



Our experience of Ofsted 'deep dives'

A background image showing a group of students at what appears to be a school event or fair. In the foreground, a young man with brown hair, wearing a grey hoodie and a dark jacket, is looking towards the camera. To his right, another young man with glasses and a blue t-shirt is smiling. In the center, a young man with dark hair is looking forward. Behind them, a young woman with long dark hair is visible. All the students are wearing green lanyards with 'STUDENT' written on them. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and structures.

This workshop will consider:

- How did Ofsted inspectors decide which areas to 'deep dive'?
- How did inspectors carry out the 'deep dives'?
- What were the common questions asked of students, teachers and leaders during the deep dives?
- How did leaders prepare their teams for 'deep dives', and how did leaders prepare themselves?

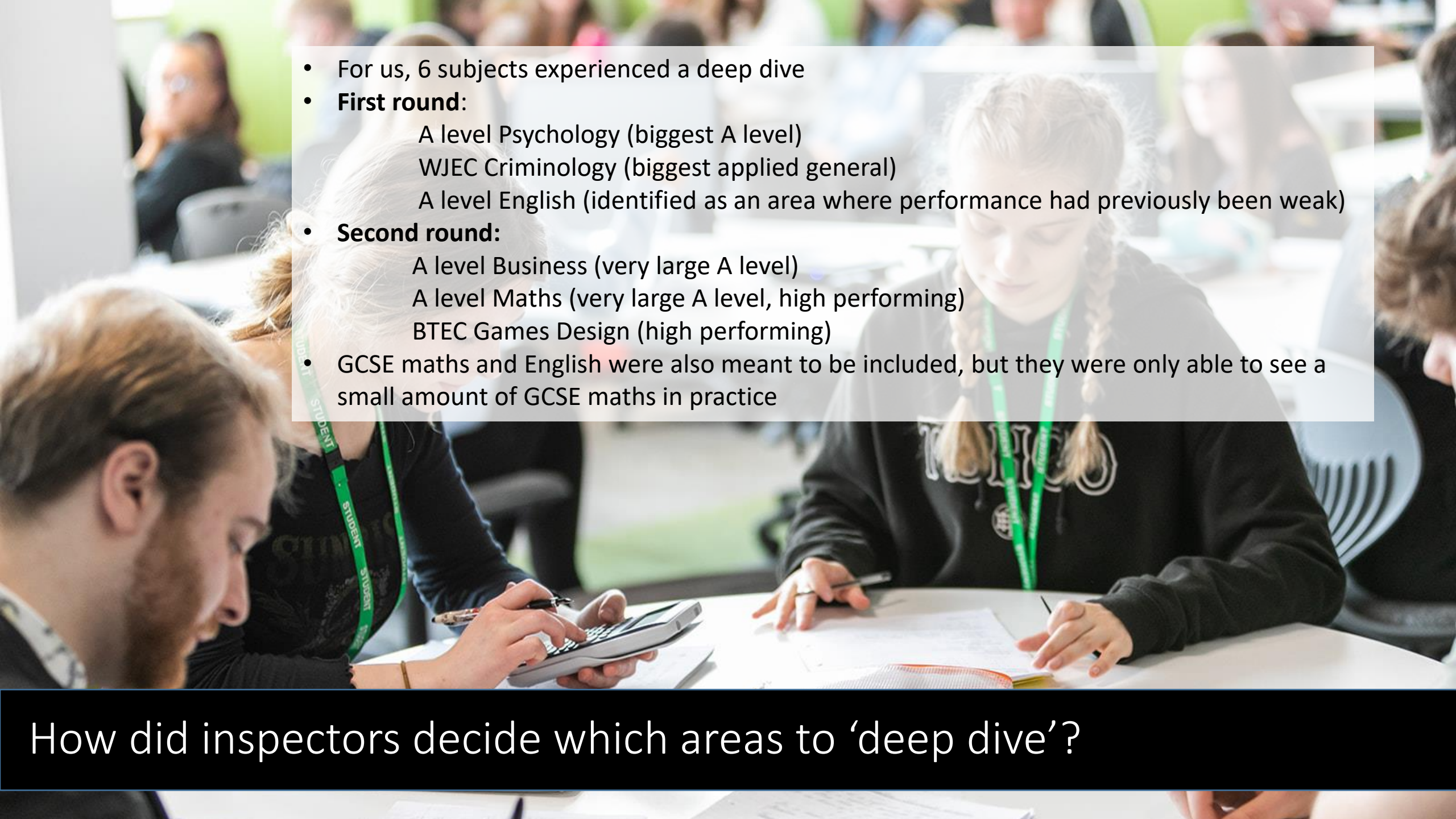
To what extent do you feel staff in your school or college are familiar with the current Education Inspection Framework?

