

Quality Mark

for Primary Schools



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ISBN: 1 85990 438 6

Design: Bell

Photos: Maxwell

First published October 1997.

This revised edition published March 2007.

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Introduction

This guidance booklet aims to provide information for a school that might be interested in the Primary Quality Mark award and to support it through the process of working towards accreditation.

It will:

- clarify the principles underlining the Primary Quality Mark;
- demonstrate links with the school improvement agenda;
- explain the expectations for achieving accreditation;
- set out the criteria for each of the 10 elements and make suggestions for possible sources of evidence;
- outline the process by which a school will achieve the award.

Context

Background

The Primary Quality Mark award was first developed in 1997, with the help of local education authorities and primary schools throughout England and Wales, to provide a framework that would promote, support and celebrate the improvement of literacy and mathematics¹ in schools.² It was revised in 2006 following consultation with a significant number of local authorities in the Primary Quality Mark Partnership.

The 10 Primary Quality Mark elements are as relevant today for school improvement as they were originally. The fundamental principles of the Primary Quality Mark process, such as the involvement of the whole school community, self-review and targeted intervention, have now become central to any school's improvement agenda, regardless of its context.

The Primary Quality Mark provides a framework for self-evaluation and continuous improvement of the basic skills of all pupils in a school. This includes both those who underachieve and those whose attainment is lower than would be expected of someone of their age.

¹ The term 'mathematics' is used throughout this guidance to encompass all aspects of numeracy and mathematics across the curriculum.

² Although the term 'school' is used throughout this guidance, the Primary Quality Mark is also suitable for early years settings. Additional guidance is available that interprets the criteria for the 10 elements in the context of early years children. See also page 30.

What are basic skills?

Basic skills are defined as:

'The ability to read, write and speak in English and/or in Welsh and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general.'

Without good communication, literacy and mathematical skills, individuals are severely disadvantaged throughout their lives – as learners, in the workplace and as parents, consumers and citizens.

Underattainment and underachievement

The terms **underattainment** and **underachievement** are used in some of the Primary Quality Mark elements.

Underattainment means where a pupil performs in literacy and/or mathematics at a lower level than the attainment expected for a pupil of their age.

Underachievement means where a pupil performs at a lower level than their potential. An underachiever may be a high-attaining pupil who does less well than their potential.

The national agenda

The Primary Quality Mark complements and supports the principles underpinning the national strategies, the inspection frameworks³ and the drive to improve standards in literacy and mathematics in both England and Wales. In England, it is also consistent with the Every Child Matters agenda.

Benefits of the Primary Quality Mark

A school working towards the award will find that it adds value to their current teaching and learning in literacy and mathematics, and supports improved outcomes for learners.

The Primary Quality Mark is an inclusive award as it can be achieved by all types and sizes of schools. It can be used as a supportive improvement framework for those needing to address issues of underattainment and/or underachievement in basic skills, or as an external validation and recognition of good practice and progress in basic skills.

The process of rigorous self-evaluation, followed by action planning and regular review to identify impact, is a key strength of the award. Primary Quality Mark work will complement and help to integrate other initiatives being undertaken to improve basic skills.

³ Ofsted in England and Estyn in Wales.

⁴ Staff includes all those adults working in a school who are involved in helping children to learn or to improve basic skills, not only those with Qualified Teacher Status.

Each school controls the timescale for making its submission. The length of time taken to achieve accreditation will vary according to a school's starting point and its capacity to demonstrate progress.

All staff⁴ will be involved in helping to achieve a Primary Quality Mark but there are particular continuing professional development (CPD) benefits for middle and senior managers. They can develop and employ generic leadership and management skills such as auditing, action planning, monitoring and evaluating, in a practical context and with a tangible outcome.

Governing bodies will find that work undertaken to achieve and sustain a Primary Quality Mark offers a practical context in which to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and educational standards in their schools. This will demonstrate how governors are actively carrying out their 'critical friend' role and offers opportunities to work with staff.

