenge programme, to help schools achieve the floor standards. National Strategy packages have largely disappeared.

English at the crossroads found that the standards reached by White British boys, especially those eligible for free school meals, were among the lowest nationally. It might be helpful here to reflect on the gap between boys' performance nationally, especially in writing, and that of girls.

In 2010, at Key Stage 2, the gap between girls and boys achieving Level 4 or better in English was 10% points. In writing it was 15% points. At GCSE in 2010 the gap was again 15% points. Although boys have narrowed the gap slightly over time at Key Stage 2, it has remained relatively static at GCSE. Seventy per cent of girls make three levels of progress from Year 6 to Year 11 but only 60% of boys. Provisional

results for 2011 at Key Stage 2 indicate that the gap between girls and boys has narrowed slightly, to 9% points in English and 13% points in writing.²³

Boys often form the majority of pupils within withdrawal support groups or lower sets in English. However, boys can be motivated to achieve in English, as the case study of a Year 6 class on page 15 of *English at the crossroads* and a checklist of effective ways to help boys write effectively on page 45 show.

To understand the problems for pupils who may find acquiring literacy skills difficult because of their circumstances, look at the following clip.

Activity 2.5: Learning with Charlie – what aids or blocks writing?

This clip follows a Year 1 boy, who is described as 'lively', through a literacy activity and highlights where he responds well and where he loses concentration. It gives some suggestions as to why this might be.

The clip lasts for around 14 minutes but you can view just the classroom sequence, lasting around 10 minutes. Focus on what helps Charlie to concentrate and to write with confidence.

Here is the link you need:

www.schoolsworld.tv/videos/ks1-ks2-english-learning-with-charlie

Charlie's experience raises some interesting questions about how boys, especially those who learn best through visual and physical experiences, might respond to typical literacy lessons as they move through Key Stage 2 into secondary school. *Excellence in English* contains case studies on motivating boys in a secondary school, St Paul's Academy (page 33), and differentiating the curriculum to meet the needs of a range of pupils, Crown Woods School (page 14).

This training cannot possibly cover the detail necessary to highlight the particular issues raised by different special educational needs. Equally, those pupils learning English at an early stage or those for whom some of the more sophisticated usages of language, such as idiom and inference, will prove a challenge also require particular teaching and learning approaches. In all these cases, it is reasonable to assume that the teaching will be carefully planned and that opportunities will be taken to reinforce key and common aspects of literacy at any stage. *Excellence in English* has a case study which identifies effective teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language, George Eliot Primary School (page 19).

However, these effective features of lessons are often missing. Teachers assume that all pupils will be secure with basic points and do not refresh vital learning when

²³ The latest data are available at: www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001018/index.shtml.

there are good opportunities to do so. For example, a class with pupils who use some of the home languages from the Indian sub-continent may not readily use the definite ('the') and indefinite ('a' or 'an') articles in writing or speaking English. This is often because they are still thinking in their home language which does not have these parts of speech. The teacher needs to refresh this constantly with them to help them remember that they will need to add them in their speaking and writing in English.

In secondary schools, particularly as pupils progress into Key Stage 4, there may be alternative programmes for some which allow them to learn outside school, often on work-related or vocational courses or in the workplace. Until recently, these programmes often meant that pupils did not complete qualifications in English and mathematics, certainly not at GCSE. It is now more common to find these pupils at least completing a Functional Skills qualification or spending some time in school on GCSE English and mathematics. Again, in relation to the government's response to the Wolf Report on vocational education, it is clearly intended that all pupils should reach a basic standard in literacy by the time they leave school. This appears to be focused in the future on achieving the equivalent of a grade C at GCSE. Inspectors may well need to investigate the literacy provision for and outcomes of pupils on these alternative courses.

Whatever the additional programmes or support provided for these pupils with a range of differing, specific needs, inspectors will need to assure themselves that the right pupils are identified and that the programmes are effective in narrowing the gap between the performance of these pupils and all pupils nationally and in the school. This will be part of the judgement on achievement required by the new framework.