Do you feel your Ofsted gradings could potentially be dependent on which subjects were included in the 'deep dive'?

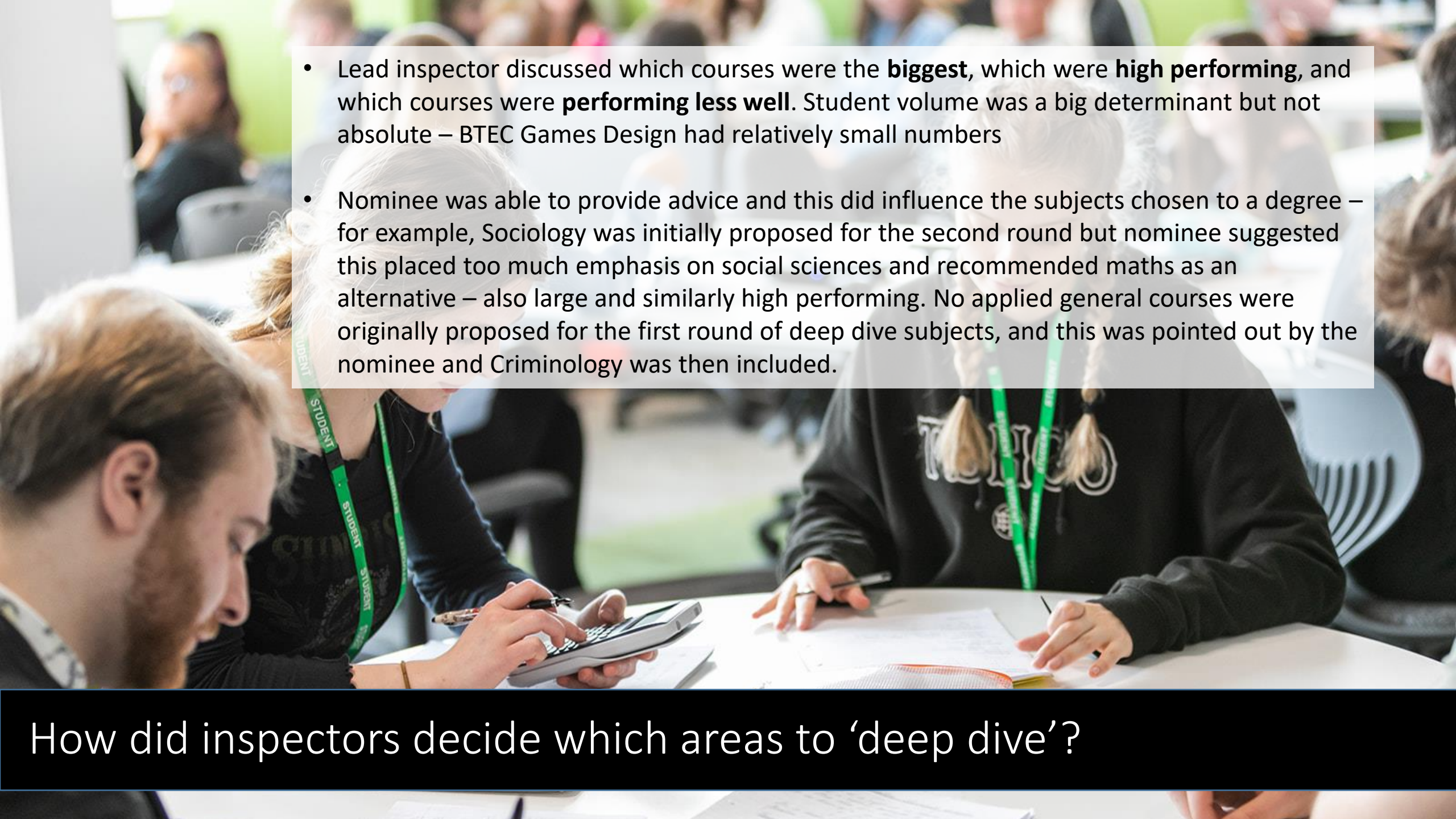
Introductory Reflections



Introductions

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- A background image showing students in a classroom. In the foreground, a male student with a beard is looking down at a calculator. Next to him, a female student with blonde hair in pigtails is also looking down at papers. They are both wearing green lanyards with 'STUDENT' written on them. The background is slightly blurred, showing other students and classroom furniture.
- For us, 6 subjects experienced a deep dive
 - **First round:**
 - A level Psychology (biggest A level)
 - WJEC Criminology (biggest applied general)
 - A level English (identified as an area where performance had previously been weak)
 - **Second round:**
 - A level Business (very large A level)
 - A level Maths (very large A level, high performing)
 - BTEC Games Design (high performing)
 - GCSE maths and English were also meant to be included, but they were only able to see a small amount of GCSE maths in practice

How did inspectors decide which areas to 'deep dive'?

