



Policy for Remote Teaching and Learning during a COVID-19 School Closure

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees with reference to the academy's Equality Policy. The aims of the Equality Policy are to ensure that Plume Academy meets the needs of all, taking account of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. It is important that in this academy we meet the diverse needs of students to ensure inclusion for all and that all students are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

When Plume Academy enters into a period of remote teaching and learning, such as when educational establishments are required to shut as part of a national lockdown, leaders within the academy will publish a supplementary document detailing the precise educational offer this is being made to students for the duration of the respective closure period. This document, entitled 'Remote education provision: information for parents and carers' should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Reviewed:	January 2021
Next full review due:	January 2022
SLT Lead:	Mrs C Pretty

Remote Education Expectations, Evidence and Experience

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1. Introduction

With the nationwide return of remote education for the majority of students as a result of a further national lockdown, Plume Academy is understandably grappling with how best to implement remote teaching, while maintaining face-to-face provision for those students who are entitled to it.

This guidance is intended to support Plume Academy as we pivot once again towards educating our students off-site, detailing the relevant obligations as well as providing some evidence of best practice.

Key points:

- A. We learnt a huge amount during the first national lockdown, and since, about how to teach remotely. A range of ideas and approaches have been developed and we are in a much better place now than in March 2020.
- B. There are much clearer legal obligations and expectations regarding remote learning than in the first national lockdown. It is essential that Trust leaders, schools and staff are cognisant of these when making plans.
- C. There remains a dearth of unequivocal evidence about what 'best practice' remote education looks like, but the EEF Rapid Evidence Assessment from April 2020 is still relevant.

2. Legal duty to teach remotely

Our legal partner, Stone King LLP provided a briefing note on schools' legal duties to provide remote education imposed by the new COVID-19 directive published on 30th September 2020.

The following extract outlines the legal duties for schools and Trusts:

The DfE has issued a new Directive dated 30th September 2020 compelling English schools to "provide remote education" to students who are unable to attend school due to Coronavirus. Schools and Trusts need to take account of the Remote Education Direction explanatory note when meeting this duty. The duty will apply from the 22nd October 2020 to the end of the current school year.

Which students?

Those of compulsory school age and students who are below compulsory school age, but who would usually be taught in a class with compulsory school aged children (most commonly in a reception class). This Direction does not apply to post - 16 education.

In which schools?

All students within that age range in entirely state funded schools and those students in independent schools whose education is wholly funded by the state (e.g. students with wholly state funded EHCPs).

When is the obligation triggered?

When a pupil's "travel to or presence at the school" is contrary to any COVID-19 guidance published by Public Health England or the Secretary of State: i.e. "where a class, group of students, or individual students need to self - isolate, or there are local or national restrictions requiring students to remain at home." Consequently, those schools affected can rely on other current DfE Guidance on school attendance notably

that in *Guidance for full opening: schools*.

What standard of “remote education”?

The explanatory notes says that “the expectations on the quality of remote education expected of schools remain those set out in the guidance for full opening published in July 2020”. So again, in theory nothing has changed regarding this standard, which is found under the “Curriculum” section of Guidance for full opening: schools and summarised as “high - quality and safe, and aligns as closely as possible with in - school provision.”

“Schools and other setting continue to build their capability to educate students remotely, where this is needed.” That does not however require schools to put all their own classroom provision live online: the requirement is what is “possible” within the resources available to schools. Each school is advised to develop clear policy on the content and extent of its remote provision to manage expectations. This is particularly so for any students who are long - term disabled and unable to attend school because of COVID-19, for whom reasonable adjustments will also need to be made regarding their remote provision.

Summary

This directive simply legally compels the standard of remote provisions expected under existing DfE Guidance. By imposing a duty, it clarifies what parents can expect in specific circumstances when their child cannot attend school, and also clarifies what schools are required to ask of their teaching staff regarding remote provision

What happens if a school does not follow the directive?

In theory the DfE could seek an injunction to force it to do so, although that would be a last resort.

