Continuing Professional Development for Teachers in Schools

Inspected September 2000 to April 2001

Contents

Continuing Professional Development for Teachers in Schools

Introduction

1. In the autumn term 2000 and the spring term 2001, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) visited a sample of schools to evaluate the management and effect of teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) activities. The focus was on activities falling within the scope of the School Improvement Grant of the Standards Fund, particularly the self-improvement element that enables schools to plan and put in place improvement programmes in line with their own development plans.

2. Inspectors visited a representative sample of 112 schools in 10 local education authorities (LEAs). In most of the LEAs, inspectors visited five primary schools, five secondary schools and one special school.

3. The two main aims were to evaluate:

   • the effectiveness of the schools' management of the Standards Fund in supporting teachers' professional development

   • the effect of professional development activities on raising standards in the schools.

4. To meet these aims, inspectors:

   • judged the fitness for purpose and effectiveness of the schools' procedures to use the available funding in support of teachers' professional development and to assess whether value for money is obtained

   • assessed the quality of the procedures used by the schools to measure the effect of professional development activities on the standards achieved by pupils

   • evaluated evidence of the effect of the activities on the schools' standards

   • explored with teachers which forms of professional development activities were most effective in enhancing their skills, knowledge and understanding.

5. In the course of the inspection, inspectors:

- examined documents provided by the school in order to gain an understanding of:
  - the processes of curricular and professional development planning in the school
  - the range and scope of CPD activities undertaken by members of staff over the two previous school years
  - the school's procedures for evaluating CPD provision and its outcomes
  - the strategies used by the school to spread and share the outcomes from CPD activities
  - how the school evaluated the effect of CPD activities

- held discussions with relevant members of the school's senior management team, notably the CPD co-ordinator, and a sample of teachers who had undertaken professional development activities within the last two school years

- looked at samples of pupils' work or other evidence that teachers were able to provide to demonstrate the effect of the CPD activities the teachers had undertaken.

6.   About four fifths of the schools used the self-improvement element of the School Improvement Grant responsibly and purposefully, guided appropriately by specific improvement needs. They used a broad range of relevant evidence to measure their achievements and plan for improvement and further development. The evidence used included inspection findings, the analysis of pupils' performance data, and self-evaluation of the outcomes of their responses to new initiatives, for example policies on inclusion.

7.   Approximately seven out of ten of the schools were able to identify teachers' professional needs well, and related them directly to whole-school plans for development and improvement. In most of the schools, there were good consultative systems in place to involve staff in identifying their professional development needs. In secondary schools, subject department self-review provided an increasingly useful focus for this. Although the Investors in People (IiP) standard was not a touchstone, schools with IiP accreditation tended to make good use of the principles on which it is based.

8.   Four fifths of the schools drew on a wide and relevant range of professional development activities to meet their corporate priorities and those of individual teachers. A significant minority of the schools included non-teaching staff in professional development activities on the grounds that all staff had a role to play in improving performance. Most teachers and support staff were constructively involved in professional development activities aimed at developing their knowledge and competencies and improving their career opportunities.

9.   Course attendance was the main vehicle for professional development in most of the schools. However, inspectors noted evidence of a growing awareness of the value of other forms of CPD. These included, in particular, sharing the expertise of teachers in the same school, sharing knowledge and skills with teachers in other schools, and using consultants to provide in-school programmes of support to tackle a specific need.

10.   Teachers, line managers and CPD co-ordinators rarely assembled an array of CPD activities to form a coherent individual training plan, designed to bring about specific improvements in a teacher's knowledge and skills. More often, teachers worked on a range of loosely related activities that did not always provide good value for money or achieve the intended outcome.

11.   Schools on the whole failed to allow enough time to support effective professional development and to ensure that newly acquired knowledge and skills were consolidated, implemented and shared with other teachers.

12. Although a small number of schools could point to clear evidence of the effect of CPD, more often the procedures used to judge the extent to which teachers' professional needs had been met were weak. Teachers' judgements about the effect of CPD activities on their work were usually based on broad statements about what they felt better able to do, or the increased confidence with which they now undertook their work. The expected effects in terms of pupils' gains in knowledge, understanding or skill, or specific improvements in the teacher's performance, were rarely stated explicitly when the development activities were planned or used as criteria for judging their effect.

13. Few schools evaluated CPD activities in terms of the value for money obtained as measured against their effectiveness in improving teaching and raising pupils' achievements.

Teachers' Professional Development Needs

14. Nine out of ten secondary schools made good use of a wide variety of relevant sources of evidence to identify their priorities for school improvement. The main sources were key issues from the most recent school inspection, feedback from LEA inspectors and advisers, analysis of external examination results and national tests, and issues highlighted in the school's self-evaluation process. The primary and special schools drew on a narrower, but equally relevant, range of evidence to decide on specific areas needing attention. In most of the schools, the plans that resulted from this process were the main influences in prioritising professional development activities.