Part 3: How to plan your inspection

Selecting inspection trails – using data

There will be training on using data and RAISEonline in school inspections provided separately. This package does not attempt to cover the detailed analysis of a range of attainment and progress data. It suggests questions that might be applied to such data and how the outcomes might direct inspection trails. Once the 2011 unvalidated RAISEonline is available, you may wish to try out the questions on a school which you are due to inspect or you might use a recent section 5 inspection which you completed as a starting point for this exercise.

Activity 3.1: Framing questions on achievement

What would you need to know from the data to help to identify any specific inspection trails based on literacy? You can either jot down your own questions or review the list of suggestions below to see if you would add any other questions.

Questions to use when interrogating school achievement data

- Is attainment in English at any key stage below that found nationally?
- Is attainment for English and mathematics below the national floor standard?
- Is attainment in English significantly lower than that in mathematics (or than other subjects at Key Stage 4 with proportionately large entries, e.g. science)?
- Is the attainment of any particular groups in English significantly lower than the average for the school and for all pupils nationally?
- Is attainment in any of reading, writing or speaking and listening significantly lower than the other skills? (NB Generally, attainment in writing is lower than in reading which is lower than speaking/ listening, although this does vary slightly by key stage and in some schools.)
- Is the attainment of any broad ability group in English significantly lower than others, especially those pupils who were working below expectations at the previous key stage?
- Is progress in English by the end of the key stage (as evidenced by value added scores) significantly below expectations?
- Is progress in reading or writing (if the data are available) significantly below expectations? Is there evidence that pupils leave the school without the expected level of reading skills?

- Is progress in English for any particular group of pupils, including by prior attainment, significantly below expectations?
- Does attainment and progress, overall and for groups, fluctuate over three years and unrelated to any contextual factors in the pupil cohort?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', there may be an inspection trail to follow based on literacy. Exactly what the trail is will depend on the overall balance of trails for the school. In other words, the 'literacy' trail might form part of a larger trail related to pupils' achievement, might contribute to a trail focused on specific groups of pupils or might be sufficiently important to be a trail in its own right. This balance will be different for each inspection.

As the inspection progresses, it is likely that inspectors will receive more data to assess the initial hypotheses, including school assessment data and that provided by other external organisations, for example Fischer Family Trust (FFT) or the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT). It is almost certain that schools will provide data which are more refined than RAISEonline and capable of more sophisticated interpretation. For example, a school might provide the actual progress in reading based on reading ages and teacher assessments for lower middle ability boys. This information would be assessed against the original data and inspection hypothesis in exactly the same way as now. It may alleviate or confirm concern about an original hypothesis.

Deciding on inspection activities

It is not necessarily the case that inspectors will add extra activities to the inspection. It is more likely that existing activities will be shaped to ensure that key inspection trails and questions about literacy are included and observations made to provide secure evidence. The new framework already requires inspectors to make observing teaching a priority. It also implies, because of the focus on getting the views of pupils and evaluating more closely the performance of different groups, greater contact with pupils. It is most likely that evaluating provision and outcomes in literacy will form part of these processes, in much the way that tracking some of the Every Child Matters outcomes did in the framework that runs until the end of December 2011.

Lead inspectors might choose to ask their inspectors to make specific comments in evidence forms about aspects of literacy teaching and the effectiveness of pupils' reading in lessons, the engagement of certain groups of pupils in literacy activities, the standard of marking for literacy, or the quality of pupils' spoken work or writing. In interviews with pupils, there might be questions on how they know what they need to improve in their literacy work and how they are supported to do so, how often teachers in other subjects refer to specific literacy skills or targets, and attitudes to reading. These will need to be included to respond to the requirement in

the framework to evaluate pupils' ability to communicate, read and write but may be accentuated as necessary, depending on the major inspection trails.

You could use an inspection trail arising from your last inspection which you considered in Part 3, 'Selecting inspection trails – using data' to try to write some instructions for inspectors to help them focus on literacy in lesson observations or pupil interviews.