3. Department for Education’s remote education expectations

The Department for Education’s remote education expectations, as outlined in the guidance ‘restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools’, are as follows:

In developing their remote education, we expect schools to:

- Teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject so that students can progress through the school’s curriculum.
- Select a digital platform for remote education provision that will be used consistently across the school in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback and make sure staff are trained and confident in its use. If schools do not have an education platform in place, they can access free support at [Get help with technology - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-help-with-technology).
- Overcome barriers to digital access for students by:
 - distributing school-owned laptops accompanied by a user agreement or contract.
 - providing printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, to structure learning, supplemented with other forms of communication
 - to keep students on track or answer questions about work
- It may also be that some students who have difficulty engaging in remote education may be considered to be vulnerable children, and therefore eligible to attend provision in person. As

outlined in the guidance, this is a decision based on local discretion and the needs of the child and their family, as well as a wide range of other factors.

- Have systems for checking daily, whether students are engaging with their work, and work with families to rapidly identify effective solutions where engagement is a concern;
- Identify a named senior leader with overarching responsibility for the quality and delivery of remote education, including that provision meets expectations for remote education.
- Publish information for students, parents and carers about their remote education provision on their website by 25 January 2021 – an optional template is available to support schools with this expectation.

When teaching students remotely, we expect schools to:

- Set meaningful and ambitious work each day in an appropriate range of subjects.
- Provide teaching that is equivalent in length to the core teaching students would receive in school. This will include both recorded or live direct teaching time and time for students to complete tasks and assignments independently, and will be as a minimum:
 - Key Stage 1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
 - Key Stage 2: 4 hours a day
 - Key Stages 3 and 4: 5 hours a day

Online video lessons do not necessarily need to be recorded by teaching staff at the school: Oak National Academy lessons, for example, can be provided in lieu of school- led video content:

- Consider how to transfer into remote education what we already know about effective teaching in the live classroom by, for example:
 - providing frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources
 - providing opportunities for interactivity, including questioning, eliciting and reflective discussion
 - providing scaffolded practice and opportunities to apply new knowledge
 - enabling students to receive timely and frequent feedback on how to progress
 - using digitally-facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate
 - using assessment to ensure teaching is responsive to students’ needs and addresses any critical gaps in students’ knowledge
 - avoiding an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities

We expect schools to consider these expectations in relation to the students’ age, stage of development or special educational needs, for example where this would place significant demands on parents’ help or support.

Younger children in Key Stage 1 or Reception often require high levels of parental involvement to support their engagement with remote education, which makes digital provision a particular challenge for this age group. We therefore do not expect that solely digital means will be used to teach these students remotely.

We also recognise that some students with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may not be able to access remote education without adult support and so expect schools to work with families to deliver an ambitious curriculum appropriate for their level of need.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

For students with SEND, their teachers are best-placed to know how the pupil's needs can be most effectively met to ensure they continue to make progress even if they are not able to be in school due to self-isolating. The requirement for schools to use their 'best endeavours' to secure the special educational provision called for by the students' special educational needs remains in place.

Schools should work collaboratively with families, putting in place reasonable adjustments as necessary, so that students with SEND can successfully access remote education alongside their peers.

Where a pupil has provision specified within their EHC Plan, it remains the duty of the local authority and any health bodies to secure or arrange the delivery of this in the setting that the plan names. However, there may be times when it becomes very difficult to do so, for example, if they are self-isolating. In this situation, decisions on how provision can be delivered should be informed by relevant considerations including, for example, the types of services that the pupil can access remotely, for example, online teaching and remote sessions with different types of therapists. These decisions should be considered on a case by case basis, avoiding a one size fits all approach.

4. Remote education in practice

The EEF conducted a Rapid Evidence Assessment in April 2020, drawing on the available evidence of best practice, and reached the following conclusions about remote education:

- A. Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered
- B. Ensuring access to technology is key, particularly for disadvantaged students
- C. Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes
- D. Supporting students to work independently can improve learning outcomes
- E. Different approaches to remote learning suit different tasks and types of content

There have been no significant meta-analyses conducted on remote education since this was published, and the evidence base for 'what works best' has not been overturned since April. This means this initial work from EEF should remain an important touchstone for schools and Trusts delivering remote education.