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- A background image showing a group of students in a classroom or meeting. In the foreground, a male student with a beard is looking down at a calculator. Next to him, a female student is also looking down. In the background, another student is visible, and there are other people out of focus. The students are wearing green lanyards with 'STUDENT' written on them. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the upper right area of the image.
- Lead inspector discussed which courses were the **biggest**, which were **high performing**, and which courses were **performing less well**. Student volume was a big determinant but not absolute – BTEC Games Design had relatively small numbers
 - Nominee was able to provide advice and this did influence the subjects chosen to a degree – for example, Sociology was initially proposed for the second round but nominee suggested this placed too much emphasis on social sciences and recommended maths as an alternative – also large and similarly high performing. No applied general courses were originally proposed for the first round of deep dive subjects, and this was pointed out by the nominee and Criminology was then included.

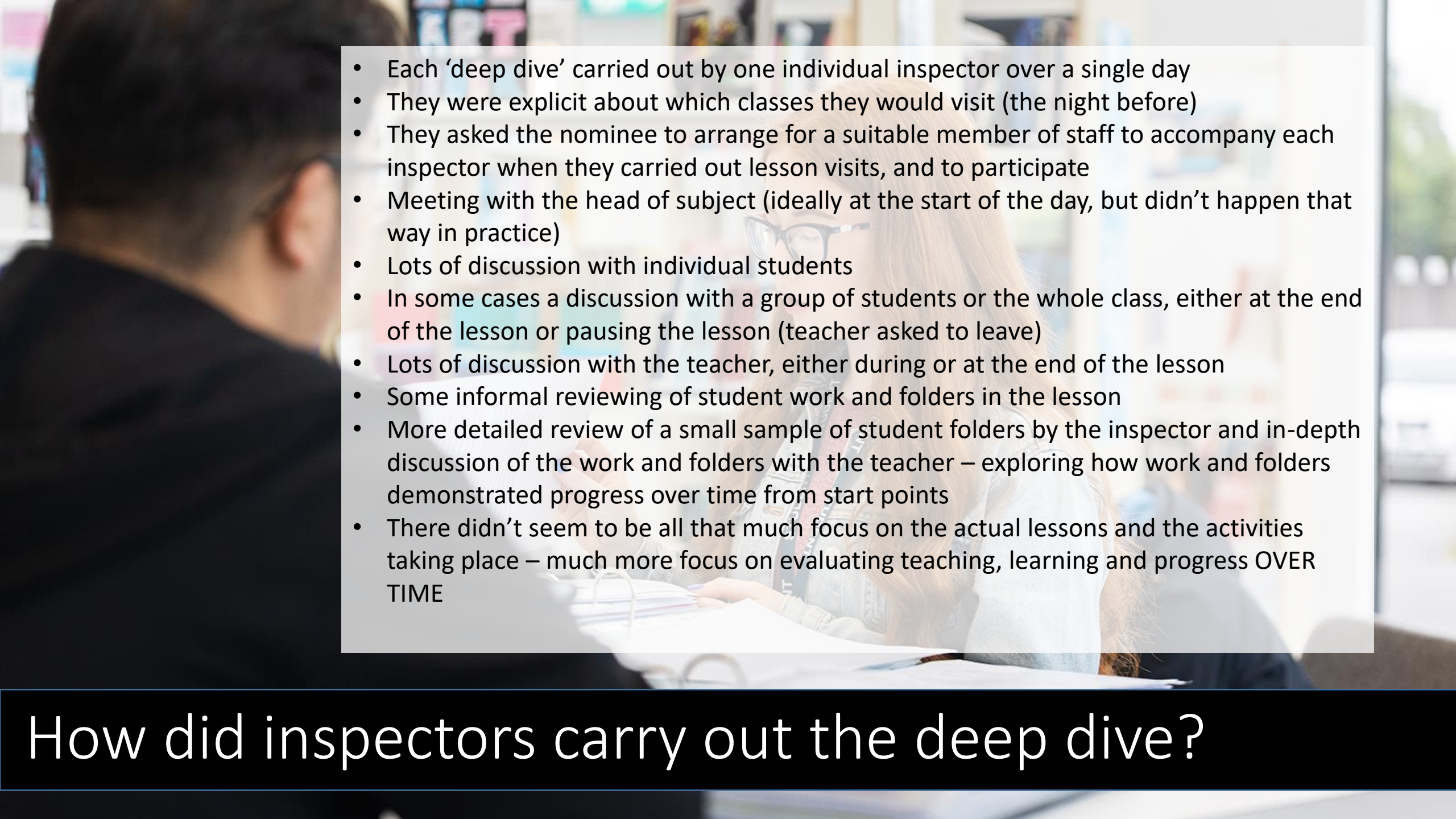
How did inspectors decide which areas to ‘deep dive’?

