Professional learning environments in primary and secondary contexts

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Context

- How to support CPD in depth in a newly fragmented system? In this context schools are the mediating agency

- Decided to translate international evidence into a framework for analysing schools as Learning Environments

- Schools fund individual studies and follow up

- Piloted in 4 schools, now completed 20 (11 sec, 9 primary) expecting 30 in Autumn term

- Here are first steps in meta analysis

Methods

- Data collection methods included:
    - Group interviews with SLT
    - Individual interviews with a sample of staff
    - Focus group(s)
    - Staff survey
    - Documentary analysis
- Importance of triangulation
- Evidence analysed against research-based benchmarks
- Report, recommendations and follow-up

Approach

- Key areas
  - Needs analysis
  - Collaboration
  - Use of specialist expertise
  - Use of evidence
  - Leadership
- For each area, the quality and consistency of professional learning is assessed using a four point range:
  - Developing
  - Enhancing
  - Embedding
  - Transforming
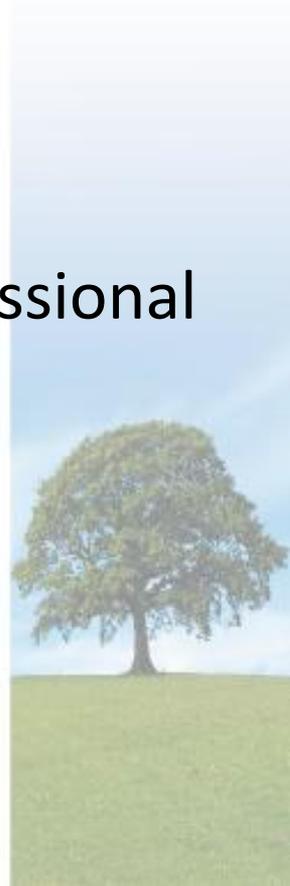
Staff survey: participating schools

- Of the 10 secondary schools
  - 3 had an 'outstanding' Ofsted grading, 5 were 'good' and 2 – 'satisfactory'
  - geographically, the schools were located in the North East, South West, West Midlands
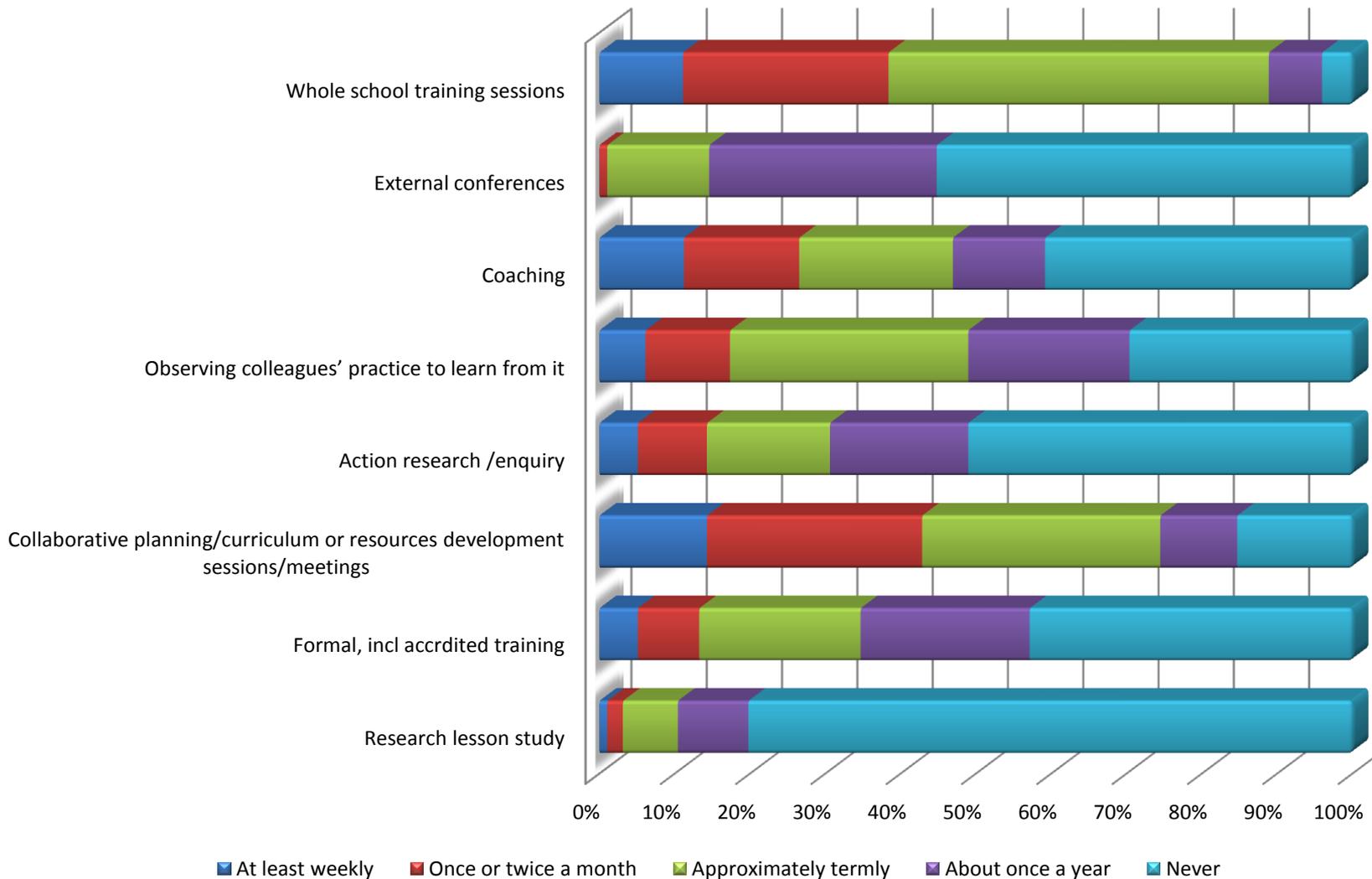 - Number of students on roll ranged between just under 500 to over 2000

