

*A Quick Guide to*



Mike Lansdown

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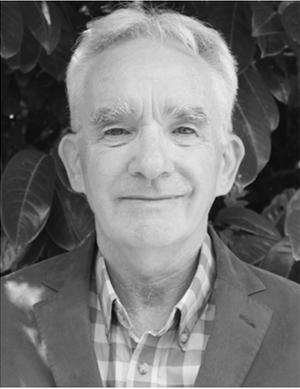
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## About the author



**Mike Lansdown** is a PGCE tutor and a supervisor for the MA in education with the University of Buckingham's education department, a position he has held since retiring from his second headship in 2015. Prior to completing 18 years as a headteacher, he worked in London teaching in both the primary and secondary sectors. Before this, he taught English as a foreign language (EFL) in London and in Sweden, but started life as a teacher of geography, geology and PE in Newport, Gwent. He enjoys watching rugby, painting and writing. He has previously published a text on learning and teaching called *In the Zone*, and has self-published a historical novel, *Adam's Lock*.

## Thanks and acknowledgements

I would like to thank and acknowledge the help of a number of people. First, all the trainees and mentors I have worked with as a tutor with the University of Buckingham over the past three years, especially in 2017–18 when the idea for this guide first emerged. I would also like to thank my colleagues at the university for their guidance and support, as well as Neil Brading at *Outset Education* for generously giving me his time and his opinions on the final draft. Similarly, I am extremely grateful for the guidance I received from Emma Hollis at NASBTT and Dr Elizabeth White in the School of Education at the University of Hertfordshire. Last, but not least, thanks to my family for ignoring the mess on the dining room table – we will soon be eating off it again, I promise.

# Introduction

## Background

This quick guide is the result of numerous discussions I have had with trainees about how to provide the strongest evidence of progress against the Teachers' Standards. It assumes that most, if not all, of the evidence will be uploaded onto an e-portfolio capable of being verified remotely – a fact that in itself makes the careful selection and presentation of the best possible evidence key to the process.

The world of education is replete with jargon and specialist words that may well mean something to teachers and school leaders but might mean something else completely (and sometimes nothing!) to the uninitiated. At the start of your teacher-training course, the unavoidable fact is that there is a good chance you will fall into this latter category. Consequently, the guide is written in the spirit of 'explicit modelling' and assumes that you, as a relatively inexperienced trainee, will need the ideas and terms that your more experienced colleagues take for granted explained to you in more detail. As a result, there is some repetition and reinforcement, but I believe this will only serve to cement your understanding over the first few weeks of the year and beyond.

An important component of your training year(s), and of the ones that follow, is the ability to reflect critically on your own practice and on how it impacts the learning and progress of the pupils you teach. To help you in this, against each strand in the guide is a space for you to reflect on what you did in your teaching and how it helped your pupils to learn.

## How to use this guide

The guide is designed to be used regularly – daily even. The noting and collating of evidence should be an on-going process that avoids a last-minute rush towards the end of an already busy term, and builds up an emerging picture of improving practice.

- ✓ Take the guide to all meetings with your mentor, tutor and other colleagues. Refer to and add to it when you are considering particular strands of the Standards, especially when discussing how to provide strong evidence of your progress against them.
- ✓ Use the guide to help you focus on, and raise your own awareness of, particular areas of your professional practice. Keep it near you when you are doing academic reading, for example, so that you keep the link between the theoretical and the practical aspects firmly in mind.
- ✓ Keep it in your classroom so you can jot down notes against the Standards as things occur, especially where evidence may be ephemeral, eg a note of where to find a particularly successful piece of differentiated work in a pupil's book; spoken comments made by pupils that indicate progress in learning; a photo of a temporary construction or an illustration of pupils working well as a group.

