

The journey to subject reports



Our recent history

- From our inception in 1992, Ofsted's work focused not only on the individual inspection of schools, but also on **thematic** and **research** work across the sector.
- This work was highly prized by schools. It informed and shaped the debate about what it meant to teach subjects well.
- Schools are asking for reliable, trustworthy information about how to enhance their expertise in subjects and curriculum design.

The distinctiveness of subjects

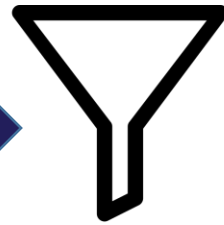
- Subjects are key ways that humans go about organising knowledge, validating claims and discovering more
- A significant portion of the knowledge that we pass on to pupils is structured into these subjects
- Different subjects have different 'forms of knowledge' that are distinctive to those subjects



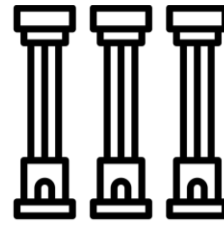
From research review to subject report



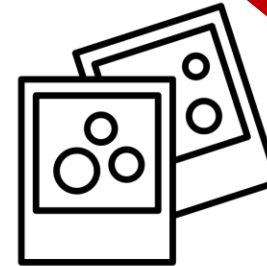
Established principles for quality of education (EIF)



Filter: subject education



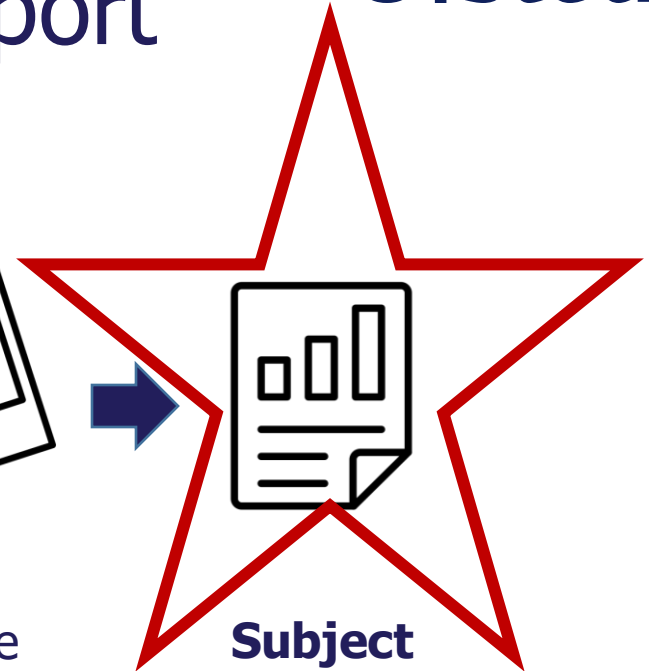
Conception of subject quality (**research reviews**)