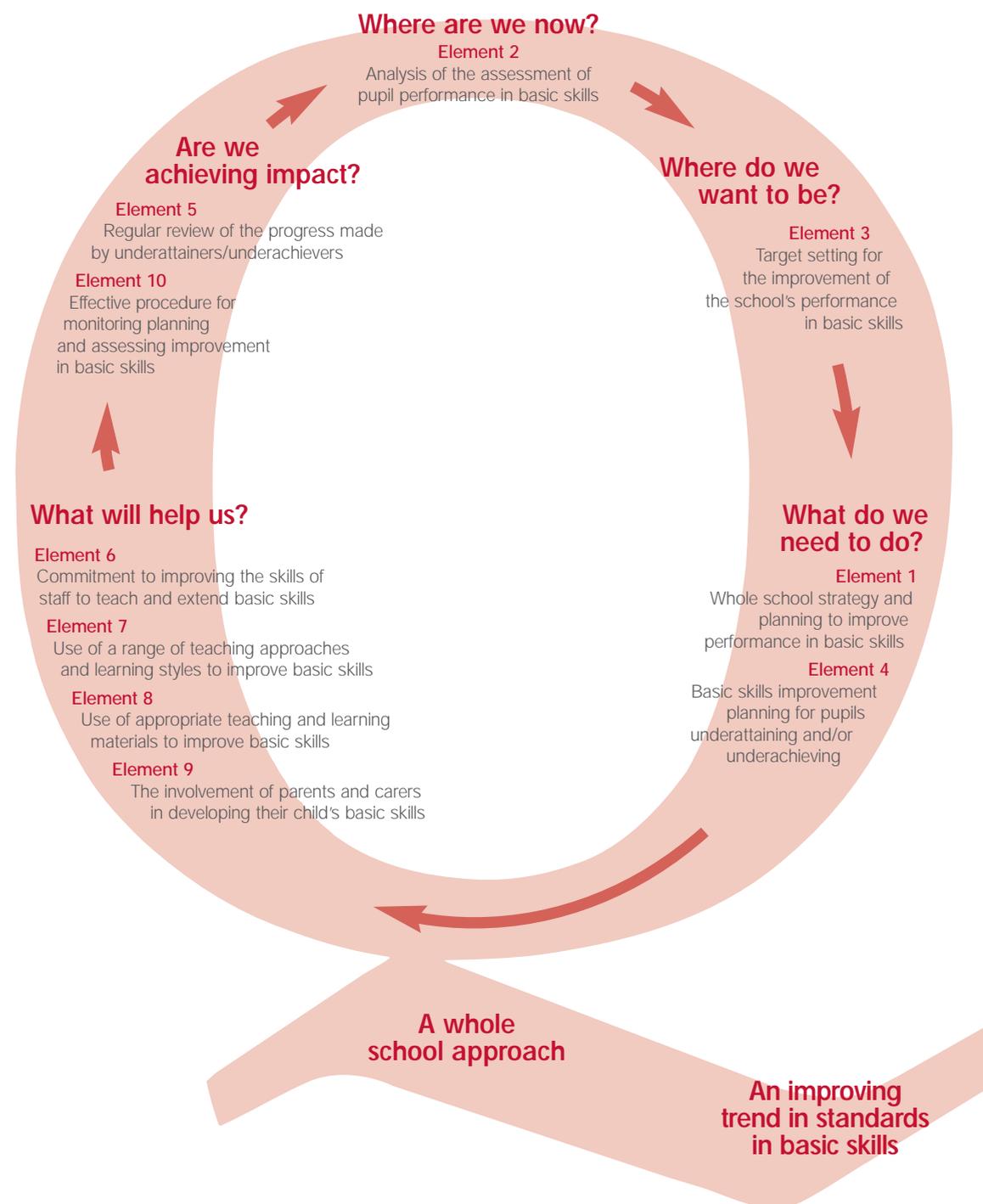
Achieving a Primary Quality Mark offers valuable public recognition and 'a pat on the back' for staff for their day-to-day work of teaching literacy and mathematics. It celebrates the work of the whole school community in making progress in improving the quality of its provision for basic skills.

One benefit of working towards the award is that it encourages networking to share good practice in basic skills.

The Primary Quality Mark 10 elements

- 1 A whole school strategy and planning to improve performance in basic skills
- 2 An analysis of the assessment of pupil performance in basic skills
- 3 Target setting for the improvement of the school's performance in basic skills
- 4 Basic skills improvement planning for pupils underattaining and/or underachieving
- 5 Regular review of the progress made by pupils underattaining and/or underachieving in basic skills
- 6 A commitment to improving the skills of staff to teach and extend basic skills
- 7 The use of a range of teaching approaches and learning styles to improve basic skills
- 8 The use of appropriate teaching and learning materials to improve basic skills
- 9 The involvement of parents and carers in developing their child's basic skills
- 10 An effective procedure for monitoring planning and assessing improvement in performance in basic skills

The Primary Quality Mark as a cycle for school improvement





The Primary Quality Mark

10 elements and criteria

1 A whole school strategy and planning to improve performance in basic skills

A strategy, supported by planning, assessment and evaluation of impact, that gives clear consideration to the provision, enjoyment and performance in literacy and mathematics of all learners in a school is the most effective way of improving standards.

