RBWM Vulnerable Pupils

Results of the HT telephone survey May/June 2020 – Discussion document v3

Context

Aware that the coronavirus lockdown would be likely to be having a disproportionate impact upon the most disadvantaged pupils in the Borough, we conducted a survey of headteachers. Our pupil premium network devised a series of questions designed to explore attendance patterns, staffing and safeguarding considerations and outline the current educational provision, both in-school and via home-learning, across schools in the Borough. Our key focus was on vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. Headteachers of all primary and secondary schools were contacted the questions were shared and appointments made for telephone interviews with them. The findings from this survey have been analysed with a view to identifying trends and patterns in provision and seeking to inform our future work to close the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Overview of findings

- The dedication and commitment of headteachers and their staff to their local community is particularly impressive. Many schools have been very flexible in offering bespoke support to vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Most staff have been willing to engage with new online learning technology and adapt their ways of working. Several senior leaders reported engaging with training and support for online platforms prior to lockdown.
- **The most reflective and apparently strategic headteachers highlighted the underpinning importance of maintaining the school's vision and values during lockdown.** Examples included: ensuring weekly online assemblies for all pupils, regular online meetings with pastoral staff; an expected timetable/structure to the day with flexibility for parental and pupil choice through a menu of learning activities; regular monitoring and verbal feedback from staff to pupils about their work and continuing rewards and certificates. Regular newsletters and/or online meetings have been used to maintain a sense of community and purpose to learning.
- Headteachers, including those within multi-academy trusts (MATS), are very keen to express their appreciation of the support on offer from the Borough and how much they have valued this during the lockdown.
- The lockdown has had a significant impact on anxiety levels of many staff and pupils. Headteachers reported that they expect to see cases escalate over the coming weeks. There are also concerns expressed over the long-term implications for the well-being and mental health of pupils.
- Several headteachers are concerned about the longer-term impact of the crisis on the well-being and mental health of senior leaders and staff, particularly their designated safeguarding leads (DSLs). Senior leaders report feeling unqualified to recognise all symptoms or to offer appropriate help.
- Most schools have sought to encourage attendance and engagement of vulnerable pupils during the lockdown with varying degrees of success. Typically, primary schools secured far higher attendance of vulnerable pupils than secondary schools.
- Understandably leaders initially focussed their tracking systems on pastoral issues and pupil engagement with the learning tasks set rather than the quality of pupils' work. Staff and pupils have moved to more provision being online with a variety of platforms and approaches used.
- Teachers have worked extremely hard to adapt and adopt new methods of online delivery and learning packages. However, schools report that teacher's assessment and feedback systems for these new ways of working still need developing and refining. Consequently, most schools' analysis of the impact of lockdown on the quality of learning for vulnerable groups is very much in its infancy. Headteachers are very aware that they need to focus their recovery curriculum during their phased reopening not only on the very necessary pastoral and wellbeing issues that have emerged, but also to plan for a systematic assessment of pupils' learning and knowledge across the curriculum during the past 3 months.
- Headteachers valued the survey phone calls as giving them a chance to share their experiences, concerns and ideas.
- The Pupil Premium Network have found the process and the information it has yielded extremely valuable to identify future ways of working and highlights changes that are needed (see 'Planning Our Next Steps' section below).

1. Attendance Patterns

In the sample of 56 schools phoned by 15 June the total number on roll (NoR) was 19,092. The chart provides the numbers within each vulnerable group and their typical attendance during lockdown. (The survey focused on attendance during the week beginning 11 May 2020)

Attendance by age groups

			Vulnerable groups			
Of the schools phoned *(updated 15/6/20)*		**Total NoR**	**With a social worker**	**With an EHCP**	**Otherwise vulnerable**	**Pupil Premium**
All Schools	Totals	19092	277	373	941	2260
	% attending		39.0	18.0	11.0	8.7
Infant Schools	Totals	837	14	20	6	76
	% attending		28.6	10	33.3	6.6
Infant + First Schools	Totals	3224	72	61	80	326
	% attending		50	14.8	22.5	9.5
Primary & Junior Schools	Totals	6680	110	129	277	741
	% attending		52.8	37.2	24.6	19.7
Middle Schools	Totals	456	8	16	50	201
	% attending		75.0	12.5	6.0	2.5
Secondary	Totals	7057	69	142	428	841
	% attending		11.6	4.9	2.6	1.4
High Schools	Totals	1675	18	25	106	151
	% attending		0	4	2.8	2.0

The figures above suggest that the infant, first, primary and junior schools account for 56% of the reported NoR in the survey. However, these schools account for:

- 70% of all the pupils reported as having a social worker
- 56% of pupils with an EHCP
- 39% of pupils identified as otherwise vulnerable
- 51% of the PP pupils

On average, the proportion of pupils identified as vulnerable who attended during lockdown was much higher in primary schools than in secondary schools. Primary schools also had significantly more disadvantaged pupils attend during lockdown than the secondary schools.