15. In the secondary schools, these plans usually specified the broad actions, development and training needed to secure the desired improvements, the timetable for achieving targets, and the resources available to run the development activities. Departmental planning processes were commonly linked to school development planning. Heads of department and their colleagues were required to say how they would help to meet the school's wider priorities as well as those that they considered essential to improve teaching and learning in their own subject.

Case study 1

In this large secondary school, planning cycles are linked very effectively to ensure that review processes feed into the formulation of its self-improvement and development plan. As part of the review process, each department evaluates its practices and achievements and identifies areas for development. These departmental priorities feed into the production of the whole-school plan. Departments then use the whole-school plan to define how they will meet the school's priorities during the year as well as any specific objectives and targets for improving teaching and learning in the subject.

The assistant headteacher allocates a notional professional development budget to each department. When submitting a spending proposal for professional development activities, the teachers are required to:

■ *define how the CPD activity links to the school improvement and development plan and/or the specific objectives or targets of the department*

■ *illustrate specifically how the development activity links to the processes of improving teaching and learning*

■ *specify how progress towards meeting the target or objective will be monitored.*

The assistant headteacher conducts periodic spending reviews to assess the extent to which CPD activities are supporting achievement of the objectives and targets that have been set. This is done by consulting the head of department, reading monitoring reports to assess progress, and reviewing any other relevant evidence, such as schemes of work or pupils' books, to look for early signs of effect. Where progress is considered to be too slow or the initiative lacks focus, he redirects funding to activities that he believes will yield more positive benefits. This ongoing review of the contribution of professional development to the achievement of the school's objectives and the specific priorities of departments helps to ensure that funding is used to best effect.

Case study 2

GCSE science results in this inner-city comprehensive school showed that pupils' levels of attainment were consistently below those achieved by the same pupils in mathematics and English. In addition, pupils' attainment was lower than that of pupils of the same age and ability in similar schools nationally. Therefore, the school defined, as one of the objectives in its improvement plan, the need to raise pupils' levels of attainment in science.

The achievement of this objective was delegated to the science department. A senior teacher was assigned to act as mentor to the head of department to help her plan an improvement strategy. This included the identification of the professional development activities needed to raise the levels of subject knowledge of her staff to enable them to teach more competently at Key Stage 4 and across all areas of science at Key Stage 3.

The mentor and the head of department drew up a strategy that included:

- *examination of performance data for pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 in order to predict more systematically and accurately their expected attainment at GCSE*

- *a series of meetings to explain to the teachers in the department how these predictions were calculated, to identify the improvement that was needed if they were to meet these expectations, and to define the performance indicators that would be used to measure progress*

- *reviews with each of the specialist teachers to focus on the individual support each required to improve their subject knowledge and competencies, both in their specialist and non-specialist areas of science*

- *formulation of action plans, both for the department as a whole and the individual teachers, that included:*
    - *joint planning and teaching of lessons and lesson observations, with a 'specialist' and a 'non-specialist' teacher working together to help the latter improve their subject knowledge and*

classroom organisation, particularly in managing practical activities in areas of science outside their main specialism
- *subject knowledge sessions, planned and taught by the biology, chemistry and physics specialist teachers to their peers*
- *attendance at relevant in-service training courses*
- *production of model lessons and associated resource material for groups of different abilities*
- *sampling pupils' work to assess whether progress was being made in line with expectations*
- *monitoring procedures to help all concerned measure the progress being made towards meeting the objective that had been set.*

Whilst progress was slower than originally hoped, the plan was successful, over a two-year period, in achieving improved GCSE results in science. In particular, teachers attributed this success to:

■ *the role of the mentor in providing strategic and objective support*

■ *involvement of all teachers from the outset so that they were clear about the nature of the problem and what needed to be achieved, and were able to contribute to devising the strategy*

■ *individual audits of skills and knowledge in order to match professional development activities to teachers' specific needs*

■ *structured and focused professional development opportunities*

■ *transparent monitoring and evaluation procedures for assessing progress.*

16. In most of the secondary schools, teachers' personal needs and interests were taken into account appropriately, for example by providing them with opportunities to enhance their subject knowledge to support the teaching of particular aspects of the curriculum.

Case study 3

The needs and priorities of each subject department are defined in their development and improvement plans. However, the staff development co-ordinator in this secondary school is keen to ensure that the personal aspirations and interests of all teachers are taken into account when professional development activities are agreed. He conducts an annual audit in which each teacher has the opportunity to identify any personal development needs that are not central to their departmental improvement plan.

A teacher of food technology felt that she had sufficient knowledge to teach the current GCSE and advanced level syllabuses adequately and

her pupils obtained good results. However, she had developed an interest in the subject that spurred her to take it further, particularly by improving her scientific knowledge. Following the annual audit, she was helped to follow an element of a postgraduate course that allowed her to develop this aspect of her subject knowledge. She also completed the assessment requirements, which allowed her to gain accreditation for the work submitted. As a result of this study, she has increased the challenge of her lessons by introducing a wider and more ambitious range of practical experiments with her examination candidates. More importantly for her, she has also chosen to pursue other elements of the postgraduate course to gain a master's degree. Previously, she had felt that this was outside her capabilities, but the CPD activity has widened her interests, motivated her to make the best use of the opportunities available and raised her self-esteem and confidence.