Tracking and meeting pupils and groups of pupils

Some groups of pupils are more likely to be the focus of inspection trails than others although, of course, this may vary from school to school. As part of your analysis of the school's data, you may have identified particular groups of pupils who might appear to be performing less well than their peers or below the level expected for their age. These would almost certainly provide a basis for any selection of pupils you make.

Based on national data, boys make proportionately less progress than girls in English and generally have lower attainment. This has been briefly summarised in Part 2, 'Special educational needs, boys, English as an additional language, intervention and alternative provision'. The removal of CVA has been partly to avoid such national trends dictating expectations for these pupils. The particular focus of the White Paper sets the challenge to raise the proportion of pupils achieving age-related expectations by the end of each key stage and to ensure that all pupils have literacy skills that allow them to be employable by age 16 or 19. Inevitably, this steers the inspection focus towards boys with below-average prior attainment. This group has been the focus of much work in the National Strategies and these boys often formed a major part of any intervention or 'catch up' group. Inspectors may well choose to interview or track such boys to see how effective provision and outcomes in literacy are.

As discussed earlier in these training materials, while provision and outcomes in English may be the starting point for analysis, it is clear that the government intends that teachers across a range of subjects should contribute to improving pupils' literacy skills. As such, inspection activities may need to be more sophisticated. For example, lead inspectors might allocate inspectors to:

- track a particular group of pupils (or individuals) in several different lessons to assess the quality of their literacy skills and whether they receive any specific support or teaching (This might well be alongside other trails such as behaviour, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and so on.)
- observe particular intervention or support sessions to evaluate their impact on literacy skills
- review the work of particular pupils or groups of pupils – not necessarily just English work – to evaluate literacy skills and look for evidence of effective marking, specific teaching, and guidance on improvement (Again, this might form part of a wider trail.)

- visit particular activities which the school identifies as developing literacy skills – for example individual reading in tutor periods or library lessons to explore the promotion of reading
- interview selected pupils, either as part of a more disparate group or as a specific group [Again, this might be part of a wider process.]
- interview particular pupils after observing them in English, intervention or other lessons to identify how far they understand their performance in literacy and how they are helped to improve
- meet a group of pupils to find out what and how much they read, and their confidence in and understanding of reading as an aid to learning.

Observing lessons and reviewing literacy across the curriculum

It is likely that there will be a greater focus in all lesson observations under the new (2012) framework on how well particular groups of pupils achieve. Also, with the increased emphasis on reporting what makes teaching effective in improving learning, it will be necessary for inspectors to record in evidence forms where aspects of teaching clearly have an impact on learning, whether positive or not. For literacy, this will be easiest where there are readily identifiable actions which affect the progress of pupils. However, the real skill of observation may be in identifying where opportunities are missed in teachers' planning or in their teaching. This may also feature in recommendations for the school at the end of the inspection.

Again, a set of questions may help you to assess what you see in any lesson. You may want to save these for your own files, either now or later.

Questions to use when observing 'literacy' in any subject

- Are key terms and vocabulary clear and explored with pupils to ensure that they recognise and understand them? Are they related to similar words or the root from which they are derived?
- Do teachers identify any particular features of key terms and help pupils with strategies for remembering how to spell them or why they might be capitalised (e.g. 'Parliament' in history or citizenship)?
- Do teachers remind pupils of important core skills – for example how to skim a text to extract the main elements of its content quickly or to scan a text for information about a key word or topic?
- Do teachers make expectations clear before pupils begin a task – for example on the conventions of layout in a formal letter or on the main features of writing persuasively?
- Do teachers reinforce the importance of accuracy in spoken or written language – for example, emphasising the need for correct sentence punctuation in one-sentence answers or correcting 'we was...' in pupils' speech?