## A note on the layout

Each left-hand page of the guide comprises the following:

- a breakdown of the chosen Teachers' Standard strand (1a, 1b...) with a brief explanation of the key words or phrases it includes;
- a 'What kind of evidence is possible/best?' section made up of suggestions on the best sort of evidence to include and where to look for it;
- an 'Anything to avoid?' section, based on my experience of using e-portfolios over the last two years, reinforcing the points made about making the verifier's job easier (see below) and emphasising quality over quantity.

Each right-hand page of the guide comprises:

- a page (facing each strand) with a table for you to complete. The table template is also available online at [www.criticalpublishing.com/free-resources](http://www.criticalpublishing.com/free-resources). You should fill in a version of the table for each strand of the Standards. It allows you to keep on-going notes, recording anything you could use to evidence progress against the Teachers' Standard described. It will help you find the evidence you are looking for weeks, or even months, after the event. This will be important, especially towards the end of what will be a busy year! You can include reminders of where the evidence is from and where it is stored, eg Lesson observation (Year 4 science) by mentor Oct 5 2018; maths display (Year 6) Laptop folder: 'Displays'.

*Note: as mentioned above, some repetition and overlap in the advice given is inevitable and preferable, I believe, to leaving gaps. It also recognises the inter-relatedness and the non-sequential nature of evidencing the Standards.*

## Evidencing your progress against the Teachers' Standards

Over recent years there has been increasing emphasis on trainees providing *evidence of the impact* of their teaching upon *pupil progress over time*, tracked and evidenced in *sequences of lessons* – something that is increasingly preferred to evidence relating only to *individual* teaching sessions. In Ofsted's own words:

***The very recent changes to assessment are helping current trainees to make these links [between lessons] more readily. The use of 'evidence bundles', which bring together evidence of pupils' progress over time, helps trainees to recognise the positive effects of their teaching on pupils' progress over a sequence of lessons.***

(Essex and Thames Primary SCITT, Ofsted, 2016)

Although the Teachers' Standards themselves have remained unchanged, the current trend is towards the use of evidence bundles (see below for description) to support a more holistic approach in evaluating a trainee's progress over the year. There appears, therefore, to be a general move away from the provision of evidence for each individual strand to the more *holistic* perspective increasingly being adopted by providers and verifiers.

This reflects and reinforces point 13 of the DfE Teachers' Standards Document (June 2013) which says:

*The bullets [strands], which are an integral part of the Standards, are designed to amplify the scope of each heading. The bulleted subheadings should not be interpreted as separate Standards in their own right...*

Clearly, trainees are required to meet each of the overarching Standards per se and need to provide evidence that this is the case. The provision of evidence against the strands will help them do this but it is not a requirement to provide evidence against each and every one of them.

*Note: individual providers may differ in the details of how evidence is to be garnered, collated and presented, and you need to be clear on what your provider expects. Nevertheless, and whatever approach is adopted, this guide will support you in understanding the Standards and in deciding on the best sorts of evidence to present – whether stand-alone or brought together in a bundle.*

## What do evidence bundles look like?

The National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) says that evidence bundles could include:

- *pupil data (prior to activity to show starting point, eg. previous activity level – this needs to reflect skills, knowledge and understanding related to the intended learning outcomes);*
- *pupil progress over time;*
- *self- and peer-assessments undertaken by pupils;*
- *annotated samples of pupils' work, including homework;*
- *trainee marking and annotations to highlight impact, and how this was acted upon by pupils showing improvements;*
- *visual or electronic evidence, eg video clips of lessons or parts of lessons to show individuals at the start, middle and end of a sequence of work;*
- *completed exams and tests;*
- *comments about each pupil's progress, outcomes, behaviour and effort;*
- *weekly meeting reports and interim reviews;*
- *lesson plans, formal observations and lesson evaluations which relate to progress.*

(NASBTT: Training and Assessment Toolkit: Evidence Bundles for Tracking Progress – Supporting Guidance, December 2017)

Like a good detective or barrister, you will gradually build your case over the year, presenting evidence to support your claim that you are meeting each of the eight Standards. Naturally, your evidence should be clear, and so compelling that no reasonably-minded person could decline to verify what you have presented.