All headteachers confirmed that they were happy that they had conducted the vulnerable group attendance risk assessments in line with guidance and had kept the LA informed of any changes.

How have lockdown attendance patterns for groups linked to school contextual factors?:

Deprivation

- RBWM predominantly has schools serving communities with very low proportions of deprived pupils (IDACI quintile 1). However, the 8 schools serving communities of comparative higher social deprivation (which are in line with national figures - IDACI quintile 3) were reporting being much more successful in achieving far higher proportions of their EHCP, Otherwise Vulnerable and PP pupils attending during the lockdown than the other schools.

- Approximately 59% of pupils attend schools where the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is very low (bottom quintile nationally). During lockdown the proportions of disadvantaged and otherwise vulnerable pupils attending in this 59% of schools was well below that of other schools in the Borough. Similarly, the attendance of pupils with a Social Worker or an EHCP in these schools was lower than that of other schools.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

- Schools with the highest proportions of EHCP and/or SEND support pupils on average had far higher proportions of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils attend during lockdown. However, even in the schools with the best attendance only between one quarter and a third of those with an EHCP and just over half of those with a Social Worker attended.

Minority Ethnic Groups (MEG) / Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- Schools with the highest proportions of MEG typically saw much higher proportions of their vulnerable and/or disadvantaged pupils attend than other schools in the Borough. This contradicts some of the anecdotal feedback from HTs recounting challenges of promoting attendance within some specific minority groups.
- Schools in the Borough who are in the top 20% of schools nationally for the proportion of pupils with EAL attracted the highest proportions of attendance of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils during the lockdown

Strategies that worked to promote attendance during lockdown:

- Ensuring effective communication with parents. Building on existing relationships with families through setting up regular phone calls, online meetings, weekly newsletters and doorstep visits where necessary. Facilitating regular contact from the SENCo and pastoral teams with vulnerable pupils and their parents.
- Offering flexibility within school opening hours so vulnerable pupils' attendance patterns were able to fit parental evolving work patterns during lockdown. Also allowing friends and/or siblings to attend where possible.
- Blending home learning with school learning opportunities. For example, staff delivering/sharing packs of work and stationary, reading or maths resources that could be used by target pupils at home and at school.
- Coordinating / delivering food parcels and meals vouchers was seen as particularly valuable. Several headteachers reported benefits of increased engagement and attendance where parents were seeing schools caring about their family, not just pushing for completion of school work.
- Primary schools have reported that opening to Y6 has gone well in the first two weeks, in the first week there was between 30%-50% attendance of Y6 in the schools contacted and numbers were increasing. However, very few nursery and YR children had returned and numbers in Y1 have tended to be much lower.

Challenges in promoting attendance during lockdown:

- Parents not wanting their children to be labelled as 'vulnerable' within the local community or on social media have opted to keep their children at home.
- Parental anxiety caused by what they interpreted as mixed messages coming from the Government and the media during the lockdown. Headteachers report that often the parents of PP and the otherwise vulnerable have tended to be over-protective, preferring their children to remain at home.
- The announcement that school attendance was not compulsory, the promotion of working from home, and longer-term furlough arrangements for parents all contributed to increased challenges and pressures on parents. Schools reported these factors as being key challenges in promoting improved attendance of vulnerable and key worker pupils.
- Although schools with the highest MEG tended to report the best attendance of vulnerable groups during lockdown, schools report that cultural issues affecting some communities are presenting challenges. Examples included: within some of the traveller community there is a lack of trust that school is safe for pupils; some multi-generational Asian households want children to stay at home to help protect older vulnerable relatives who live with them.
- Headteachers have reported concerns about the quantity and quality of work and engagement by some pupils with SEND and pupils with behavioural issues. Some headteachers report that parents

of older pupils have struggled with their child's behaviour at home and have found it difficult to ensure that they attend or engage with home working.
- A few schools reported that some pupils have been "playing social workers, parents and school against one another during the lockdown." Senior leaders recognise the need to ensure parental communication is 'front and centre' to avoid this.
- Some schools have reported worries that without attendance being compulsory many vulnerable pupils and PP are unlikely to attend in June.

