

A Personalised Approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) - Advice to the Secretary of State for Education on effective, relevant and sustained CPD for teachers

Advice from the General Teaching Council for England (GTC)

Executive summary

1. There is now comprehensive and robust evidence that investing in teacher learning and professional development improves the quality of teaching¹. It has a positive impact on the achievement of children and young people, as well as on teachers' colleagues and peers.
2. Government and other agencies have already recognised the need for greater differentiation in the curriculum, learning approaches and assessment strategies in order better to meet the needs of all children and young people. Our evidence suggests that teachers also need a differentiated approach to maximise the impact of CPD.
3. Further improvement in teaching quality requires a more 'personalised and tailored' approach to CPD. This must be supported financially and through the development of appropriate knowledge and infrastructure.
4. The GTC therefore proposes that:
 1. ***a personalised approach is taken to the identification of all teachers' learning and development needs;***
 2. ***access to personalised learning and development that is effective, relevant and sustained be supported***
 3. ***participation in personalised learning and development be assured***
5. Well constructed performance management processes can provide the bridge between identifying individual learning and development needs, providing highly tuned learning and securing high impact for pupils
6. The GTC supports a balanced investment strategy that recognises the value of both specific CPD programmes and work-based teacher learning

¹The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning, *EPPI Review*, www.gtce.org.uk/shared/contentlibs/126795/93128/120213/epi_rpt01

7. The national CPD 'supply' strategy needs further development. Existing expertise in the system could be better recognised and used to provide an adequate 'supply' to support CPD access for all.
8. Successive systematic reviews of research conducted over several years describe the characteristics of effective approaches to CPD as:
 - having a clear focus on pupil learning
 - involving teachers in identifying their needs
 - using coaching and mentoring
 - including observation, feedback and collaborative working
 - providing opportunities for practice, research and reflective practice; and
 - modelling preferred practice (e.g. active learning), both in classrooms and in adult learning situations.
9. To ensure relevance we suggest that national, local and school policy should promote supply that addresses a CPD 'curriculum' comprised of five broad areas : context, specialism, leadership, pedagogy and professionalism
10. Whilst 2006 performance management regulations legislate for the procedures whereby teachers identify their CPD and learning objectives, there is, as yet, no legislation which secures access to and participation in CPD.
11. We propose further guidance to governors and head teachers. We also recommend that CPD outcomes are addressed with School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and Ofsted.

Introduction

12. The General Teaching Council for England (GTC) is the independent professional body for teaching in England. Under the remit conferred by the Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998), the Council is required to provide advice to the Secretary of State and others on matters affecting standards of teaching and the quality of learning.
13. This advice proposes mechanisms for providing effective, relevant and sustained continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers from the fourth year of practice onwards.

Context

14. Government policies currently place great emphasis on improving the quality of teaching. Several recent initiatives are designed to stimulate the demand for and, therefore, promote appropriate supply of professional development opportunities to secure improvement in teaching quality. These initiatives include revising performance management arrangements, developing a coherent professional standards framework and supporting the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to build continuity and coherence in professional development and continuing to develop the National Strategies support for teaching and assessment for learning.
15. Government policy for improving teaching quality through these measures is also expected to help reduce variability in the national school system, as reflected by the under-achievement and under-attainment of a significant number of children and young people in differentiated local contexts.
16. A significant driver for improvement in teaching and professional practices has arisen from the increasing diversity in children and young people within educational settings. Teachers face different types of challenge that necessitate learning and developing different knowledge, skills and understandings. Teachers are now expected to provide greater differentiation and personalisation in learning opportunities to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population of children and young people, and help reduce the achievement gap evident within different contexts.
17. For example, a higher proportion of children now present with special education needs (SENs) resulting in part from increasing survival rates from premature births. The UK has a long history of migration which contributes to increasing heterogeneity in schools, the need for more extensive English language learning provision as well as greater cultural understanding.
18. There is now a legal, as well as a moral, responsibility for teachers to actively promote equality of opportunity irrespective of gender, race or disability. Variations in socio-economic status, ability profile in a school population, cultural and language backgrounds all contribute to varying degrees of challenge for a teacher.