## Finally...how to make your verifier's job easier!

To help you empathise with the verifier, picture *yourself* marking 30 books at the weekend, because the same things that frustrate you when you are marking (poor presentation of work; pupils missing the point and answering a different question; grammar that makes work difficult to understand; indistinct images) all have their equivalents for the struggling verifier. Imagine the verifier in their office or kitchen, possibly tired or distracted, and present them with something they cannot fail to recognise as meeting the Standard under consideration. A wise trainee aims to make their job easy!

With this firmly in mind use the following checklist.

- Read carefully and fully understand the strand of the Teachers' Standards* under consideration. In effect, understand, then 'answer the question'. This guide will help you enormously in this.

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- Wherever possible try to *link your evidence with the improved learning and progress* that you are aiming at for individual or groups of pupils. The progress you identify could be academic, behavioural, social, or some other aspect pertinent to improving outcomes for the pupil(s) concerned.

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- Favour quality over quantity.* The verifier does not want to spend valuable time sifting through lots of irrelevant material.

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- Where possible, *include more than one person's view of your teaching*, eg mentor, tutor, subject lead/head of department, or other senior colleagues. This will give balance to your evidence and make it all the more compelling.

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- Draw upon as wide a range of teaching contexts as you can.* If you are in primary, try to avoid limiting your evidence entirely to a single teaching group, for example, just in English or maths. If you are in secondary, draw your examples of good practice from a selection of classes across the age range you teach. What opportunities are there for broadening your experience and evidencing what you can do more widely?

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- Ensure that your final selection of evidence* for a particular Standard *spans a decent range of time* to show that it reflects an embedded, consistent behaviour, rather than a one-off. Obviously, this will become easier as the year progresses and stronger evidence is likely to emerge as time goes by.

*Note: this will be especially important when you move on to evidencing 'good' or 'outstanding' practice, as many of the Standards include words such as consistently, much of the time, systematically, maintains, sustains, and over time. Evidence collected 'over time' will certainly better support your claims against the higher-level descriptors.*

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*Highlight clearly what it is you want the verifier to read, notice, and tick off. You can literally highlight the section(s), add annotations, type in bold... whatever makes it stand out most clearly for the person reading it.*

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*Critically, include with your evidence a clear and concise description of the context in which it was generated (eg This session was the first in a sequence of three lessons on story-starts; This comes from a lesson I revisited as children had not fully grasped the concept of division; This shows parts of a sequence of lesson plans aimed at developing children's investigative skills in history) and explain/justify carefully why you believe it evidences this Standard particularly well.*

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You also need to recognise that some parts of the Standards are easier to evidence than others. Many lend themselves to the uploading of documentation and reports, whereas others (eg 8a: 'is able to make a positive contribution to the... ethos of the school') might rely more on comments by a range of people, which are not so easily available and in this case you may need to request supporting evidence from a colleague or other professional, for instance an email or thank you note from your mentor or head teacher.

Finally, remember that 'meeting' the Standards is just the first step of a longer journey. The NASBTT Training and Assessment Toolkit makes it clear that 'Partnerships should work with trainees... to realise the trainees' potential *in becoming good and outstanding teachers* [my italics] as seen through the lens of the progress that pupils make'. A lot of trainees achieve the higher levels, so this can and should be your ambition too!

