

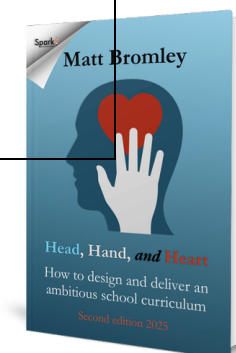


## Curriculum planning – audit tool 2025

### 1 HEAD

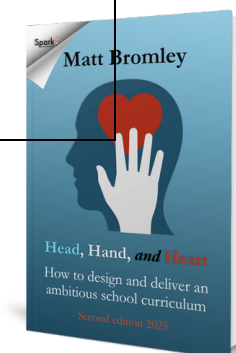
The **head** represents the thinking, or the ‘what?’: the intellectual and strategic work of curriculum planning. It is the domain of vision and values, of deliberate design. In this section of the audit tool, we will consider how you can articulate a coherent intent: from agreeing a shared vision and setting the destination, to identifying starting points and plotting a course through the curriculum. We will examine what knowledge matters and why, and we will look at issues of curriculum breadth, balance, and equity.

Curriculum question	Strengths	Evidence	Areas for development	Actions required
<i>Is our curriculum ambitious?</i>				
Does our curriculum teach the knowledge and skills learners need to take advantage of the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life?				
Does our curriculum reflect our school’s local context? Does it address typical gaps in learners’ knowledge and skills?				
Does our curriculum bring the local community into school and take learners out into the community?				



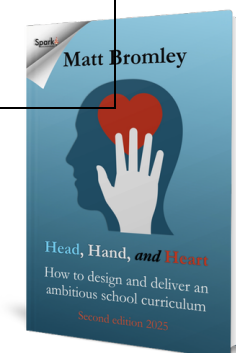


Does our curriculum respond to our learners' particular life experiences?				
Is our curriculum sufficiently broad to ensure learners are taught as many different subject disciplines as possible for as long as possible?				
Is our curriculum sufficiently balanced so that each subject discipline has a fair amount of space on the timetable to deliver both breadth and depth?				
Are learners able to study a strong academic core of subjects but also afforded a well-rounded education including in the arts?				
Do we account for the hidden curriculum and ensure there are no inconsistencies or contradictions between what we explicitly teach in lessons and what we teach by way of the values, behaviours, and attitudes all our staff display daily, and by the quality of the learning environment and our rules and routines?				



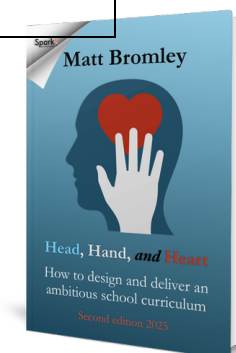


<i>Is our curriculum preparatory?</i>				
Is it clear what curriculum content (knowledge, skills, and understanding) we are building towards as a school and in each subject discipline that we teach?				
Is it clear what our learners need to know and be able to do and understand at each stage to acquire this curriculum content?				
Will this curriculum content fully prepare learners for the next stage of their education, employment, and lives?				
Do we make explicit links between related content within and across subject disciplines?				



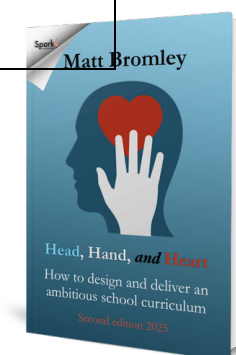


As well as subject-specific knowledge and skills, do we also identify the research and study skills – and indeed other cross-curricular skills – that our learners need to succeed?				
Are skills explicitly taught and reinforced? Are they taught consistently across all subjects where applicable?				
Do we ensure that the content of each part of our curriculum seamlessly join to the starting points of the next and so on, so that we achieve curriculum continuity and so that transitions between the various years, key stages and phases of education are as smooth as they can be?				
<b>Is our curriculum sequenced?</b>				
Does our planning ensure that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and help learners acquire the curriculum content we've planned?				



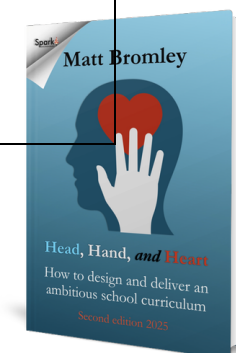


Is there an appropriate pace that allows for sufficient breadth and depth?				
Is content taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly enough for all learners to acquire the intended knowledge and skills?				
Is there an appropriate level of challenge for all?				
Does our progression model allow for a mastery approach where the higher-performing learners are sufficiently stretched and lower-performing learners are effectively supported, and yet the integrity of our teaching sequence is still maintained so that no learner runs too far ahead or falls too far behind?				