- Do teachers identify when it is important to use standard English and when other registers or dialects may be used – for example, in a formal examination answer and when recreating dialogue as part of narrative writing?
- Do teachers help pupils with key elements of literacy as they support them in lessons? Do they point out spelling, grammar or punctuation issues as they look at work around the class?
- Does teachers' marking support key literacy points? For example, are key subject terms always checked for correct spelling? Is sentence punctuation always corrected?

This may seem an exhaustive set of expectations for teachers whose main role is to teach geography or design technology. However, to pupils who have weaknesses in their basic literacy, there can never be enough support and consolidation for them to ensure that they avoid basic errors.

Reviewing pupils' work and scrutinising teachers' marking

Although in many schools inspectors will have data to help them to form a judgement on pupils' attainment, progress and achievement at the end of a key stage, there may be occasions where the data do not match the cumulative picture of progress or achievement from lesson observations. In addition, the year groups in some schools, such as first and middle schools, do not neatly match the key stages. In these cases, it is often necessary for inspectors to review the work of pupils in the final year at the school to form a judgement on attainment and progress. This may also be one of the inspection activities that you have selected to gather evidence or test out an inspection hypothesis.

It is easiest to assess pupils' performance in writing. When looking at work in English it is important to establish whether you have all of a pupil's work in front of you. Certainly, for older pupils, there will be assessed work which may be kept securely. This often represents the best way of reviewing pupils' attainment since it has usually been assessed by the teacher using grade or level criteria. You may also want to ask for APP (assessing pupils' progress) or other assessment information which will provide a reflection of pupils' attainment, their strengths and weaknesses. In primary schools, pupils often have a 'big writing' book and, increasingly, may write extended pieces as part of a thematic approach or in other subjects. Again, this will help to form a view of pupils' performance. It is also helpful to consider how much difference there is between pupils' usual standard of writing and what they write in 'controlled' situations.

Assessing reading, speaking and listening from written material is far more difficult. Teachers may provide you with assessment records. This should be the case with pupils on GCSE courses but may also be possible in other key stages. Older pupils should begin to show the ability to understand and interpret texts through their reading, applying knowledge of technical aspects of literature and non-fiction texts.

They should use quotation and reference to support their observations. Pupils are expected to talk confidently in a range of contexts as they get older, using formal grammar and tone along with standard English to engage their audience. By Year 9, they are expected to be able to listen closely and adapt their responses according to the views of others.

A basic way of reviewing pupils' work is to select an extended piece of writing from near the beginning of a pupil's book (or folder of work). This can then be compared with a piece from the middle and one nearer the end. Is there a discernible difference in length, presentation, sophistication (e.g. paragraphing or length of paragraphs), common errors, use of vocabulary and variation in style? Look at the teacher's marking. Are the same issues highlighted in the later pieces as in the earlier ones? Has the teacher identified any developing strengths or commented on improvement?

When looking at books from other subjects, it is important to form a view of what it is reasonable to expect. If pupils are writing in a form that would be taught in English, it is reasonable to expect that they would draw on what they have learnt already. This is often the case in primary schools. In secondary schools, there is considerably more variety. Do teachers identify important errors (such as some of those contained in questions about literacy in lessons above). Key subject terms should be spelt correctly. Basic sentence punctuation should be accurate. If it is not and is not identified, how will pupils improve?

Consider the following for your inspections:

Involving the whole inspection team in evaluating pupils' writing

- Don't necessarily ask for a selection of books to be provided in the team room. There will be a lot of material, the books will have been selected (and checked) for you, and the pupils (and teachers) are disadvantaged because they are without the books.
- On the morning of the first day of the inspection, ask each inspector to maintain a 'running' evidence form (EF) and to look at two or three books in every lesson (at an appropriate point). On the EF, each inspector should record the year group, subject and some brief commentary about what is seen (standards of literacy, the variation in the work, how topics flow into each other and fit together, marking, pupils' response to it, presentation, organisation and so on). Doing this in the classroom means that you can ask the pupils about any aspect that interests you, at the time.
- Each inspector can probably see about 20 books over Day 1 across a range of subjects quite easily. You will then have a good evidence base. (You do have to be careful about missing work that may be kept elsewhere, but you can check this with the pupil.)
- Spend a little time in the team meeting at the end of Day 1 identifying any trends or patterns in what has been seen. This does not take long. If a

member of the senior management team is joining you for the team meeting, she or he should benefit from hearing your discussion.

