

A Self-evaluation Tool for English Subject Leaders

Note: *These descriptors should not be used as a checklist.
They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspector.*

	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Outstanding
The overall effectiveness of English education provided in the school	<p>English in the school is likely to be inadequate if inspectors judge any of the following to be inadequate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the achievement of pupils in English the quality of teaching in English the behaviour and safety of pupils in English the quality of the curriculum in English the quality of the leadership in, and management of, English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English in the school requires improvement because one or more of the key judgements for achievement; behaviour and safety (in English); the quality of teaching; the curriculum; and the quality of leadership and management of English requires improvement (grade 3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils benefit from English teaching that is at least good and some that is outstanding. This promotes very positive attitudes to learning and ensures that pupils' achievement in English is at least good. Pupils and particular groups of pupils have highly positive educational experiences in English that ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. Pupils' progress is not held back by an inability to read or write accurately and fluently. The school takes effective action to enable most pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, to reach their potential in English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English teaching is outstanding and, together with a rich and relevant English curriculum, contributes to outstanding learning and achievement. Exceptionally, achievement in English may be good and rapidly improving. Pupils and particular groups of pupils are well-equipped for the next stage in their education, training or employment as a result of excellent educational experiences. Practice in the subject consistently reflects the highest expectations of staff and the highest aspirations for pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Best practice is spread effectively in a drive for continuous improvement.

	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Outstanding
Achievement of pupils in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pupils have significant weaknesses in key areas of reading, writing, speaking or listening which limit their achievement overall. They are too often passive in lessons and show no real enthusiasm for English. ■ Pupils make insufficient progress in acquiring a secure knowledge of letters and sounds or in learning to read and to write legibly and fluently. ■ Pupils do not read for pleasure and show limited understanding when talking about their reading. They lack confidence in writing and struggle to write without frequent interventions and support. Their writing tends to be short and contains too many inaccuracies in spelling, grammar or punctuation, with little originality. ■ Pupils do not express their ideas well in discussion. They tend to speak and write colloquially and are not able to use Standard English appropriately. ■ Pupils rarely use initiative and are highly reliant on their teacher for ideas and guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is noticeable variability in pupils' performance across reading, writing, speaking and listening. ■ Pupils' progress in acquiring a secure knowledge of letters and sounds, or in learning to read and to write legibly and fluently, is inconsistent. ■ Pupils are willing to contribute and listen to discussion. Oral contributions tend to be brief or lack depth. ■ Pupils usually enjoy the reading introduced by the teacher. They struggle to understand more complex texts and rarely choose to extend their reading beyond the texts required by the curriculum. ■ Pupils sometimes write at length but their range of language forms and vocabulary is limited. Their accuracy in spelling, grammar or punctuation lacks consistency and the quality of presentation may be variable. Pupils are not always able to observe the features of Standard English in their speech or writing when appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pupils acquire secure knowledge of letters and sounds and make good progress in learning to read and to write legibly and fluently. ■ Pupils perform equally well in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They enjoy English lessons and express their ideas confidently and with some originality in both writing and speaking. ■ Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of texts and can talk and write with understanding about them. They enjoy writing and write confidently for different purposes and audiences, showing a good degree of technical accuracy. ■ Pupils are able to vary their language according to the particular demands of the task, both spoken and written, making effective use of Standard English when required. ■ Pupils express their ideas clearly and well in discussion and work effectively in different groups. They are able to show initiative and raise thoughtful questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pupils show high levels of achievement in the different areas of English (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and exhibit very positive attitudes towards the subject. ■ Pupils rapidly acquire secure knowledge of letters and sounds and make sustained progress in learning to read and to write legibly and fluently. ■ Pupils express their ideas fluently and imaginatively in both writing and speaking. They are very keen readers and show a mature understanding of a wide range of challenging texts, both traditional and contemporary. ■ Pupils' writing shows a high degree of technical accuracy. Pupils write effectively across a range of genres, frequently showing creativity in their ideas and choice of language. ■ Pupils have a mature understanding of the differences between written and spoken language. They speak confidently and with maturity in relation to their age, using Standard English very effectively when required. ■ Pupils are effective learners, able to think for themselves and to provide leadership in learning, while also being sensitive to the needs of others.