Whole school strategic planning will acknowledge that, while some learners will receive additional specialist support, it is the responsibility of all staff in the school to teach and extend basic skills. The commitment and involvement of the management team is essential. A basic skills strategy may be a separate document or be a part of other written documentation, such as literacy and mathematics action plans and the main school development or improvement plan.



While strategic planning will set out what a school intends to achieve for all its learners in respect of basic skills, it is perfectly acceptable for specific plans to focus on a particular group of identified learners. For instance, a plan may focus on a group of learners where underattainment is a particular issue; this group might be identified through cohort, age, gender, ethnicity or background. What is important is that the focus of the plan has been decided after careful analysis of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement or development in literacy and mathematics.



A school **WILL MEET** the requirement for this element if:

it has a whole school strategic approach, demonstrated through planning, that:

- is based on self-evaluation, which will include an audit of underattainment and/or underachievement in literacy and mathematics of learners in the school (element 2);
- takes into account the performance and needs of different groups of learners;
- has realistic and measurable targets for improving performance (element 3);
- specifically mentions both literacy and mathematics (although both have to be mentioned, it is acceptable to give greater priority to either literacy or mathematics. However, this has to be supported by evidence that the decision has been reached after careful analysis);



- demonstrates that there is commitment and involvement of the management team;
- specifically states that improving basic skills is the responsibility of all staff;
- reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion;
- includes a description of the measures to be taken to raise standards, including any provision beyond the normal school day;
- sets a realistic but challenging timescale for achieving the objectives of action planning;
- details the resources, including materials and equipment, staff and teaching time, and funding to be devoted to literacy and/or mathematics;
- has clear and specific success criteria;
- describes how the planning will be monitored and how progress and impact on learners will be evaluated (element 10).

A school WILL NOT MEET the requirement for this element if planning:

- is not strategic;
- is not applicable to the whole school;
- is not based on the outcomes of self-evaluation, which identifies underattainment and/or underachievement in literacy and mathematics;
- does not take into account the performance and needs of different groups of learners;
- does not have realistic and measurable targets;
- mentions only literacy or only mathematics;
- does not demonstrate commitment or involvement of the management team;
- does not reflect the school's commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion;
- does not state how the impact of the planning is to be monitored and evaluated.

Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- main school development or improvement planning
- action plans for literacy and mathematics
- post-inspection action planning
- Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), Primary Leadership Programme (where applicable)
- staff development or CPD planning
- learning network action planning
- school aims and curriculum statement
- equal opportunities policy or statement
- assessment policy
- target-setting summaries

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- discussion with headteacher
- discussion with key staff and governors

‘Working towards achieving a Quality Mark gave a meaningful context to issues that we knew we needed to address.’





2 An analysis of the assessment of pupil performance in basic skills

It is vital that a school uses information about performance in basic skills to inform planning, identify groups, meet the needs of individual learners and measure the impact of actions taken.

A school should make use of the full range of formative and summative data available, such as assessment on entry to the school, Foundation Stage Profile, end of key stage data, moderated teacher assessment, additional standardised testing and value added measures. There should be an opportunity for learners to share, understand and use the outcomes from assessment to inform their future learning.

Pupil mobility is an issue for many schools. It is essential that there is an established procedure for assessing the basic skills of new learners at whatever point they join the school, in order to make appropriate provision.

A school **WILL MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- it makes use of an appropriate range of summative data in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics;
- it makes use of an appropriate range of formative data throughout the school year, e.g. moderated teacher assessment;
- it uses the outcomes from the analysis of data to identify and track learners who are underattaining and/or underachieving;
- it uses ongoing assessment to inform planning processes (school development planning, provision mapping and teachers' planning);
- it has a procedure for assessing the basic skills needs of learners whenever they join the school;
- learners are involved in the assessment of their own progress;
- it uses information from assessment of learners to make appropriate provision.



