

You Can... Contribute to the running of the whole school

You Can... Create a clear subject leader file

A subject leader's file is their bible. It contains the essence of what they are doing, what they plan to do as well as their budget and assessment information. It is often a highly personal document. However, it is also a professional document that should be accessible to all and should have a clear system. Ultimately Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMI) would expect a subject leader to use their file as part of their discussions about the standards of their subject. The clearer the file, the smoother this process will be.

Thinking points

- In the same way that we inspect classroom planning, subject leadership files are increasingly coming under the same amount of internal scrutiny. This is for many good reasons: it can identify good practice (which in turn can be shared among the staff); it can help track action during the year; it can reinforce common practice, which leads to ease of access; and it raises professional accountability of subject leaders.
- Increasingly subject leaders will have a set of files on their computer that either complement or are a copy of their paper file. This is a useful practice as electronic paperwork is easy to distribute and quick to access. However, that said, it is always good practice to have a paper copy of core documents, such as your improvement plan, to safeguard against file corruption and to enable quick access when a computer isn't available. Although computers are useful, a flick through the file can often be as fast as searching the hard drive to print off a copy.

Tips, ideas and activities

- A file should have a common index across the school for ease of access and agreed systems. Suggested titles for an index include:
 - Subject Improvement Plan (see page 61 for a photocopiable template).
 - Budget.
 - Audit of skills.
 - Resource audit.
 - Lesson observations.
 - Assessment.
 - Letters.
 - Governors' briefing.
 - Staff professional development.
 - Subject policy.
- Ask yourself a key question 'Would another person be able to use this file if I were not here?' If the answer is 'no', take action to improve your file!
- HMI will, at some point in your career, inspect the standards of your subject. A clear file will support this process and make life a lot easier.