However, what has happened since April 2020 is that teachers and leaders will have developed a wealth of experience in teaching remotely. While this might not translate into hard evidence of what works, there will be some things that have proven successful – and should be continued and developed – and other practices which should be abandoned.

This section explores some key areas of remote education, weaving together aspects of the Department for Education's expectations and how these may, or may not, be usefully translated into remote teaching practice.

1. Remote education is as much about the curriculum as face-to-face teaching is

The first bullet point in the DfE's list of expectations is about the curriculum. This is not an accident. In the early weeks of the first national lockdown teachers were, understandably, in many cases having to find any materials at short notice that could be taught remotely or activities that could be worked on independently

by students. This sudden pivot did not necessarily lend itself to well-sequenced and deliberate pacing of the curriculum.

However, in the weeks that followed teachers were able to think longer term about the curriculum itself, applying good curriculum practice to the remote paradigm. This means moving from an activity-focused way of viewing their teaching to a knowledge focused approach; starting from the question ‘what do I want students to learn?’, rather than ‘what activities can I give them to do?’

This requires teachers to have a good sense of how knowledge is built over time, knowing which aspects are essential, which are prerequisites for subsequent learning, and which might be ‘nice to have’ but not essential. It is important that teachers have this clarity.

However, it is important to remember that the content of our subjects is still of intrinsic value to students, and they entitled to have access to it. The things we want students to learn about Geography, or Science, or Art, and so on, remain the same. It would be an odd position to assume that the curriculum we want students to learn is now different because of the pandemic.

So, while some decisions might be made about adapting content, or changing the pace, it’s important that students continue to benefit from careful sequencing, breadth and depth, learning important concepts, taking time to practice and weaving content together – just as would happen in a face-to-face classroom.

Viewing remote education as emerging from the curriculum is important for other reasons too. Maintaining the attention of students can be hard when teaching remotely, so a good level of efficiency is required. Make sure that assessment and feedback target the things that matter most, or those things that are harder to grasp and remember – so that teaching can respond accordingly.

But the curriculum considerations of remote learning potentially run far beyond the current lockdown. For example, long term work to address ‘gaps’ and catch-up is far more meaningful if we have a clear sense of exactly what we want students to have learned through this period. It may also be that schools choose to review wider structures. For example, a school which usually runs a short KS3 might decide that Year 8 children will need longer to master or revisit the concepts that underpin the curriculum before they advance to GCSE.

It’s important to be realistic about the challenge of remote education. Lemov (2020) argues, “everything we know about teaching suggests that on net the experience online will be less powerful, and what’s most worrisome is that it will almost certainly be that way for the students most at risk already.” This is not a defeatist stance, rather it is a call for us to be aware that progress through the curriculum may be harder and slower for many students. Recognising this means we can consciously adapt the curriculum as necessary to make sure it is as powerful and efficient as possible. But the beautiful tapestry of each subject remains the same.

Schools and teachers which have developed strong curriculum practice may find it easier to move to a remote pedagogy. They will better understand which curricular components need to be mastered, in which order, and how these build over time.

It is worth noting in the expectations from government that schools are required to “publish information for students, parents and carers about their remote education provision on their website by 25 January

2021.” A template is provided, which is not mandatory, but gives a good steer as to what the DfE believes should be shared parents. It is much more a declaration of the school’s general approach to remote learning rather than a curriculum document.

Schools or subject teams might choose to go further and share with parents and students an overview of the key propositions children are expected to learn over a given period – be that weekly, fortnightly or so on. It would be important to keep this concise, but parents and students might find such a resource a helpful means of checking whether the core knowledge of that series of lessons has been learned. Indeed, many schools may already have this in place in the form of a knowledge organiser.

This, from Ofsted’s Daniel Mujis (2021), is a great summary of how we need to think about the remote curriculum: “Everything we know about what a quality curriculum looks like still applies. The remote education curriculum needs to be aligned to the classroom curriculum as much as possible. And, just like the classroom curriculum, it needs to be carefully sequenced and ensure that students obtain the building blocks they need to move on to the next step. Curricular goals should be made as explicit remotely as they would be in the classroom.”

