

Key Stage 3 National Strategy

key messages from the Departmental evaluation and forward planning for Key Stage 3 science training

This leaflet is for teachers who were unable to attend the national training. It summarises the main points and is best used as part of a departmental meeting.

Other Key Stage 3 National Strategy materials can be found on the website at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3

Main messages

- All stages in the cycle for self-improvement need to be completed in order to achieve the maximum benefit for the department.
- Plans for departmental improvement will be devised from the action points identified and prioritised in the science audit and annual review.
- Monitoring and evaluation are separate but complementary stages in the self-improvement cycle. The cycle will not be complete if either is omitted.
- Monitoring is a process that involves the collection of evidence. It is a regular, ongoing activity that involves all members of the department working as a team.
- Monitoring requires careful planning and a clear purpose. It should have agreed starting and finishing dates.
- The success criteria built into the departmental action planning indicate the types of monitoring activity that should take place.
- The quantity of evidence collected during monitoring is less significant than its quality and relevance: too much can be difficult to interpret.
- Evaluation is a process that involves making judgements about the impact of actions or the implementation of a policy.
- Evaluation should be fair, rigorous, reliable and set against understood and agreed criteria.
- Evaluation will have as its major focus the question: Are all the pupils learning as much as they are capable of learning?
- Evaluation is more effective when it is an interactive process that combines support with high expectations.
- Evaluation is not a final stage: it leads automatically on to the identification of actions for further improvement, so moving on the cycle.
- Subject leaders have a key role in managing the processes of monitoring and evaluation: successful departments are, almost without exception, well managed and effectively led.

Implications for the science department

Science departments that have followed the guidance in units 1 (Launch of the science strand) and 4 (*Introducing curricular targets and reviewing action points*) will have success criteria for their prioritised and agreed action points. Those identified for 2002–3 should be reviewed and modified where necessary. Decisions will need to be taken about which of these, and any additional action points, need to be prioritised for implementation in 2003–4. Planning for monitoring and evaluation should involve all members of the department. Some of the actions involved are listed below as an aide-memoire.

- Ensure that all members of the department understand all of the action points.
- Discuss the contribution of all teachers to the achievement of the action points.
- Check that the success criteria meet the expectations of SMART targets.
- Identify specific activities for monitoring the progress made towards achieving the improvements.
- Check that the monitoring activities will draw on a range of sources, extending beyond the observation of teaching.
- Involve some staff from outside the department in monitoring.
- Consider ways to include well-focused pupil feedback in the range of monitoring activities.
- Agree completion dates for monitoring activities.
- Evaluation takes time, requires thoughtful analysis and discussion, and should not be rushed: allocate the resources needed to make it effective.
- Evaluation should clearly identify successes: it should not ignore the aspects that require further improvement.
- The outcomes of evaluation should be discussed within the department as well as with the school's senior managers.
- The identification of modified or additional action points should lead into improvement planning by the whole department.