

GTC QUALITATIVE STUDY OF SCHOOL-LEVEL STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS' CPD

Report by:



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Project Brief and Background

CUREE was commissioned by GTC to undertake a qualitative exploration of the strategic planning and evaluation of continuing professional development (CPD) at school level. The study was commissioned in the context of:

- the Department for Education and Skills' (DfES) stated aim of making teachers' professional development more systematic and systemic;
- the signalling by the Training and Development Agency for Schools of the importance of creating a more intelligent and proactive 'demand side' in schools for CPD, in order to stimulate a higher quality of supply;
- evidence from GTC surveys indicating that there is work still to be done at school level to ensure that (i) all teachers and other professionals working in schools receive the CPD they need to support their professional practice; (ii) there is equality of access to CPD; (iii) the choices made about CPD provision can be justified on grounds of capacity-building value for the school; and
- the evaluations of GTC-led partnership initiatives with local (education) authorities (LAs), which have suggested that:
 - schools need to work with their own staff and their LA to define what is meant by CPD that goes beyond a traditional notion of INSET;
 - schools need to integrate policies for CPD with wider school development planning;
 - schools need ongoing support from LAs to develop and sustain creative and strategic approaches to CPD – particularly through an LA-wide approach that enables schools to work together and share development activities; and
 - schools need particular help in creating the time and finding the resources for high-quality CPD that includes opportunities for staff to do joint planning and reflection.

In commissioning this study the GTC wanted to explore how and by whom decisions are made in schools about CPD needs and priorities, and subsequent resource allocation and evaluation; and to what extent this appears to be a strategic or an *ad hoc* decision-making process. As a result of this, GTC hoped to identify a menu of options and levers for improving the 'demand side' of CPD provision, particularly in its strategic planning and evaluation at school level.

It was agreed that the study would:

1. Develop an interrogation framework based on empirical evidence and theoretical approaches to strategic CPD, in particular Guskey's model of the different levels for CPD, the principles for the leadership of CPD that has been developed for London Challenge, London's Learning, the Primary Strategy Intensifying Support Programme and Ofsted: *The logical chain* (2006)

2. Identify and research three case studies along a continuum of development towards the components of strategic CPD as identified in the framework. Also identify and research a special school setting for comparative purposes. Supplement this data with *ad hoc* focus groups and LA perspectives where possible
3. Review key reports and studies agreed with GTC
4. Report on findings and suggest emerging principles.

The Report

This report is organised in four sections. Section 1 provides a brief summary of the relevant features of the research literature in the context of this study. Section 2 presents the results of the fieldwork and Section 3 discusses the key findings in the context of the aims and objectives of the study. Section 4 outlines the evidence base, references and possible avenues for further research.

The Appendix contains the framework used to collect data for the case studies.

Section 1

Student Learning Outcomes

A review of the relevant literature and its implications for continuing professional development was undertaken to provide the strategic interrogation framework for this study. Guskey's five levels of evaluation were used to structure the framework, and to anchor the research in Guskey's Level Five: student learning outcomes. Muijs and Lindsay (2006) have led the way in the UK on the application of Guskey's levels to CPD evaluation, starting with student outcomes. However, for the purposes of this project, the Guskey model is not without its limitations. In particular, it is geared towards a particular CPD intervention and is virtually silent on the issue of organisational context. GTC wanted to look at the whole-school picture and the framework was adapted to reflect this. As a starting point we identified three key, practice-based models which we have used to explore the 'black box' of organisational issues involved in strategic CPD at school level:

- London's Learning
- the Primary Strategy Intensifying Support Programme
- Ofsted: *The logical chain* (2006).

This helped to structure the questions for level three of the framework, where Guskey's formulation is both too vague and too un-contextualised for the current UK policy and practice environment.

In general, while there is plenty of guidance (DfES, 2005) about designing CPD around targeted student outcomes, there was little evidence in the literature we reviewed about effective practice in this regard. Most of the evidence we found was US based (Cordingley *et al.*, 2003, 2005) and drawn from relatively small scale studies about particular CPD interventions delivered with sustained support from the researcher/specialists. The research may be lagging behind the practice here, although as the evaluation literature (see below) suggests, collecting and using evidence about student learning in relation to CPD at a whole-school level appears to be not widely understood or practised. At an individual level, the development trajectory is more encouraging. For example, evidence now emerging from the evaluation of TDA-funded Postgraduate Professional Development provision reveals a trend across all of the twenty sample consortia towards enquiry-orientated teacher professional development targeted at specific groups of students. Foster (2006)¹ reported on an analysis of 177 questionnaire responses from CPD co-ordinators in primary and secondary schools in the north west. The research aimed to discover how the school's CPD programme was planned, how it related to school and/or individual priorities, how the impact on

¹ Foster's paper contained references to a number of studies which were not part of the agreed documentary review for this project but which might reward further scrutiny.

teachers' thinking, planning and practice was evaluated and what evaluation of pupil impact took place. He found that the schools split roughly into three groups:

- those (26%) which had rigorous and evaluated processes;
- those (58%) which were less formal and structured, though still linked to development priorities, and where evaluation tended to be mainly linked to the CPD events/activities themselves; and
- those (16%) which tended to approach CPD rather more haphazardly and where evaluation was rare.

However, teachers seldom had 'hard data' to quantify the effects of changing practice on students, and student outcome reports about motivation or performance were often anecdotal. Foster points to the variables which inevitably intervene between the CPD and the formal attainment data available from the testing regime. The study did reveal that the more strategic schools were developing a broad approach to the collection and evaluation of a range of evidence. He also found that one of the key factors distinguishing "the most coherent practice from the rest" was the level of 'planning for impact' linked to identified needs and clearly articulated intended outcomes.

Evaluation

Ofsted (2006) also found that few schools evaluated the impact of CPD on teaching and learning effectively, largely because they failed to identify at the planning stage its intended outcomes and suitable evaluation methods. Clearly-stated student learning outcomes and the means by which to evaluate them are not yet embedded in school CPD policies and processes. Sebba and Robinson (2004) highlight the ways in which 'poorly developed' evaluation of CPD tends to focus more on the inputs than the outcomes. Furlong and Salisbury's (2003) analysis of the Best Practice Research Scholarships offered some insights into the links between action research – as a form of CPD – and teacher skills in collecting and using evidence about student outcomes in the context of their own and colleagues' pedagogical experiments. Although heads and teachers were reported to have rated action research very highly, there is no evidence either from this report or from subsequent whole-school evaluations (Ofsted, 2006), studies of teachers' perceptions of CPD (Hustler, 2003) or meta-studies such as Bolam and Weindling (2006) that their enthusiasm has influenced CPD policies and practices at a whole-school level. In Foster's (2006) sample of schools in the north-west of England, those that were most strategic in their approach were developing a range of monitoring and evaluation systems, ranging from the 'sealed envelope' technique to follow up interviews and pro-formas some time (a half a term to a term) after the CPD activities.

Aligning teacher needs to school priorities

Hustler's (2003) study of teacher perceptions about CPD found that most teachers felt that school development needs took precedence over individual needs and that a 'compliant' culture had emerged which effectively suppressed

individual, professionally based demand. Key features of worthwhile CPD were the perceived relevance and applicability to both school and classroom settings. Negative feelings were especially associated with 'one size fits all' standardised CPD provision. To some extent the dissatisfaction expressed by individual teachers in the GTC (2006) survey responses echo some of Hustler's findings. The focus of this project on what strategic CPD (which effectively links personalised CPD with school development objectives) might look like *operationally* in a whole-school context therefore has the potential to throw some practical light on what schools can do to overcome this tendency. Bolam and Weindling's (2006) meta-study was clear about the benefits for the school of promoting good CPD practice, not just in terms of teachers' knowledge and skill but also in terms of improved motivation and morale. Muijs and Lindsay (2006) further identified the creation of a collaborative learning environment for teachers as 'the single most important factor' for successful school improvement and reinforced the earlier findings (Cordingley *et al.*, 2003) in singling out collaboration as the "first order of business for those seeking to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning". Furthermore, Ofsted (2006) reported that schools which had designed their CPD effectively and integrated it with their improvement plans found that teaching and learning standards rose.