- Sometimes issues emerge and become a trail for the morning of Day 2. If so, the response usually involves inviting a senior member of staff to accompany an inspector to a number of lessons and doing a joint 'book look' to test any hypotheses. School staff often value this and realise that it is something they could do themselves if they have not done so before.

When looking at teachers' marking, a good test is whether you can see what needs to improve and understand how to make the improvement. To give an example, many teachers will underline an incorrect spelling and may put 'sp' or some other code in the margin. Does this help the pupil to correct the word next time? Perhaps the teacher writes the correct word above (or sometimes just the correct letter sequence of part of the word). Is this better? Does the pupil now know how to spell the word? Has she or he internalised this? If there is a common error – perhaps about understanding 'i' before 'e' except after 'c' – does the teacher help the pupil to avoid this error in other similar words?

English at the crossroads has examples of effective comments by teachers in paragraphs 91 and 92. The most effective marking that inspectors see in English survey visits often challenges the pupil to go back to the work and rewrite a section to improve it in a specific way or to correct errors. The pupil is given time to do this and the teacher can check that they have done so successfully. If not, they can follow the matter up. This approach creates a dialogue between teacher and pupil and also provides a trail that can be referred to if the same error reappears in later work – "Look back at...". Pupils usually can explain very clearly in these circumstances how teachers' marking helps them to improve their work.

Narrowing the gap?

There is a lot to cover in these training materials. As with other training or reference materials, for example those to support the inspection of special educational needs, this pack is available as a reference source for inspectors to refresh any section or to check a particular aspect of inspecting communication, reading and writing later.

To support the importance of inspecting pupils' skills in communication, reading and writing, it is perhaps worth revisiting what we know about literacy skills and their impact on young people's lives. The Communication Trust, which is funded by the Department for Education to raise awareness of speech and language issues, highlighted the following:

- vocabulary at the age of five is a powerful predictor of GCSE achievement
- two thirds of 7- to 14-year-olds with serious behaviour problems have language impairment
- 65% of young people in young offender institutions have communication difficulties

- 47% of employers say they cannot get recruits with the communication skills they need.²⁴

Remember, too, the adults you saw struggling to read in the clip you watched at the beginning of the training materials on phonics and early reading²⁵ and Charlie in Year 1 who struggled with writing. In a recent speech, the Secretary of State reinforced that:

‘... there is nothing either inevitable or fixed about the number of people who cannot read properly.

‘We know that teaching using the right methods can effectively eliminate illiteracy.

‘You cannot read to learn until you have learnt to read... unless children are secure in that basic skill [decoding fluently] then reading remains a painful, difficult and obscure process.’²⁶

The government has focused attention in the recent White Paper on the effective teaching of phonics to improve early reading. It has also announced its intention to raise the floor standards which primary and secondary schools should reach. In its response to the Wolf Report on vocational education, it has also confirmed the aspiration for all young people to leave school with literacy and numeracy skills which enable them to be employable.

In its new school inspection framework, Ofsted has increased the focus on the performance of particular groups of pupils and the provision and outcomes in literacy. The focus on literacy in schools is a valuable test of these intentions since any marked improvement, especially for those groups who appear to achieve less well currently, should be measurable not just in educational data but also in other indicators over time.

²⁴ Introduction by Jean Gross, Communication Champion, to *Talk, listen, take part*, a supplement published in conjunction with the Communication Trust and BT by TSL Education Ltd in the Times Educational Supplement, 2 September 2011. Find out about the work of the Communication Trust at: www.thecomunicationtrust.org.uk/.

²⁵ The clip can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOM6aGbfY04.

²⁶ Speech by Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, at the Durand Academy, Stockwell, 1 September 2011. The text of the speech is on the DfE’s website: www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/speeches/a00197684/michael-gove-to-the-durand-academy.