2. Iterate pedagogy and supporting structures, but recognise good teaching remains good teaching

There has been much discussion about whether synchronous (everyone learning at the same time) or asynchronous learning (students learn at different times) is better. First off, note the EEF concludes the evidence does not clearly point to one approach over the other.

Secondly, note that although some of the DfE’s requirements might appear to lend themselves to ‘live’ synchronous lessons, the expectations don’t explicitly demand this and there are compelling reasons why schools may want to take a different approach. Indeed, the DfE guidance makes explicit reference to pre-recorded lessons such as Oak National Academy’s. There is, in fact, quite a degree of flexibility for schools and Trusts to find an approach that works best for them and their students.

However, there is no reason, and no authoritative evidence, to suggest that the fundamentals of teaching should be very different when delivered remotely. For example, the basic paradigm remains: the teacher wants students to encounter and remember particular propositions, and to understand how such propositions are related through, and exemplify, particular concepts. Yet, because of the focus on ‘remote learning’ as a discrete activity it can be too easy to assume that something radically different is required. The evidence suggests this is not the case.

As Mujis (2021) argues, “Our brains don’t learn differently using remote education, so everything we know about cognitive science and learning still applies. We don’t have to make huge changes to the way we teach.”

The key is that whatever structures surround and facilitate the school’s pedagogic approach, students benefit from particular parts of the teaching process, including:

- Explanations of new content
- Interaction
- Scaffolded practice
- Assessment
- Feedback

These are all reflected in the DfE's remote learning expectations. In the remote classroom it's not that these things are suddenly and unexpectedly important – they have always been so. It's just that teachers might need to think more consciously about how these can be effectively and efficiently achieved.

There are numerous examples of how teachers are building this into their practice, which are worth exploring. Doug Lemov's (2021) new book, 'Teaching in the Online Classroom', is also excellent and is highly recommended for teachers and leaders who want to find out how some teachers seem to be developing effective remote teaching practices. It helpfully links to extracts from online lessons and weaves in what evidence indicates effective approaches might look like. Lemov's suggestions include:

- Building 'pause points' into live and recorded lessons. Students can use this time to elaborate on what they've learned, to complete a short task, or ask questions of each other or the teacher. This is why an hour's pre-recorded lesson is unlikely to be a 60-minute recording, just like in the face-to-face classroom it is unlikely that a teacher will talk for the entire lesson; they will set tasks, pose questions, and elicit feedback and so on
- Using shared documents so you can see students' work. In the normal classroom a teacher can see the work students are doing, they can spot misconceptions and tackle any students who are not completing it. In the remote classroom teachers need a different window into this and some teachers have used shared live documents to good effect. The teacher can view the document to check the child is completing the work but also check for understanding and pick up any necessary corrections. This could result in individual feedback to the child or whole-class feedback.
- Requiring and supporting participation. Teachers will be familiar with the scenario in which the teacher poses a question and yet it's the same students who always put their hands up; great for these children but what about the others? Requiring students to formulate a verbal response can be a great precursor to writing it, as well as ensuring all students are 'tuned in' and accountable for their learning. This is why in face-to-face teaching many teachers make use of Doug Lemov's 'cold calling' – targeting your questions at specific students rather than waiting for them to raise their hand. Some teachers are extending this into the remote classroom, using chat functions on Teams and Google classroom, or even camera & mic, to sensitively pose questions to children and gauge how well they are learning.

The problem with the 'live vs recorded' debate is that neither necessarily utilises these sorts of approaches, although each have the capacity to do so. As the old song reminds us, "it ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it."