2a – Staffing Issues

Strengths:

- There have been very high levels of staff dedication and commitment during this crisis, particularly in primary schools. Headteachers describe teachers and teaching assistants as being 'brilliant', 'going the extra mile' and being 'very flexible'.
- Most schools report being comfortable with longer-term recruitment of staff for September. Those that are experienced in online recruiting have done so, but several have preferred to delay the small number of appointments needed until they can conduct face to face interviews next term.
- Most headteachers reported lower staff movement this year than normal and being fully staffed or not having significant concerns for next year.

Challenges:

- Having sufficient staff and space in the small primary schools, particularly the infant schools, to allow for the increases in numbers during the phased re-opening is a concern. Some headteachers are concerned about being able to offer the level of support required for vulnerable pupils during this time.
- Managing staff workload during the phased reopening and balancing the requirements of staffing the bubbles while continuing to provide home learning is a particular challenge for the smaller infant and first schools opening to nursery, YR and Y1.
- Some headteachers have expressed their worries that some senior staff, including themselves, while absolutely committed to reopening the school, are reconsidering whether they wish to stay in teaching long term. They anticipate significant staffing changes next year.
- There are challenges associated with staff who are self-isolating or have their own child care and/or family members to support. Headteachers are faced with a series of evolving and fresh staffing challenges recognise the need to balance HR issues with a need to be compassionate & sensitive.
- A few schools have reported that a small minority of staff lack cooperation due to their interpretation of union advice. However, most headteachers confirmed that this is limited and not impacting on whole-school plans.
- Many headteachers are concerned about the longer-term impact of the crisis on the well-being and mental health of staff, particularly DSLs. Senior leaders report feeling unqualified to recognise all symptoms or to offer appropriate help.
- Headteachers of stand-alone academies have reported concerns about legal implications should a member of staff or pupil show signs of the virus onsite.

2b – Safeguarding issues

- Headteachers are typically able to describe in depth how their school systems and the monitoring by the DSL and safeguarding teams have been adapted during lockdown to ensure effective safeguarding. All describe the regular monitoring and communication within their school teams.
- The frequency of school contact with vulnerable pupils during the lockdown varies. Some secondary schools have described weekly monitoring of pupils' engagement with the online work set and have offered fortnightly pastoral catch-up calls with vulnerable pupils. Primary schools typically report more regular contact. For example, targeting afternoon phone calls from teaching assistants and DSLs to follow up from morning work to support SEND and vulnerable pupils.
- Headteachers have expressed their concern about only having very small numbers of vulnerable children attend during lockdown.

- Many (mainly primary schools) describe organising pastoral home doorstep visits at the same time as dropping off work or vouchers which have helped, but the contact and interaction with vulnerable children is very limited in these situations.
- Several schools have reported an increase in DSL workload. They have seen cases of domestic violence and child protection issues increase during these exceptional times.
- Most schools have praised how communication with social workers and outside agencies has been good (in some cases ‘better than normal’). They report having been able to continue with making referrals when necessary with Early Help and MASH.
- A minority of headteachers expressed concern over the impact of changing social workers during lockdown or that some social workers’ interpretation of the guidance was inconsistent with their colleagues.
- Most headteachers reported frustration at the time required to keep abreast of the frequently changing DfE and government guidance and that the format of the updates do not make the changes easy to identify.

3 a – Educational Provision & Uptake

Home Learning Strengths:

Online learning Platform / approach	Examples of schools identifying strengths in these areas	
	Primary	**Secondary**
Class Dojo Free online platform to share learning / give feedback / communicate to parents and pupils	● All Saints Junior	
Reading Eggs Online reading programme for ages 2-13	● Alwyn Infant School	
Bug Club Primary online reading resources	● Riverside ● Wessex	
Purple MASH Online teaching and learning resources for ages 2-11 across curriculum	● White Waltham / Ashley Hill MAT ● Holy Trinity Sunningdale ● Homer First ● St Lukes	
SeeSaw Online learning platform	● Burchetts Green ● Cookham Rise (using it to give regular feedback each afternoon) ● Eton Wick ● Furze Platt Junior and Infant Schools	
DoodleMaths Online maths learning YR – Y6	● Eton Porney ● St Edmund Campion	
MyMaths Interactive maths learning with curriculum coverage KS1-Alevel	● Hill Top First School	St Peters Middle
White Rose Maths online resources	● St Michaels ● The Royal First ● Woodlands Park ● Wraysbury	
Hamilton Trust learn at home packs for English & maths	● Larchfield ● Waltham St Lawrence	
School's own YouTube Channel	● Braywick Court ● Holy Trinity Cookham ● Lowbrook Academy ● St Lukes	
Google Classroom	● Holy Trinity Cookham	
Class Charts Online timetabling / seating plans		● Charters Secondary ●
Show my Homework		● Altwood ● Furze Platt Secondary ● Windsor Girls
Doddle Online homework platform		● Furze Platt Secondary
MS Teams		● Altwood ● Churchmead ● Cox Green Secondary ● St Peters Middle ● Newlands Girls

Home learning strategies that schools have found helpful include:

- Maintaining the school's vision and values during lockdown. This includes: ensuring weekly online assemblies for all pupils and regular virtual meetings with pastoral staff; an expected timetable/structure to the day; regular monitoring and verbal feedback from staff to pupils about their work and continuing with rewards certificates etc. Regular newsletters have been used to maintain a sense of community and purpose to learning;
- Headteachers recognise the importance of maintaining a structure to staff meetings and cascading training for the new resources and online learning platforms required. Training is underway to ensure a consistency of approach and expectations across the school for home learning.
- Making sure that pupils' cumulative workload from all the work set is achievable at home. Offering parental/pupil choice through a flexible menu of learning activities to be done over a period of time has supported pupils to fit the sequence of activities into home life;
- Distributing of school laptops (or coordinating supply of charity-funded laptops) to disadvantaged pupils for them to use at home.
- Teachers' use of research to underpin approach to online learning. For example NZ earthquakes, EEF analysis and resources etc - to underpin school-designed selection of online activities.
- More personalised homemade teacher-narrated PowerPoints have re-engaged some pupils who quickly became frustrated by the 'off-the-peg' resources used at the beginning of the lockdown. Pupils are motivated by knowing that their teachers have prepared their work for them;
- Teachers' short video introductions to the work set have proven to be successful. Pupils and parents appreciate the personalised touch. While only a few schools have begun trials of live online lessons, several have experienced success in making short videos where the teacher models the task(s) in the classroom and follows this up via recognisable resources either accessed online or via distributed print-outs. Some schools have launched their own YouTube channels or have used SeeSaw or other learning platforms for this. They report that the videos and any follow up tasks set should be small enough to be viewed on mobile phones as some pupils have limited access to IT at home.
- Ensuring a system for regular verbal feedback particularly for the vulnerable and SEND is particularly important. Primary schools, having set work to be carried out in the mornings, have arranged for afternoon calls to be made between teachers and/or teaching assistants and target pupils. In addition, staff are regularly supporting pupils' reading over the phone or by video link.
- There has been mixed feedback about the use of face to face online meetings via Google or Teams for whole classes or groups of pupils. The best examples have had a clear training programme for staff and a thorough risk assessment conducted to avoid video links to pupils' bedrooms and unmonitored chat etc. Several schools have instigated monitoring and oversight of these online events by senior staff or by ensuring 2 staff are present during live sessions and have made restrictions to chat rooms etc to reduce potential safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring that pupils experience a range of learning activities and there is not over-reliance on one format is required. Schools report success when they have published weekly timetables with a menu of online lessons available and have encouraged parental/pupil choice in sequencing the work and fitting it in to their week.

Home Learning Challenges

Headteachers have noticed gaps emerging between vulnerable groups and their peers during lockdown. However, most identified that the impact of the lockdown is not as simple as a widening of the gap between the identified groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils and their peers. They reported that pupils' knowledge and progress over recent weeks has been influenced by a much more complex range of issues. These are summarised below.

Staff issues:

- Staff / School IT expertise and whether or not there is experience in using online platforms. For many teachers they have engaged in learning how to use these systems for the first time.
- The initial overloading of pupils during the first few weeks of lockdown when, with the best of intentions, teachers uploaded a great deal of work. A lack of oversight of the cumulative impact, together with a lack of feedback, initially disengaged some pupils and their parents.