Organisational and leadership support

The literature reviewed on organisational and leadership support for CPD in schools is strong on guidance and theory but thin on the finer detail of everyday school practice. Bolam and Weindling (2006) identify the key role of heads and senior staff in promoting and supporting CPD. Ofsted (2006) found that CPD was most effective in the schools where the senior managers had fully understood the connections between each link in 'the logical chain' of CPD – an extensive list of organisational and leadership processes. The connections are very similar to those developed by London's Learning. They begin with the need to recognise school needs and identify individual staff needs as part of school improvement planning. Resource allocation, performance management, striking a balance between national and school priorities and treating workforce development as CPD should be integrally planned. CPD should have clearly specified outcomes, based on student learning and assessment mechanisms and schools should recognise the need for specialist subject training. The provision of coaches and mentors and tailoring development to the best possible sources (including in-school training) were all highlighted in the report. Interestingly, even at the individual teacher level, Foster (2006) found evidence in some schools that teachers who were enthusiastic about implementing new practice following CPD were sometimes prevented from doing so by school leadership reluctant to move from the *status quo*. CUREE has also found this to be the perception in some of the fieldwork carried out for the Innovation Unit research and development work around the transfer and scaling up of new practice. Some headteachers were thought to have acted as a brake on innovative approaches to the curriculum in order to avoid a possible dip in national test results.

Supporting teachers' use of new knowledge and skills

Harland's (2006) evaluation described the processes involved in the GTC partnership project as 'designing CPD for impact'. They included: coaching, developing school CPD leaders, creating consistency across the school, school self-evaluation, developing mentors and coaches, enhanced collaboration across schools and engagement with the Teacher Learning Academy. By contrast, Ofsted (2006) found wide variation in the way schools on their own use mentoring and coaching and that insufficient use is made of coaching and mentoring as a form of CPD. Collaboration was a key feature of the successful Intensifying Support Programme pilot (DfES, 2004), which created opportunities for staff to discuss and reflect together and to evaluate and monitor targets with their peers. Moor *et al.* (2005) found that one important outcome of the collaborative CPD support processes designed into the partnership project with GTC, LAs and schools was a greater awareness amongst teachers of the CPD options available and greater understanding of how to identify training needs. Bolam and Weindling (2006) identified these processes as: sharing knowledge and practice within and across schools; collaborative approaches to CPD; mentoring and coaching as a key component of CPD; and promoting participation in award-bearing courses. Cordingley *et al.* (forthcoming) also found that effective CPD comprised *both* the introduction of new knowledge and skills and a range of measures for supporting and embedding their use – including coaching, collaboration, modelling and experimentation.

Section 2

Overview of the case studies and supplementary data

The first three schools were selected to provide data about CPD on a continuum of strategic CPD development. The fourth was a special school which we explored for messages about personalised student learning allied to personalised CPD. Our aim was to plot the characteristics at different stages of the journey. The data for this section were not therefore synthesised across all four schools in order to extract common themes. Instead, the information for each school is summarised separately to provide a fine-grained picture of the processes and practices involved in an everyday school context. The first one (Sweyne Park) illustrates key features of strategic CPD leadership in a school which provided operational data for all the framework elements and could therefore be considered to be strategic. The second and third (Finham and Ladygrove schools) illustrate the steps being taken on the ground by a secondary and a primary school which are on a planned journey towards a more strategic approach to CPD. The fourth (Piper Hill) explores how the approach to CPD in a special school might be different from that of mainstream schools because of practical differences in the everyday school context. In Section 3 we go on to explore the key messages from across all four case study schools.

The framework used to collect data for the case studies (see Appendix 1) was designed around key components of strategic CPD derived from the research explored in Section 1. Two case studies offer very practical insights into the structures and processes, at school level, by means of which these components are operationalised. The other two describe the journeys which the schools are making as they develop more strategic approaches to CPD.

Questions were themed around six key areas:

- The extent to which CPD is related to student learning outcomes
- The processes in place to support, monitor and evaluate participants' acquisition and use of new knowledge and skills
- The organisational structures, processes and leadership of CPD in relation to access, needs identification, alignment with school development and national priorities
- The learning outcomes for participants
- Participant perspectives
- The learning outcomes for students

The Sweyne Park School, Essex: a strategic approach to CPD

Secondary: 11-16, mixed

Community school

Pupils on roll: 1303 (Majority White British, achievement on entry below average)

The Sweyne Park School is a large secondary school in Essex. It was formed in 1997 by the amalgamation of two undersubscribed schools. It is a training school and specialist science centre. The school has succeeded in developing a very evident culture of mutual respect amongst and between staff and students. Performance levels in national tests have increased significantly and the school has substantially increased the number of students on roll. The school leadership is strongly committed to creating and sustaining a climate of continuing professional development.

The extent to which CPD is focused on student learning outcomes

School CPD policies and priorities are explicitly focused on student learning outcomes. School development planning triggers the CPD planning. Staff have to set three targets for the year: one relating to a whole-school priority, which is targeted at student learning (for example Assessment for Learning, AfL); one relating to a departmental student learning priority and one based on pupils in particular classes (for example, stretching the more able in Year 9).

CPD goals relating to specific groups of students are also targeted through consistent and systematic use of data. For example, the lowest achieving 20% of students are the focus of personalised curriculum planning. Staff are trained to use performance data. One of three deputy heads runs the student services department which constantly monitors data as well as welfare and other issues. She uses data to identify certain groups – for example, underachieving KS3 girls. She then liaises with the CPD team (also led by a deputy head) to identify what CPD is needed to support this. Another example involves a group of boys in English where monitoring activities have been put in place. A member of staff works intensively with them three times a week and is in turn supported by a consultant coach who works with her on lesson planning and other activities.

The school also makes extensive use of pupil voice for diagnostic and evaluation purposes and all staff are expected to consult their pupils about their learning. On top of this, the school uses a team of four external consultants who feed pupil perspectives back to the staff. The school believes that pupil voice creates cutting-edge staff development as staff have to build the pupil perspective into their teaching. The school also uses pupil panels as a powerful diagnostic tool and as a way of measuring impact. Each department is reviewed annually, and pupil questionnaires, interviews and panels feature significantly in these – often led by the consultants who are seen as more impartial and who therefore elicit good feedback. Student voice is itself a strong motivational factor for change.

The processes in place to support, monitor and evaluate participants' use of new knowledge and skills

Observation and coaching lead the menu of CPD processes in the school. All staff are regularly observed and observe other colleagues. The school is also extending the use of research study lessons, originally piloted in the maths department. The school spends around £20K each year on the services of a team of four consultants who play a key role in staff CPD. The consultants know the school well and also bring in external expertise and perspectives. They will work with individual members of staff on projects linked to school priorities, on intervention strategies for particular groups of students, or on developing new skills or improving existing ones. They also help with the use of resources, identifying and refining appropriate materials for different students. For example, the school identified literacy as an area for improvement. A consultant worked with staff to sift through the National Strategy resources which were having little impact and also visited other schools. She is now working with HoDs to adapt the materials and to make them really relevant to different subject areas. The consultants' role grew organically and the school is finding that as personalised learning for pupils is developed, so staff are increasingly wanting personalised CPD to help them meet those learning needs. When there are new pupil learning opportunities (such as a visit or an AST coming in) the school will always involve as many staff as possible so that it is a learning opportunity for them also.

Both challenge and support come through the performance management system: challenging targets are set and teachers are supported in their efforts to achieve them (see below). PM is neither threatening or judgemental because staff are supported through the year to work towards their targets and there are no surprises at the end of it. If targets are not met, fresh support mechanisms are identified to help staff achieve their goals. Each member of the CPD team is linked to a particular group of departments to ensure that there are checks and balances in the system and that every member of staff is getting the support they need. The school also consciously uses its ITT programme as a CPD opportunity for existing staff. Working with trainees prompts and encourages staff to think about their own practices in a fresh and challenging way. The school makes extensive use of video to support changing practice and to monitor and evaluate. Staff can, and do, book the video and the technician to support the development of their practice.