Part 4: Annexes and responses

Annex A. Where do Functional Skills fit in?

To get a full history of functional skills you will need to visit the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) website which has now been archived. QCDA began to develop functional skills assessments in communication, number, and information and communication technology (ICT) in 2004. A full-scale pilot began in 2007 and was completed in August 2010. According to the QCDA website, functional skills are:

- a component in new Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diplomas
- part of all Foundation Learning programmes
- a component in the apprenticeship frameworks.

Functional skills elements are also part of new GCSE courses and in the Key Stage 3 and 4 programmes of study.

Functional skills are assessed at Entry Level, level 1 (equivalent to GCSE grades D to G) and level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grades A* to C). Originally, the previous government intended functional skills at level 2 to be a precursor to pupils achieving a grade C or better in GCSE English and mathematics. However, this intention was withdrawn before the end of that government's term of office. Functional skills do not cover the full curriculum and programmes of study in English. They were originally tested by short tasks and multiple choice answers in 'communication' but this has now been adjusted to include some extended writing. Pupils are expected to apply their literacy skills in a range of unfamiliar contexts, often based on 'real life' situations.

Some secondary schools still use functional skills qualifications. Others use qualifications such as the Adult Literacy and Numeracy tests (ALAN) for all or some pupils. GCSE syllabus specifications explain how the 'functional elements' of English are included. For example the examination board AQA states:

This is done mainly through the externally examined unit. The term "functional" should be considered in the broad sense of providing learners with the skills and abilities they need to take an active and responsible role in their communities, in their everyday lives, workplaces and educational settings.

Effectively, functional skills are a closer match to the 'basic skills' mentioned in the White Paper and suggested by the ability to communicate, read and write. They focus on pupils applying their skills in 'real life' contexts. However, it is unlikely that inspectors will find many schools where a majority of pupils take these qualifications. It is often reserved for those who may struggle to achieve a grade C in GCSE or who are at risk of gaining no qualification in English. ([Return to Part 1, 'Where do Functional Skills fit in?'](#))

Annex B. Floor standards and the English Baccalaureate

Schools have been challenged to achieve floor targets (now renamed 'standards') for several years. The White Paper (para 20) states that there will be 'an escalating minimum expectation for attainment'. Recently, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, announced:

We should no longer tolerate a system in which so many pupils leave primary school without a good grasp of English and maths, and leave secondary school without five good GCSEs (quoted in Education Business magazine, 17 June).

In a speech to headteachers on 16 June 2011, the Secretary of State indicated his intention to increase the floor standard for five GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics from 35% to 40% by 2012 and to 50% by 2015. In primary schools, the standard for proportion of pupils achieving at least Level 4 in English and mathematics may rise from the current 55% to 60% and beyond, but no date has been specified. To meet the floor standard, schools will also have to ensure that pupils are making at least the average level of progress expected nationally or to be closing the gap consistently on average progress.

This renewed challenge matches the White Paper's commitment to focus on how well disadvantaged pupils do in the 'basics' at primary and secondary school (para 6.14). There is also an undertaking to consider the progress of the lowest attaining 20% of pupils (para 6.15). This builds from the assertion that 'effective teaching of English and mathematics in primary schools is the bedrock of a good education' (para 4.19).

In addition, secondary schools are now expected to consider how they will increase the proportion of pupils achieving at least a grade C at GCSE in the English Baccalaureate. This new measure of performance identifies English, mathematics, science, a modern or classical language, and either history or geography as qualifying subjects. While in one way it does not alter the expectation for English, it will probably focus secondary schools further, especially with the rise in the floor standard, on the proportion of pupils achieving at least a grade C. ([Return to Part 1, 'Floor standards and the English Baccalaureate'.](#))

Annex C. The revised GCSE framework for English

The GCSE framework for English was reviewed and consulted upon, leading to new syllabuses being available from September 2010, for first assessment in 2012. The major change to these syllabuses is the move from coursework to controlled assessment. Pupils are expected to enter for **either** GCSE English **or** for GCSE English Language **and** GCSE English Literature. The reason for this is that the National Curriculum programme of study in English at Key Stage 4 contains a literature component. Therefore, the study of just English Language would not comply with the current requirements. The GCSE English course contains both language and literature assessments. The White Paper, in the section on the review of the National Curriculum, makes it clear that pupils will be expected to study both English language and literature (para 4.13) and so it is reasonable to expect that the situation regarding choice of course at GCSE is likely to be maintained.