Moreover, it is not necessarily the case that a school, child, or teacher is best served by committing exclusively to either approach. It may be that a blend or cycle of approaches will deliver the best balance of effective teaching, flexibility for teachers, and attentiveness from students. For example, if a child has four 'lessons' of science in a week, a learning sequence might be structured as follows:

- **Lesson 1: Recorded lesson to introduce new content**
- **Lesson 2: Activities to aid practice. Teacher to check students' work/ test scores afterwards (formative assessment)**
- **Lesson 3: Live lesson to check for understanding, provide feedback and explore the concept in depth through discussion**
- **Lesson 4: Recorded lesson/remote activities to practice or extend learning**

Although the number of learning hours' students should receive are outlined by the DfE, this does not mean that lessons and activities have to follow the pattern of the 'normal' school timetable. During the first national lockdown some schools developed an alternative timetable, sometimes providing longer periods of immersion in a subject or aligning subject lessons so they occurred simultaneously across the year group in a way that is not normally possible due to timetable and staffing constraints.

For some schools this yields the opportunity for teams of teachers to make more efficient use of instructional time so that one expert teacher could provide video input to a large group. So, in the example above it could be that Lesson 1, 2 and 4 are centrally produced or consist of an Oak National Academy lesson. Assuming the curriculum is coherent, and each lesson builds the necessary components, this approach could be effective.

In turn, this approach might free up or create more flexibility for teachers to engage students in other aspects of the pedagogical or pastoral processes of the school. For example, making calls to check in on students, or providing feedback on assessed work. So, while some schools found that following the normal school timetable worked well, others found that adaptations were necessary or desirable. There is flexibility to do this within the DfE's remote learning expectations.

Another reason why some schools do not require every lesson to be on screen and live is to help families with limited device access to juggle competing needs in the household. It might also help to reduce the inevitable widening of the disadvantage gap we have seen. As Simon Cox (2021) explains, "the 'digital divide' means that overreliance on live remote learning could negatively impact the most disadvantaged in our society. Such an approach can assume that households are in a position to run the school day according to the usual timetable; that families have enough suitable devices for all children to log in to different lessons at the same time; that students can view lessons on something larger than a mobile phone; and that their home internet data package is sufficient to successfully stream multiple lessons simultaneously."

Furthermore, a more mixed diet could reduce the risk of the Zoom fatigue that some children might experience after spending long periods in front of the computer. This is not to advise schools that they should not continue with a full timetable of live lessons, but just poses some considerations for reflection and mitigation.

Kirschner's (2020) top piece of advice is for teachers to keep online lessons short. He argues that evidence suggests it's difficult for children to maintain concentration online for long periods. While the DfE's expected learning hours might seem to make Kirschner's concerns appear irreconcilable, it is important to note the DfE requirements do not explicitly expect that these hours consist of non-stop teacher instruction. Indeed, if Kirschner is correct, such an expectation could be counterproductive. So, some schools are maintaining the notion of hour-long lessons, but incorporating within this time for students to work on activities or practice what they have learned.

It is also worth sparing a thought for the humble textbook too. Evidence suggests there are some advantages of printed materials, such as textbooks, over online resources. Oates (2016) highlights evidence that scrolling and navigating use up brain capacity, which affects comprehension. Wiliam (2018), argues "most high-performing countries – even the ones that could afford to give every child a tablet or laptop – make extensive use of textbooks because they enable every student to get high-quality instructional materials." Given the points made above about Zoom fatigue and the difficulties some children face in

accessing devices, it could be worth considering in some subjects whether textbooks could form a part of students' remote curriculum.

Whatever the medium being used, it's important not to stray from the most important and effective aspects of teaching. For example, Kirschner (2020) argues that teachers should "begin simple and work towards the complex, begin general and work towards the specific." Start with a contextualised 'exemplary example', he suggests, that students understand and can relate to, and then 'unpeel it in layers' like an onion to reveal the underlying concept in increasing complexity. This back-and-forth movement between concrete examples and abstract concepts is often to be found in effective classroom teaching (Maton 2014), and it's important not to overlook this when teaching remotely.

Many blogs have been written since the start of the pandemic about the developing remote practice in schools and these are worth reviewing. These include:

- Boxer, A. 2020 Some top tips for making teaching videos
- Fletcher-Wood, H. 2020 Learning in the time of coronavirus: learning distance schooling
- Enser, M. 2021 Remote learning: How to apply Rosenshine's principles.
- Facer, J. 2020 Remote learning: lessons learned

The EEF has a range of support materials, and Oak National Academy's support pages contain a treasure trove of advice and case studies on remote education.