A school **WILL NOT MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- it does not make use of an appropriate range of summative data;
- it does not make use of an appropriate range of formative data;
- it does not use the outcomes from the analysis of data to track pupil progress;
- it does not use ongoing assessment to inform planning processes;
- it does not have a procedure for assessing the basic skills needs of learners whenever they join the school;
- learners are not involved in the assessment of their own progress;
- it does not use information from assessment of learners to plan provision.

Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- last inspection report
- outcomes of on-entry assessment procedures
- Foundation Stage Profile results
- KS1 and 2 English and/or Welsh and mathematics task and test results from previous years
- optional QCA test results
- reading and spelling test results
- analysis and comparison of teacher assessment and test results
- national comparative data
- local authority data analysis and benchmarking
- Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data
- value added analysis
- pupil tracking
- class teacher records
- special needs register
- teachers' planning
- work scrutiny analysis

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- discussion with key staff and governors

3 Target setting for the improvement of the school's performance in basic skills

Schools have become accustomed to target-setting at a range of levels and will be working towards their own school, local authority and national targets, based on a rigorous assessment of the needs of their learners. It is inevitable that such targets will vary from school to school, from cohort to cohort and even from group to group; accordingly, the actions a school needs to take to meet these targets will vary.

Targets are about improving on performance. A school's targets should focus on reducing the number of those who underattain or, in some circumstances, underachieve in basic skills in the school. Whole school targets are likely to be broken down into curriculum, cohort, group and individual targets. Individual learners will need to understand, and may participate in setting, targets for their next steps in learning. Targets should be shared with staff, learners and, in the case of individual children, with parents.⁵

The Primary Quality Mark requires a rigorous process of setting, monitoring and reviewing realistic but challenging targets and a commitment to improvement. A school must demonstrate it has taken all possible steps to meet its targets. Where targets have not been met at any level, a school will need to demonstrate that it has analysed the reasons for this and that it has used this analysis to improve its future performance.

A school **WILL MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- it has targets for improving performance in basic skills that are quantifiable, measurable, realistic and evidence based;
- targets are set at whole school, cohort, group and individual levels;
- individual learners are involved in the target-setting process at an appropriate level;
- individual pupil targets are shared with relevant staff;
- targets have a positive impact on learning.

A school **WILL NOT MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- it does not have targets for improving performance in basic skills that are quantifiable, measurable, realistic and evidence based;
- targets are not set at whole school, cohort, group and individual levels;
- individual learners are not involved in the target-setting process at an appropriate level;
- individual pupil targets are not shared with relevant staff;
- targets do not have a positive impact on learning.



Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- local authority-negotiated targets
- intervention programme targets (where applicable)
- curricular targets for English and/or Welsh and mathematics
- examples of staff (anonymous) performance management targets
- FFT predictions
- outcomes of on-entry assessment procedures
- Foundation Stage Profile results
- KS1 and 2 English and/or Welsh and mathematics task and test results from previous years
- teacher assessment and predictions
- value added analysis
- tracking records of school and cohort performance

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- discussion with headteacher
- discussion with key staff
- discussion with a member of the governing body
- discussion with learners about their own targets
- observation of curricular targets on display in classrooms and in books

⁵ Although the term 'parent' is used for ease of reading, this will include anyone who has the primary responsibility for the care of the child.

4 Basic skills improvement planning for pupils underattaining and/or underachieving

Planning is essential to meet the needs of all learners. This will involve planning for identified groups of learners, as well as identified individuals. The evidence provided might include examples of whole class plans, group plans or individual plans. Provision should be mapped to meet the needs of underattaining and/or underachieving learners.

Planning should show evidence of having been informed by the assessment process and should include appropriate learner contributions. All learners should be aware of what they need to do to improve in language, literacy and mathematics. Written improvement plans will identify the appropriate resources, including materials, time and staffing, needed to implement them and how impact will be monitored and evaluated.

Parents should be made aware of any intervention programme their child is engaged in and how they can support the process, where appropriate.

‘Quality Mark provided a focus for the work we have undertaken with underachieving pupils and linked effectively with other initiatives on literacy and assessment.’

A school **WILL MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- there is specific planning to meet the needs of identified groups and individuals who are underattaining and/or underachieving in basic skills;
- planning and provision are informed by ongoing assessment;
- all learners are aware of what they have to do to improve in respect of basic skills;
- identified learners have specific written improvement plans which:
 - have specific, agreed targets and learning goals for literacy and/or mathematics based on assessment of need;
 - cover a specified period of time;
 - include details of steps to be taken to help learners reach their targets;
 - identify materials and resources needed and personnel to be involved;
 - outline the skills to be learnt through the plan;
 - build in review and revision of the plan;
- the school shares its plans for underattaining/underachieving children with their parents.