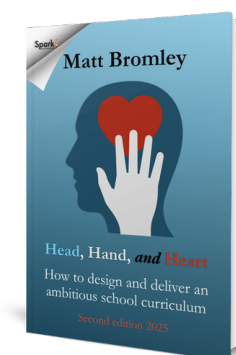


Do we bake retrieval practice into our curriculum to ensure we activate prior knowledge as and when appropriate and keep that prior knowledge accessible to learners so that they can make connections between what they learned yesterday, what they're learning today, and what they will learn tomorrow? Does this enable learners to forge ever-more complex schemata in long-term memory and aide automaticity?				
<b>Is our curriculum inclusive?</b>				
Have we planned to teach the knowledge and cultural capital our learners need to access and understand our curriculum and go on to thrive in later life?				
Are there high academic ambitions for all learners, and do we offer disadvantaged learners and those with SEND the same curriculum experience as their peers rather than 'dumb down' or reduce the offer?				
Do we identify the barriers some learners face in school and within each subject discipline, including though not solely a potential vocabulary deficit, and do we plan effective support strategies to help overcome those barriers?				





Whenever we use additional intervention and support strategies to help disadvantaged learners and those with SEND, do we monitor their effectiveness as they're happening rather than wait to evaluate their eventual success once they've ended?				
Do we use appropriate and well-judged adaptations to help pupils to overcome the most significant barriers to learning, particularly for those who are disadvantaged and/or who have SEND? Do these adaptations effectively enable pupils to learn the curriculum, so that they secure the knowledge and skills they need for future learning?				

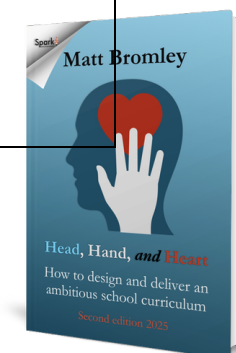




## 2 HAND

The **hand** is about the doing, or the ‘how?’: the art and science of classroom practice. In this section of the audit, we will explore pedagogy that makes the curriculum come alive. We will consider how to stimulate learners’ senses, challenge them to think hard yet efficiently, and provide structured opportunities for deliberate practice. We will examine the importance of motivation, both extrinsic and intrinsic, and the power of modelling, questioning, and managing cognitive load. The hand is where curriculum meets the learner – where plans are enacted with precision, passion, and purpose.

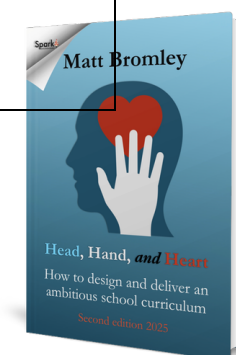
Curriculum question	Strengths	Evidence	Areas for development	Actions required
<b><i>Do teachers have expert subject knowledge?</i></b>				
If not, are they being supported to address gaps in their knowledge so that learners are not disadvantaged by ineffective teaching?				
Does the school support an effective programme of subject-specific professional development as well as training on generic pedagogy?				
Do the teachers assigned to each cohort, each year group and each level and type of qualification have the knowledge and experience to teach it well? Thus: is timetabling as effectiveness as it could be?				





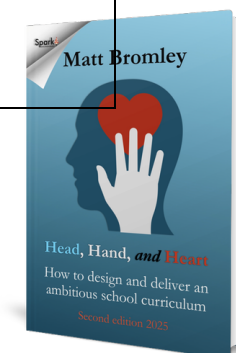


Do teachers explain key concepts?				
Are teacher explanations effective – for example, do they make use of dual coding?				
Do teachers also model thinking aloud for learners to make the invisible visible and the implicit explicit?				
Do teachers explicitly teach the language – including tier 2 and 3 vocabulary – that learners need in order to understand the curriculum?				
Do teachers articulate clear learning outcomes and make explicit what learners should know and be able to do at the end of each sequence of lessons?				



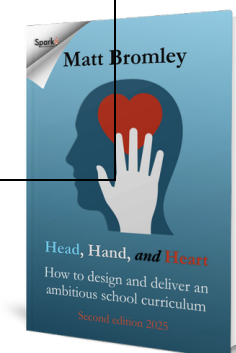


Do teachers establish routines for classroom discussions so that all learners contribute fairly and in order that debate deepens learners' understanding?				
Do teachers make use of 'live' low-stakes assessment practices such as hinge questions and exit tickets to assess learners' understanding and to identify the gaps in their knowledge and skills, as well as their misunderstandings?				
Do they use these assessments to inform their planning and teaching so that lesson planning is fluid and responsive, rather than something to stick to religiously?				
<b><i>Do learners embed key concepts in long-term memory and apply them fluently?</i></b>				
Is the subject curriculum taught in such a way that helps learners to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory?				