17. Only a minority of the secondary schools were fully successful, however, in devolving the management of professional development from senior to departmental levels. In a significant number of schools, specification of the resources available to support the necessary developments was too broad, leaving heads of department without a clear understanding of the time and money available to support relevant activities. This uncertainty was compounded by the lack of guidance and training offered to heads of department to enable them to select, monitor and evaluate the effect of professional development activities that departmental staff undertook. This led to significant differences in the quality of individual teachers' training plans and their potential to supply the professional development needed to improve teaching and learning. It was clear that many CPD co-ordinators, team leaders and line managers needed training to help them draw up appropriate and realistic training plans, in discussion with the teachers concerned. Nevertheless, departmental self-evaluation was providing a useful agenda for improvement in some cases.

18. In three quarters of the primary schools, school development plans identified clearly the key areas for school improvement. In these schools, the staff development policies set out the procedures by which teachers' development needs should be met.

Case study 4

The school development plan has been expanded to include detailed targets and priorities for individual teachers, and it sets out timelines for each in relation to the targets they are required to meet. This strategy allows the school's senior managers and the teachers themselves to see where their efforts can best be placed over the period of a year or more. The individual plans also contain the criteria for judging teachers' success in meeting each target.

Individual plans are drawn together to form the staff development plan, and the CPD activities and resources required are specified. This process has been successful in assuring a good match between meeting the professional needs of the teachers and identifying the CPD activities that will best deliver the training required. It has also helped discover where collective training can be provided to meet the needs of small and larger groups of staff, thus making good use of the funding available.
The success in meeting the targets in the staff development plan is judged throughout the year by interim discussions and by end-of-year reviews between the headteacher and each member of staff. This information feeds into the evaluation of the extent to which the overall targets identified in the school development plan have been met.

19. In the remainder of the schools, the absence of a school policy relating to staff development was a significant barrier to progress.

20. In the special schools, teachers sometimes required the guidance of external specialists to help them identify their training needs more accurately. One teacher, for example, was aided by an LEA adviser to define the precise professional training needed to improve their success in engaging pupils with specific learning difficulties in challenging practical activities in lessons. Another teacher drew on the subject expertise of colleagues in mainstream schools by attending, with them, a series of training sessions on the co-ordination of physical education. These colleagues were helpful in guiding and assisting the special school teacher to identify the specific focus for her training to enable her to devise more appropriate activities for her pupils. The other teachers also gained valuable understanding for themselves of the issues that may prevent some pupils engaging fully in lessons in mainstream classes.

21. On the whole and across all phases, most of the teachers interviewed felt fully involved in identifying the professional development activities that they needed to undertake in order to meet the school's needs as well as their own. Annual reviews and the introduction of more formal performance management arrangements had helped them to define more clearly their objectives for the year and to specify the professional development that was required. However, in a significant minority of schools, the absence of these formal mechanisms had led to unplanned professional development provision. In such cases, there was little rationale underpinning the choice of provision, and participation depended simply on the agreement of the headteacher or CPD co-ordinator and sufficient funds being available at the time.

22. The introduction of the government's performance management requirements was already leading schools to start developing more effective review, monitoring and evaluation arrangements in relation to teachers' professional development. In many of the secondary

schools, for example, training had been provided to develop the competence of heads of department and other line managers in judging their colleagues' understanding and skills and in defining realistic and achievable targets. In most cases, it was too early to discern the effect of this training in relation to the professional development of individual teachers.

23. The minority of the schools that had acquired IiP accreditation made good use of the principles on which it is based. These schools were more likely to schedule opportunities for discussing professional needs, adopt more formal systems of review and encourage staff in the school to take part in joint decision-making. However, a significant proportion of the schools that did not have IiP accreditation, and did not intend to seek it, were similarly positioned to ensure that the professional needs of all staff in the school were identified and met as effectively as possible.

24. The great majority of schools were keen to help teachers to meet their staff development needs, including freeing them from their teaching commitments when necessary. A minority of the schools regularly called on a small number of well-regarded supply teachers to cover teachers' lessons on these occasions. In a good proportion of the other schools, supply cover was more difficult to find, especially in areas of social and economic deprivation and where pupils' behaviour was more challenging. In these cases, schools frequently adopted strategies such as allowing the absence of only one teacher a day for staff development purposes. However, there was no evidence that this significantly restricted teachers' CPD opportunities, although they were sometimes delayed.

Meeting Professional Development Needs

25. The majority of the secondary schools were drawing on an extensive range of appropriate development activities to meet the schools' priorities and the individual professional needs of teachers. The narrow perception that professional development always involves off-site activity, such as attendance at a course hosted by the LEA, is gradually being replaced by a wider and more comprehensive view of CPD. Whole-school training days, team planning opportunities, joint teaching, peer observation, work shadowing, residential working groups, and local and national conferences and networks were some of the strategies used to provide CPD. The range of professional development activities gives many teachers the chance to observe good teaching and its results, extend their professional experience in a number of ways and to take time to evaluate their own practice.