19. Given limited resource and capacity the differentiated needs of teachers are not always met. Inequities exist in the opportunities teachers have to access effective, relevant and sustained CPD. Whilst more teachers are saying that their professional development needs are being met fully or to some extent, these levels of satisfaction are not the same across the profession. Levels of satisfaction as indicated by CPD needs being met in full or to some extent, vary by role, employment pattern, phase, experience and ethnicity.
20. Heads and assistant/deputy heads indicated the highest levels of satisfaction whilst supply teachers indicated the lowest levels. Less than half of supply teachers felt that their needs had been met to any extent. 85% of primary teachers indicated that their needs had been met in whole, or in part, but only 78% of secondary teachers indicated the same².
21. The types of CPD activities experienced by teachers in primary and secondary schools also varied in the last 12 months. Primary teachers participated in the following CPD activities more often:
 - external courses (84% primary; 72% secondary)
 - collaborative enquiry (59% primary; 44% secondary)
 - collaborative learning in a network of schools (70% primary; 51% secondary).
22. Secondary teachers participated in the following CPD activities more often:
 - observing colleagues teach (76% secondary; 69% primary)
 - being observed by colleagues (90% secondary; 82% primary).
23. An area of particular concern emerges from the GTC's *Survey of Teachers* in 2006 where half the respondents indicated that they had received no equalities training and in no aspect of equality have more than one third received training.
24. Respondents were not always clear about the implications of equalities legislation for classroom practice. Around two in five teachers indicated that they have some understanding, and a slightly smaller proportion indicated a fuller understanding. A much higher proportion of trained respondents indicated a fuller understanding and it is therefore critical that all teachers are able to access this in order to maximize the impact of equalities legislation and guidance.
25. We have already contributed through advice to the National Reference Group (NRG) for continuing professional development to both national priorities and the national CPD strategy formulated by the TDA and sent to the Minister in December 2006. However, we believe it is timely to reconsider and restate our policies on CPD in the light of the changing policy environment, new evidence and knowledge from research, the profession and key stakeholders. We make

² GTC Teacher Survey 2006

the following proposals in support of and to further develop our previous advice on CPD.

Proposals

Proposal 1 – Government policy supports a ‘personalised’ identification of learning and development needs for all teachers

26. Given the highly differentiated picture of need among children and young people and the aspiration to personalise the learning offer to them there is more pressure than ever to tailor teacher learning and development to the starting point and context of the individual. This is the starting point for any effective performance management process.
27. Well constructed performance management processes can provide the bridge from informed needs identification to finely tuned learning and development experiences and high impact for pupils. During performance management teacher and reviewer can maximize its impact on CPD by identifying:
- existing expertise and areas for development accurately
 - identification and removal of barriers to participation if they exist
 - learning and development outcomes

and, the consequent

- appropriate approaches that will deliver impact on teaching quality and standards of achievement; and
 - ‘gateways’ to learning and development, which offer realistic opportunities for and the participation of all teachers, including those in supply and peripatetic roles.
28. A ‘personalised’ approach to CPD is needed and is, therefore, one which can be delivered through a rich interpretation of performance management.
29. New performance management arrangements offer an opportunity to determine relevant learning and professional development goals, a necessary but not sufficient outcome to ensure teaching quality. To achieve this, teachers must access and participate in effective, relevant and sustained CPD.

Proposal 2 – Government policy supports access to personalised learning and development i.e., that which is effective, relevant and sustained

30. The GTC supports a balanced investment strategy that recognises the value of both specific CPD programmes and work-based teacher learning and professional development opportunities that:
- arise from teachers’ knowledge of teaching and learning, curriculum and assessment
 - reflect principles of adult learning
 - are collaborative, collegial and generally use school-based learning environments