Staff survey: participants

- Across the 10 schools, 412 members of staff completed the survey. Of these:
  - 45% were teachers
  - 23% middle leaders
  - 22% support staff
  - 3% senior leadership
  - 7% chose 'other' as they felt their role was different from those identified in the options

Range of CPD available to staff

Whole school training sessions
External conferences
Coaching
Observing colleagues' practice to learn from it
Action research /enquiry
Collaborative planning/curriculum or resources development sessions/meetings
Formal, incl accrdited training
Research lesson study

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ At least weekly ■ Once or twice a month ■ Approximately termly ■ About once a year ■ Never
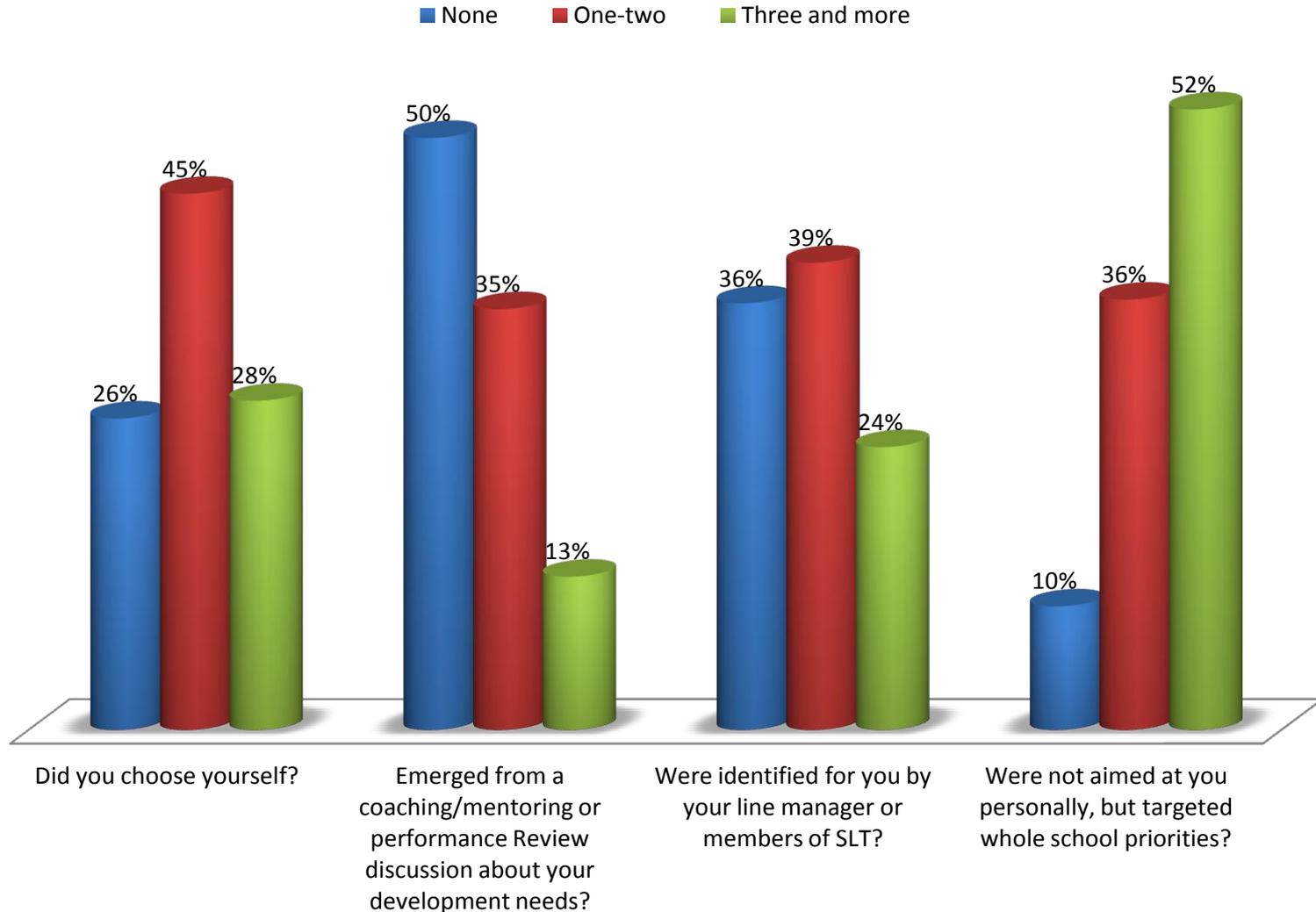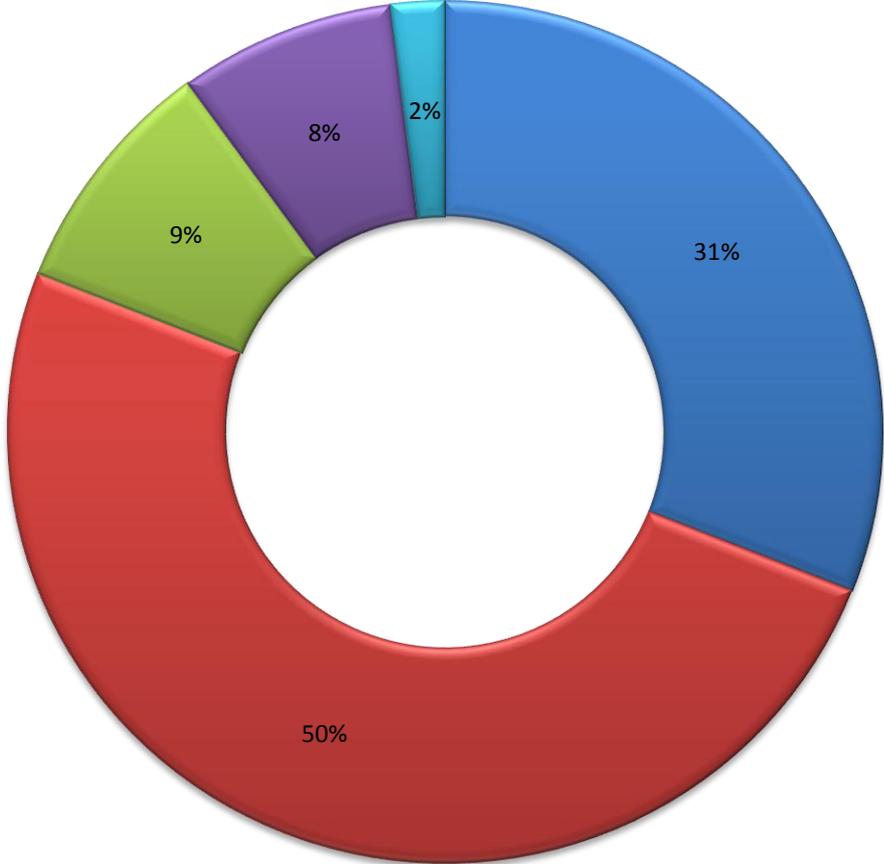
Needs analysis