Case study 5

Through membership of their subject association, two teachers in the design and technology department of this secondary school learned of the Pro-Desktop initiative, by which training and software are provided for teachers to enable pupils to do computer-aided design activities using industry-based processes. They were also aware that the school's development plan included an aim to increase the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in the curriculum.

They enrolled on a course run by the LEA and quickly realised that other colleagues in the department needed to be trained in the use of the software if they were to use it to advantage across the range of projects taught. Encouraged by their own personal interest and enthusiasm, and having achieved sufficient basic skills and expertise from the training, they organised training sessions for their specialist colleagues in the department. Through planning and teaching these sessions, the teachers became increasingly enthusiastic and competent, and were able to explore more widely the possibility of providing pupils of all abilities with increasingly challenging tasks. Equally, their colleagues were motivated because the training provided by their peers was very well matched to the department's curriculum and to their individual levels of competence in using ICT. Together, the department planned curriculum units and specific classwork tasks, and quickly realised the potential of the software for engaging pupils with a wide range of challenging homework activities.

The initial interest of the two teachers spread quickly across the department. The result was the formulation of new, demanding and exciting tasks which captured the interest of teachers and pupils alike. This training activity also led the department to analyse more closely the skills and expertise that already existed among staff. This led them to organise further peer training, drawing on these areas of knowledge and skill in aspects such as graphical techniques, teaching designing skills, electronics and using the Internet effectively to obtain technical information.

26. Research scholarships and part-time study for postgraduate qualifications not only extend teachers' professional knowledge and understanding but also widen the career options for some teachers by allowing them to gain the qualifications that they perceive as important for promotion. Often, teachers willingly share with their colleagues the knowledge gained from advanced study.

Case study 6

Eight Year 11 form tutors in this school were concerned about their ability to teach aspects of careers guidance as part of their tutorial responsibilities. They sought information from the acting head of the careers department, who had just completed a part-time postgraduate Diploma in Careers Education and Guidance. She was keen to ensure that information given to pupils was set within the broader context of careers education. She arranged a morning off-site conference, at which she covered some of the theoretical background that she had obtained from her diploma studies, an outline of the changing world of work, up-to-date factual information on the local and national employment picture, and post-16 pathways. She had prepared high-quality materials to use in the session.

As a result of this input, the tutors formed working groups to develop careers education and guidance materials for use in their tutorials, with the specialist head of department acting as a consultant. This improved the quality and accuracy of the general careers education and guidance that pupils received, and released time for the specialist teacher to deal with the more specific and complex needs of individual pupils.

---

27. In the secondary schools, subject departments were commonly undertaking review and self-evaluation, focusing on trends in performance and the need to assess practice in the light of new developments and initiatives such as the Key Stage 3 Strategy. In a minority of schools, these procedures were well established, although more commonly, they had been introduced fairly recently. Senior managers in a number of the schools were also targeting specific improvements in particular departments, for example as a result of a recent inspection. As a result, the development needs of the different departments in the same school were often quite diverse, and the notion that, where professional development is concerned, 'one size fits all' was largely rejected. The collective and individual needs of the teachers were influential in shaping the content of training programmes, particularly when external consultants were used, whether on or off-site.

28. However, although leadership teams, CPD co-ordinators, line managers and teachers in the schools generally appreciated the wide array of CPD activities, these were rarely selected and put together effectively to form an individual training plan, designed to bring about

specific improvements in a teacher's professional knowledge and skills. More often, teachers took part in a range of loosely related, sometimes unfocused, activities that did not necessarily provide good value for money nor lead to the intended development.

29. The main priority for all the primary schools had been to raise standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT. To achieve this, most of the primary schools were drawing on a wide variety of professional development activities that focused on observing and evaluating good practitioners. These included joint lesson planning, observing colleagues teaching, visiting other schools, and using consultants for in-school training. Generally, the teachers favoured professional development activities that gave them access to specialist support in the classroom and the opportunity to undertake collaborative work with other teachers and teaching assistants. There was also a growing tendency for a cluster of primary schools to share the cost of bringing an acknowledged expert to a central venue for a day's intensive training.

Case study 7

Past experience had shown the staff in this well-established and high achieving primary school that a whole-school workshop, with planned follow-up activities in the classroom, can be effective in improving the practice of its teachers.

A development aim of the school was to improve the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs. On a school training day in the summer term, a specialist adviser for the LEA led a session in which the staff considered a range of relevant issues. This involved the presentation of several case studies from which the teachers had to diagnose the learning difficulties of the pupils concerned, write suitable Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in which they identified appropriately challenging targets for improvement, and plan how they would meet such needs in their own classrooms. They found this a very challenging task, but recognised the increasing importance of examining the content of IEPs for the pupils in their classes and of planning lessons to take full account of their needs as well as those of the rest of the class.