	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Outstanding
Quality of teaching in English	<p>Teaching is likely to be inadequate where any of the following apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Significant numbers of pupils are sometimes bored, passive or badly behaved as a result of teaching failing to engage pupils.■ The teaching of phonic knowledge, skill and understanding is insufficiently well planned or delivered.■ Teachers' subject knowledge is limited in key aspects of reading, writing, and speaking and listening. There are occasional weaknesses in the teacher's own understanding and use of language.■ There is an imbalance of work across reading, writing, speaking and listening. Adequate learning is not secured as the resources and strategies used are limited. Pupils are not helped to appreciate the importance of English in their lives outside school.■ Assessment does not help pupils sufficiently to see what needs to be improved in their written or oral work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Although most pupils are learning, teaching does not succeed in motivating or engaging all pupils equally well.■ Not all pupils make good progress, although the teaching of phonic knowledge, skill and understanding has been planned carefully. There are inconsistencies in practice and in pupils' progress, although teaching promotes skill and fluency in reading and handwriting.■ Most lessons are well planned and lively and sometimes include opportunities for drama and moving image work. On occasion, the learning focus is not sufficiently sharp and the range of needs may not be fully met. ICT is used from time to time to develop learning and improve the quality of presentation.■ Competent subject knowledge ensures that pupils read and write about a wide range of texts with competent understanding, and teachers encourage pupils. Teachers mostly use English well. Questioning extends pupils' understanding of language and literature and other texts, though it is not always sufficiently probing.■ Regular and clear feedback helps pupils to understand strengths and weaknesses in their written and oral work, though it may lack precision or consistency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Pupils' engagement in English, leading to good progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening, is achieved through effective use of a wide range of good-quality literary, media and other resources. Pupils learn to appreciate the importance of English in the wider world.■ Pupils read fluently and write with confidence and accuracy because the teaching of phonic knowledge, skill and understanding is systematic and enjoyable.■ Teachers' use of English in the classroom is well considered and effective, helping pupils to develop a good insight into how writers and others create effects. Questioning successfully engages pupils in extending their understanding of language and draws out their personal response to aspects of literature and other texts.■ Pupils' wider reading is stimulated because teachers share their understanding of a wide range of classic and contemporary texts with pupils. Activities are varied and imaginative, engaging pupils well through drama and varied discussion work.■ Teachers understand how language works and use this knowledge effectively to develop learning. ICT, including moving image work, is well integrated in lessons and contributes positively to pupils' progress in English.■ Feedback from target-setting, marking and peer- and self-assessment is constructive and clearly identifies the next steps in pupils' written and oral work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Pupils' language needs and their interests in literature and other media are addressed through the imaginative use of a wide range of resources, including ICT and moving image texts.■ Pupils are fully engaged through innovative classroom approaches, including well-planned drama activities.■ The teaching of phonic knowledge, skill and understanding is systematic, highly enjoyable and quickly enables pupils to read fluently and write with confidence and accuracy.■ Pupils make sustained progress in their own work as a consequence of teachers demonstrating high standards in their own use of English. Progress is aided through teachers' powerful modelling of the processes of reading and writing. Pupils are made aware of the importance of English to the world beyond school.■ Teachers' expert knowledge of texts is used successfully to extend and deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils' personal responses to, and their thinking about, literature and other texts are prompted by questioning which frequently probes pupils' understanding of language.■ Teachers' very good understanding of the English language ensures that the technical features of language are very well taught, including the differences between talk and writing.■ Systematic approaches to target-setting, marking, feedback and peer- and self-assessment support and challenge all pupils to make precise improvements to their written and oral work.

