Questions Ofsted might ask middle leaders about the curriculum

How to use these questions

* This resource is based on questions that middle leaders/subject leaders in 8 schools have been asked under the new Ofsted framework. You may be asked additional and/or different questions based on:
* Your school’s context
* What you tell inspectors about your curriculum intent
* There are many questions here. Focus your time by identifying areas inspectors are most likely to be interested in concerning your school – see tips in the last section [of this article](https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/uid/d74a9c82-4071-4453-b82a-fa447e4e9194/)
* Reflect on the questions and add notes in the right hand column on your approach
* These are high-level questions that inspectors are likely to ask any subject lead. Once you’ve familiarised yourself with these, use [our subject-specific questions](https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/school-evaluation-and-improvement/inspection/whole-school-inspection-criteria/) to help you prepare for the more detailed questions you might be asked if your subject is chosen for a ‘deep dive’

| Question | your notes |
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| INTENT | |
| Describe the curriculum design for your subject/phase/class/area of responsibility.  Why have you done it that way? |  |
| How have you made sure that pupils receive a ‘broad and balanced’ curriculum? |  |
| What do you want pupils to know, understand and be able to do by the time they leave the school?  Why did you decide that these are important? |  |
| How and why do you organise and sequence learning (long-term, medium-term, weekly and daily) the way you do?  How do you make sure that the curriculum is carefully sequenced to build knowledge and skills?  How do you sequence learning in [e.g. maths] between [e.g. year 7 and year 8]? |  |
| How is your curriculum designed to develop pupils’ knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to learning? |  |
| how do you plan to ensure pupils make good progress from their starting points?  Is the sequencing of lessons supporting *all children’s* progress? |  |
| How successful is the curriculum in your subject/phase/class/area of responsibility?  How do you know? |  |
| Tell me the areas of your curriculum you’re most pleased with.  Which areas are you disappointed with or think need improvement? |  |
| What is your evidence base for your decisions about curriculum, assessment, workload and data? |  |
| How innovative is your curriculum? |  |

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| IMPLEMENTATION | |
| How do you keep your knowledge and leadership of the curriculum up-to-date? |  |
| How do you know the curriculum is allowing pupils to achieve:   * Age-related expectations? * Greater depth? * Good qualifications? |  |
| How is your curriculum coverage progressive throughout the school? |  |
| Do you follow any published schemes of work? If so, why? |  |
| How does your subject fit within the wider curriculum?  Can your pupils use their subject knowledge across the curriculum? How do you know? |  |
| What schemes/medium-term plans are in place? |  |
| What resources do you use? |  |
| Tell me about how you use trips, visitors, and the wider community in your area of responsibility. |  |
| What are the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum provision? |  |
| How is your subject timetabled? Why?  Is it enough? What impact does timetabling this way have, especially on disadvantaged children or pupils with special educational needs? |  |
| How well is the curriculum covered? How do you know? When did you last check?  What did you do as a result of your findings? |  |
| How do you develop, monitor, evaluate and improve provision in your area of responsibility?  How do you ensure the curriculum is being properly implemented? |  |
| How effective is teaching? How do you know? |  |
| Do teachers use assessment to adapt their teaching? |  |
| How do staff differentiate in subject/phase/class/area of responsibility? |  |
| How do you ensure that pupils understand and remember the subject knowledge/concepts/procedures appropriate for their starting points? |  |
| Tell me about how you introduce new material to pupils. |  |
| How do you provide opportunities for pupils to make useful connections between ideas? |  |
| Tell me about how you identify and address gaps in pupils’ knowledge.  How do you help them catch up with their peers? |  |
| How do you make sure that your curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to revise and repeat previously learned material? Can you give me an example? |  |
| Tell me about how you use assessment in your subject/phase/class/area of responsibility.  How do you know when pupils are ready to move on to more complex content? |  |
| How do pupils know what to aim for, or what knowledge/skills they’re progressing towards? |  |
| How do you make sure that teachers have sufficient subject knowledge? |  |
| What are your current action plans for your subject/phase/class/area of responsibility? Why? |  |
| How do you see the future of your subject? How do you see it developing? |  |
| What do staff think of your subject? |  |
| What do pupils think of your subject? |  |
| IMPACT | |
| Does the curriculum lead to good results? In all Key Stages? In all subjects? |  |
| How do you know pupils are progressing in your subject? |  |
| How do your results compare to national averages?  Does learning over time show appropriate levels of challenge? How do you know? |  |