Evaluation of teacher learning outcomes is carried out through the performance management (PM) system. There are three meetings each year: one to plan, one mid year to review and assess, and one at the end. PM is used like AfL and is always targeted on student learning and linked to support through the setting of targets. The support provided by CPD leaders acts as a buffer zone between the target setting and accountability frameworks and development processes.

Organisational structures, processes and leadership of CPD in relation to access, needs identification, alignment with school development and national priorities

The school culture (which appears to be shared by all staff, including NQTs) is that everyone is a learner and every opportunity is a learning opportunity. This is not a cliché or wishful thinking. The school has put the building blocks in place (often juggling resources) to help staff take advantage of new learning and put it into practice.

A deputy head has responsibility for CPD. There is also a team of four senior ASTs who are linked to different departments and support staff in whatever form of CPD they choose from the menu on offer (going on a course, working with a consultant, peer observation, research lesson etc.). The school believes that its staff learn best collaboratively – with consultant coaches, co-coaches, and departmental teams – and that they need the space to innovate and take risks. An assistant head is responsible for the professional development of support staff and learning assistants, who currently all have access to skills training on Wednesday afternoons and to the Thursday after-school workshop sessions. They are now working through job descriptions in preparation for a full review of CPD for support staff.

CPD and Performance management

The SDP triggers the CPD which is associated with meeting identified targets. Performance management revolves around targets orientated to student learning for which in-school CPD (co-coaching and observation, or consultant coaching) and out of school opportunities are widely available. The latter are published weekly in the staff bulletin, itself a valuable CPD tool. The PM system enables every member of staff to identify, with their line manager, both targets and the CPD activities they will undertake to achieve them.

The CPD team, through its departmental links, keeps in touch with staff in linked departments to make sure they are getting the learning support they need and that they have access to the CPD activities identified in their PM portfolio.

There is some concern in the school at the introduction of pay-related PM and the effects this might have on the current line management arrangements.

Learning opportunities

All staff have access to the same information and CPD opportunities through the EPD (electronic CPD) staff library, weekly bulletins with external course listings, cross-school R and D groups, weekly timetabled departmental workshops (Thursday afternoons), pre-school departmental meetings (Tuesday mornings), peer observation, consultant coaching, lesson video capture and coaching others. Hence all staff experience at least two meetings a week explicitly for learning purposes while observation and coaching processes are ongoing. All staff can contribute to the bulletin and all staff both observe and are observed. If a member of staff is concerned about a learning problem or wants to try a different approach in the classroom, he or she will regard it as a matter of course

to invite a colleague to observe them or to book and brief the video technician about the focus for a video observation. Staff who go on courses make presentations to others and are also expected to write up their learning for the bulletin.² There are periodic conferences where staff go away for two days for CPD, and mentoring and coaching are extensively used. Staff expertise is consistently used throughout the school to lead the learning of others.

The Thursday afternoon CPD workshops are based around a school development priority (such as 'the thinking school') and were, until fairly recently, conducted on a whole-school basis. This has now changed so that staff can work together in their departments on subject teaching expertise and developing curriculum priorities based on student learning outcomes. The change was made in direct response to staff preferences for working departmentally with fellow subject specialists.

According to the deputy head the LA plays little role in the school's CPD arrangements.

Participant perspectives

During the course of a year all teaching staff are likely to have:

- been supported by a mentor or coach (and many will have coached themselves through joint observation and feedback);
- experienced collaborative learning with other colleagues;
- taken an active part in school self-evaluation through their performance management targets and monitoring;
- taken part in a research lesson study;
- participated in external courses;
- observed colleagues teaching;
- been observed by colleagues;
- been to in-school courses; and
- used reading or other resources, such as video, for CPD.

Being in formal networks or training with professionals from other sectors is less likely.

Data Use

Data use is extensive and sophisticated. Data are used both to evaluate whole-school performance and to identify under-performing groups of students or individuals. A member of the SMT has specific responsibility for data monitoring and a deputy head with responsibility for CPD works with staff on data management and monitoring techniques for their own students. The data

² Extensive use is made of the bulletin, which is confidential to staff – there is a weekly newsletter for students and their parents. Comments are made by staff about students in difficulties who may need watching out for or who are experiencing personal problems; staff are named and thanked by colleagues for their contributions to events or activities. The open culture of the school and the collaborative and respectful environment come across strongly.

monitoring function is located within the school's student services department and tied closely to CPD planning.

Tracking Participant Learning Outcomes

Because CPD is linked to performance management, staff development is closely monitored in the context of staff and student learning outcomes. Staff are observed, pupils consulted and data monitored. Each Department is reviewed annually, a process which involves governors and students. Performance management involves a mid term review and assessment of progress as well as the initial review, target setting and end of year review.

Tracking Student Learning Outcomes

Data monitoring, pupil voice, observations and video are all used to monitor student learning outcomes in relation to staff CPD. The data embrace both groups and individuals.

Piper Hill High School, Manchester

Special school: 11-19, mixed Specialist status: Mathematics and
computing/SEN

Pupils on roll: 105 (45% ethnic minority, 30% early EAL)

The extent to which CPD is focused on student learning outcomes

The school development plan is the keystone for the school and is oriented to the specific learning needs of the students. Student progress, within key stages, in each curriculum area, is targeted according to relevant P-scales (attainment of any child with special educational needs working below national curriculum level 1 is reported as a P level). Some students are working towards formally accredited qualifications. Staff work and learn in two operational teams (curriculum and access), both of which are organised around student learning needs. Both sets of teams are led by four of the six members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT - made up of the headteacher, two deputy heads, one assistant head; other members are one senior administrative officer/PA and a TA4 High Level Teaching Assistant – HLTA). All school development activities (including CPD) are planned and refined collaboratively between SLT and their respective teams. All staff interviewed were aware of the SDP priorities for this year – reading and mathematics – and all had learning targets that related to this focus. Last year the targets for both the development plan and CPD related to ICT. Piper Hill is a Specialist School in mathematics and computing and so a proportion of its development work is geared to fulfilling the requirements of SSAT to maintain this status, which the school has found very helpful.

CPD portfolios refer to specific learning targets for individual or small groups of students (two to four in the sample seen) and specify progress between points on P-scales for subjects or curriculum areas. Staff at all levels consistently conflated

their learning needs with their students' learning needs and the learning needs of the school as an organisation. For example, a member of staff with no formal training in dyslexia has recently requested to attend a programme on the basis that it would help her to assist some of her more able students, and support the school focus on reading.

The processes in place to support, monitor and evaluate participants' use of new knowledge and skills

Teaching and learning at Piper Hill relies on a dual respect for what has worked before – schemes of work, lesson plans and resources are posted on an intranet for all staff to access – and a constant process of creative adaptation of the curriculum to meet the extremes of differentiation that are required to meet the learning needs of students with severe learning difficulties. The characteristic 'way of working' in the school is both collaborative (constant conversations about the health, behaviour and learning needs of students are required) and experimental (adapting existing approaches or inventing new ones for individuals and small groups of students is the norm).

There is no 'menu' of CPD processes. Collaboration is part of the school culture. Most CPD focuses on joint planning and curriculum development and is supported by co-coaching and mentoring arrangements. All the teachers in the school have responsibilities for subject leadership, and curriculum teams meet once a week before school to help them to do this. Within this structure, staff work with one or two colleagues in co-coaching partnerships. SLT members have strategic responsibility for areas of the curriculum so, for example, in the current redesign of the D and T and English schemes of work, the head acts as specialist coach to the staff member leading on that work.

New practice is monitored and evaluated through specialist coaching which includes joint planning, observation/feedback episodes and formal and informal meetings.

Staff also work in groups of three to undertake 'learning walks' relating to the SDP priorities. Pairs of staff visit another colleague and 'walk through' their classroom and relevant aspects of their practice using a combination of observation, question and answer and looking at resources. They then provide verbal and written feedback, which is later collated into a central resource (anonymised and summarised into an 'account of practice') which is available for all staff to see.