# Teacher’s Standard 2: promote good progress and outcomes by pupils

## TS 2a: ‘is able to take accountability for pupils’ attainment, progress and outcomes’

Key words	Understanding the Standard: guidance notes
<i>to take accountability</i>	<p>I take this to mean that you accept a large measure of responsibility for improving your pupils’ attainment, progress and outcomes.</p> <p>The evidence for this will come through the things you actually <i>do</i> which show that you take a responsible and professional approach to supporting your pupils.</p>
<i>attainment</i>	<p>A measure of the level of learning.</p> <p>In simple terms, a mark or a grade, for example.</p>
<i>progress</i>	<p>A measurement of the distance that a pupil has made in their learning.</p> <p>In other words, the difference your teaching has made to the learning of this pupil. What do they know or understand, or are able to do now that they could not do before?</p>
<i>outcomes</i>	<p>This is a trickier term to pin down exactly. It includes the acquired knowledge and skills implied above, but would also imply elements such as attendance, attitudes and behaviour, learning habits and so on.</p> <p>These are important for all children, but for particularly vulnerable groups (eg Traveller children, Looked After children and children with EAL) they might be especially pertinent.</p>

### In relation to pupils’ learning and progress, what kind of evidence is possible/best?

- ✓ Planning, annotated and/or adapted, which shows you have taken into account the varying progress of individuals and groups in your class(es). Include a commentary to explain what the planning sheets show, what you did to adjust your teaching, and why.
- ✓ Examples of tracking sheets with a commentary explaining what they show and how you use the information they contain.
- ✓ Any targets – curriculum or behavioural – you have set pupils and how you monitor them. Again, a commentary explaining simply the context in which the targets were set would be useful.
- ✓ Notes of meetings with the SENCO, SLT or others in which you have shared concerns and decided on any actions needed.
- ✓ Examples of changes to teaching input following marking. Did you, for example, repeat material or change the level of challenge as a result?

### Anything to avoid?

- ✗ Unsubstantiated claims that you take these responsibilities seriously.



**TS 3b: ‘is able to demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas and the value of scholarship’**

Key words	Understanding the Standard: guidance notes
<i>demonstrate a critical understanding</i>	<p>The word <i>critical</i> here means that you are able to take an evaluative view of ‘developments’, in which you weigh up and articulate what you think of them.</p> <p>In teaching and learning, things are rarely black and white and it is important to show that you have thought about the various arguments and come to a personal view about what you believe.</p>
<i>developments</i>	<p>Generally, things develop quite slowly in education and today’s practice is still heavily influenced by some decades-old theories and ideas.</p> <p>Consequently, you should be able to show your understanding of the main well-established ideas about teaching and learning covered by your university studies.</p> <p>However, it is also important to keep up with current developments, especially in a world increasingly influenced by computer technology and improved understanding of how the brain works, for example.</p>
<i>scholarship</i>	<p>The OED defines scholarship as ‘<i>academic achievement; learning of a high level (and) the methods and Standards characteristic of a good scholar (ie a learned person)</i>’.</p> <p>Are you able to demonstrate that <i>you</i> value learning and help to promote the love of learning in your pupils? Do you model tackling something that you yourself find difficult to learn? Can you also demonstrate that you take the learning of <i>how to teach</i> (pedagogy) seriously through, for instance, your application of educational theories to classroom practice? For example, experimenting with different approaches to classroom groupings (ability, mixed-ability, gender).</p>

**In relation to pupils’ learning and progress, what kind of evidence is possible/best?**

- ✓ Extracts taken from meetings with your mentor and others that show you can articulate a view on different approaches to teaching and learning, explaining your reasons for your beliefs. This could come through others’ comments about your ability to reflect, or could be evident from what you yourself have written.
- ✓ Your own reflections on how lessons went that include reference to relevant theory (eg social constructivism; growth mindsets).
- ✓ Extracts from written work that you have done as part of your studies. (*Note: different establishments may have different rules on, for example, including parts of essays as evidence. Please check with your own institution on this one.*)
- ✓ Anything which demonstrates that you encourage pupils to go the extra mile in their studies, eg asking children to find additional information about a topic at home, using books, the internet, adult friends or relatives.
- ✓ Evidence that you encourage children who may be of a more academic bent to challenge themselves further, praising them for their efforts and hard work.

**Anything to avoid?**

- ✗ Simple statements outlining the university work you have done on various pedagogies.

