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# The logical chain: continuing professional development in effective schools

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**Better  
education  
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This report looks at schools' arrangements for the professional development of their staff. It is based on visits to 29 schools whose previous inspection reports identified strong practice in this area. It also considers the arrangements for staff's professional development in different subjects following inspectors' visits to a representative sample of about 130 schools. It describes the most effective practice as a logical chain of procedures which place continuous professional development at the heart of schools' planning for improvement. The findings are intended to disseminate best practice and to provide help to institutions seeking to improve this aspect of their work.

**Of particular interest to:**

Schools, the Department for Education and Skills, the Training and Development Agency for Schools

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**Age group**

All

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## Executive summary

This report is based on a survey into the impact in schools of the government's strategy for continuing professional development (CPD). The strategy was introduced in 2001 and relaunched recently to reflect new initiatives. It aims to promote the benefits of CPD, help teachers make the most of the choices available, and build schools' capacity for effective professional development so that they use effectively the funding delegated to them.

The survey was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). Between the summer of 2005 and the spring of 2006, they visited 13 secondary, 14 primary and 2 special schools whose section 10 inspections had identified good practice in managing and using CPD. The rest of this report refers to these schools collectively as 'the survey schools.' The evidence from the HMI survey was supplemented during the same period by evidence from Ofsted's surveys of National Curriculum subjects in over 130 schools. On these visits, inspectors considered the effectiveness of CPD in the subject they were inspecting.

The survey was conducted to enable Ofsted to advise the government and schools on the strengths and weaknesses of CPD at a time of two important developments. First, the implementation of the national workforce agreement between 2003 and 2005 saw an increase in the number of support staff in schools and, consequently, in the range of training and development needs which schools have to meet. Second, in September 2005, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) assumed the responsibility from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for coordinating CPD for all school staff nationally.

This report describes the CPD arrangements in the survey schools as a logical chain of procedures which entails identifying school and staff needs, planning to meet those needs, providing varied and relevant activities, involving support staff alongside teachers, monitoring progress and evaluating the impact of the professional development. Overall, CPD was found to be most effective in the schools where the senior managers fully understood the connections between each link in the chain. They recognised the potential of CPD for raising standards and therefore gave it a central role in planning for improvement. The teachers and support staff in these schools enjoyed high-quality CPD, which had been well chosen from a wide range of possible activities to meet their school's and their own needs. Schools which had designed their CPD effectively and integrated it with their improvement plans found that teaching and learning improved and standards rose.

This report also identifies a number of concerns, based on the visits to the survey schools and to the schools visited by subject inspectors. Although senior managers identified their school's needs systematically and accurately, the identification of individual teachers' needs was not always so rigorous. As a result, planning for the professional development of individuals was often weak. Few schools evaluated the impact of CPD on teaching and learning successfully,

largely because they failed to identify, at the planning stage, its intended outcomes and suitable evaluation methods. Headteachers did not know how to assess the value for money of their CPD policy. Although well designed coaching and mentoring arrangements were highly effective in developing staff's competences, there was wide variation in the way schools used these two types of professional development and, consequently, in the extent to which staff benefited from them. Finally, while this report illustrates how well some schools use additional classroom and administrative support for teachers and pupils, it concludes that they have not yet considered how the time created by workforce reform could be used for teachers' professional development.

In the surveys of National Curriculum subjects, inspectors found arrangements for CPD in the subject they were inspecting were inadequate in about one third of the primary schools. This did not mean that the school's arrangements for CPD were unsatisfactory but, usually, that there had been little or no recent professional development in the subject being inspected. The lack of such professional development was due partly to the schools' drive to improve literacy and numeracy and partly to a lack of specialist subject expertise, which meant that managers were failing to pick up important subject-related issues.

## Key findings

### The key strengths in the survey schools

- ❑ Continuing professional development was most effective in schools whose senior managers understood fully its potential for raising standards and were committed to using it as key driver for school improvement.
- ❑ The best results occurred where CPD was central to the schools' improvement planning. Schools which integrated performance management, school self-review and development, and CPD into a coherent cycle of planning improved the quality of teaching and raised standards.
- ❑ Primary and special schools, in particular, recognised the full part that support staff could play in raising standards and gave such staff good and varied opportunities for training and professional development.
- ❑ Staff benefited where a wide range of different types of CPD was on offer. The very best schools selected the types of CPD most appropriate to the needs of the school and of individuals.
- ❑ Most of the survey schools used their five professional development days well to support their improvement plan.
- ❑ The schools had sufficient resources to provide the CPD which staff needed. Even those schools whose budget was limited had set aside funds for CPD, and all of them used local and national schemes to augment their resources for CPD.
- ❑ Newly qualified teachers were supported effectively throughout their induction year.