- are sustained and cumulative, providing opportunities for professional learning over time; and
 - are closely aligned with reform initiatives³.
31. The national CPD ‘supply’ strategy needs further development to ensure that appropriate support and resource is available for the individual to engage with, commit to and enact changes in teaching practice that contribute to raising standards of achievement. We also suggest that it is necessary to ensure that existing expertise in the system is better recognised and used to provide an adequate ‘supply’ to support CPD access for all.
32. We believe that there should be emphasis on ensuring that the ‘supply’ of CPD (i.e., the combination of learning and development opportunities available to any teacher from whichever source – school, local or national agency, university or other provider) is capable of delivering personalised learning for teachers. It is the view of the GTC that three factors must therefore characterise supply – effectiveness, relevance and that it is sustained through to practice.
33. Evidence⁴ incontrovertibly shows that engaging in **effective** CPD is critical to improving teaching quality. Particular approaches to CPD are more likely to be effective and result in changes in teaching and professional practice that positively impact on the learning, behaviour and achievement of all children and young people. Successive systematic reviews of research conducted over several years describe that characteristics of effective approaches to CPD as:
- having a clear focus on pupil learning
 - involving teachers in identifying their needs
 - using coaching and mentoring
 - including observation, feedback and collaborative working
 - providing opportunities for practice, research and reflective practice; and
 - modelling preferred practice (e.g. active learning), both in classrooms and in adult learning situations.
34. CPD that is **relevant** is necessary to realise the full potential of performance management being to produce improvements and innovations in teaching and professional practices and outcomes. To ensure relevance we suggest that policy – national, local and school - promote supply that addresses a CPD ‘curriculum’ comprised of five broad areas:
- **context** in order to meet local challenges and conditions, characterised by the particular profile of children and young people within the school or educational setting including their socio-economic status, ability, language capabilities, ethnicity and cultural background;
 - **specialism** to develop **phase** appropriate expertise, for example, Foundation stage, Key stages 1-5, and/or by age group, for example, 14-19

³ EPPI Systematic reviews 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the effectiveness of CPD.

⁴ Bolam, R. and Weindling, R. (2006) GTC CPD research synthesis project.

or **subject** and other specialisations, **particularly Special Educational Needs (SENs)**;

- **leadership** to lead learning within and beyond classrooms, schools and other educational settings; and contribute in local, regional and national contexts;
 - **pedagogy** to develop flexible, innovative, differentiated and appropriate learning opportunities for all children and young people based on up to date knowledge of learning and development, curriculum and assessment;
 - **professionalism** to work inter- and intra-professionally, with parents and other adults within the school and wider community.
35. The notion of a **CPD ‘map’ or ‘curriculum’** is proposed as a way of making sense of and ensuring that the multiple drivers for change at any one time are attended to in the combination of supply. Among these drivers currently are those identified as critical in the Gilbert Review report: analysing and using data, with specific focus on assessment for learning; understanding how children learn and develop; working with other adults (including parents and other children’s services professionals); and engaging pupils as active participants in learning. Others derive from changes in school curriculum content, processes and organisation planned for implementation by 2010. The rapidity with which new knowledge is created within subjects and specialisations, particularly in the area of information and communications technologies (ICT) is also a significant driver.
36. CPD must, therefore, offer ways in which teachers can create new knowledge for curriculum renewal, through the study of effective implementation and evaluation, using available technologies to support teaching, learning and assessment.
37. Similarly, there are different types of knowledge, skills and understandings needed to work within and across key stages. Teachers are trained initially for particular subjects and phases; the needs of the system often require them to broaden, deepen or move into new areas of subject knowledge, phase or learn a new specialisation.
38. Teachers now regularly lead, work with, and manage other adults in the classroom as a result of *Every Child Matters* and workforce remodelling. Teachers need to develop new knowledge, skills and understandings about working in teams, collaboration, networking, mentoring and coaching both within and outside the context of the school and educational setting to be able to work effectively within such contexts and with other adults.
39. In practice improvements to, and innovations in, teaching only happen when a teacher has the opportunity to test and evaluate changes to his or her teaching. It is this process that we believe constitutes truly **sustained (and sustainable) CPD**. Therefore, any approach to CPD must ensure that sufficient time is available to learn, practice, develop and evaluate the impact of new

professional knowledge, skills and understandings on both teaching and professional practices, and ultimately to consider the impact on the achievement of particular groups of children and young people and to work towards addressing incidences of under-achievement.