Together with the teaching and learning support staff, each teacher undertook the same activity using the IEPs of pupils in their own classes. They then paired with the 'team' from another class to moderate the outcomes and to judge whether the tasks and activities planned would support the progress that the pupils needed to make. The same 'team' met at regular intervals to look at pupils' work and their achievements resulting from the strategies used. Further changes required to lesson plans and tasks were identified.

The success of this strategy lay in:

- *the early development of teachers' expertise and knowledge using specialist advice*

- *time to plan and review*

- *peer support over time*

- *ongoing review of the progress being made and the levels of success achieved*

- *a clear understanding of the expected effect of the activity.*

30. In seven of the ten special schools, an extensive range of training opportunities was matched effectively to teachers' needs. In the main, these were planned and delivered by LEA support services and other outside agencies, with some in-school activity. LEA courses were occasionally criticised for being advertised as suitable for teachers in special schools when in the event, they lacked sufficient tailoring to meet the specific needs of these members of staff.

31. Lack of supply cover was not a significant factor in preventing teachers undertaking professional development activities. However, on occasions, teachers were informed on the day that an external course was to take place that they could not attend because of the lack of an available supply teacher. This problem was made worse on days when there was a significant amount of staff absence due to illness. On these occasions, staff development understandably took a lower priority than ensuring that all teaching commitments were met.

32. In a significant proportion of the schools, teachers were hesitant about leaving their classes in order to undertake professional development activities. In the secondary schools, for example, teachers tried, wherever possible, to undertake activities on days when their teaching loads were lighter or at times when their lessons could be covered by their departmental colleagues. In primary and special schools, internal cover for lessons was less frequently possible. In all phases, teachers tended to pursue staff development that took place after school in order to avoid missing lessons. The majority felt that this was undesirable, however, since it detracted from the time available for marking and preparing lessons for the following day. Most of the teachers felt that time should be available for them to undertake CPD during the school day.

Effects of Professional Development

33. Most teachers were very willing to plan professional development activities. In the main, however, such planning tended to be short term, focusing on the courses to be attended or other development opportunities to be undertaken. It was rarely perceived as part of a longer-term sequence or cycle of activities which would lead from enhancing the skills or knowledge of the teacher to enabling pupils to achieve higher levels of performance.

34. Few of the schools specified the outcomes that were expected from professional development activities in terms of improving teachers' expertise, classroom practice, pupils' progress and standards of achievement. The targets and the criteria to be used to judge the success of these activities were defined in only four out of ten of the secondary schools and about a third of the primary and special schools. This meant that the majority of the teachers and their managers could not select, plan, monitor and evaluate CPD opportunities in a sufficiently systematic way, or know the extent to which development needs had been met.

35. Monitoring procedures in relation to CPD were weak in the great majority of the schools. In more than half the secondary schools, monitoring arrangements rarely extended to verifying that newly acquired skills and knowledge were being applied successfully in classroom settings. The picture was similar in primary schools, where the quality of the schools' arrangements for monitoring the provision of training and its impact were good or very good in little more than half the schools. Monitoring was not rigorous in seven of the ten special schools.

36. Evaluation strategies for assessing the effect of professional development activities were generally weak. The teachers commonly completed evaluation forms directly after the CPD activity had taken place, but responses were limited mainly to assessing the quality of the inputs and perceived usefulness of the activities. Only very rarely were CPD activities evaluated after teachers had had the time to judge the success of implementing changes to their teaching as a result of the training.

37. Evaluation was also weak because there was seldom a specific subject dimension and, because of this, professional development lacked a clear focus. There is a need for schools to recognise that the better targeted the intended gains or improvement, the easier and more effective the evaluation of those gains is likely to be.

Case study 8

The teacher and the head of department in a secondary school chose to focus on the gifted and talented pupils in Year 10. Together, they agreed a timescale and set of appropriate evaluative activities in order to provide evaluations, both medium and long-term, of the extent of improved learning of the pupils concerned. The evaluation included:

■ *lesson observations where the teacher's new approaches, methods, style of questioning or organisation were assessed by an experienced senior colleague*

■ *observing pupils' learning activities within a lesson in relation to the learning objectives set by the teacher*

■ *sampling pupils' work to analyse and establish the extent of new understanding and skill development*

■ *sampling pupils' work over time to see how far the understanding and skills have been consolidated.*

In one identified group of pupils, this specific focus on development, of a clearly targeted skill or capability, made structured evaluation of the outcomes of professional development more tangible and accessible. It allowed teachers to undertake classroom-based research with real purpose and for positive benefits to themselves, the pupils and the school as a whole.

38. Overall, the measurement of the impact of teachers' professional development was too often only impressionistic and anecdotal. In contrast, a small minority of schools used more robust strategies to assess the effect, for example by using evidence from lesson observations, looking at samples of pupils' written work and pupils' test and examination results. In secondary schools, such strategies were typically developed by the more effectively led subject departments, supported by the senior management of the school, but they were very rarely adopted across the whole school.