A school **WILL NOT MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- planning does not meet the needs of identified groups and individual learners who are underattaining and/or underachieving in basic skills;
- learners are not aware of what they have to do to improve their basic skills;
- plans for identified learners:
 - lack specific targets or goals;
 - do not cover a set period of time;
 - have not been based on assessment of need;
 - do not include information about the skills to be learnt;
 - do not demonstrate continuity and progression;
 - have no arrangements for review and revision;
 - are not shared with parents.

Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- provision mapping for children identified as underattaining and/or underachieving
- Raising Achievement Plan (RAP) for the ISP
- school-devised support, intervention or mentoring strategies
- intervention programmes
- sample individual or group education plans, or individual learning plans (IEPs, GEPs or ILPs)
- pupil targets (individual, group, cohort)
- use of ‘P’ scales in target setting (where appropriate)
- assessment and review outcomes
- differentiation evident in lesson planning

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- discussion with key staff and appropriate governors
- discussion with sample pupil(s) receiving additional support
- observation of an intervention group

5 Regular review of the progress made by pupils underattaining and/or underachieving in basic skills

Learners underattaining and/or underachieving in basic skills should have their progress reviewed and recorded regularly. 'Regularly' means at least three times in an academic year, depending on the nature of the intervention strategy. It is expected that all learners should evaluate their work and contribute to regular review of their progress. This information should be used to inform future planning of their learning.

Progress should be recorded and include details of the knowledge and skills acquired since the previous review. The outcome of any review should be shared with the child and her/his parents and relevant staff.

A school **WILL MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- progress in literacy and mathematics is reviewed as part of an ongoing assessment cycle;
- a written record of the knowledge and skills learnt or improved since the last review is made;
- there is evidence that children, parents and professionals are engaged in a shared partnership to review progress.

A school **WILL NOT MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- literacy and mathematics are not reviewed regularly as part of an ongoing assessment cycle;
- a written record is not made;
- the review process is not seen as a partnership between the school, parents and the child.



Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- RAP for ISP (where applicable)
- Sample IEPs/GEPS/ILPs, showing evidence of review
- records from intervention programmes
- pupil conferencing notes
- sample pupil annual report
- sample pupil self-evaluation and review
- records of reviews from parents' evenings

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- discussion with key staff and governors
- discussion with a learner receiving additional support
- discussion with a parent of a child receiving additional support

'It made us place a stronger emphasis on identifying the impact of our intervention strategies and action plans for underachieving pupils and, through this, contributed to raising standards.'



‘Gaining the award allowed everyone to celebrate the good practice that was going on in the school and boosted staff confidence and raised morale.’

6 A commitment to improving the skills of staff to teach and extend basic skills

It is essential that teaching and extending pupils’ basic skills has a positive impact on achievement. A school should be committed to improving the understanding, skills and knowledge of all its staff in order to support and improve the development of basic skills. ‘Staff’ means all those working in the school who are involved in helping pupils to learn or to improve basic skills, not only those with Qualified Teacher Status.

This commitment will be evident through the inclusion of basic skills training for all staff, including managers, in the school’s CPD strategy, which should be based on an audit of needs of the school and of individual staff members.

There should be evidence that regular training in basic skills takes place, and that the induction of new members of staff includes guidance and support on the school’s approach to teaching and extending basic skills. Evaluation and monitoring of basic skills training and its impact in the classroom will contribute to the performance management processes in the school.

A range of approaches to CPD is likely to be evident. Training may be provided via courses, whether external or internal, or through coaching, mentoring, shadowing or sharing best practice.

A school WILL MEET the requirement for this element if:

- CPD for all staff, including managers, in teaching or improving basic skills is linked with planning for basic skills and is included in the school’s staff development programme;
- CPD planning is clearly based on an analysis of need of individual members of staff and of the school as a whole;
- CPD opportunities, as appropriate to the currently identified needs of the school, are likely to include:
 - learning how to develop, use and apply skills in literacy and mathematics;
 - assessing the suitability of teaching materials, equipment and resources;
 - using specific teaching materials, equipment and resources;
 - assessing pupil progress;
 - using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to promote basic skills across the curriculum;
 - meeting the specific needs of individuals and groups.