3) Be clear on the purpose of assessment and feedback

As illustrated above, effective teaching depends on making sure curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are pulling in the same direction. You will also have noted the DfE's requirement that schools are:

- enabling students to receive timely and frequent feedback on how to progress, using digitally-facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate
- using assessment to ensure teaching is responsive to students' needs and addresses any critical gaps in students' knowledge

It is important to recognise, however, that some established 'marking' practices do not necessarily result in good feedback. We have seen this previously in schools when marking has sometimes been more about compliance with a policy rather than good formative assessment.

Problems identified by Christodoulou & Wiliam (2017) can include:

- Lack of clarity about the purpose of the marking
- Lack of specific feedback
- Feedback doesn't require students do anything with it
- Teaching doesn't adapt as a result
- Workload

For this reason, it's helpful to avoid conflating marking with assessment. As Christodoulou says (Christodoulou & Wiliam, 2017), "We've got into a bit of a situation where we think that feedback and marking are the same thing and actually they're not. There's lots of different ways to give feedback that don't involve marking, and a lot of marking isn't good feedback, and...it's probably the most time expensive task."

So, when transposed to the world of remote education, it's important to recognise the same assessment risks could be transferred into this new paradigm: we could set up industrious remote marking practices which don't make enough difference to students. We can help to mitigate this risk by talking about assessment, rather than marking, and by turning the above list on its head:

- Know the purpose of your assessment. What specifically do you want to find out?
- Give specific feedback. Comments like "explain more" can be replaced by specifics about exactly what should be included or asking the pupil to spot what is missing.
- Require students to do something. This doesn't mean getting into lengthy written exchanges with them – it might be about asking them to answer another question so they can practice and improve.
- Consider how you will adapt your teaching as a result. There's no point ploughing on if most of the students haven't understood
- Be efficient. Don't mistake industry for impact. Not everything has to be assessed and not everything that is assessed has to be assessed by a teacher; many online quizzes can be self-marked.

Even after taking on board the above points, assessment is, arguably, one of the trickiest aspects of remote teaching. The impression gleaned from the early weeks of the first lockdown was that schools and teachers often found assessment hardest, or in some cases overlooked it entirely.

This may have been because some of the tasks that teachers might have set in those early weeks were not intended to be assessed – they might not have been considered part of the main curriculum because the initial expectation from many of us was that Covid-19 would be a temporary disruption rather than an ongoing emergency. Such work may have been a 'bolt-on' to the normal curriculum. This may have particularly been the case for some of the long-term project work students were set.

This is one reason why the DfE stipulates that schools should avoid "an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities." Given the expectation that the remote curriculum should be sequenced and with 'a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught', it would be sensible to ensure assessment is appropriately aligned – so we can find out if what is being taught is actually being learned.

There are other reasons to ensure assessment is part of remote education too, such as providing a focus for interactions between students. Mujis (2021) argues that "peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes. It's therefore worth considering enabling these through, for example, chat groups or video-linking functions."

And, of course, many teachers and schools routinely make use of retrieval practice and low-stakes quizzes because of the evidence from cognitive science that such strategies can boost learning (Weinstein & Sumeracki, 2019). There is no evidence that suggests these can't be an effective part of the remote classroom too. Indeed, some strategies are well-suited to remote education. For example, "spaced repetition, which is also sometimes known as distributed practice, is one of the best-evidenced but least-used findings in education (Christodoulou, 2020). There are sophisticated online spaced repetition apps which pose children questions with a frequency designed to make it easier to learn what they're struggling to remember, while focusing less frequently on things they have already memorised. The software does the assessment heavy lifting, the pupil and teacher reap the benefit.

Perhaps most importantly, though, effective assessment is necessary so that subsequent teaching can be adapted. Borrowing the term ‘responsive teaching’ from Dylan Wiliam, Fletcher-Wood (2018) argues that “awareness of exactly what students need, and responsiveness to this – rather than indiscriminately providing support – is therefore critical.”