Every Tuesday after school there is a one-hour school development meeting for the whole staff (approximately 60 people). About a third of these meetings have an explicit CPD focus and an underpinning learning process, although most meetings involve professional learning of some kind such as policy briefings, or demonstrations of how to use new equipment or software. The SLT has been specifically 'skilled up' in CPD leadership and have learned together, particularly about coaching (as a result of which they became involved in the Manchester

Coaching Network) and techniques for stimulating discussion, such as 'Diamond Nine'. All staff interviewed described their meetings as 'interactive' and 'good' although there was some concern that the inclusiveness of the Tuesday sessions might not allow for progression and space for specialist issues. Staff were clear that they could make requests for specific issues and learning foci for these meetings and had a high expectation that their requests would be met. Teachers and HLTAs have a further meeting on Thursdays for similar purposes. Curriculum and access groups, which also offer learning opportunities, meet once a week in the morning before school starts. This means that most staff attend at least four meetings per week at which they expect to engage in some form of professional learning and all of which provide opportunities for both generic and specialist discussion. This is in addition to their participation in learning walks, coaching and other forms of CPD.

Organisational structures, processes and leadership of CPD in relation to access, needs identification, alignment with school development and national priorities etc

Staff talk about what they are doing and behave as a 'learning school'. They have a strong sense of being jointly and severally responsible for the learning of all the students in the school, a key indicator of the development of a professional learning community. Levels of trust and opportunities to collaborate are high. There is a published Staff Development Policy, which sets out CPD as an **entitlement** for **all** staff (their emphasis).

CPD and performance management

The link between PM and CPD is strong, practical and widely understood. CPD targets are derived from SDP priorities. PM targets (for teachers and HLTAs) are likely to be similar. All staff identify their own PM and CPD targets and negotiate them with SLT at an annual meeting, with termly reviews. Two sets of targets are agreed: personal development (targets staff set for their own management, organisational and effectiveness purposes, such as improving ICT skills) and professional development (related to the progress of individuals or groups of students).

SLT as a whole takes responsibility for CPD in teams. Ultimately the head is the *de facto* CPD coordinator. She has practical support from a PA/ senior administrator to manage programme activity and keep records. The school is part of the Manchester Coaching Network and SLT as well as most of the staff have had training in coaching. There is strong awareness of, and commitment to, effective adult learning.

Learning opportunities

CPD is well documented. Each member of staff has a professional learning portfolio. Needs are analysed as part of an annual cycle of school and individual self-evaluation, run collaboratively (all staff are involved in the SEF and SDP planning) and concurrently, to enable staff to identify appropriate CPD needs.

Personal development requirements are also fulfilled where possible. Formal accredited programmes (NVQs, degrees and PGCEs) are supported by the school in relation to both fees and study leave. Several teachers on the staff are former TAs who have qualified whilst at Piper Hill. A group within the school comprising teachers, senior administrators and HLTAs is currently working on the NCSL Leading from the Middle programme.

Staff are given opportunities to lead the development of others and are coached by SLT to do so effectively. SLT have adopted an approach to coaching to develop others which includes withdrawal of support over time to avoid dependency and to build capacity.

Resources are allocated according to need. Funding for CPD does not appear to be discrete, but linked with SDP and recently, SSAT activities. Significant amounts of time are committed to CPD. All staff are paid to attend pre- and after-school meetings.

The school is well staffed and SLT have consciously built flexibility into working practices. As a result, cover for observations, coaching conversations and meetings is always available. The school invests heavily in its own people and pays no supply cover to outside agencies. It also offers PPA time to TAs as well as to teachers. *Ad hoc* and informal learning opportunities are recognised and facilitated too.

Specialists are brought into the school (to support learning, for example, about specific learning difficulties, new equipment and software, or new approaches for working with specific groups of pupils) and usually work with the whole staff at Tuesday, Thursday or whole training day meetings. More often, CPD takes the form of sharing expertise within the school and all teachers lead on an aspect of the curriculum and are expected to support colleagues in learning. This is characteristically achieved through modelling and demonstration, joint planning, curriculum development and team teaching.

The school has little contact or involvement with the local authority. The head attributes this to the fact that Piper Hill is a category 1 school.

Tracking participant learning outcomes

Staff learning as an outcome of CPD is evaluated as an integral part of school self-evaluation and performance management. Staff learning outcomes are expressed in CPD planning and target setting in terms of student learning achievement, and so the extent to which those targets have been met is the measure by which the impact of the CPD is evaluated. Learning models (apart from accredited programmes such as PGCE) are characteristically collaborative, so supporting others' learning takes place during rather than after CPD. This is a school where staff are rarely if ever alone with students. As a result, teaching and learning is constantly under scrutiny by other members of staff. TAs and HLTAs have an active role and powerful status in the school. All staff said they were

proud of the fact that, walking into any classroom, you would be unable to distinguish teachers from support staff. TAs and HLTAs therefore form part of the process of (self) evaluation of staff learning as they and the teachers work together to improve their students' learning.

Participant perspectives

Staff felt that their CPD needs were well served and there were no perceptions around inequality of access. No staff interviewed could remember a time when CPD, including off site, funded programmes, was refused. All staff understood CPD to be an entitlement and considered that they are actively encouraged to participate in, and to offer, CPD.

Tracking student learning outcomes

Teacher assessment is the normal form of evaluation generally and that is true for CPD too. Staff articulate accountability for identifying the need for CPD and for its outcomes in terms of improvement for student learning. There is no explicit process for exploring the extent to which CPD contributes to specific improvements for individuals or groups of students, but the degree of integration between staff and student learning needs might explain this. All staff interviewed were able to identify learning gains for the school and for their students as a result of CPD in which they had recently participated, and were clear that current and pending requests would be considered on the basis of the extent to which their fulfilment might contribute in the same way.

Finham Park School: on a CPD Journey

Secondary: 11-18, mixed Specialist status: mathematics and computing
Pupils on roll: 1474 (75% White British, above average SES)

Finham Park is designated as a Mathematics and Computing College and plays an active role in the local community with a large, school-based adult education programme and a network of partner schools. Finham also has training school status.

Finham Park's aim is to become a "shared vision and practice of learning community". It is embarking on a major review of CPD, using the TDA standards as a framework. The school has moved away from the traditional model of CPD still articulated in the existing, written policy and has introduced new approaches to CPD which include research groups, learning groups, coaching and mentoring. CPD is the responsibility of the deputy head. The school sees the next step as creating much closer links between CPD and student impact.

The extent to which CPD is focused on student learning outcomes

Pupil learning outcomes were at the heart of much of what teachers interviewed for this project said in relation to their CPD. Nonetheless the deputy head responsible for CPD believes that explicit consideration of pupil outcomes is not sufficiently embedded at the CPD planning stage. At present student learning needs do inform the CPD policy and much of the CPD activity but the links are implicit. The aim is to make them more specific and explicit using as a model a recent, whole-school development of Assessment for Learning practice. The current CPD policy was written 10 years ago and is about to have a radical review as practice has moved ahead of the policy. The leadership team aim to use the CPD review and its links to the TDA standards as an opportunity to develop and embed the alignment of CPD and clearly identified target student learning outcomes.

The processes in place to support, monitor and evaluate participants' use of new knowledge and skills

The school takes formative evaluation of CPD seriously. CPD takes many forms, including the use of Learning Forums, where groups of teachers undertake research into aspects of teaching and learning related to their own practice contexts. Teachers' use of new knowledge is consciously included in staff reviews, learning forums and performance management. The same attention is given to supporting learning in good practice in relation to staff portfolios and target setting. Teachers who were interviewed said that they felt supported and provided with ample opportunities for development. For example, the school provides observation and videoing facilities where staff can support each other's learning. The SMT plans to introduce a more explicit and systematic approach to measuring the impact of new professional learning. The school acknowledges that monitoring of this is currently underdeveloped and it will be reviewed as part of the policy overhaul. Monitoring currently happens most explicitly within the performance management process but it is also being developed through the Learning Forums where each research focus has to include development targets for the teacher, school and pupils.

Organisational structures, processes and leadership of CPD in relation to access, needs identification, alignment with school development and national priorities

The school leadership has a clearly stated and shared vision for the school as a professional learning community. Staff regularly observe each other and work in teams on planning or on research projects about teaching and learning. The school describes itself as having an "open positive learning culture where staff are encouraged to share ideas and strategies in the classroom". This is evidenced in the range of learning opportunities (see below) within the school and between the school and its university and network partnerships.