- As staff have learnt new delivery systems, many schools report that they have only been monitoring engagement and uptake, not the quality of pupils' work. Learning new methods of teaching and not knowing how long the lockdown was likely to last meant that inhibited the priority given to assessment and monitoring. Headteachers describe the need to offer staff training and co-ordinate the sharing of best practice in the use of assessment and feedback for home learning.
- Changing the tempo of setting work over time, and now blending home learning with onsite learning during the phased return to school has been essential. Senior leaders are seeking to do this at the same time as developing feedback and accountability. In the strongest examples, school leaders have a very clear focus on ensuring regular verbal feedback / pastoral support as well as promoting the purpose of learning.

Pupil and family issues:

- Pupils' access to computers, and a suitable working space at home is significantly variable. Many schools have distributed their own laptops to target families, but report frustration by the delay to accessing the funded laptops.
- Some schools report that a minority of the disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND who received these school laptops have engaged with work and flourished while learning at home. For example, individual pupils who have struggled with friendship issues in school or some pupils with ASD have done well. However, many pupils in these groups have not been able to do so.
- As the demands of parental work commitments have changed, many parents require access to the home computer(s) for work and have less time to supervise their children. Several have experienced furlough or redundancy. Schools report that this has impacted on pupils who were previously middle or higher attainers who are now struggling with engagement and achievement.
- As the lockdown has progressed, more parents are now requesting for all, or most, lessons to be fully interactive.
- The number, and ages, of siblings and relatives in the house has impacted upon pupils' learning. Primary schools report that parents have tended to focus support on younger siblings, while secondary schools report significant variation in adult supervision and support due to the presence of siblings.
- The history of parental engagement with school and pupils' behaviour / relationship with staff has meant that communication with some pupils and parents has been particularly challenging.
- As the phone calls have progressed over the last 3 weeks, headteachers have reported more concerns related to parental social, emotional and mental health issues impacting upon pupils' learning. Some schools have reported that incidences of domestic violence are increasing and occurring in families where previously children have not been identified as vulnerable.
- Some schools have identified cultural issues that have impacted on learning during lockdown. For example, some pupil engagement with work has declined during Ramadan and there are challenges of communication with some traveller families.
- Parental expectations for how children should work at home are not always realistic. For example, some have requested that all lessons be live online whereas others expect young children to sit at a table for prolonged periods etc.
- Many primary schools report that appropriately during the early stages of lockdown they particularly focussed on family experiences and creative skills-based learning. However, leaders are aware that this limited engagement in particularly in reading and writing, but also in mathematics and science across all ages.
- There is some concern regarding the availability of suitable adult support for reading, literacy and mathematics with younger children. Some schools have sought to overcome this through the use of online resources and video/telephone reading sessions.

3b – Headteacher's additional feedback

- Headteachers valued the opportunity to discuss and share their experiences and concerns during the phone calls and were keen to express how much they have valued the support from the local authority during this challenging time.
- Headteachers agreed that this work focussing on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils during lockdown was necessary and that they were looking forward to receiving a summary of the

key findings of this survey. Some asked for future work of the pupil premium network to spotlight examples of successful strategies to support secondary disadvantaged pupils and service premium pupils of all ages.

- The numbers returning to primary schools from 1 June and secondary schools from 15 June has been variable. Headteachers are expecting numbers to increase as public confidence grows. However, several expressed concern that, as attendance is not yet compulsory, some parents are preferring to wait until September before their sons/daughters return to school. This includes members of the vulnerable groups.
- Several schools are worried about the impact of lockdown on forthcoming transition issues as pupils are scheduled to change schools next year. Infant schools were frustrated by the lack of opportunity to plan for Year 2 transitioning to Junior schools, similarly first and middle schools faced similar challenges with Years 4 and 8.
- There is growing concern about pupils in the year groups that have not been targeted for return to school this term.
- Senior leaders in secondary schools are frustrated by the lack of clarity about GCSE, vocational and A-Level examination requirements in 2021. More clarity is needed to assist them in establishing their curriculum planning for current Year 10 and 12 pupils.
- Schools recognise their comparative strengths and weaknesses in their use of different online learning platforms and resources. They hope that our survey will be helpful to enable them to to network with others who have adopted similar resources. This will be important to support schools with ensuring better use of assessment and monitoring.
- A few headteachers expressed frustration that medical background information on staff held by the HR team in the Borough is not always known to them in the school. This has provided them with challenges in arranging phased return to school staffing rotas.