### Areas for development

- ❑ Few of the schools evaluated successfully the impact of CPD on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement because they did not identify the intended outcomes clearly at the planning stage.
- ❑ The schools did not have an effective method for assessing the value for money of their CPD.
- ❑ Arrangements for identifying staff's individual needs were too subjective in about a third of the survey schools. These schools relied too heavily on staff's own perception of their needs and on the effectiveness of individual subject leaders to identify needs accurately.
- ❑ In the schools where identification of individuals' needs was too subjective, planning for their personal professional development was also weak. It was unusual to find individual training plans in these schools and, consequently, relevant CPD opportunities were sometimes not identified or provided.
- ❑ The schools made insufficient use of coaching and mentoring as a form of CPD.

- ❑ In about one third of the primary schools visited by subject inspectors, the arrangements for CPD in the subject they were inspecting were inadequate. This was partly due to the emphasis on literacy and numeracy and partly due to managers' failure to detect important subject-related issues.
- ❑ Most of the schools had not considered how the time made available by workforce reform could be used for CPD.

## **Recommendations**

To improve the professional development of teachers and support staff, the TDA should work with schools to:

- enhance managers' skills in evaluating the impact of their CPD arrangements
- devise easy to use practical tools to enable schools to assess the value for money and cost effectiveness of their CPD
- encourage more subject-specific training and development in primary schools
- disseminate effective methods for identifying staff's individual needs and provide models of individual training plans for schools to adopt or adapt
- make more effective use of coaching and mentoring.

## Introduction

1. Two years ago, one of the primary schools in the survey realised that pupils' performance in information and communication technology (ICT) was lower than in other subjects. After a thorough audit of the staff's competences it planned a range of relevant training opportunities to meet their short and long-term needs. Subject leaders attended training and received support from the ICT coordinator and local authority consultants. Using the completed skills audits, subject leaders trained their colleagues, including teaching assistants, in a series of sessions after school. All staff agreed to have one performance management objective related to ICT. Senior managers monitored the initiative by discussing progress regularly with the subject leaders. They assessed its impact through focused lesson observations, discussions with pupils, and analysis of assessment data. As a result of this hard work, teachers now use ICT more in their lessons and pupils' achievement in ICT is far better.
2. The steps in this process illustrate what one headteacher called a 'logical chain.'

## Identifying the staff's development needs

### Recognising the school's needs

3. Most of the survey schools identified accurately their priorities for development. Senior managers drew on a wide range of evidence to decide the areas most in need of improvement. Their evidence included assessment data and results in national tests for pupils, observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work, formal discussions with subject leaders, and, occasionally, interviews with pupils. In all of the schools these priorities had a strong influence on the opportunities created for staff development.
4. In the special schools and many of the primary schools the staff's development needs were based firmly on their pupils' needs. For example, a school specialising in pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties identified the staff who most needed training in physical restraint. A primary school which admitted a pupil with Down's Syndrome into Year 1 appointed a special needs assistant, initially to provide support for her social skills. A year later, the pupil's needs had changed, so the assistant had to develop new expertise to provide support for her pupil's learning skills. When schools linked staff development needs with their pupils' needs this resulted in higher standards as the following case study illustrates.

*A primary school regularly conducted a detailed identification of potential barriers to learning for its pupils and used this to plan professional development for the teachers involved with those pupils. The impact on*



*the classes was closely monitored, and approaches were modified as necessary.*

*One class had four pupils who presented challenging behaviour. The teacher and the teaching assistant sought advice from the special needs coordinator (SENCO), who observed the class several times. He discussed his analysis of the problem with the two staff and together they rehearsed a number of strategies to deal with it. The SENCO continued to monitor the class, and suggested modifications to the approach. The behaviour of the four pupils and the learning of the whole class greatly improved.*