	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Outstanding
Quality of the curriculum in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The curriculum does not meet the needs of significant numbers of pupils in the school and, as a result, too many make poor progress in key areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening.■ Too many pupils are not engaged by the subject and do not understand its relevance to their own life.■ The curriculum lacks breadth and balance. It is limited in scope, with too much concentration on a narrow range of skills.■ The curriculum is not planned well enough and too little emphasis is placed on key areas of English such as poetry, drama and media work, as well as on the development of literacy skills, such as punctuation, grammar and spelling. There is little by way of enrichment activity apart from a few activities that tend to be directly related to examination study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The curriculum requires improvement because it is not good.■ The curriculum provides a reasonable balance of work that helps pupils to make progress in developing reading, writing, speaking and listening. Provision for key areas of English is built into schemes of work although there may be some variability and inconsistency in the quality of this work. The curriculum is reviewed in response to external changes and national guidance.■ The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that pupils read and write about a wide range of good-quality texts, including some media texts, and appreciate the importance of English in real-life contexts and beyond school. Some elements of ICT are built into English schemes of work, including study of media texts. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently and to read outside school.■ Pupils' experiences are enhanced by opportunities to watch films and plays and to work with writers, although the range of enrichment activities is limited and sometimes concentrated on support for examinations only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The curriculum has some innovative features and is well-designed around the needs of pupils in the school. It is broad and engaging, with a good range of texts and appropriate attention to basic literacy skills. A variety of approach helps pupils to make good progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening.■ The curriculum is reviewed regularly and reflects recent developments in the subject. Good attention is given to areas such as poetry, drama and media. Opportunities are taken to make direct connections between the classroom and the world beyond school.■ Pupils' own interests and wider reading are well-integrated into schemes of work. ICT and mixed media are used well to help pupils develop learning in English and include work on analysing and producing moving image texts.■ The curriculum incorporates regular opportunities to meet with practitioners working in English, such as writers and theatre groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The curriculum is distinctive, innovative and planned very well to meet the needs of all pupils in reading, writing, speaking and listening.■ Imaginative approaches, experience of a wide range of challenging texts, and a clear focus on basic literacy skills ensure a rich curriculum accessible to all groups, which enables pupils to make very good progress across the different areas of English.■ The curriculum is continually reviewed and improved in the light of national developments. Key aspects such as poetry, drama and media work are fully integrated into the curriculum and help to provide a rich and varied programme for pupils. Schemes of work build clearly towards productive outcomes for pupils, involving real audiences and purposes; this helps pupils to appreciate the importance of English to their lives outside school.■ Wide reading is very effectively promoted. The curriculum builds systematically on technological developments in communications and pupils have regular opportunities to use ICT and mixed media, including analysing and producing media texts.■ Pupils' learning is very well enhanced by enrichment activities such as theatre and cinema visits, drama workshops, reading groups, and opportunities for writers to work with pupils in school.

	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Outstanding
Quality of leadership in, and management of, English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weaknesses in subject leadership mean there is little sense of direction or identity for English. The curriculum does not develop sufficiently quickly to meet pupils' changing needs. Gaps in subject knowledge or leadership mean that there is little capacity to improve achievement in the subject. Some teachers lack the necessary subject expertise. Communication between teachers may be limited and there are few opportunities for teachers to learn from each other and share good practice. There is a lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation, leading to inaccurate subject self-evaluation and limited opportunities for further professional development. There is insufficient understanding of how to raise standards or improve teaching in English. <p>Key statutory requirements in English are not met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aims of English are clearly set out in subject documentation that is reviewed regularly and reflects developments in the subject nationally. Subject guidance enables teachers to understand the key policies and agreed approaches in English. Practical ideas are regularly shared between teachers and there is regular access to appropriate professional development. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas and learn from each other. Provision in the subject is regularly reviewed and systematic monitoring includes evidence from lesson observations, work sampling and analysis of pupils' progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening. There is some recognition of areas of weakness in English, though subject plans may not be clear and specific in detailing what needs to be done to improve teaching or raise standards. There is some recognition across the school that there is good practice in English but also an acknowledgement that it is not sufficiently consistent across all classes and for all groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject leaders have identified clear aims for English within the school which are well-informed by national developments in the subject, and this helps to provide good direction to English work. Teachers work well together and are keen to review practice and share ideas. Subject leaders encourage teachers to be imaginative in their approaches to learning. Because of good leadership, there is a shared common purpose and a consistency of practice throughout the school in areas such as teaching and assessment and behaviour for learning. Self-evaluation is accurate and effective, based on good analysis of pupils' skills and achievement in reading, writing, speaking and listening and well-informed evaluation of English teaching. This analysis is used well to identify teachers' training needs. Subject plans are effective and include helpful ideas on improving the impact of teaching on learning. The well-thought-out policies support pupils' good or better progress in English. The subject team is well-regarded within the school and contributes to developments across the curriculum, such as in literacy and improvements in teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject leaders are very well-informed about developments in the subject nationally and use this to improve the curriculum and teaching. Innovation and creativity are evident. All staff work very well together because there is a strong, shared purpose and commitment to the same goals. Provision for pupils is reviewed collaboratively and good practice is routinely and effectively shared. Subject responsibilities are well-delegated and all members of the team, including NQTs, have very good opportunities to contribute to developments. Subject leaders make thoughtful and thorough use of a wide range of evidence, including the response of pupils, to review the impact of teaching and the curriculum on reading, writing, speaking and listening. As a result, self-evaluation is rigorous and effective, leading to well-targeted support for all staff. Subject plans identify very clearly how teaching is to be further improved. There are excellent policies which support consistency, promote high levels of literacy and contribute to pupils' excellent progress in English. The very good quality of its work means that the English department has a very high profile in the life of the school and is at the cutting edge of initiatives locally or nationally.