Planning our next steps:

a) Work with the Pupil Premium Network to disseminate the key messages within this report to school leaders and governors and link schools with others that have developed successful strategies.

b) Establish working groups with 2-3 primary & 2-3 secondary schools to develop and share case studies to exemplify:
   - Successful approaches to assessment and feedback for home learning. Use this information to inform future planning
   - Pupil and parent voice. For example, through making videos or collecting quotes from those who have experienced different home learning approaches
   - How to re-engage pupils who have disengaged with remote learning
   - Ensuring quality provision for pupils with SEND during home learning.

c) Identify and share successful strategies for blending home learning with onsite activities during the return to school in September. Supporting schools to respond to any DfE-led strategies for summer holiday learning and sharing examples of how to maintain the best of remote learning into long-term curriculum planning.

d) Broaden the scope of this work to incorporate feedback from special schools, nurseries and the PRU. Have they strategies and experience that could be shared to support the issues affecting mainstream schools?

e) Devise a strategic overview to support school leaders with the sequence of thinking and planning for a recovery curriculum. How effectively schools diagnose the impacts of lockdown on pupils will be key. Feedback from headteachers shows that due to the wide range of issues impacting on pupils' learning during lockdown, some have done well and some have not. It is not as simple as targeting the known vulnerable and disadvantaged groups – we need to promote a new approach to closing gaps that considers:
   - Pastoral support and returning to learning behaviours - promoting **HOW to learn;**

- Using assessment across the curriculum to evaluate impact of lockdown gaps that have emerged - identifying and addressing **WHAT to learn.**

Resources for HOW to learn:
Key issues

- To ensure effective diagnosis of the impact upon younger pupils' reading and numeracy skills therefore preventing the so-called 'Matthew effect'.
- To ensure that pupils returning to key examination years are reengaged with how to learn.
- To promote better self-regulation. As the likelihood is that pupils who can self-regulate and self-evaluate (typically the most able) will have engaged with work better and have achieved more from home learning than their peers, how can schools promote improved self-regulation amongst pupils and parents?
- To promote evaluation of what went well during lockdown. Which approaches and experiences should we encourage schools to blend into their 'new normal' of teaching? This means making sure that schools don't rush to the comfort of their old approach, and use this opportunity to embrace aspects of what has worked best and to reconsider how they support all pupils who have gaps in their learning
- In Singapore, since SARS 2003, it is compulsory for two days a year for all pupils to work from home, with their parents present to teach them how to learn in this environment, and to teach the teachers how to best teach in this environment. Should we consider promoting this in the Borough? Like teacher INSET days, we could explore promoting joint pupil, parent, and teacher professional learning days.

Background reading:

- The article '**A Recovery Curriculum' – Think Piece** by Prof Barry Carpenter, Oxford Brooks Uni – see Evidence for Learning website and Barry Carpenter's blog They raise some useful issues to consider.

- John Hattie's paper – The New normal of Learning https://corwin-connect.com/2020/05/the-new-normal-of-learning-build-back-better

- Microsoft Education Reimagined paper https://edudownloads.azureedge.net/msdownloads/Microsoft-EducationReimagined-Paper.pdf

- EEF report on the impact of school closures on the attainment gap https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/best-evidence-on-impact-of-school-closures-on-the-attainment-gap

Resources for WHAT to learn:

- Leaders will already have their own wealth of curriculum planning in place. We are not advocating making 'change for change's sake' or that schools should 'hothouse' target pupils. Research tells us that knowledge deficits accumulate when layered on top of one another in a curriculum sequence (See School Inspection Update Jan 19 page 6). This accumulation of dysfluency (gaps) limits pupils' acquisition of complex skills that depends on their prior knowledge. This problem is called 'cumulative dysfluency' and it has lasting negative consequences. Therefore, schools will want to carefully consider the differences between the curriculum that pupils have experienced during lockdown compared to their pre-lockdown experience, explore any differences between groups, and establish what will be required post-lockdown to remedy any gaps. The school curriculum will need refining to respond to the issues and wider gaps caused by the pandemic.

- TeachFirst's Putting Evidence to Work report www.teachfirst.org.uk/reports/putting-evidence-work shares guidance for teachers about how to use research in their practice and contains a wealth of links to other publications. It outlines a practitioner inquiry process as being: *asking well-informed questions, accessing evidence and research, appraising information critically, focusing on validity and usefulness, applying evidence to shape what we do and then evaluating critically whether intended outcomes have been achieved.*