## **Identifying the staff's individual needs**

5. To identify their staff's individual needs, the survey schools relied to a great extent on performance management interviews and the staff's self-assessment. This worked well when the process was supported by an explicit framework. The frameworks took a variety of forms. In one school, for example, performance reviews were highly structured interviews which required each member of staff to articulate their needs under different headings: policies and practices (such as marking or behaviour management); pupil progress; curriculum developments; implications of newly acquired resources; needs identified through monitoring and mentoring; and awards and qualifications, such as the national professional qualification for headship (NPQH).<sup>1</sup>
6. Many of the schools asked the staff to complete a questionnaire to identify their needs. One, for example, had devised a simple form on which staff listed their strengths and weaknesses against each of the priorities in the school improvement plan. This helped them to focus their self-assessment on areas that were immediately relevant. Staff at one of the special schools audited their experience and confidence against a checklist of pupils' learning and physical disabilities. Teachers who had followed the 'Leading from the Middle' course reported that they had been helped to identify their management needs by a searching questionnaire which they and other colleagues had to complete.<sup>2</sup> Several schools were able to put on carefully tailored training sessions in ICT because the staff had graded their levels of competence against a comprehensive checklist, although subject-specific audits like this were uncommon.
7. The identification of the needs of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) was managed effectively in the survey schools. Most felt that their career entry and development profile had been used constructively to plan a relevant induction programme. The targets agreed at the end of their training

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes/npqh/index.cfm?CFID=433903&CFTOKEN=14191400>  
See further information on page 25.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes/lftm/index.cfm?CFID=433903&CFTOKEN=14191400>  
See further information on page 25.

course had been quickly overtaken by needs that were more pertinent to their new teaching context. The best schools helped NQTs to adapt their targets at a very early stage, occasionally during an induction week in the term before they took up post. The profile kept the NQT and their induction tutor focused on the need to review progress regularly and to set new targets. Towards the end of the year the NQTs in about a half of the schools agreed targets which were adopted immediately as their performance management objectives for the following year. For the others there was a hiatus between the end of the induction period and the setting of objectives in the second year.

8. In schools where CPD arrangements were highly effective, teachers' self-assessment was amplified constructively by managers' own knowledge of their work. In a primary school where results in mathematics were below expectation the headteacher recognised that, in addition to school-wide issues in the use of problem-solving and investigations, there were specific weaknesses in the teaching of two class teachers which had not been highlighted in their self-assessment. In another school, the headteacher had noted that one teacher needed help with writing reports to parents and included this in the teacher's training plan.
9. However, the schools were not usually so rigorous in identifying individual staff's needs. Managers observed lessons, but their comments rarely contributed to the process for identifying teachers' professional development needs. Teaching assistants were seldom formally observed working with children in order to identify how they could improve their practice. All too often the development needs discussed at performance reviews were based on staff's perception of their own needs and on their personal ambitions. While this served well at times, when staff or their team leaders were insufficiently critical or were unaware of shortcomings, important weaknesses were ignored.
10. This weakness in identifying needs was particularly likely to occur in schools which lacked specialist expertise in some subjects. In one school visited by a subject inspector, for example, the sole art teacher was unaware of gaps in her knowledge of contemporary art. Furthermore, there was no mechanism by which senior managers could pick up this limitation. Put simply, they did not know what they did not know. Senior staff at a secondary school had an accurate knowledge of the main strengths and weaknesses of each subject department but lacked the specialist expertise to detect, for example, shortcomings in the way the languages teachers used the foreign language in lessons. When subject expertise was lacking, the most effective schools invited an external consultant to provide specialist advice so they could identify their needs with greater precision.

## Planning to meet the staff's development needs

### Planning for school improvement

11. CPD was central to the improvement plans in 20 of the survey schools. Once the schools had identified their needs, the next link in the chain was to plan a range of relevant professional development activities to tackle them. Good CPD plans covered all levels of staff: teachers, middle and senior managers, and support staff. It was clearly based on the school's improvement objectives; it identified actions, the people responsible, and how the objectives would be achieved through the most suitable type of CPD; it allocated adequate financial and other resources; it identified clear outcomes for the activities; and it built in time for reflection, discussion and evaluation.
12. Schools which planned their CPD carefully achieved the best outcomes. This was illustrated in one of the secondary schools:

*The school used CPD as its key strategy for improving quality and raising standards. The planning process began with an analysis of assessment data. Heads of faculty met individually with senior managers to review progress from the previous year and to agree teaching and learning priorities for the coming year. The school based its development plan on these priorities, taking care to specify the resources and CPD needed. Senior managers carried out regular monitoring of teaching and learning, including a week-long review of each subject department, which led to a detailed report with clear targets for improvement. These were translated into individual objectives in teachers' performance management reviews and formed the basis of each teacher's CPD plan. Team leaders then agreed with the CPD coordinator the training and development priorities for each teacher and for the team. The quality of teaching thus improved and, as a consequence, the school's GCSE results have steadily improved also.*

13. In almost all of the survey schools, improvement plans were fully integrated with CPD, subject and key stage plans. Performance management played a key role in achieving this. Typically, teachers had to agree at least one objective that was related to a school priority and another that was related to a departmental or key stage development. This process was very secure in the primary schools but its effectiveness varied in the secondary schools according to the ability of the team leader. In one, for example, the priorities in the languages department's improvement plan were translated into the teachers' performance objectives. In the same school, the English department's improvement plan aimed to deal with boys' underachievement but the teachers' performance objectives bore no relation to this.