39. As part of their performance management arrangements, teachers are required to have one objective that focuses on their professional development. In a significant minority of the schools, teachers tended to meet this requirement by stating that their objective was to attend a training course to improve particular aspects of their knowledge and skill. Further, they commonly considered that simply attending the course would provide sufficient evidence that the objective had been met. Most of these teachers were wary of couching the development objective in terms of the improvements in their teaching that they would expect to follow from the course, as they feared that failure to demonstrate these ran the risk of their being judged as not having met

the objective. More rigour is needed in setting professional development objectives if they are to support the improvement of teachers' performance.

40. Nevertheless, several secondary schools provided good evidence of the positive effects of professional development activities, as in the next case study.

Case study 9

An inner city secondary school wanted to improve pupils' performance in the humanities. The head of department decided to focus on each of the curriculum areas in turn, starting with history, to plan more rigorous programmes that would provide greater challenge than previously. Realising the time needed to achieve the required result, she planned a systematic sequence of professional development. This began with attendance at a one-day Key Stage 3 history course in the autumn term, followed by a day later in the same term to draft a new syllabus. A further half-day was set aside in the spring term, involving her specialist colleagues, in order to refine the syllabus. A final day in the summer term was used to finalise the syllabus and devise teaching materials.

During the inspection, she was able to display:

- *a scheme of work that covered the National Curriculum Programme of Study comprehensively*

- *resource materials for use in lessons that were motivating and required pupils to draw on a wider range of appropriate sources than previously*

- *examples of pupils' current written work which clearly showed higher levels of challenge and quality of outcome than work completed by previous cohorts of the same age and ability.*

She identified the key factors in achieving this success as: systematic, long-term planning; a very clear idea of what was to be achieved; and a precise timescale for the development to take place.

Case study 10

In another school in a similar location, the part-time head of the modern foreign languages department was concerned that her colleagues, all of whom were also part time, felt that they were struggling with the demands of planning and providing resources for their lessons. As a result, two had tendered their resignations. Together, they planned a programme of professional support to be undertaken over a six-month period in order to:

- *devise a common framework of lessons for Key Stage 3 classes*

- *develop differentiated teaching materials for this age group*

- *acquire the necessary skills in ICT to enable them to use a wider range of resources to stimulate and motivate their pupils.*

The teachers planned a programme in which they:

- *observed each other's lessons to understand more fully the range of strategies favoured by each of the teachers and how pupils' responded*

- *observed lessons taught by colleagues in other departments in order to examine the range of teaching and learning strategies they deployed, to explore how they used ICT with their pupils, and to assess the success they achieved in motivating their pupils and helping them to progress*

- *received personal tuition from the school's ICT co-ordinator*

- *carried out joint lesson planning and teaching, drawing on the strategies they had identified as successful and with which they felt confident or could become so with experience.*

At each stage, they specified the intended outcomes from each activity and how success would be evaluated. They extended the training period to include implementation of their ideas, to determine the quality of the outcomes and to define the next steps in their development. As a result, the teachers were motivated and could define the competencies that they now had, particularly in relation to teaching and the use of ICT. Pupils' work showed that provision was now more effectively matched to ability. Encouraged by their progress, the teachers were all sufficiently motivated to remain in the profession.

Case study 11

In an 11-16 school, the new head of the physical education department was appointed with a specific remit to improve: staff morale; levels of pupils' achievement, including GCSE results; participation rates; and results in team games.

Professional development took the following forms:

- *a series of regular visits to a neighbouring school to establish how high standards were achieved, particularly in terms of class management and the motivation of pupils*

- *attendance at a two-day course run by the examining body on a new GCSE course which, in its blend of practice and theory, was believed to be more suited to the pupils' needs and interests*

■

further training in ICT, so that the teachers could help pupils to make more productive use of the Internet and e-mail for homework.

The head of department, supported by a member of the senior management team, observed lessons to evaluate the effectiveness of the new approaches. There was considerable evidence of the effect of the professional development activities. The GCSE A*-C grades improved by 15% in the first year, completion rates on the GCSE course rose to 100%, more pupils engaged in extra-curricular sports activities and the performance of the school teams in local competitions improved.

41. As well as individual and departmental training activities, days involving the whole school were sometimes found to have a positive impact on standards of achievement. This was particularly so where the training focus was highly specific and relevant to the current priorities of the school.

Case study 12

A secondary school organised visits by the mathematics and English staff to partner primary schools. These departments then led training for all teachers on levels of expectation and target-setting in the light of previous performance, as a preliminary activity to re-casting and restructuring schemes of work for Year 7. Teachers felt that the work planned as a result of this activity:

■ *allowed pupils more opportunities to draw on the skills and knowledge they had brought with them from their primary schools*

■ *was more challenging than work normally set at the start of Year 7 because teachers were now more aware of pupils' capabilities on transferring to the school*

■ *was planned more systematically to develop pupils' potential over the key stage in line with their achievements at the end of Key Stage 2.*

Case study 13

National concerns about the quality of pupils' writing led another secondary school to employ a literacy consultant and to use a whole-school training day to plan ways of raising achievement in writing non-fiction and improving spelling and vocabulary, particularly in specialist subjects. The staff adopted common procedures in teaching pupils how to learn and retain spellings, and how to use common spelling strategies. They also introduced a whole-school spelling log containing spelling targets, subject lists to learn and list of spelling rules.