- Staff involvement in identifying own development needs (1- not at all involved; 6 – have total control over development targets and processes)
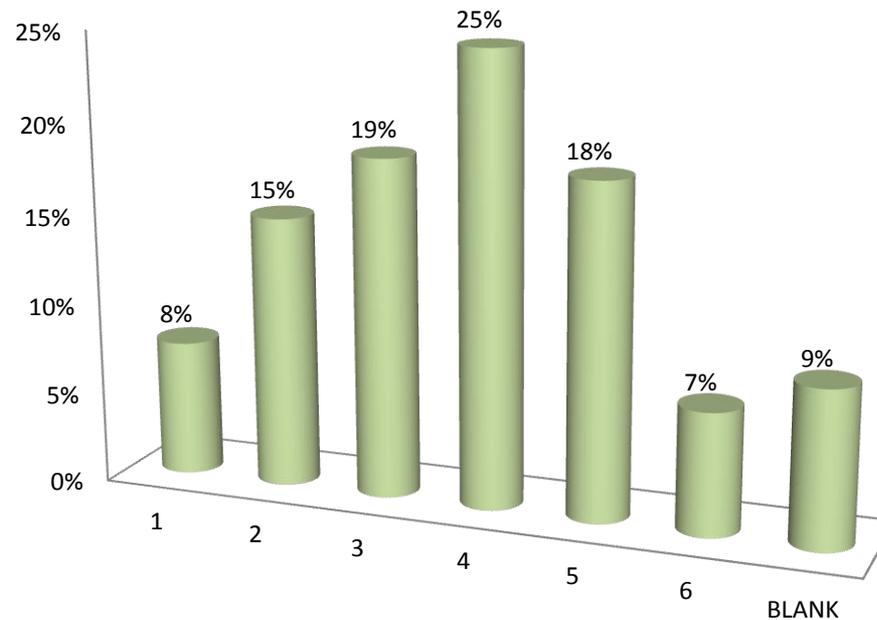
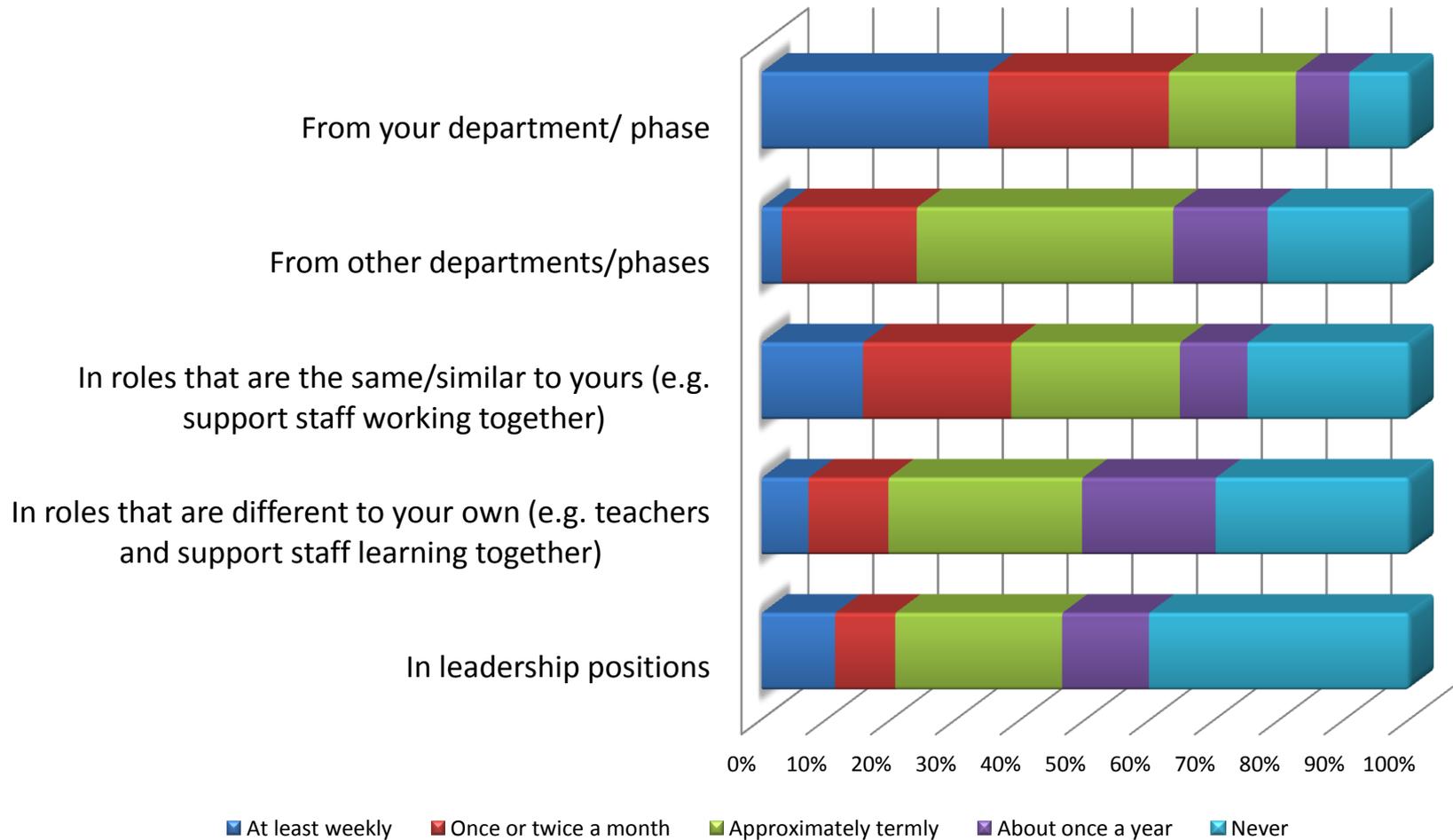# Of the 5 recent CPD opportunities, how many