The deputy head has overall responsibility for CPD in the school with support and inputs from the director of research and the head of the training school. Team leaders have been trained in coaching and mentoring and collaboration is regarded as the key to effective CPD across the school.

CPD and performance management

CPD is tied to performance management in the context of the school development plan. Individual staff learning needs are identified and recorded by means of individual portfolios in which a record of both internal CPD activities (such as coaching) and external events is kept. Targets reflect a mixture of whole school, subject and individual priorities.

Learning opportunities

The school has developed a Training Classroom with videoing and observation facilities to enable trainees and all staff to learn from each other. All staff are involved in termly research projects led by the research director, in which they focus on aspects of teaching and learning rooted in their own practice contexts. Staff work in cross-school rather than departmental teams on the research projects although they also have opportunities to work within their subject during CPD time, which the school calls 'federation days'.

The school is also extensively networked so staff are regularly in contact with fresh perspectives and are able to learn from colleagues outside the school. Finham is a member of Creative Partnerships Coventry, for example, in which staff take part in action research programmes. The school also works with partner schools on creativity and on issues such as transition. It is part of a network of local School Improvement Partnerships arranged into subject hubs which meet once a term.

The deputy head maintains an overview of the learning opportunities across the school and is clearly aware of issues such as equity and access. TAs and associates are always included in the CPD activities.

In addition to the ongoing learning activities across the school, CPD is formally timetabled on five occasions in the year and time is made available for the work of the research groups. Some 89% of all CPD is delivered in-house (external activities tend to be about issues where internal expertise is lacking – health, for example). The role of the local authority, which has been extensive in, for example, facilitating the establishment of school-run School Improvement Partnerships, is perceived to be diminishing.

On whole-school training days staff are given control over the agenda for part of the experience. One day is subject based and held in federation groups (with a wider group of local schools). The CPD approach is inclusive. All associate staff (of whom there are 70, including technicians, cover supervisors and TAs) are included in CPD activities. The research director acts as a TLA leader and TLA participations and presentations are seen as high priority.

The senior management team is fully committed to further CPD development and is aware of what's available from national initiatives and local networks. The school has a clear vision and some examples of excellent practice in its use of

collaboration, observation and research. The senior management team know where they are going but acknowledge that they are not there yet. The deputy head suggested that if one were to view progress as a pyramid (see below) Finham would be in the middle moving towards the top.

Shared vision and
practice
of learning community

Introducing new models of CPD
such as research groups, learning forums,
coaching and mentoring.
This is where Finham is currently

Existing written policy – more traditional model of CPD – external speakers,
external courses etc.

The use of pupil data to inform CPD has been growing in recent years and is evident in, for example, the work of research groups and TLA presentations. The arrangements described in earlier sections for performance management are also supporting the development trajectory towards more explicit links between CPD and pupil learning.

Participant perspectives

Teachers interviewed ranged from a Newly Qualified Teacher to an assistant head, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. They all enjoyed the research projects they were involved in. Comments included:

- *I have had lots of CPD opportunities*
- *I have always felt CPD is available – currently doing Leading from the Middle to develop me in my role*
- *I have been privileged in that I have been offered CPD opportunities that I would not have had at another school*
- *I have never been refused a course*
- *The school invested in me to do my Duke of Edinburgh.*

Two members of staff did express some dissatisfaction. This centred around the absence of enough – in their view – concentration on subject expertise. One member of staff reported that lots of staff are drowning in 'initiative overload'... "All we want to be is better teachers". Another concern was that some whole-school initiatives such as mentoring and coaching 'feel like SMT concerns'. One young teacher said that she wanted a lot more subject development.

Tracking student outcomes

Staff were quite confident about their use of data and monitoring of pupils. They were also confident in the use of their own judgement. A recent project on raising boys' achievement (Breakthrough pilot) had involved extensive data use. Staff

did not entirely rely on data *outside* their own judgements and recognised the pitfalls of ignoring the complex mix of variables affecting student achievement.

Ladygrove Primary: on a CPD Journey

Ladygrove is a large primary school in Oxfordshire with 385 pupils on roll.

The extent to which CPD is focused on student learning outcomes

Ladygrove's CPD policy makes explicit links between performance management and pupil outcomes. Every teacher has to set a target for themselves, the whole school and pupils each year. The stated aims of the CPD policy are focused on student learning outcomes. There has been a recent initiative involving Assessment for Learning which was initiated by the assistant head because of a concern about pupil progress. Pupil attainment has been the explicit focus of some of the whole-school CPD, according to the head teacher. For example, he initiated CPD for the whole staff in relation to setting because he was unconvinced by Ofsted findings and felt that there was other research that challenged assumptions about the efficacy of setting. Although this was the head's own initiative, and he acknowledges that some staff may not be so convinced, the school has at least started a professional dialogue about pupil ability and setting.

Where CPD focuses on specific groups of students, this mainly involves special educational needs. An AST was brought in to take on a strategic role. Now the head is planning to introduce a more strategic approach to the use of frameworks and data. Teachers are encouraged to look at the available data (such as PANDAs) and targets are set and analysed throughout the year.

Although practice is moving towards this, the school has not yet completely aligned CPD planning, in particular individual teacher CPD plans, with the consideration of student outcomes. At whole-school level the connections are more explicit as in, for example, the AfL project, which is a whole-school priority. Another recent project had raised boys' achievement and was closely monitored through the use of data.

The processes in place to support, monitor and evaluate participants' use of new knowledge and skills

The head and SLT are supportive of 'action' research models and also the value and use of collaborative teams and networking for staff learning. The school has adopted the principles of good coaching and mentoring. For example, new initiatives are typically introduced by pairs of teachers trialling the new approaches, normally for a term. Examples of this include the school's use of the Excellence and Enjoyment toolkit and AfL resources from the National Strategies. The coaching-based 'intervention' is followed up with a staff meeting

on what has and has not worked well and reflection on the impact on students. Coaching and mentoring are used regularly. Although teachers are resistant to the terminology, they understand the principles and practice and use them well. Teachers were positive and enthusiastic about the benefits of working together in this way.

School structures and processes are organised developmentally. For example:

- meetings and workshops are organised explicitly on a learning and professional dialogue model. They may, for example, use techniques such as card sorting and mapping/conceptualising and staff work collaboratively.
- curriculum teams are one of the formal structures that ensure a professional learning dimension is integrated with whole-school development
- the school has an explicit policy of developing leaders and has created two posts for leaders of curriculum teams.

Although whole-school development projects are closely monitored, the absence of links between CPD and pupil outcomes at individual teacher and TA level limit close monitoring of the outcomes of CPD activities.

The organisational structures, processes and leadership of CPD in relation to access, needs identification, alignment with school development and national priorities etc

From the leadership team there is a clear, stated, shared vision of the school as a professional learning community. The school leadership is also keen to promote an action research model of CPD and move away from a model of CPD as attending courses.

Between them, the headteacher and two assistant heads have formal responsibility for CPD in the school. They and the curriculum team leaders have been formally trained in the skills of mentoring and coaching. Training in mentoring and coaching is enshrined in staff development policy. The leadership team express a commitment to adult professional learning which is shared, negotiated and supported.

Individual staff learning needs are all identified, recorded and updated through the PM reviews. Fair access to CPD is enshrined in the CPD policy and is evaluated regularly. The school is small, which enables senior leaders to develop an awareness of the quite detailed needs of individual staff and use this to shape CPD provision and inform PM targets.

CPD is explicitly linked with performance management and the school development plan. A development session for all staff was designed around the alignment of school development and performance management with staff development needs. Staff were encouraged to contribute to the understanding

and development of the policy. This has not detracted from the school's view that CPD is about reflection and development and, explicitly, about learning together.

Learning opportunities

CPD in school is split between whole-school sessions and year or curriculum teams. In one staff meeting observed by the reviewer, staff met together and then divided into subject teams to tackle a common task requiring feed back to the whole group at the next staff meeting. Some TAs are included in the in-school sessions. There is no published framework of entitlement but it is clear that 'everyone knows who to ask'. Learning opportunities within the school range from external courses (where in-school expertise is lacking) to long-term research projects. The head is keen to make more use of the intellectual capital within the school. The school actively encourages collaboration among staff and between staff, other schools, parents, governors and others.

