**Possible directional questions**

The following questions are to help you direct your thinking on the significant characteristics. They can be posed to school improvers/governors/ SLT/heads of departments/middle leaders. Sometimes the same question works at all levels. Some questions are more appropriate for a specific level. Where that is the case, it is indicated. **The questions are to support your thinking and are a starting point only.**

**Directional questions: pupils focus**

1. What are the key characteristics of pupils in the school(s)?
2. What are the key characteristics of the classes I teach/ individuals and groups I support/year groups (teachers/TAs/heads of year)?
3. What are the key mechanisms by which I/we/you identify significant pupil characteristics which present as barriers?
4. Have I/we/you built a detailed enough picture of cohorts, making good use of all the information from stakeholders, especially previous schools?
5. How successful am I /are we/ are you in ensuring pupils succeed in overcoming these barriers? (school leaders/governors/teachers)
6. Do I/we/you know which disadvantaged pupils achieve well and have positive attitudes? What does this tell you/me/us and what has been my/our/your part in achieving this?
7. Do I/we/you recognise what works well with pupils varies from cohort to cohort, year to year, teacher to teacher and subject to subject? How does this have an impact?

**Directional questions: community focus**

1. How do I/ we/you define community? For example, the community for a teacher is different from a school improver.
2. What do we know about the community?
3. How variable is the community, for example are the parents of new Year 7, similar to Year 11 parents, is the community that surrounds the school homogeneous?
4. What is the community of the classroom/department and how do I/we/you ensure it meets the changing needs of pupils? (teachers /heads of department)
5. What are the key mechanisms by which I/we/you identify the key characteristics that present as barriers and which present as enablers?
6. What are those characteristics?
7. Which of these are ’forever truths’ and which are for this year/term only?

**Directional questions: workforce**

1. How well do I/we/you understand the workforce, in terms of their experience, strengths and weaker areas, training needs and aspirations?
2. How well does the training I/we/you provide opportunities to build upon, develop embed and quality assure approaches?
3. Do I/ we/you provide opportunities for staff to gather evidence/ reflect on what has worked and why and discuss this openly and honestly?
4. How well are the workforce’s strengths harnessed and needs met?
5. How do I/ we/you ensure staff training is matched to pupils’ key characteristics?
6. How do I /we/you use research to inform staff development and training?
7. How do we/you decide which to use? Do I/we/you carry out research? If so, how is it used?
8. Do I/we/you know which staff are most effective with certain pupil characteristics and why?

**Directional questions: school**

1. How do I/we/you ensure pupils/disadvantaged pupils can access the curriculum, including having sufficient reading/language skills?
2. How effectively is additional support used? How do I/you/we know it is making a difference?
3. If I/we/you do know pupil characteristics well, how is this making a difference to their learning/ the curriculum/assessment methods/ pupil groupings? (NB could go in pupil section)
4. Do I/we/you know enough about the way previous schools/providers supported disadvantaged pupils and what did and did not work in those contexts?
5. Is the curriculum building well enough on pupils’/disadvantaged pupils’ prior learning?
6. Are disadvantaged pupils making a good start academically in Year7? What role does assessment play in this?
7. Do I/we/you know enough about their strengths and weaknesses in KSU at key stage 2, in other subjects as well as mathematics and English?
8. Are systems focused on groups that underachieve, if so how do I/you/we know they are focused in the right way(s)?
9. How do I/we/you know that pedagogical approaches work for disadvantaged pupils as well as other pupils and for some staff as well as other staff?