Preliminary evidence suggested that pupils had become more confident in spelling and were benefiting from the specific whole-school focus adopted by all teachers. Examples of writing in Year 7 showed that the specific

teaching of some of the main categories of non-fiction such as instruction, explanation, persuasion and recount, and pupils' understanding of these conventions, led to more accurate, fluent and convincing work in science, history, geography, food technology and mathematics.

42. Training related to national initiatives in literacy, numeracy and ICT has done much to help teachers in the primary schools understand how to plan their teaching to raise pupils' standards of achievement. This shared priority to improve standards in the core subjects has resulted in a strong focus on planning, teaching and assessment. A large number of the teachers have made significant gains in their subject knowledge and skills, which has enabled them to be more competent and confident in their teaching. In particular, they are able to extend pupils' thinking more fully since they feel less restricted by their personal levels of knowledge. In addition, they are able to lead school discussions on these issues, formulate curriculum policy, use ICT competently in the classroom and use their understanding of issues such as mental mathematics and guided writing when planning lessons.

43. In a number of the primary schools, there were also examples of the benefits impact of professional development activities, as in the following two case studies.

Case study 14

A teacher in a primary school in north-east England had been given the task of improving the quality of design and technology teaching in the school. She defined carefully the personal development that she needed in order to plan and put in place the necessary improvements, beginning with improving her personal knowledge and practical skills, through to curriculum planning, assessment of pupils' designing and making capabilities and organising training for her colleagues. She selected the professional development activities carefully, paced them over the course of the year and trialled work with her own class as her competence and confidence improved.

There were a number of benefits. The curriculum was more challenging, broader and more stimulating for the pupils and her colleagues. Her trial lessons yielded concrete outcomes for her colleagues to observe and resources for them to use with their own classes. Above all, the work set enabled pupils to achieve much higher standards in the subject. For example, previous Year 3 pupils had carefully embroidered their names using cross-stitch in their design and technology lessons. The current class of the same age and ability was able to devise ways to make monsters, created from cardboard boxes, with eyes and mouths that moved. They did this by designing and making functional pneumatic systems, skills that the teacher had previously assessed as being beyond both her own capabilities and those of her class.

Case study 15

In another primary school, the headteacher and staff completed an annual joint training and development review and then identified both professional and whole-school priorities, relating them to the analysis of results of national testing to give a national perspective. This exercise enabled the staff to identify improvement in writing as a focus for the current school year.

They held a series of 'twilight' sessions in school with the LEA's literacy support teacher, to improve subject knowledge and lesson planning on the broad theme 'From Grammar to Writing'. The development activities were practical and firmly based on National Literacy Strategy materials and use of the 'Grammar for Writing' video. Following the training, teachers evaluated and reviewed pupils' writing for the varieties of sentence construction, including how to make sentence openings more effective, how to use the passive voice and how to use both long and short sentences for particular purposes and effects. Evidence in pupils' writing portfolios showed significant strengths and improvement in pupils' written work in Years 4 and 5.

44. CPD had helped to improve teaching, leadership and management skills in almost all of the special schools inspected. Where teachers were able to work with mainstream colleagues, this was judged to be very beneficial: the teachers' sense of isolation was significantly reduced; they were more confident in adapting and modifying the curriculum to suit their pupils; and they recognised more fully some of the barriers to inclusion.

Case study 16

In one special school, the teachers planned ways in which they could train and work with mainstream teachers, as well as with their own special educational needs colleagues, in order to develop and extend their knowledge and skills. The strategy led to a range of developments in the school:

- *the teachers in the secondary department devised a scheme of work in personal, social and health education that extended across all subjects as a result of attending a training day in their local comprehensive school*

- *their colleagues in the primary department joined mainstream teachers in literacy and numeracy training. As a result, much greater emphasis is now given to the teaching of phonics and a new, more appropriate, reading scheme has been purchased for the whole school*

■ *a science scheme, drawing heavily on collaborative work with staff in mainstream schools, was introduced recently in an effort to improve opportunities at Key Stage 4 for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.*

45. Most of the special schools had begun to develop methods of evaluation and had introduced surveys, questionnaires and lesson observations in an attempt to measure the value of professional development activities. However, few had yet produced sufficiently well-defined targets and success criteria to measure value effectively.

46. While almost all the schools in the sample were careful to account for their use of public funds to support teachers' professional development, only a very small minority had begun to address whether they were getting value for money from the activities. Judgements in this regard were often superficial, relating mainly to assessing whether the fees paid to enable a teacher to attend an externally provided course had been well spent in terms of the quality of course delivery and its support materials. Virtually none of the schools had explicit criteria for judging the value for money obtained from the full range of professional development activities in which their teachers engaged. In the great majority of the schools, such judgements were at best impressionistic as they had insufficient direct evidence of improvement in standards in the classroom.