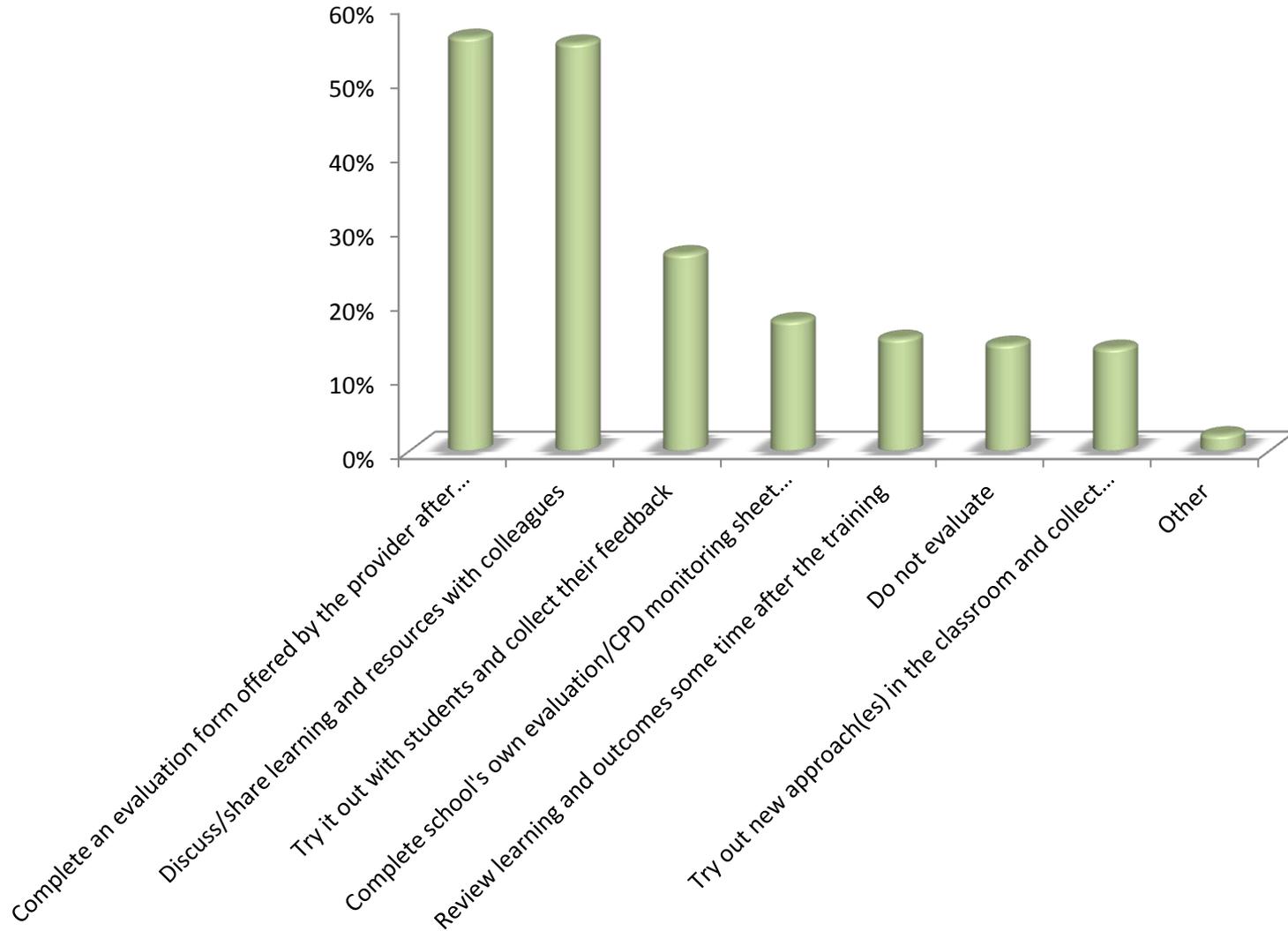# Staff attitude to whole school CPD sessions