40. This can only be achieved through the development of CPD policies and practices at the school level which create the culture and time for innovation and reflection. Pre-requisite to this is strong leadership of teacher learning and development in the school which explicitly links CPD to practice improvement and innovation. Also critical is the building, identifying and releasing capacity for mentoring, coaching and specialist and subject expertise within schools and across the system.

Proposal 3 - Government policy supports assurance of participation in personalised learning and development

41. We have recommended in previous advice (December 2003) that a statutory duty be placed to realise CPD entitlement. Whilst 2006 performance management regulations legislate for the procedures whereby teachers identify their CPD and learning objectives, there is, as yet, no legislation which secures access to and participation in CPD.
42. We suggest that initially further guidance is offered to governors and head teachers to supplement performance management guidelines from September 2007 to emphasise the critical importance of enabling and supporting access for all teachers to engage in relevant, sustained and effective CPD.
43. We recommend a number of strategies to ensure and assure the supply of appropriate professional learning and development opportunities. Existing expertise within the system can be better used to build a 'supply' of relevant, sustained and effective CPD. However, we must be able to identify, assure the quality of and effectively describe this expertise. We do not currently have such a system nationally.
44. The GTC proposes that teacher professional learning and development outcomes are an essential part of the conversation with School Improvement Partners (SIPs), school self-evaluation and Ofsted inspection frameworks.
45. Formal recognition of teacher expertise is currently limited to success in a higher degree, a specific CPD qualification such as the NPQH or judgements made by head teachers for threshold, by peers for chartered status or by external assessors to achieve advanced skills teacher status.
46. The disadvantage of existing mechanisms of recognition is that they do not use comparable criteria or standards to determine the quality of teacher learning and professional practices.
47. We believe that more opportunities are likely to emerge to identify expertise and build capacity at the local level if it is accurately identified through the new performance management processes. However, the conduct of the

performance management processes, the skills of both self-review and needs identification are critical to developing an accurate picture of potential supply from within the school.

48. Strategies that document changes in teaching and professional practices such as submissions made to the Teacher Learning Academy (TLA) can provide detailed evidence of teacher learning. It offers a method of evidencing teacher learning at different 'stages' and, through moderation of verifiers' judgements, can also assure the validity and reliability of evidence and the comparability of assessments made of submissions. These processes can ensure and assure that those offering expertise to others have the necessary knowledge, skills and understandings, as well as a capacity to share this with others.
49. The Teacher Learning Academy thus offers a rigorous, valid and reliable method to assure the quality of CPD supplied by teachers. The submission also provides evidence of new knowledge, skills and understandings, changes in practice, sharing and dissemination of expertise, working with others and impact on outcomes which can also be used as evidence of the impact of CPD at school, local and national levels.
50. The Council rejects the use of simple quantitative accounting mechanisms for recording teacher engagement in CPD. The counting of CPD hours on courses or listing course participation does not give any indication of improving teaching quality or of any potential impact on standards of achievement.

Conclusion

51. The Council reasserts the central and crucial role played by teachers in raising standards of achievement for all children and young people. More comprehensive and robust evidence from research, professional and stakeholder consultations is now available. This shows that investing in teacher learning and professional development can and does improve the quality of teaching. By improving the quality of their teaching and developing their professional expertise, teachers have an impact on the learning and achievement of children and young people, as well as on their colleagues and peers.
52. Government and other agencies have already recognised the need for greater differentiation in the curriculum, learning approaches and assessment strategies used to ensure standards of achievement for all children and young people. From our research and other evidence teachers also need a differentiated approach to maximise the impact of any CPD.
53. Further improvement in teaching quality and thus raising standards for all will be achieved through the implementation of a more 'personalised and tailored' approach to CPD. This must be supported financially and through the development of appropriate knowledge and infrastructure to support the sharing of expertise and the effective management of professional knowledge and expertise.