## Allocating resources

14. The schools made sufficient resources available to support the staff's professional development. Even schools which had a very limited budget had earmarked adequate funds for CPD. School managers invariably amplified their resources for CPD by using national and local schemes. For example, consultants from the national strategies provided significant support; the schools made effective use of advanced skills teachers; and school projects were planned with funds from the Primary Strategy Leadership Programme.<sup>3,4</sup> Schools stretched available resources still further by working with other partners to provide training more economically.

## Striking the right balance

15. The CPD plans of the most effective schools struck a good balance between national and school priorities. Very often these overlapped; for example, a priority in many of the primary schools visited was to raise standards in English and mathematics, and in the secondary schools to improve examination results. Most of the schools were using national strategy resources to support their work on topics such as assessment for learning.
16. However, in several of the survey primary schools and in those visited by subject inspectors, the drive to improve English and mathematics had resulted in a lack of focus on CPD in other subjects. Furthermore, in secondary schools too much emphasis had been placed by some subject leaders on using examination awarding bodies for staff development. The drive in these departments to improve examination results by learning about new course specifications and assessment arrangements had deflected attention from improving the quality of teaching and from developing Key Stage 3.
17. The survey schools' CPD plans gave suitable emphasis to staff's individual needs and career aspirations, though managers did not simply agree to their staff's requests for training unless there was a clear benefit for the school. The headteacher at one primary school enabled a relatively new teacher to study for a Master's degree and an experienced teacher to work for the NPQH. Both teachers felt they were being fully prepared for their next career move, and the school gained because the research topics chosen by the teachers were of practical value. On the other hand, a primary teacher who asked to enrol on a course to improve his piano

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/about/>  
<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3/downloads/sns0506launch1651005schimp.pdf>

See further information on page 25.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes/plp/index.cfm>

See further information on page 25.

playing was turned down as there was a more pressing need to improve his teaching. 'Anyway,' as the headteacher explained, 'we already have three pianists.'

## Managing individual staff's performance

18. Teachers and support staff in the survey schools were involved in a formal process of performance review. They found this a positive experience as it gave them an opportunity to discuss their career plans, reflect on their professional development, have their achievements recognised, and to focus on priorities for the coming year. In the most effective schools, the process resulted in a carefully considered individual training plan, as in this primary school:

*The school's comprehensive system for planning CPD included an individual CPD plan for each member of the teaching and support staff. These plans took account of the school improvement plan, the particular responsibilities of the individual, and the outcomes of performance management reviews. Each individual plan identified suitable CPD activities, such as external courses, or involvement with an action research group in the school. It established how exactly the school would evaluate the impact. As a result of this meticulous approach to planning, CPD in the school was highly effective; the school's contextualised value added scores had improved steadily over three years.*

19. However, in the survey schools, and in those visited by subject inspectors, detailed individual training plans were unusual. In schools where the headteacher lacked commitment to performance management, the process did not help guide staff to relevant professional development. The following secondary school illustrates this attitude:

*Although performance management provided staff with an opportunity to discuss their career plans, it lacked rigour. Some team leaders accepted pupil progress objectives that were deliberately imprecise and unchallenging, because they did not wish to jeopardise decisions about pay and promotion. For example, several staff were aiming to get only 'the majority' of their Key Stage 4 class to the target level anticipated by assessment data. The objectives that concerned staff's personal professional development were ill chosen; several, for example, were to attend a training course, 'if one becomes available'. Managers did not match obvious CPD opportunities, such as coaching by the school's trained team, to anyone's objectives. Whereas some teachers used the process constructively by setting themselves challenging targets and seeking out relevant CPD opportunities, too much was left to the individual. Performance management was consequently not playing its full part in school improvement.*