Across the four major examination boards, 40% of the English and English Language syllabuses is assessed in examinations, 40% through controlled written assessments and 20% in controlled assessment of speaking and listening. The boards vary in the way they include a new requirement to study spoken language. Some include this as a written assessment within the speaking and listening section while others include it as part of the controlled assessment section. For English Literature, 75% of the final marks are under examination conditions and 25% in controlled assessment.

Possibly the biggest change in GCSE practice over the last five years has been the rapidly growing use of early entry in English. This trend began in mathematics, especially for the most able. However, particularly in National Challenge schools where there has been intense pressure and support to reach the floor standards, pupils have often been entered for GCSE English either at the end of Year 10 or in November of Year 11, or, in some cases, both. The purpose is usually to assure a baseline percentage of pupils reaching grade C. However, schools then focus on specific pupils who may have missed the grade C by varying margins. It is usually possible to identify weaker areas in the assessment and try to remedy these before the next entry. English now accounts for far more early entries than mathematics. Schools vary in the strategies they use after early entry. Some restrict entry for GCSE English Literature only to those who have already gained a grade C in English. Schools will have to decide whether to enter pupils for just GCSE English or for both English Language and Literature. It is not possible yet to comment on how this may affect overall entries in GCSE English and whether fewer pupils might study English Literature as a discrete subject.

It is also important to note that the government's response to the Wolf Report indicates that students who continue in education beyond 16 will be expected to achieve a grade C in English and mathematics wherever possible. This will presumably require some consideration in the future by the examination boards of suitable variations to syllabuses for those who are re-taking the subject. ([Return to Part 1, The revised GCSE framework for English](#))

Annex D. National Curriculum levels and their point score equivalents

Key Stage 1

NC Level	POINTS
A	discount
D	discount
W	3
1	9
2	15
2C	13
2B	15
2A	17
3	21

Key Stage 2

NC Level	POINTS
A	discount
D	discount
B	15
N	15
2C	13
2 or 2B	15
2A	17
3C	19
3 or 3B	21
3A	23
4C	25
4 or 4B	27
4A	29
5C	31
5 or 5B	33
5A	35

Key Stage 3

NC Level	POINTS
A	discount
D	discount
B	21
N	21
3C	19
3 or 3B	21
3A	23
4C	25
4 or 4B	27
4A	29
5C	31
5 or 5B	33
5A	35
6C	37
6 or 6B	39
6A	41
7C	43
7 or 7B	45
7A	47
8C	49
8 or 8B	51
8A	53
EP	57

Annex E. Responses to activities

Activity 1.1: Improving the playground – assessing writing in Year 5

The first piece is below the expectations for a Year 5 pupil. It is Level 2 because the ideas are developed in a sequence of sentences. The sentences have some detail but lack variety. Sentence punctuation (capital letters and full stops) is accurate but spelling is less consistent. Handwriting is weak.

The second piece is closer to the age-related expectation for Year 5. It has sustained ideas, including reasons for the improvements chosen. It also has a sense of audience. Spelling is usually accurate, as is sentence punctuation. The pupil uses some interesting vocabulary, such as 'socialise'. Handwriting is joined but erratic in size and not securely located on the lines. This is probably a top Level 3 moving towards Level 4. [Move on to Activity 1.2.](#)

Activity 1.2: Writing in the Year 6 end-of-key-stage test

These scripts come from the 2011 Year 6 National writing tests. The levels used here are those ascribed to them from the marking, using the mark bands and level thresholds awarded.