A school WILL NOT MEET the requirement for this element if:

- it has not included basic skills training in the planned CPD programme;
- CPD development planning is not based on the needs of individual staff members and the school as a whole;
- CPD is not evaluated;
- CPD is not disseminated, as appropriate.

Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- main school improvement/development plan
- Investors in People portfolio/assessment report (where applicable)
- audit of staff skills and training needs
- staff CPD plan
- strategies for dissemination of course content or other CPD
- evidence that training and dissemination have taken place
- monitoring systems and outcomes
- performance management policy
- sample staff (anonymous) performance management targets that have a literacy/mathematics focus

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- discussion with headteacher/CPD co-ordinator
- discussion with staff about CPD experiences



7 The use of a range of teaching approaches and learning styles to improve basic skills

Excellence in teaching and an enjoyment of learning are central to how well a child learns and progresses. Children need to experience basic skills within a broad, balanced and rich curriculum. Adults need to be creative and innovative in the ways they meet the basic skills needs of children. They must be aware that children's learning styles will differ, and be able to adopt a variety of teaching approaches to meet their needs. Children's reflection on their work through assessment for learning will inform this process.

There should be a range of contexts for learning basic skills, which includes individual, group and whole class activities undertaken independently, collaboratively or appropriately supported by adults.

A school should be able to demonstrate that it has systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning to ensure that there is a positive impact on standards. This will inform both the CPD of adults and basic skills planning for the school. While the procedures involved are a matter for each school, they will normally include classroom observation, analysis of planning, work sampling, discussions with children and regular reviews with adults.

'Quality Mark helped focus our conversations about children's learning.'

A school WILL MEET the requirement for this element if:

- a range of teaching approaches and learning styles is evident through planning and observation;
- children are involved in the assessment of their own learning;
- teaching approaches are based on an analysis of the learning needs of a particular child, group or class;
- ICT is used to promote basic skills and actively engage learners;
- there are systematic procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

A school WILL NOT MEET the requirement for this element if:

- a restricted range of teaching approaches is used;
- assessment for learning strategies are not embedded in classroom practice;
- teaching approaches used are not based on an analysis of learners' needs;
- ICT is not used to support basic skills teaching and learning;
- there are no systematic procedures for monitoring the effectiveness and impact of teaching and learning.

Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- inspection reports
- local authority adviser/consultant reports of visit
- teaching and learning policy
- co-ordinator monitoring notes
- lesson observation feedback (anonymous)
- annotated teachers' planning with evidence of differentiation
- work sampling

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- a 'learning walk' around the school
- observation of teaching and learning in sample lessons or intervention sessions
- discussions with learners
- observation of ICT in use with and by learners
- observation from review of classroom/corridor displays
- photographs illustrating range of activities undertaken



8 The use of appropriate teaching and learning materials to improve basic skills

All learners, when acquiring or improving their basic skills, should have access to appropriate materials. These should be varied, related to the skills being taught and relevant to the learner's age, interests and ability. Materials should be audited regularly to assess their quality and relevance. The provision of materials should be identified in the school's basic skills planning.

Planning and delivery of lessons will show effective use of materials, by both learners and adults, to enhance learning. The monitoring of lessons should identify whether materials are used effectively and that they have a positive impact on learning.

ICT should be used both as a teaching aid and a tool for learning.

The physical environment of the school should support teaching and encourage learning.

A school WILL MEET the requirement for this element if:

- there is evidence that teaching and learning materials and the physical environment are used effectively to support learning;
- monitoring is used to evaluate their impact;
- materials and equipment are of good quality, sufficient in quantity and well maintained;
- materials used reflect the needs of different groups;
- there is evidence that a range of ICT is being used appropriately to support and improve teaching and learning in basic skills.

A school WILL NOT MEET the requirement for this element if:

- the physical environment does not support teaching and learning;
- there is no process to monitor the impact of materials;
- it lacks a wide range of good quality, well-maintained and relevant materials;
- it uses teaching and learning materials ineffectively;
- ICT is inappropriately and/or infrequently used to support basic skills.

Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- inspection report
- local authority adviser/consultant reports
- School Improvement Partner (SIP) reports
- school library audit/report from School Library Service
- teaching and learning policy
- headteacher/curriculum monitoring reports
- curriculum resources audit (for quality and quantity)
- lesson planning
- work sampling

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- a 'learning walk' around the school
- observation of teaching and learning in sample lessons or intervention sessions
- observation of ICT in use with and by learners
- observation from review of classroom/corridor displays
- photographs illustrating range of activities undertaken
- discussions with pupils

'A major benefit was the external, public recognition of the staff's work, which helped give parents confidence, boosted staff morale and gave children a sense of pride in their school.'