Evidence base

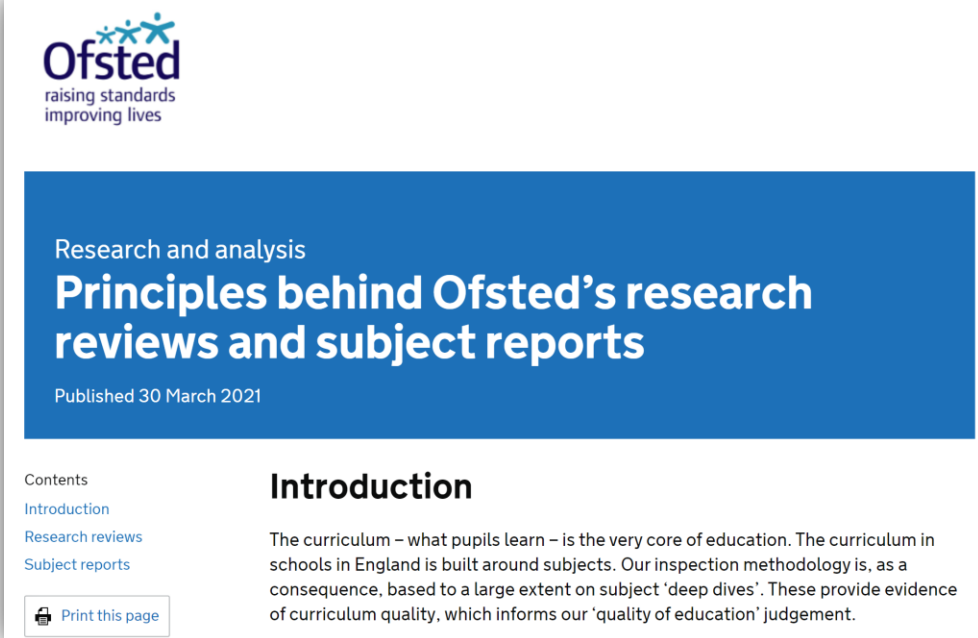


Subject report



Principles paper – inclusion criteria

- An understanding that curriculum is different from pedagogy
- How people learn
- Relevance to inspection
- Subject specificity



The screenshot shows the cover and introduction of a research paper. The cover features the Ofsted logo and the title 'Principles behind Ofsted's research reviews and subject reports' in a blue box. The introduction text discusses the curriculum as the core of education, built around subjects, and mentions 'deep dives' as a methodology for evidence gathering.

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Research and analysis
Principles behind Ofsted's research reviews and subject reports
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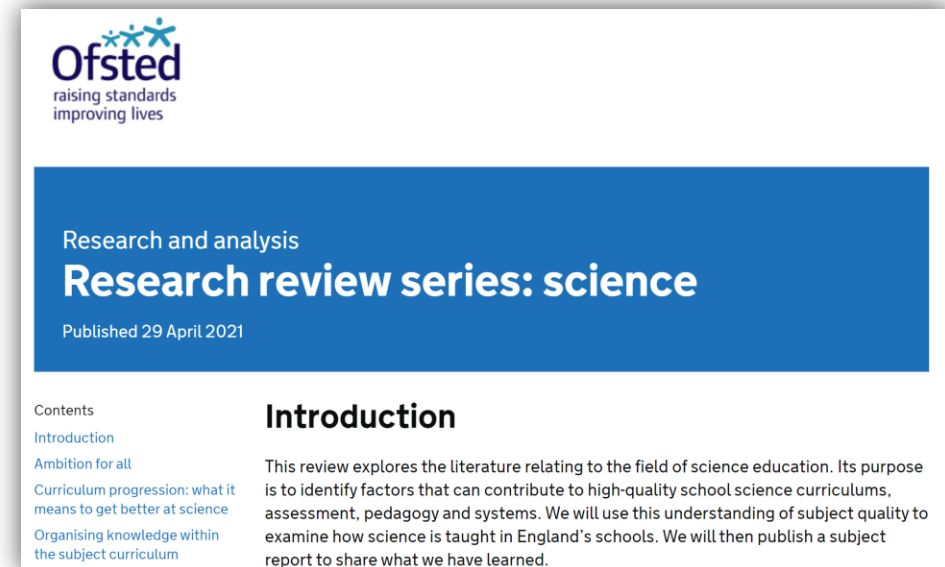
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Introduction

The curriculum – what pupils learn – is the very core of education. The curriculum in schools in England is built around subjects. Our inspection methodology is, as a consequence, based to a large extent on subject 'deep dives'. These provide evidence of curriculum quality, which informs our 'quality of education' judgement.

Research reviews

- What published research tells us about a high-quality education in each subject
- Supporting and informing those leading the thinking on subject education
- Useful guiding principles – particularly in the current context



Factors that explain variation in quality

Curriculum: scope, components, sequencing and rigour



Pedagogy



Assessment



Systems



Subject reports

- 50 schools in sample (25 primary / 25 secondary)
- Research ethics considered
- Standardised questions asked
- Builds on the research review – the concept of quality set out in this review was used as a lens to consider subject quality
- Evaluates common strengths and weaknesses: these were often different for the primary and secondary phases

Useful links

- [Principles paper](#)
- [Research review series: science](#)
- [Finding the optimum: the science subject report](#)
- [Curriculum research: assessing intent, implementation and impact](#)
- [Intention and substance: primary school science curriculum research](#)



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