A background image showing a group of students in a classroom or meeting. In the foreground, a male student with a beard is looking down at a calculator. Next to him, a female student with blonde hair is also looking down. In the background, another female student with blonde pigtails is looking at a document. They are all wearing green lanyards with 'STUDENT' written on them. The setting appears to be a modern educational environment with large windows and other students in the background.

DISCUSSION

- *Which are your largest three subjects? (all would have a high chance of being included)*
- *How do you feel these courses would fare if they were included in the deep dive?*
- *If you had to identify for an inspector an underperforming subject that you'd encourage them to consider 'deep diving' which would you suggest, and why?*
- *Which are the two or three highest performing subjects that you'd want to encourage inspectors to 'deep dive'?*

Reflecting on which areas might be 'deep dived' at your school/college

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- The background image shows a classroom setting. In the foreground, the back of a person's head is visible on the left. In the center, a female teacher with blonde hair and glasses is looking down at a student's work. The student is a young girl with blonde hair, wearing a blue shirt, and is writing in a notebook. The teacher is holding a pen and looking at the student's work. The background is slightly blurred, showing other students and classroom posters.
- Each 'deep dive' carried out by one individual inspector over a single day
 - They were explicit about which classes they would visit (the night before)
 - They asked the nominee to arrange for a suitable member of staff to accompany each inspector when they carried out lesson visits, and to participate
 - Meeting with the head of subject (ideally at the start of the day, but didn't happen that way in practice)
 - Lots of discussion with individual students
 - In some cases a discussion with a group of students or the whole class, either at the end of the lesson or pausing the lesson (teacher asked to leave)
 - Lots of discussion with the teacher, either during or at the end of the lesson
 - Some informal reviewing of student work and folders in the lesson
 - More detailed review of a small sample of student folders by the inspector and in-depth discussion of the work and folders with the teacher – exploring how work and folders demonstrated progress over time from start points
 - There didn't seem to be all that much focus on the actual lessons and the activities taking place – much more focus on evaluating teaching, learning and progress OVER TIME

How did inspectors carry out the deep dive?