Case study 17

In this middle school, there is a strong implied sense of ensuring value for money from externally provided courses, but nothing specific is written or calculated to act as a measure for assessing value for money. Each teacher attending a course is expected to complete an evaluation sheet, which asks for comments on the quality of the training, whether it meets the needs of the course member and in what ways it will change the teacher's practice. This form is completed conscientiously but with varying degrees of detail and perception. Some teachers go to considerable lengths to praise or criticise the course they have attended, but give little or no indication of the broader expected effect. As a result, it is not possible to determine whether the course gave good value for money.

47. Schools found value for money easiest to assess where the focus of the activity was highly specific. An example of this was where teachers had attended meetings organised by examining groups to disseminate information about the new advanced subsidiary (AS) level courses. Meetings required teachers to be out of school for only short periods or took place after school, resulting in minimum disruption to teaching and no necessity for supply cover. The meetings were informative and gave teachers the opportunity to ask about issues that were causing them concern, as well as clarifying the written guidance distributed with the examination syllabuses. Teachers who attended were knowledgeable and confident, able to disseminate this information quickly at departmental meetings, and had clarified that their practices were in line with the requirements of the examining body.

48. Schools were more confident that value for money was obtained where an external course was structured explicitly to provide

something for the school as a whole as well as for the individual teacher who attended. For example, a course on mental calculations attended by a teacher from one primary school contained a module on planning and delivering training sessions for colleagues in school. This teacher not only enhanced her personal mathematical knowledge as a result of the course but was also given the confidence to share what she had learned with other staff.

49. Few of the schools gave sufficient consideration to the range of factors that would enable them to judge value for money more effectively. Hardly any of them, for example, had a rigorous system for analysing the costs and benefits of CPD. The cost of employing a supply teacher to cover the lessons of a member of staff undertaking a CPD activity, and the lack of continuity for pupils, were not evaluated systematically against the potential for improved quality of teaching as the teacher put newly acquired skills and knowledge into practice.

50. In a significant proportion of the schools, money to support professional development was often spread thinly across a number of teachers, based on the principle that each teacher was entitled to a share of the available funding. This principle was rarely evaluated against targeting funding selectively at a specific curriculum area, department or group of teachers to provide a more substantial development programme to meet priority development needs.

51. In a good number of the schools, support from external consultants was frequently purchased before a proper analysis had been undertaken of the specific strengths of the teachers in the school and the range of expertise already available. On many occasions, however, the use of consultants, although costly, brought the knowledge and expertise required to focus on specific issues in the school. In a significant number of other cases, using the expertise of the school's teachers not only cut expenditure but was also very effective. This was because the needs of the school and the skills of its individual teachers were readily understood, and the provision was accurately matched to the required effect. The teachers who were used in this way were able to take account of the specific circumstances of the school, for example its ethos, the resources available, and the pupils' levels of achievement and motivation.

52. Making economies of scale by linking with other schools, departments or teachers was rarely considered, even when similar areas for development had been identified. The potential for increasing the effect of professional development as a result of joint planning and implementation of improvements was also generally overlooked when assessing how maximum value could be obtained.

53. Very few schools took sufficient account of the time required to support effective professional development. Most of the teachers who attended external courses, for example, were unable to exploit and share their newly acquired skills, knowledge and enthusiasm on returning to school because of the competing demands and pressures on their time. By the time they had had an opportunity to reflect on the course, their enthusiasm and motivation to make changes as a result of it had often diminished significantly. The cost of the time spent on the course, as well as the registration and other fees, were therefore to some degree wasted. Sufficient time for effective preparation, follow-up and dissemination needs to be included as part of the budget for professional development. This can range from protected non-contact time before and after a course, to half-day or full-day release from lessons at a future date in order to implement their new ideas and to assess the quality of the outcomes.

Concluding Remarks

54. CPD is, in the main, becoming better organised and better related to schools' and teachers' individual needs. There is now a good degree of coherence and common purpose in attempts to improve standards through professional development activity. These developments are taking place in the context of a wide range of national initiatives and government policy focusing on raising the profile of CPD in the teaching profession.

55. However, in order to ensure that CPD brings about the improvements intended and that value for money is obtained, more attention needs to be given to:

- improving the management of professional development, particularly in relation to developing the skills of CPD co-ordinators and line managers to enable them to help teachers plan robust and relevant individual training plans

- defining the intended effects of professional development in the classroom

  – monitoring and evaluating the success of CPD activities, with measures that focus on the extent to which teachers, as a result of their professional development and subsequent teaching, are able to demonstrate that their pupils:

    (i)   achieve well relative to their previous attainment
    (ii) make progress that is as good as or better than comparable pupils nationally
    (iii) are motivated, enthusiastic and respond positively to challenge and high expectations
    (iv) as a result, have high standards of behaviour

- developing more effective dissemination procedures to enable those who have participated in the development activity to share their new knowledge

- assessing whether value for money has been obtained.