

## HeadteacherChat's Review of Focus Education

Focus Education offers many resources, including books and courses, as well as a consultancy service. Popular products include:

The 'Subject leadership' range - a separate book (hard copy and e-book) for each subject in primary education. The books all follow a similar format - content covered includes:

- An overview of the relevant Ofsted research and how this relates to subject leadership.
- Key questions for subject leaders to consider
- Simple outline of the statutory curriculum.
- Example of year by year progression through KS1 and KS2 for foundation subjects.
- Simple template for recording assessment for each cohort.
- Updated guidance and templates for monitoring and evaluation (with a focus on triangulating evidence).
- Action planning template.
- Audit for the intent, implementation and impact of the core and foundation subjects.

### **Auditing the intent, implementation and impact of the science curriculum**

This audit has been designed to assist science subject leaders to consider their subject in the light of the recent Ofsted research and subsequent inspection grade descriptors based on the quality of education, and impact of leadership and management.

The audit tool on the following pages provides a list of questions and subject specific prompts to enable the science subject leader to consider the three strands of intent, implementation and impact. They can then make a note of the evidence that supports their response to each main question and note any action that is required. This can then form the basis for development planning in science.

Intent of the Science Curriculum			
	Response	Evidence	Any Action Re
<b>What is the rationale behind the science curriculum in the school?</b> e.g. is it taught as a discrete subject or are some strands of the curriculum taught thematically? Why has this been decided?			
<b>How does it reflect the school context and the specific needs of the pupils?</b> Consider their starting points on entry e.g. UW in EYFS			
<b>How does the science curriculum reflect the schools aims and values / mission statement?</b> e.g. do staff relate learning in science to the fact that a school's mission aims might be for the pupils to be enquiring and questioning?			
<b>Are all relevant staff and governors aware of the rationale and aims of the science curriculum?</b> Have staff and governors revisited the NC Programme of Study and evaluated the current planning and teaching against the original documents including the Purpose of Study and Aims as well as subject content?			

Mini clips – Focus Education recognises that school budgets for training are stretched. To help address this, their consultants have developed and produced half-hour videos on a wide range of topics that can be purchased individually. The wide range of topics includes ‘Developing Middle Leaders’, ‘Deep dives’ and ‘Effective subject leadership in small schools’. They are ideal for staff meetings or twilight sessions for sharing ideas and generating discussions. Consultants from Focus Education can provide support afterwards to answer and discuss issues raised by staff.

 <p>Behind a Deep Dive in Science</p> <p>Focus miniCLIPS</p> <p>Mini Clips</p> <p><b>Mini Clip: Behind a Deep Dive in Science</b></p>	 <p>Effective Subject Leadership in a Small School</p> <p>Focus miniCLIPS</p> <p>Mini Clips</p> <p><b>Mini Clip: Effective Subject Leadership in a Small School</b></p>	 <p>Characteristics of Strong Pedagogy</p> <p>Focus miniCLIPS</p> <p>Mini Clips</p> <p><b>Mini Clip: Characteristics of Strong Pedagogy</b></p>
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Consultancy – Focus Education offer support on a number of areas including leadership, governance, curriculum, coaching and assessment. They describe their ethos as ‘a private company with a public sector heart’ and pride themselves on the

open and honest relationships they build with school leaders, working alongside leaders and offering objective advice.

Headteacher's Professional Handbook - one product that has proved particularly useful to school leaders is the Headteacher's Professional Handbook: A Guide to the National Curriculum and Ofsted Expectations. This is described in greater detail below.

## How does Focus Education describe their product?

Produced following consultation with inspectors and head teachers, this is an invaluable companion for head teachers, deputies, advisors, inspectors and senior managers in primary schools. This product is made up of our two most popular “minis” – we’ve put the two together in one book to enable the user to pick it up and use it repeatedly when needed.

The A5 bound booklet is a convenient size containing 2 sections:

- Section one contains the National Curriculum. The content for reading, writing and mathematics is outlined not only by year group but also by strand or element.

Unit:	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Plants	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-

  

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and <b>name a variety of common wild &amp; garden plants</b>, including deciduous and evergreen trees.</li> <li>Identify and describe the basic <b>structure</b> of a variety of common flowering plants, including trees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observe and describe <b>how seeds and bulbs grow</b> into mature plants.</li> <li>Find out and describe how <b>plants need</b> water, light and a suitable temperature to grow and stay healthy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and describe the <b>functions</b> of different parts of flowering plants: roots, stem/trunk, leaves and flowers.</li> <li>Explore the requirements of plants for life &amp; growth (air, light, water, nutrients from soil, &amp; room to grow) &amp; how they vary from plant to plant.</li> <li>Investigate the way in which <b>water is transported</b> within plants.</li> <li>Explore the <b>part that flowers play</b> in the life cycle of a flowering plant, including</li> </ul>

- Section two contains the Ofsted Evaluation Schedule. This includes the latest changes to the grade descriptors, taking into account the removal of the transition arrangements and other changes.

Evaluating the quality of early years education in schools (INTENT) 1				
	<b>Outstanding</b> <i>The school meets <b>all</b> the criteria for good in the effectiveness of early years <b>securely</b> and <b>consistently</b>.  The quality of early years education provided is <b>exceptional</b>.</i>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>Inadequate</b> <i>The effectiveness of the early years is likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies:</i>
<b>Intent</b> Curriculum ambition	The EYFS curriculum provides no limits or barriers to the children's achievements, regardless of their backgrounds, circumstances or needs. The high ambition it embodies is shared by all staff.	Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give children, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.	The effectiveness of the early years is not yet good.	A poorly designed and implemented curriculum does not meet children's needs or provide the necessary foundations for the rest of their schooling.

## What are the benefits of using the Headteacher's Professional Handbook?

1. The format of the National Curriculum section makes planning for differentiation much easier as you can track an element of the curriculum from one year group to another. Content for foundation subjects is outlined by key stage expectations.
2. It is presented in a user-friendly and accessible format. The book is a handy A5 size with tabbed dividers to make it quick and easy to access.
3. Up to date information using the latest Ofsted framework contained all in one place.

### Testimonials:

"I find it really useful – I use it at home when writing my reports for quick reference"  
Ofsted Inspector

"I think it's so useful and the order has been well received by the 600 teachers in our Trust" Senior Director Primaries for a Multi Academy Trust

### In summary, HeadteacherChat recommends Focus Education because:

'We like the variety of interesting and helpful resources for leaders. Their short video clips are useful for staff meetings, especially as conversation starters. The subject leader range of resources are particularly useful for those who are new in role, or for those who are looking to ensure that they have covered all important areas. Their resources are available in a range of subjects so schools could potentially purchase them for their leaders to ensure consistency.'

Lucy Coy, CEO HeadteacherChat, October 2022