A background image showing a classroom setting. In the foreground, the back of a person's head is visible on the left. In the center, a young woman with long red hair, wearing a denim jacket and a lanyard that says 'STUDENT', is looking down at papers. To her right, another person is partially visible. The background is slightly blurred, showing shelves with books and other classroom items.

HIGH NEEDS STUDENTS WERE A FOCUS IN EVERY DEEP DIVE

(students with an EHCP and for whom we receive additional funding)

- Inspectors wanted timetables for these students and made a point of trying to visit lessons attended by them in the 'deep dive' subject
- They spoke specifically to the teacher about the student
- They asked us to arrange a meeting for the inspector to meet the high needs student (and we usually included their key worker from the study support team)
- They included the high needs student in the folder sample they reviewed
- They asked for copies of EHCP and review documents, and discussed them in detail in separate meeting with the SENDCo

How did inspectors carry out the deep dive?

INTENT

- Why do you offer the courses you offer?
- How do you make decisions about the courses you offer?
- How do the courses you offer address local needs?
- How does the course prepare students for next steps after college?
- Exploration about combinations of subjects and linkage

QUALITY

- How do you identify whether any staff are underperforming?
- What happens if you spot underperformance?
- How do leaders assess the quality of teaching and learning?

STAFF

- How do you support staff wellbeing and workload? How are your wellbeing and workload supported?

Are there questions here that you feel leaders in your school and college would answer particularly well, in general?

Are there any that leaders might find more challenging?

Common Questions – Intent and Quality (leaders)

The background of the slide is a photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a young man with dark hair is looking towards the right. Behind him, a young woman with brown hair is also looking right. In the far right, the back of a man's head with glasses is visible. The background is filled with bookshelves containing various books and papers.

To staff:

- Why does the college offer this course?
- What skills do students gain from this course?
- How do you structure your curriculum? Why?
- How do you help students to remember more?
- How do you assess student progress?
- How do you identify any learning gaps?
- How do you provide feedback to your students?
- How do you adapt your teaching for your SEND students?
- How do you decide what resources to use?
- Do the students arrive with gaps in knowledge? How do you address this?
- How do you know the students have developed the knowledge/skills you wanted them to today?
- How does this course help students make decisions about the future and be ready for their next steps?
- How does the organisation support your wellbeing and workload?

Are there questions here that you feel staff in your school and college would answer particularly well, in general?

Are there any that staff might find more challenging?

Common Questions – Staff

A background image of a young man with brown hair, wearing a grey hoodie and a dark jacket, sitting at a desk in a classroom. He is looking down at a book or paper. A black water bottle is on the desk in front of him. The background is slightly blurred, showing other students and classroom shelves.

LEARNING CULTURE

- What does it feel like to be a student at this college?
- Do your teachers have high expectations of you?
- Has the course got harder? How have you been prepared for this?
- Do you have to think hard in here? Is that the same in your other subjects?
- Are you becoming a better learner at college? How?
- Do you feel ready to study at university? How has college helped with this?

SUPPORT

- How do you know how well you are doing?
- Do you know how to improve?
- Are you set work to do outside of lessons?
- Do you receive feedback on this?
- Why are you attending TAP? Is it helping?
- How did college help you make the transition between school and college?
- How were you supported during lockdown? What were lessons like? Do you feel you are behind because of it? How has this been addressed?
- Are you expected to self and peer assess? Do you know how to do this? Is it useful?

CURRICULUM DESIGN

- How does this work build on what you have done previously?
- Can you make links between your subjects?
- How is this helping you learn/remember more?
- Do you review previous content?

Common Questions – Students

A background image of a classroom with several students. In the foreground, a student on the left is looking towards the camera, while others are focused on their work. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

INTENT, IMPLEMENTATION, IMPACT

‘What’s it like to be a student in this college?’

‘How do students learn more and remember more over time, developing skills and making connections?’