## Planning for clear outcomes

20. A significant weakness in the planning for CPD was the failure to identify clearly at the outset the intended outcomes of any activity or to agree how to assess the extent to which the outcomes had been met. A primary school which had devoted considerable staff time to a specialist art course, for example, provided its pupils with an interesting experience in creating a mural. However, the benefits ended there. This was because the school had not identified the skills which teachers were expected to learn from the course and to teach to their pupils. Schools' failure to define at the planning stage the intended effect on teaching, learning or management meant that the potential of CPD activities was sometimes lost. This is illustrated by the following example:

*In a primary school, a teacher chose to attend a local authority course on orienteering. She found the course practical, relevant and interesting. However, she was unaware that a significant amount of time would be needed subsequently to plan a scheme for the whole school, to prepare resources and to train other staff. No time had been allowed for this. Because of weak planning, the opportunity to improve teachers' and pupils' skills across the school was missed.*

## Providing high-quality CPD

### Tailoring the provision

21. Staff in the survey schools reported that they were satisfied with the quality and quantity of their CPD. They enjoyed a wide range of different types of professional development, particularly in the primary and special schools. There was a tendency in the secondary schools for some subject leaders to think of CPD mainly as out-of-school training courses. Their limited understanding led to restrictions in the range of activities for the staff in those departments. This was particularly acute in localities where there were few or any external, subject-specific courses for the staff to attend.
22. The ability to match staff's development needs to the best source of support marked out the most effective schools. Often this entailed bespoke work in school, using internal or external expertise. The following two stories from one primary school illustrate the point:

*Monitoring had revealed inconsistencies in teachers' approaches to managing pupils' behaviour. Consultants from the local authority behaviour support service were invited to find solutions with the staff. They interviewed pupils about a rewards system; they discussed effective approaches with managers; and they helped the staff to design the school's own behaviour strategy. They then trained the staff in how to use the strategy. When the new policy was implemented, the team returned to*

*the school to evaluate its impact. They found that teachers applied the rewards and sanctions consistently and that pupils' response was outstanding.*

*The headteacher had also recognised through classroom observations that pupils were reading books which were poorly matched to their ability. As a result their reading levels were low and their attitudes to reading were unsatisfactory. She carried out her own inquiries by looking at recent research and Ofsted publications. She commissioned the school library service to identify the reading level of all the books in the school, and over time she provided training for the staff in guided reading. Subsequent monitoring provided evidence that pupils were enjoying books more and were attaining higher standards.*

## **Organising collaborative projects**

23. Staff found that one of the most effective development activities was involvement in a well planned collaborative project designed to improve teaching and learning. Several schools, for example, had used external consultants to develop the staff's understanding of pupils' learning styles. Although there was little hard evidence of better teaching or higher standards, the staff had been enthused by the training and by the opportunities to discuss and develop their teaching with their colleagues. The benefits of this type of collaboration were also evident in well managed subject departments in secondary schools, as this case study illustrates:

*Following criticism of assessment by Ofsted, a science department elected to be one of the school's lead departments for assessment for learning. The teachers attended local authority courses and were given advice by assessment and science consultants. They used their timetabled weekly development time to plan their approach, try out new ideas, and discuss progress. For example, they rewrote the national curriculum level descriptions in language that pupils could understand and exemplified them with concrete success criteria. The teachers then used these in lessons so pupils could assess their own work and knew how to improve it. The head of department monitored progress by discussing the project in departmental meetings, observing lessons, and compiling a report on the successes of the project and the areas which needed further improvement. Because of the close collaboration with each other and their access to expertise, the staff's use of assessment became more consistent and more productive.*

## **Providing coaches and mentors**

24. The survey schools used some form of coaching and mentoring as part of their CPD strategy. Coaching was most effective when a teacher with a clearly identified need was paired with a colleague with expertise in that area. The process was planned over an agreed time period and designed

to increase progressively the degree of independence shown by the teacher as the coach's support was withdrawn. The following example shows how expert coaching can develop management skills:

*The subject leader for mathematics needed to develop her confidence as a manager. National test results in mathematics were poor, so it had become a priority for the school. The headteacher, a former local authority inspector, worked closely with her to develop her monitoring skills. They carried out joint lesson observations and feedback to teachers. They worked together on scrutiny of pupils' work and on the analysis of assessment data. They carried out interviews with groups of pupils. Through this intensive coaching the subject leader learned what to look for, how to interpret the evidence and how to deal with the findings. The school soon noted an improvement, not just in the skills of the subject leader but also in teaching and in pupils' attitudes to mathematics.*