The school is consciously trying to build capacity across staff to lead on CPD opportunities. Staff are involved in Leading from the Middle, ECM, action research projects and networks. The CPD leadership display considerable knowledge of the resources and opportunities available for their colleagues – including national programmes – and of the need to keep abreast of individual teacher needs. There is no formal mechanism for allocating CPD resources across the school but staff are aware that they can ask about CPD opportunities at any time (although one part-time member of staff did not see CPD as relevant to them). Support is also sourced through the local authority and some national programmes (NCSL), although local authority input is diminishing because the head is moving away from externally delivered CPD.

There is some teacher use of data (Pandas in setting targets) but there could be more.

Tracking learning outcomes for participants

A culture of evaluation is now developing. Because CPD is part of performance management it is closely monitored. There are termly performance reviews as well as an infrastructure of coaching and mentoring. Evaluation processes and methods are not always identified at the planning stage of CPD. Nonetheless a lot of CPD work takes place in teams which feed back regularly to the whole staff group – led by one of the senior leadership team.

Participant perspectives

Eight teachers were interviewed. The shared understanding of school vision was borne out by the interviews with all but one member of the staff. They were positive about the support available for CPD, the open culture of the school, and the CPD opportunities. All staff have portfolios and regarded PM and targets as being a normal part of professional development. Staff described the school as friendly and open.

One very experienced teacher agreed that CPD has a high profile but implied that it was not entirely shared. This teacher was quite sceptical about some aspects of it. On a spectrum of what makes them buy into CPD – whether it is ‘just for me’ or mainly to improve ‘pupil outcomes’ – all teachers interviewed placed themselves towards the ‘pupil outcomes’ end, but with reservations. Most suggested that to focus exclusively on pupil outcomes could be demoralising.

It is clear that there is still some way to go before all staff buy in to the leadership vision, and the leadership is aware of this. For example, there was some suggestion that coaching was mainly a leadership project and did not yet have the full support of all staff. All teachers said enjoyment of the job was key to retention and that sometimes too much emphasis was placed on being trained to be leaders – instead of just concentrating on subject and classroom expertise. Data tracking was also perceived as a senior management interest and not shared by the whole staff, as shown by the comment “We know and trust our own judgement about pupils’ achievement”.

Time for CPD was also raised as an issue. Initiatives, however embedded, were seen as being on top of the day job. One teacher early on in their career commented that coaching seemed a bit artificial and challenging (this teacher is coaching someone with four years’ more experience), but also said that teaching should not be exempt from the challenging CPD that exists in other professions. This teacher also wanted to concentrate on the job rather than the career – and felt there is a lot of emphasis on career development that was premature.

Most of the teachers were positive about opportunities and quality. Two thirds said they didn’t want to work with other schools.

One teacher was identified by the head as being dissatisfied with CPD and so provided an important perspective in building a full picture of the school as a professional learning community. This teacher concurred with the head’s appraisal of his/her dissatisfaction. As a specialist he/she feels thwarted by the system as a whole in his/her ambitions to enhance his/her specialism. This teacher is not interested in leadership development. She/he has outstanding qualifications and is obviously very able. She/he actively dislikes the CPD direction in the system at present and therefore in the school although he/she recognises the head’s extensive efforts to involve and support her/him. This teacher prefers being taught by someone really good and who knows what they are talking about and finds coaching irritating.

Tracking student learning outcomes

There is explicit tracking of progress on the basis of inspection recommendation and the head is encouraging the development of explicit teacher judgement – rather than relying too much on SATs. Student confidence and attitudes to learning are regarded as important goals and the school is sensitive to tracking progress in this domain too.

Supplementary information

In order to set the evidence from the case studies in a wider context we also interviewed nine teachers from seven primary and secondary schools who were recruited by invitation to a (much wider) group of schools on the CUREE database who were located within easy travelling distance of Coventry. Their responses represented a wide range of practice. In one school the weekly CPD session often turned into an administrative meeting and there was clearly a perception from two of the teachers that CPD meant 'going on a course'. Whole-school training was on most schools' agendas and there was a sense that individual needs were not always catered for. None of the teachers felt that the system in their schools was unfair or inequitable but it was clear from the responses that Hustler's (2003) findings – that some teachers felt that school development needs took precedence over individual needs – still prevails in these schools. Only one teacher said that the school set whole staff, subject specific and individual targets. Another said that teachers were becoming sharper at identifying the kind of CPD they needed in the light of PM targets.

The two LA advisers we interviewed both noted that performance management was having a significant impact on CPD and sharpening the focus on student learning. Both stressed the need for opportunities and support for embedding new practice – and highlighted the usefulness of coaching for this purpose. One adviser highlighted the whole-school approach to CPD in the context of the five ECM outcomes and echoed the findings from the fieldwork and from the literature in relation to CPD which did not address teachers' own concerns. This links to the experiences at Sweyne Park, where teachers moved from working on whole-school priorities in a cross-school context to working on them in their own departments, wrapped around their subject specialisms.

Section 3

Key messages

These are four very different schools, all some considerable way along the journey to creating a professional learning community and a strategic approach to CPD leadership. It is clearly not possible to generalise from such a small sample of case studies and interviews. Nonetheless the case studies, coupled with the evidence from the literature summarised above, and the supplementary perspectives from *ad hoc* interviews and focus groups do enable us to start building an evidence-informed approach to answering some of GTC's key questions about '**strategic**' CPD in schools. Some of these raise further issues and questions that create an evidence-informed basis for further enquiry.

1. *What is a good and consensual working definition of 'strategic' in the context of the evidence and of the case studies?*

Based on the evidence in the case studies and the literature review we would offer a 'work in progress' definition of a strategic approach to CPD in schools, for testing, consultation and further enquiry as follows. Schools which take a strategic approach to CPD:

- Put student learning at the heart of all professional learning
 - Provide opportunities for staff to collaborate and to be proactive about their own learning
 - Ensure that all staff are aware of and share the school's approach to professional learning
 - Align school, departmental and individual staff priorities and set them in the context of national and local priorities and resources
 - Locate the leadership of CPD at senior management level
 - Use a mix of specialist expertise and collaborative coaching
 - Use a mix of whole school, departmental and individual pupil data to inform CPD decision making
2. *What internal features and/or external factors appear to influence the development of more strategic decision making? What internal features and/or external factors appear to influence the extent to which CPD policy has a systemic role in school development planning?*

A critical mass of CPD support enabled CPD leaders to use the school development plan to agree targets and individual CPD priorities while at the same time identifying and agreeing on the *means* by which professional learning will take place. This was accompanied by a reduction in the use of local authority and university support. The development of an array of CPD capacity (including skilled ASTs and experienced coaches and mentors) seems to have been a key factor in enabling the development of more strategic decision making.

External factors included the introduction of performance management and the emphasis on coaching and mentoring in a range of national and local initiatives. All of the case study schools were working to align their CPD systems and policies with performance management. Targets were set and progress monitored through the PM process. Although this was done jointly by teachers and their line managers, Sweyne Park, for example, ensured that there was a supportive buffer zone in the form of the central CPD team whose members were linked to departments and liaised with staff to ensure that everyone who needed support was getting it in a form that was useful to them.

We suggest that this will become even more critical when another external factor comes into play and pay becomes part of the PM package. Schools which are taking a strategic approach to CPD might consider expanding and formalising the in-school support and development team(s) available to staff. It will be important in this to consider how to create a supportive environment for learning and risk taking that is appropriately connected to accountability systems and inevitable power imbalances.

Further investigation to identify the specific characteristics of in-school support mechanisms would clearly be very helpful to schools, to CPD leaders and to the teachers they support.

3. What are the barriers to a more strategic approach being developed?

Our study focused on the journey of schools already experiencing a degree of success. The barriers facing schools that are at an earlier stage of development may well be greater and different in kind. Obstacles that our schools had to overcome included:

- securing the support of a senior colleague with an interest and skills in adult professional learning;
- an assumption that performance management was more about accountability than development and so should be treated as separate from rather than a key part of CPD;
- dislocations between school development planning and CPD planning;
- a lack of shared understanding of evidence based principles and practices involved in effective mentoring and coaching
- insufficient recognition of the need for and use of specialist expertise;
- insufficient data collection and monitoring and support for teachers in the use of data;
- difficulties in personalising adult professional learning and building on what people know, can do and care about already in relation to their children's learning; and
- difficulties in rooting CPD in pupil learning given the number and complexity of variables involved.