Wiliam (2020) argues that assessment is essentially about drawing inferences. In ‘normal’ face-to-face teaching subtle forms of assessment can happen intuitively, helping the teacher to draw inferences about what students have learned; the teacher who glances around the class having asked a question can see students’ puzzled expressions and instinctively knows they need to explain something slightly differently, provide more practice, or break it down further. In the remote classroom it can be harder, but it is no less important. This means teachers might have to think more explicitly about what they want to find out and how they will do it if they are to draw the kinds of inferences they need.

To use the analogy of a satellite sending a signal into space, we only know how far the signal has travelled if it bounces back to us. Teachers have to be able to pick up the signal of what students have learned if they are to draw meaningful inferences. This doesn’t have to mean lots of lengthy online submissions (although these could be part of the picture). Many online platforms such as Teams and Google have the facility teachers and students to talk, either verbally or through messages. These can be a very useful tool for assessment and feedback.

Mujis (2021) gives examples of how some teachers are assessing and providing feedback:

- chatroom discussions
- 1-to-1 interaction tools
- interactive touch-screen questioning in live recorded lessons
- adaptive learning software

Lemov (2020) illustrates how teachers can implement assessment through a range of strategies, including using self-assessment by creating models against which children can check their work. He also describes ‘lagging assessment’, where students complete a task during the remote lesson which is subsequently assessed by the teacher. By anticipating common mistakes and misconceptions teachers can provide supportive prompts and reminders. This is the sort of teaching that might happen routinely in the face-to-face classroom but could be overlooked remotely.

4) Spinning plates

This final section briefly explores the reality that many schools, and therefore teachers, are neither operating fully in the face-to-face classroom or the remote classroom. Many are having to cater for the needs of students who are vulnerable or are the children of critical workers, and thus eligible for onsite teaching, while simultaneously meeting the DfE’s expectations for those students who are learning at home.

The difficulty of meeting this challenge will vary for each school and Trust, it may also vary within school depending on the subject, the teacher and the resources they have available. Accordingly, this section seeks to identify some things to consider, recognising that what works in one school may not work in another.

The key, though, is to move forward from a position of entitlement: each child, whether they are being educated remotely or onsite, is entitled to the same curriculum. This is particularly important because it is possible that attendance patterns could fluctuate over time. For example, it could be that a child who is usually educated onsite has to isolate at home for a period of time. They need to be able to switch to remote lessons without being disadvantaged by not having studied the same content as their peers.

Things to consider:

1. Knowing what devices your students can access is important, but you also need to consider supplementary questions. For example, how many people do they share that device with? Is it a phone or a laptop? Mujis (2021) indicates that students tend to spend longer accessing lessons on a laptop than they do on a phone. Piecing some of this together might help you to make better decisions about how you will teach the curriculum at home, and this could have a knock-on impact on what happens in school.
2. Many schools have focused on developing an online remote offer and, as such, those students being educated onsite could simply be asked to follow the online offer while they are at school. Of course, to do this they will need a device. It may be that the school has enough to provide this or it may be that they allow students to bring their own devices (if the school is set up for a BYOD approach). Again, it is important to consider the type of device.
3. Some schools and teachers decided that lessons will continue to be taught from the teacher's classroom so those onsite can be taught as usual, but with the lesson broadcast to those at home. Logistically, this could work for some teachers and students. However, it's not without problem. For example, it assumes that teachers can continue to attend the school site during this time. This could be difficult for a range of reasons, including in relation to CEV staff or those with young children of their own at home. Moreover, if Zoom fatigue is a concern, this approach could be difficult for those at home who are having to watch the entire school day via video.
4. If non-specialist staff are supervising onsite students, it might be beneficial for them to have access to the curriculum and resources. They may find it reassuring to know what students are going to be studying so they can check in advance if any materials are needed (pens and paper etc.), or have a sense of what the content is going to be so they can support students.

5. Final Thought

The work that schools and Trusts have done since the start of the pandemic to ensure that students have access to their educational entitlement, whether at home or at school, has been incredible. To everyone in your school or Trust who has helped to protect education during this challenging time: thank you – you are a credit to the children and communities you serve. We are proud to represent you.

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