9 The involvement of parents and carers in developing their child's basic skills

Parents and carers play a key role in helping their child acquire and improve their basic skills, and schools should actively seek to engage them in this process. Schools should offer a variety of opportunities for parents and carers to gain a greater understanding of how their child develops in literacy and mathematics. Such opportunities may include:

- providing information about the school's approach to teaching basic skills;
- literacy or mathematics curriculum workshops;
- family learning activities;
- class/year group topic or curriculum overviews;
- home-school diaries;
- access to information on the school's website;
- newsletters and leaflets.

Procedures should be in place that encourage and help parents and carers to support their child's home learning in basic skills. This should not just involve helping with work that has been set by the teacher, but should also include advice about activities that will help sustain and extend the literacy and mathematics learning that has taken place in school.

Where a child is below the age-appropriate level in literacy and mathematics, parents and carers need to be fully involved in any actions planned by the school and aware of the progress their child is making. This should be in addition to any statutory requirements for the school to report on pupil performance.

Parents and carers should have access to information about any extended services offered by the school, as these may also provide opportunities to improve and extend basic skills.

A school **WILL MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- its approach to improving basic skills is communicated to parents and carers;
- it actively engages with parents and carers on how they can help to support, sustain and extend the basic skills of their child;
- the basic skills opportunities offered by extended services (where available) are communicated to parents and carers;
- induction procedures for parents and carers include providing information about the ways the school teaches and extends basic skills and seeking information about their child's prior development of basic skills;
- the school regularly consults parents and carers to seek views about their child's progress in basic skills.

A school **WILL NOT MEET** the requirement for this element if:

- it does not communicate with parents and carers about basic skills provision in the school;
- it does not provide advice for parents and carers on how they can help to support, sustain and extend the basic skills of their child out of school;
- it does not actively attempt to involve parents and carers in their child's learning;
- it does not regularly consult parents and carers on their child's progress in basic skills.

Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- inspection reports
- main school development/improvement plan
- home-school partnership agreement
- school prospectus
- homework policy
- examples of annual pupil reports
- examples of home-school books/diaries
- details of open evenings, curriculum workshops, etc. that have been run
- evidence of family learning activities
- examples from newsletters
- parent questionnaire responses
- references from minutes of the governing body
- extended service plans/records of activity
- details of partnerships with other agencies/providers

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- discussion with sample parent(s) or parent governor(s)
- photographs showing parental involvement

‘It made us place a stronger emphasis on identifying the impact of our intervention strategies and action plans for underachieving pupils and, through this, contributed to raising standards.’

10 **An effective procedure for monitoring planning and assessing improvement in performance in basic skills**

A school will need to monitor the impact of its strategic planning for raising the standards of basic skills. This process of monitoring and evaluating may be demonstrated through various approaches, including self-evaluation, external viewpoints and analysing current data and trends. Reports made to the governing body by the headteacher and key staff, and through the involvement of designated literacy, mathematics and special educational needs governors, will also provide frequent opportunities to monitor and analyse provision, progress and impact.

To gain a Primary Quality Mark award the governing body of the school must discuss and review the progress being made in implementing planning to improve basic skills at least once a year. There must also be regular discussions about the school's plans, provision and progress in basic skills by all members of staff.

It is up to each school to decide how it undertakes self-evaluation and reviews pupil progress – what is important is that regular assessment, evaluation and analysis of performance in basic skills actually take place. All stakeholders, i.e. governors, parents, pupils and adults who work in the school, need to receive appropriate information to help them monitor progress and report, where relevant, on improvements in performance.

A school WILL MEET the requirement for this element if:

- it has a procedure for monitoring and evaluating its strategic approach and assessing the progress and impact of the resulting plans;
- monitoring includes self-evaluation, external viewpoints and analysis of current data and trends;
- there is evidence of moderation of the school's self-evaluation;
- the school's procedure includes regular discussion by all staff of the progress being made to achieve the success criteria of the basic skills action planning;
- a report is made to the governing body on progress and impact in basic skills and discussion is held about basic skills planning at least once a year;
- all stakeholders are informed about the school's performance in basic skills.