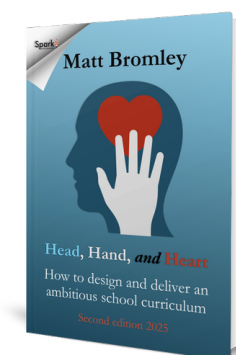


Do teachers gain the active attention of learners' working memories and make them think hard but efficiently about curriculum content? Once encoded into long-term memory, do teachers provide plenty of opportunities for retrieval practice to ensure the knowledge in long-term memory is brought back into the working memory so that it remains accessible, and so as to encourage learners to apply that knowledge in different contexts? Is prior learning linked to new learning, so that what is taught today builds upon what was taught yesterday and so forth?				
Are explicit links made between different parts of the curriculum and indeed across curriculum areas to help make knowledge transferable and useable?				
Is teaching sequenced in practice not just in lesson plans so that learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to complete each task before they are asked to complete it, and so that new knowledge and skills logically build on what has been taught before enabling learners to make progress towards clearly defined end points?				
<b>Do teachers use formative assessment to check learners' understanding?</b>				
Do all these assessments have a clear purpose? Do they provide valid data on which the teacher can and does act?				





Is the feedback garnered from assessments meaningful and motivating to learners? Does it help them to close the gap between their current performance and their desired performance?				
Is time set aside every time feedback is given to learners so that they can process it, question it if needed, and act upon it in class whilst the teacher is present to provide support, challenge and encouragement?				

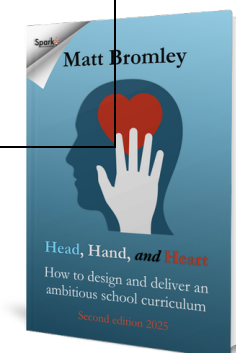




### 3 HEART

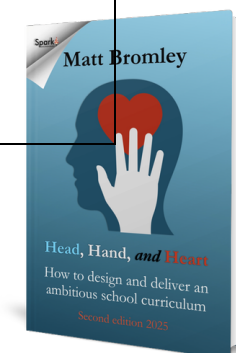
The **heart** is the purpose or the ‘why’: the moral and meaningful outcomes of education. In this section, we will focus on the impact of our work. What difference does our curriculum make to learners’ lives? Are our assessments valid and our feedback meaningful? Are we helping young people become self-regulating, successful learners prepared for the next stage in their lives? The heart of our work lies in shaping not only learners’ knowledge and skills, but also their character, aspirations, and self-worth.

Curriculum question	Strengths	Evidence	Areas for development	Actions required
<i>How do we prepare learners for the next stage of their lives?</i>				
Is learners’ attainment in national tests and examinations over time above national averages? Is learners’ progress, as shown in national tests and examinations over time, above national averages?				
Over time, is the difference between the attainment rate of our school’s disadvantaged learners and those of all non- disadvantaged learners nationally narrower than the difference between the attainment rates of all disadvantaged learners and those of non-disadvantaged learners nationally?				
Where do our learners go next? Does this represent a positive step in the right direction for them? Is it ambitious and challenging?				



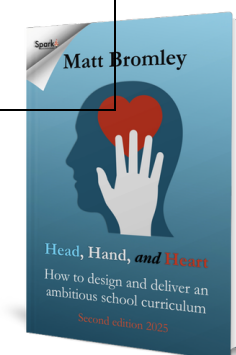


How effective is our provision of character education? RSE? PSHE? The fundamental British values? Does this prepare learners for their next steps beyond subject qualifications?				
Do we run an ambitious programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which take learners beyond the academic curriculum and the taught timetable? Do we develop oracy skills, perhaps through a debating society?				
What messages does our hidden curriculum send to learners? What do the words and actions of all the adults in school say to learners about what values and attitudes matter most in life, and about how to behave as citizens and employees?				
<b>How do we develop learners' wider skills?</b>				
Are the skills that learners need in order to be prepared for their next steps explicitly planned and taught?				





Are skills developed as 'transferable' or through subject disciplines in domain-specific ways? <i>NB You may decide that some skills are transferable because they are used in many subjects across the curriculum and in similar ways. Take, for example, structuring an argument, working in a team, giving feedback to a peer, internet research, note-taking, and so on.</i>				
<b><i>Is the information, advice and guidance we provide impartial and effective?</i></b>				
Do you offer effective impartial careers guidance and advice on further qualifications to study?				
Do learners know their options for the next stage of their education, employment and lives? Are they able to make informed decisions?				
Does future planning, including thinking about career options, help foster intrinsic motivation and lend purpose to learners' current studies?				





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Adapted from the book, **Head, Hand, and Heart: How to design and deliver an ambitious school curriculum** by Matt Bromley