Curriculum sequencing and design

Readiness for next steps

Recurring themes

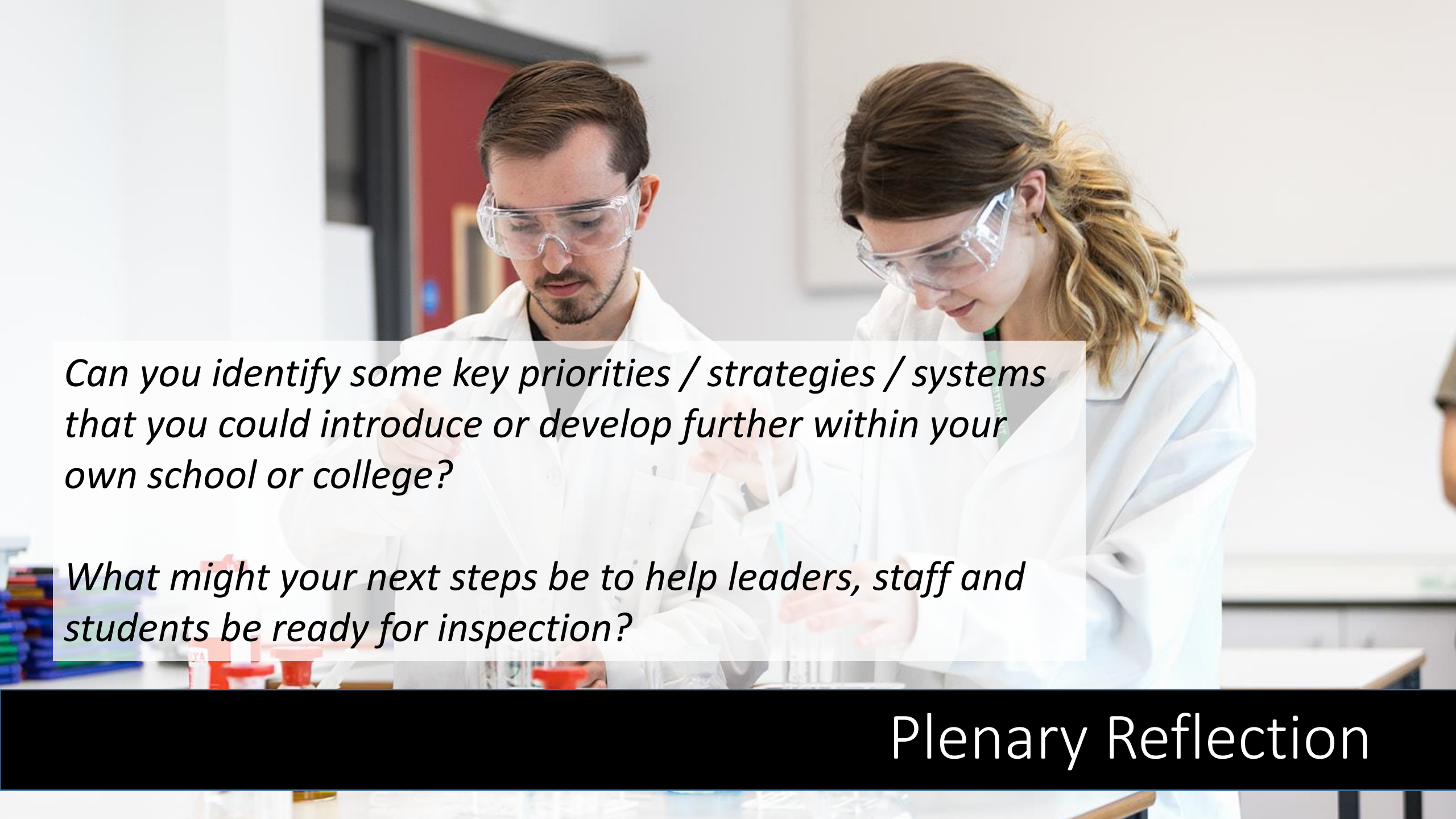


How did leaders prepare their teams for deep dives?

How did leaders prepare themselves for deep dives?

How did teachers prepare themselves for deep dives?

Preparation

A man and a woman in white lab coats and safety goggles are working in a laboratory. The man is on the left, looking down at a small container. The woman is on the right, also looking down and holding a pipette. They are both focused on their work. The background is a blurred laboratory setting with various equipment and shelves.

Can you identify some key priorities / strategies / systems that you could introduce or develop further within your own school or college?

What might your next steps be to help leaders, staff and students be ready for inspection?

Plenary Reflection