The rank order and levels awarded on this basis were, highest to lowest – N (5A), O (4A), K (4B), M (3C).

Script N (5A) This is a sophisticated piece of writing for a Year 6 pupil. It has many features of a Level 6. It is logical and written as a speech to persuade its audience. It has a variety of sentence structure and punctuation. It includes devices such as rhetorical questions which are used effectively to make the reader think. It appeals directly to the reader, 'we can help!'

Script O (4A) It has a lively and persuasive tone and uses a variety of punctuation effectively. It is written as a speech to persuade its audience. It appeals to the reader. However, common words are confused – 'their' instead of 'there' – and others are routinely misspelt.

Script K (4B) It has a sense of logic and appeals to the audience, 'I hope you agree'. It uses some variations in punctuation. However, the ideas are not controlled as well as those in script O.

Script M (3C) It develops the idea but lacks sentence variety and, importantly, sentence punctuation. It is more descriptive than persuasive and not written as a speech.

Although not a key factor in this levelling, scripts K and M have handwriting which is not securely cursive and looks more immature than scripts N and O. The second Year 5 script from Task 1 has some better features than script M here. ([Move on to Activity 1.3](#))

Activity 1.3: Examples of writing in Year 11

There are two exemplar Functional Skills scripts with the examiner's commentary on the AQA website:

<http://store.aqa.org.uk/resourceZone/pdf/english/AQA-47252-W-TRB-EXE.PDF>

These provide some comparison with the Year 11 GCSE scripts looked at as part of Activity 1.3.

Activity 2.1: Building a reading community

The assessment of reading in Key Stage 2 end-of-key-stage national tests and at GCSE uses a combination of different texts and graduated questions which are marked using a structured mark scheme. Look at the specimen assessment materials for Paper 1, reading, on the WJEC website:

www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/10091.pdf

These provide the texts, questions and mark schemes for non-fiction reading at GCSE level. Note that the mark bands are not directly related to grades. The grade thresholds will be decided once the marking is completed. (Return to [Part 2](#), 'Speaking and listening')

Activity 2.4: Developing ideas at Key Stage 3

Twenty per cent of the final GCSE English grade is awarded for speaking and listening. This is usually based on a range of tasks completed over the two-year course and assessed by the teacher. Standards are moderated using a set of video examples, discussed by the English teachers, and then checked by a sampling visit from an external moderator. There is also a unit on the study of spoken language in the revised GCSE courses. This is completed as a controlled assessment task. You can review the assessment criteria for this task and look at candidate responses with the moderator's comments at www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/12950.pdf. (Return to [Part 2](#), 'Spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting')

Part 5: Further reading

Publications by Ofsted

English at the crossroads: an evaluation of English in primary and secondary schools 2005/08 (080247), Ofsted, 2009;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/english-crossroads-evaluation-of-english-primary-and-secondary-schools-200508

Excellence in English: what we can learn from 12 outstanding schools (100229), Ofsted, 2011;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/excellence-english

Reading by six: how the best schools do it (100197), Ofsted, 2010;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/reading-six-how-best-schools-do-it

Removing barriers to literacy (090237), Ofsted, 2011;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/removing-barriers-literacy

The special educational needs and disability review: a statement is not enough (090221), Ofsted, 2010;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/special-educational-needs-and-disability-review

Other publications

Teachers' standards (DfE V1.0 0711), DfE, 2011;
www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/reviewofstandards/a00192172/review-of-teachers-standards-first-report

The importance of teaching - The Schools White Paper 2010 (Cm 7980), DfE, 2010;
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/CM%207980>

Review of vocational education – the Wolf Report (00031-2011), DfE, 2011;
www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00031-2011

Independent review of Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability – Final Report (00068-2011), DfE, 2011;
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00068-2011>

Anne Kispal, *Effective teaching of inference skills for reading* (RR031), NfER/DCSF, 2008; www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/RRP/u015200/index.shtml