- I usually find them useful
- I sometimes find them useful for developing my own practice
- A few colleagues could do much better in the areas that such sessions target so they are helpful to some people
- It's a bit of a waste of time
- BLANK

Collaboration

'How frequently do you have opportunities to work, as part of your professional learning, with colleagues:'

From your department/ phase

From other departments/phases

In roles that are the same/similar to yours (e.g. support staff working together)

In roles that are different to your own (e.g. teachers and support staff learning together)

In leadership positions

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

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Evaluating CPD

Overview findings

- The two strongest sub-areas overall were:
  - Strategic prioritising of CPD
  - Recognising the need for and identifying specialist expertise

- The two weakest sub-areas were:
  - Evaluation of CPD
  - Linking professional development needs and pupil learning

Good, innovative practice exists in most schools (1) Agency

- In Castle each year SLT consider deeply, not just performance of every colleague, but also their *confidence and capacity to learn* to create springboard for the next year's CPD offer

- In Duchess school Experience Teams (SETS) meet every 2 weeks as x-departmental learning groups to explore experiments with new school improvement approaches and plan next cycle. SETs led by volunteers & deputies trained in depth in facilitating CPD

- In KEVI annual staff voice sessions use sophisticated processes for involving all staff in creating CPD priorities and identifying what they can offer to them as springboard for CPD offer

Good, innovative practice exists in most schools (2) specialist expertise

- KEVI appoints Lead Learners and puts them at heart of CPD offer

- Kenton – Head and deputy scrutinise all external contributors in depth and personally

- Sir Bernard Lovell - uses research unusually systematically with large SLT modelling evidence-informed , expertise rich curriculum planning & innovation

- The Head very explicitly evaluates expertise of external partners and contributors

- The school's approach to performance review also enables staff to identify existing & emerging strengths

- Colleagues at all levels report an interest in trying out approaches identified for them by specialists

Good, innovative practice exists in most schools (3) use of evidence

- In a primary school, staff regularly use evidence from pupils' workbooks and pupil performance data to evaluate the impact of professional learning, such as in recent activity to improve outcomes in mathematics

- Teachers also make use of pupil voice data to reflect on their developing practice. This has been facilitated by the introduction of the Building Learning Power programme in the school, where children are encouraged to think about and discuss their learning

- Staff also monitor (observe) pupil learning and behaviour as a way of understanding how well they are implementing new practices. In the case of BLP this has been through the extent to which pupils manage distractions, e.g. by moving away from a chatting partner, etc

Next steps

- We will be using the overview analysis to identify priorities for probing extensive qualitative data

- We expect very significant increases in numbers fro musing this with Teaching School Alliances and school networks of varying kinds and working with HE partners

- What questions, pitfalls and challenges do you see for us?