On a practical level, both time and money could and sometimes were, identified as potential barriers to strategic approaches to CPD. In all of the case studies in our study the school leadership made conscious efforts to schedule time for teachers to work together. The energising effects of this were noticeable in the teacher interviews and there is also an existing strong evidence base that identifies collaboration (for example, in lesson planning, reviewing lessons, observing and discussing) as an effective way of fuelling and sustaining innovation and putting new knowledge and skills to work. This small scale study and the larger scale research reviews suggest that paying attention to this important dimension of adult learning requires deliberate timetabling and scheduling as it does not happen accidentally. Careful planning of time also played an important role in creating the culture of openness and amenability to change which were the hallmarks of the learning communities we saw working effectively in these schools. Budgetary decisions had to be made too. At Sweyne Park for example, the school had made a substantial investment in external consultants for professional development. The school judged the returns in terms of teacher and student learning to be well worth the 'sacrifices' which may have had to be made elsewhere.

4. *Does planning for CPD involve different approaches to CPD allocation, and therefore different opportunities, for different groups of teachers (for example, older teachers, less senior teachers, teachers from BME backgrounds, supply teachers, teachers with particular specialisms)? what are (i) the intentions (ii) the effects, of such differentiation?*

We found little evidence (other than the arrangements for NQTs) that CPD planning in schools which were approaching CPD strategically was differentiated for different groups of staff in terms of age or ethnicity. One school (Sweyne Park) had specially appointed CPD co-ordinators for NQTs and teachers in the early years of their career, but this seems to be more for the additional support needed than for offering different types of CPD opportunities. On the contrary, needs identification processes were focused around student learning and related teacher learning, irrespective of teacher characteristics. What we did find was a growing appreciation of the need to address teachers' professional identity and subject or curriculum expertise through the personalisation of CPD.

This awareness grew out of teachers' own expressed concerns for subject, or specialism-related professional development opportunities. At Sweyne Park, for example, whole-school CPD sessions had been largely replaced by departmental sessions as staff preferred to work through school development priorities within their own subject area. Teachers in other schools expressed concerns that the emphasis on whole-school activities might be at the expense of curriculum-based CPD.

This leads us to suggest that a strategic approach to CPD means identifying approaches that enable the articulation and connection of whole school, subject/phase or departmental and individual CPD priorities. We know from the latest systematic review into CPD³ that schools need to ensure that specialist knowledge and skills can be accessed by specialist teachers and CPD co-ordinators. We believe too that teachers' professional desire to develop their curriculum expertise as the basis from which to develop their teaching expertise is an important asset on which CPD leaders need to build, and an area where further investigation and exemplification would be helpful.

There was also some evidence that the personalisation agenda – for students - has led to increasingly differentiated *teacher* learning needs. The most strategic schools in our study were able to plan for differentiated targets - that is, those geared to individual teacher needs but consistent with the SDP. (Sweyne Park has developed a simple portfolio format to assist this process which they may be prepared to make available as a model for other schools.) Each of the schools is developing opportunities and resources for in-class collaborative or specialist coaching. In Sweyne Park these are particularly well established and there is widespread understanding of their role and purpose in structuring and extending the learning dimension of on-the-job CPD.

5. Where strategic approaches are judged to be in place, what range of CPD concepts seem to be deployed in support of this? How are these translated into a range of CPD opportunities for staff?

In our suggested definition of strategic CPD in schools (see 1 above) – based amongst other things on systematic reviews of the research, we highlighted collaboration, coaching and specialist expertise as key CPD concepts. Some of the ways in which these were being operationalised in the case study schools included the development of a range of in-school CPD resources such as video for observation, training in coaching skills, intranet sharing, the identification of specialist expertise amongst staff, the use of external specialists and weekly bulletins targeting staff professional development.

As part of the learning support available to teachers most schools in our study operated some form of intranet resource sharing system, although in some it was not clear how much this was used by the teachers. We also noted that Sweyne Park had an open-access CPD resources library which was kept up to date by the deputy head in overall charge of CPD. Perhaps most striking was that teachers routinely made use of the school's video technician for improvement purposes, either in collaboration with other teachers or simply to be able to reflect and observe a particular group of students or the effects of a particular technique at a particular point in the lesson. At Finham Park, the leadership had invested in

³ Cordingley et al. (2007) Forthcoming

a designated Training Room which all teachers could use to learn from each other.

This supports our suggestion that a strategic approach to CPD needs to take account not only of creating timetabled learning opportunities and organisational and leadership support but also to plan for the creation of the physical and human resources which teachers can use for CPD purposes. This is not to suggest that there is no place for off-site professional development inputs. But the larger public evidence base suggests strongly that without a strategic approach to embedding learning and creating opportunities for experimenting with new ways of doing things, new knowledge and skills will not readily translate into lasting changes in practice.

Further illustration (and practical examples of their use) of the range of approaches to creating a pool of CPD resources would no doubt be very helpful to CPD leaders. Even a simple mechanism like the weekly staff bulletin at Sweyne Park can play a powerful role in promoting openness, innovation and sharing.

We were interested in the reservations which a minority of teachers at Ladygrove and Finham Park expressed about the introduction of coaching and mentoring for staff development. By contrast, staff at Piper Hill and Sweyne Park regarded coaching as a valuable means of staff development which is focused squarely on student outcomes and targeted at a specific teacher learning goal. This suggests that it takes time to build a strong infrastructure of professional learning skills and support. Strategic use of coaching depended upon the clarity and relevance of the coaching focus, on an appropriate mix of specialist and co-coaching skills and opportunities and on the clarity of the aims and objectives. The challenges of introducing coaching can sometimes mean that the process appears to be an end in itself. It was when coaching was understood as a means to an end that everybody cares about that its true strategic potential was realised.

CPD leadership, like all forms of leadership, involved balancing needs that were in tension with each other. As Ofsted remarked, strategic CPD involves building logical links in an extended development chain which implies considerable strategic planning. Just as importantly, in the case studies it involved more dynamic and organic development approaches and the capacity to respond imaginatively and creatively to an unfolding situation. This may be one reason why in two schools (Sweyne Park and Finham) the school leadership were reluctant to spend time on updating written policies because they felt that the time was more usefully spent in developing resources and tools for moving practice forward and responding to external and internal priorities.

6. *How is CPD evaluated and its impact assessed at a strategic level?*

Schools which were strategic about their CPD policies and processes geared professional development to student learning. Consistent with this, evaluative processes took account of student outcomes as key indicators of impact. For example, at Piper Hill, staff learning outcomes were expressed in CPD planning and target setting in terms of student learning outcomes, and so the extent to which those targets have been achieved is the measure by which the impact of the CPD is evaluated. At Sweyne Park extensive use was made of pupil voice for diagnostic and evaluation purposes and all staff were expected to consult their pupils about their learning. The four external consultants fed pupil perspectives back to the staff. The school also used pupil panels as a powerful diagnostic tool and as a way of measuring impact. Examples of strategic evaluation (i.e. where evaluation is built into the design and planning of CPD) across the study included:

- Annual departmental reviews which included pupil questionnaires and interviews
- Assessing goals and targets through the performance management system: if targets were not met, fresh learning support mechanisms were identified to help staff achieve their goals
- Use of video for both peer and self monitoring and formative evaluation
- Systematic use of data monitoring by teachers and by senior and middle management
- Using coaching, including observation and debriefing/formative assessment for adults as a peer review strategy
- Taking account of teacher judgement as well as data monitoring

At Finham Park, which was working towards a strategic approach to CPD, teachers' use of new knowledge was consciously included in staff reviews, learning forums and performance management. The SMT planned to introduce a more explicit and systematic approach to measuring the impact of new professional learning – an area which had not been developed at the time of our fieldwork.