A school WILL NOT MEET the requirement for this element if:

- it does not have a procedure for monitoring and evaluating its strategic approach and assessing the progress and impact of the resulting plans;
- there is no evidence of moderation of the school's self-evaluation;
- there is no evidence of, or commitment to, regular staff review of basic skills;
- there is no evidence of, or commitment to, governor involvement in basic skills planning or there are infrequent reviews by the governing body;
- stakeholders are not informed about the school's performance in basic skills.



Possible sources of evidence might include:

- Self Evaluation Form
- inspection reports
- national comparative data
- intervention reports (where applicable)
- SIP report (where applicable)
- local authority adviser and consultant reports of visits
- headteacher's report to governors
- governing body committee reports
- individual governor monitoring reports
- staff meeting and senior management team minutes
- curriculum monitoring reports
- information from parent and carer surveys and questionnaires
- monitoring and evaluation procedure

Additional sources of evidence might include:

- discussion with headteacher
- discussion with key staff
- discussion with chair of governors or other member of the governing body



How to achieve the Primary Quality Mark

Who can apply?

The Primary Quality Mark is available to all maintained primary schools in England and Wales, including nursery, infant, first, junior, middle (deemed primary) and special schools with primary phase pupils. Independent primary, nursery and special schools can also be accredited.

Early years settings, including children's centres and those from the private, voluntary and independent sector, such as playgroups, are also eligible. Additional guidance is available to support the interpretation of the Primary Quality Mark elements and their criteria in the context of the Foundation Stage.

Each Primary Quality Mark is awarded for three years. At the end of that period the award can be renewed for a further three years (and subsequently every three years), providing the school or setting still meets the criteria for all 10 elements and provides evidence that holding a Primary Quality Mark has had a positive impact on its provision and practice in basic skills.



Who undertakes the assessment?

In England, a school or setting, whether maintained or independent, must be assessed by an assessor accredited by a local authority that has joined the Primary Quality Mark Partnership. In most cases this will be the school or setting's own local authority. Where the local authority is not in the Primary Quality Mark Partnership, the school or setting can negotiate its assessment by another local authority that is in the Partnership.

In Wales, all schools are assessed for the Primary Quality Mark by their local education authorities.

The recommendation for a Primary Quality Mark award can only be made by an accredited assessor. There is no deadline for applications and most local authorities assess Primary Quality Mark applications throughout the year.

Local authorities have differing procedures for managing, promoting, supporting and assessing the Primary Quality Mark. Schools and settings interested in seeking accreditation

will need to contact their own local authority to find out how assessment is undertaken and what support is available.

The details of designated Primary Quality Mark contacts can be found by searching under the name of the relevant local authority on www.qmdatabase.org or by sending an email enquiry to qualitymark@basic-skills.co.uk.

What has to be demonstrated?

A school or setting has to show that at the time of its assessment:

- it meets the criteria for all 10 elements of the Primary Quality Mark;
- there is a whole school commitment to improving basic skills;
- the performance of learners in basic skills is improving.

While schools or settings may spend varying amounts of time working towards accreditation, a Primary Quality Mark cannot be gained merely



through making a commitment to meet all the elements in the future. An improvement in basic skills has to have taken place because a school or setting has added value through the quality of its provision. Any improvement will also need to relate to a period longer than a single academic year, in order to show that there is an upward trend.

Evidence to demonstrate that a school or setting is meeting the criteria for each element may come from a range of sources, some of which are suggested in the guidance for each element.

Documentary evidence can be presented in any format that makes it easy for the assessor to identify planning, provision and evidence of impact in basic skills. Most of what will be needed to demonstrate that the criteria are met will already be available in the school, as it will have been gathered for other purposes. Core documentation may either be presented in a specific portfolio or made available by highlighting sections in existing school files.

An assessor will also seek evidence through discussion with key stakeholders, such as staff, parent/governor representatives or pupils. Additional evidence may also be gathered

through the observation of teaching and learning in lessons or intervention groups, or from taking a 'learning walk' around the school.

How is achievement of a Primary Quality Mark recognised?

The Primary Quality Mark is a registered logo that can only be used by currently accredited award holders. Individual schools and settings are entitled to display this logo, which is supplied electronically, on information and publicity materials, such as a letterhead, prospectus or advertisement. Award holders also receive a Primary Quality Mark plaque, which can be wall mounted, an award certificate and materials to help publicise and celebrate the achievement, including badges, stickers, bookmarks and letters for distribution to parents and governors.

For further information

Visit www.quality-mark.org.uk or www.basic-skills.co.uk.