At Ladygrove, a culture of evaluation was developing through the performance management system. Progress was also routinely tracked on the basis of inspection recommendation. The head is encouraging the development of evaluation processes based on teacher judgement rather than relying on national test results as student confidence and attitudes to learning are regarded as important goals which also need tracking.

These data and evidence from our systematic reviews suggest that a key to making sure that CPD interventions remain focused on student learning lies in

involving teachers and their colleagues closely in the evaluative processes. The development of a CPD resource infrastructure on which teachers can draw is a prerequisite for this. Both Swayne Park and Finham have built on this to develop action research models by means of which teachers are supported and equipped to undertake objective evaluations of the impact of their practice on their students' learning.

7. What appear to be the key managerial and operational characteristics of a strategic approach and what are the benefits to school leadership teams and to school staff?

The key managerial and operational characteristics emerging from this study were embedded in CPD processes and arrangements described above and analysed in these key messages. They could perhaps be characterised best as the application of expert knowledge about teaching and learning processes in classroom contexts to adult professional learning.

We would suggest that the key benefits of aligning staff professional development with school, departmental and individual priorities through the performance system are that:

- CPD becomes a clear means to an end
- professional learning is focused on and driven forward through the lens of pupil learning
- staff are more confident and enthusiastic about their professional learning and more willing to take risks and open up their practice – partly as a result of the focus on pupil learning
- collaborative learning creates a learning culture within the school. Each learning benefit experienced by a teacher is immediately fed back into learning benefits for pupils – and vice versa.

Section 4

The Evidence Base

Case studies

Data were gathered from four case study sites, identified jointly with GTC in the expectation (based on personal knowledge, Ofsted comments and scoping interviews) that they would provide:

- an exemplar of a strategic approach to CPD at school level:

Sweyne Park High School

Secondary: 11-16, mixed; Community school

Pupils on roll: 1303 (Majority White British, achievement on entry below average)

- Examples (one primary, one secondary) of schools which were in the process of creating a more strategic approach to CPD:

Finham Park School, Coventry

Secondary: 11-18, mixed; Specialist status: mathematics and computing

Pupils on roll: 1474 (75% White British, above average SES)

Ladygrove

A large primary school in Oxfordshire with 385 pupils on roll.

- An exemplar of a strategic approach to CPD in a special school for comparative purposes:

Piper Hill High School, Manchester

Special school: 11-19, mixed; Specialist status: Mathematics and computing/SEN

Pupils on roll: 105 (45% ethnic minority, 30% early EAL)

Three researchers visited each of the schools over two days (except for the smaller, special school where data were collected over one full day). They used the same interrogation framework (see above and Appendix) for data collection in each case. Up to 8 teachers were interviewed in each school, together with the head and the CPD co-ordinator who was either the head or a deputy head in each case. Teachers included a spread of age and experience, from NQT to assistant head level.

Supplementary evidence

This was collected through:

- LA Interviews with two CPD advisers in Oxfordshire and Coventry; and
- teacher perspectives from a mixed primary and secondary focus group.

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Appendix 1

GTC Study of Strategic CPD: interrogation framework

Student Learning Outcomes (Teachers and Leaders) (Focus)

- To what extent are the school CPD policies and priorities explicitly focused on student learning outcomes?
- In what ways are student learning outcomes identified and targeted in the context of CPD?
- Do the CPD goals focus on specific groups of students?
- Are staff given the tools and resources or frameworks to evaluate changes in terms of student outcomes?
- To what extent is a focus on student outcomes a motivational factor for change: does it achieve buy in?

Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills (Teachers and leaders)

- How do CPD participants effectively interpret and apply new knowledge and skills in their own context?
- How do CPD processes enable teachers to explore and refine their beliefs about effective teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment and their subject?
- What challenge and support mechanisms are in place to implement changes in practice?
- How is new practice monitored and evaluated?
- How are meetings and workshops structured: do processes model and or adapt as appropriate student learning processes for a professional context? e.g. Is formative evaluation built into the design of CPD activities?
- How or to what extent are new staff encouraged and supported to share their perspectives and influences with colleagues
- Are staff encouraged to work within generic learning foci that can also be specifically related to their context of student work?

Organisation “support and change” (Leaders and CPD co-ordinators)

- Is there a clearly stated and shared vision for the school as a professional learning community?
- In what ways does CPD policy link with performance management and the SDP?
- In what ways does CPD contribute to self-evaluation, standards of teaching and learning and school improvement?
- Is the CPD leader a member of the school leadership team?
- Have team leaders been formally trained in the skills of mentoring and coaching?
- Is there a shared understanding among team leaders of the characteristics that contribute to effective adult learning experiences?
- How are individual staff learning needs identified and recorded and updated?
- How is participation monitored in relation to entitlements, needs and equity?
- Is there a whole workforce CPD strategy or separate strategies for separate groups? If whole school how are the different needs of different groups accommodated?

- Do all staff, including support staff, have professional portfolios and individual learning plans? How are these linked to school improvement and performance management? How are they linked to national/regional priorities?
- Is there a published framework of entitlement?
- Does the leadership promote a wide range of learning opportunities?
- How are internal and external perspectives combined to support close-to-practice learning?
- Does the school encourage collaboration between staff and between staff, other schools, parents, governors or others in the community?
- Does the CPD approach recognise that teaching others is one of the best forms of CPD?
- In what ways is the school systematically building capacity across staff to lead on CPD opportunities?
- Does the CPD leader have an overview of all the time, resources and opportunities (including external resources) available to support professional learning?
- How are resources for CPD allocated across the school?
- Does the school draw on locally and nationally resourced programmes to augment CPD resources?
- Are all staff clearly informed about available CPD resources?
- Are aspects of professional learning timetabled?
- How does the school ensure that time is available for professional learning?
- How is external expertise selected? Is it explicitly linked to school based classroom practice?
- How is internal expertise used? Does the CPD leader have an overview of the contributions that staff can make to the learning of others?
- What is the role of the local authority in staff professional development?
- How does data collection and data use inform CPD?

Participants' Learning Outcomes (Teachers and Leaders)

- Do CPD participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills? Can these be described in concrete terms, exemplified and linked to participants' perceptions and analysis of student learning?
- How does the school monitor and evaluate staff learning?
- Are participant and student learning outcomes identified and specified before CPD takes place?
- Are evaluation processes and methods identified at the planning stage of CPD?
- Are ways of encouraging teachers to use their learning to support others' learning identified at the planning stage of CPD?
- Are data about outcomes reviewed and synthesised? If so how often?

Participants' Reactions/Perspectives (Teachers)

Note: in this section some of the organisational level questions are repeated in order to test whether whole-school 'rhetoric,' or the leadership perspective, aligns with the experiences of staff. The GTC survey questions are also repeated here to contextualise the responses.

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- Is there shared understanding of the vision for the school as a professional learning community or model of professional learning/development?

- In what ways does CPD policy link with performance management and the SDP?
- In what ways does CPD contribute to self-evaluation, standards of teaching and learning and school improvement?
- Do all staff have professional portfolios and individual learning plans? How are these linked to school improvement and performance management? How are they linked to the bigger picture?
- Does the leadership promote a wide range of learning opportunities, blending internal and external opportunities to meet different learning needs?
- How are individual staff learning needs identified? What role do staff play in identifying their own learning needs?
- How do staff experience the process of supporting their colleagues' learning?
- Does the school encourage collaboration between staff and between staff, other schools, parents, governors or others in the community?
- In what ways is the school systematically building capacity across staff to lead on CPD opportunities?
- Are all staff clearly informed about available CPD opportunities?
- Do staff feel equipped to monitor and recognise improvements in their own and their students' learning? Do they feel confident in the use of classroom observation, feedback, work sampling, lesson planning, pupil feedback and reflective coaching conversations?
- Are support staff and Las included in the school's professional learning programme?

Student Learning Outcomes (Teachers and Leaders)

(Results)

- In what ways are student learning outcomes evaluated?
- To what extent are individual and group student achievement indicators monitored?
- To what extent are affective attributes (student confidence and attitudes to learning) factored in to CPD evaluative processes?
- To what extent are behavioural patterns (e.g. attendance) factored in to CPD evaluative processes?