25. Primary schools preparing to introduce a modern language have found that one of the most powerful methods for developing teachers' skills is specialist coaching. The following example shows how a school benefited from the DfES-funded modern languages Pathfinder project:<sup>5</sup>

*The school's languages coordinator attended ten training sessions provided by the local authority. At the same time the school introduced French for its Year 6 pupils. Initially, this group was taught by a teacher from the partner secondary school, who had contributed to the training sessions. The coordinator helped the secondary teacher to plan the lessons and observed her in action with her class. There followed a period of team-teaching segments of lessons. Gradually, the coordinator increased the amount of time in which she was teaching independently. The secondary specialist provided expert guidance during and after the lessons, until both agreed she could withdraw altogether. As a result of this highly structured coaching, pupils thoroughly enjoyed their French lessons and most of them achieved level 2 in listening and speaking.*

26. The schools had developed their own interpretations of coaching and mentoring, and consequently the usefulness of this valuable form of CPD was limited. Often staff used the terms only to refer to a system of peer support in an area of common interest. The process did not always include mutual observation of teaching. In one school, the arrangements allowed one observation and no more. In several, the practice was deliberately informal and confidential, so managers were unaware of what was going on. Although teachers in these schools spoke highly of the experience, this sort of organisation denied them the benefits of expert specialist coaching,

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[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/languages/DSP\\_sub.cfm?sub\\_id=4&cn\\_pagename=primary&area\\_id=3](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/languages/DSP_sub.cfm?sub_id=4&cn_pagename=primary&area_id=3)  
See further information on page 25.



and made it difficult for senior managers to assess the effectiveness of the process.

## **Arranging effective staff development days**

27. The primary and special schools in the survey used their annual five school closure days effectively for staff development. The time was dedicated to one or more of the priorities in the school improvement plan. Typically, after listening to a presentation and discussing the day's theme, staff worked in small groups on related activities. In secondary schools, this group work usually took place in departments or faculties, where its quality varied greatly, since it relied largely on the skills of the subject leader. In one school, for example, a presentation by a national speaker on boys' achievement was not followed up effectively in all departments because some subject leaders were unable to think through the implications for their own subject. Although the presentation had been well received, subject leaders did not consider, let alone answer, the crucial question, 'So what?'
28. Many of the schools replaced some of the five days with a series of short after-school sessions, and found this very productive. One was able to put on a wide variety of optional workshops, specifically designed to meet a range of needs identified in performance reviews. Another broke two of the days down into a series of weekly 90-minute sessions in which staff received practical training in aspects of ICT which they needed to improve; such short slots were ideal for this sort of work.
29. The schools found it useful to include their teaching assistants in these professional development days. This was successful when the training was focused on the assistants' needs; for example, in one school the assistants followed courses in child protection and in behaviour management, which they had identified as their main priorities. Occasionally, schools provided thoughtfully designed sessions which enabled teachers and assistants to work and learn productively together.

## **Exploiting links with external partners**

30. All of the schools had drawn on the local authority to provide support for staff. The types of support that managers valued most highly were bespoke training sessions in school, and consultancy for subject leaders and for working groups which had been established to develop teaching and learning.
31. Almost all of the survey schools were involved in a partnership with a provider of initial teacher training. This had significant benefits for staff development. Teachers learned useful mentoring skills and improved their teaching by reflecting on their practice with trainees. Some higher education institutes offered credits on award-bearing courses for teachers who were involved in initial teacher training. One university worked very

successfully with two of the survey schools to raise standards in literacy through its Master's degree course.

32. Links with other schools were exploited to good effect. Not only did schools pool resources to provide training for teachers and support staff, but they paired up to share areas of expertise. A grammar school, for example, provided experience of working with gifted and talented pupils to teachers at another school, which reciprocated by providing training in the use of the interactive whiteboard. The staff in both schools learned valuable new skills. Teachers who worked in other schools as part of their responsibilities as advanced skills teachers or as specialist school managers gained significantly from the experience. A head of department in a specialist arts college, for example, reported greater confidence and skills in teaching pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities after leading outreach work at a partner special school.

### **Developing the role of the CPD coordinator**

33. CPD was most effective in schools where the staff development coordinator had a clearly defined strategic role. Their responsibilities included planning for CPD, ensuring coherence with the school's other planning cycles, quality assurance, and evaluating impact. They were members of the senior management team; indeed, some primary headteachers had assumed the role themselves. CPD was less effective in schools where the coordinator retained largely administrative responsibilities; and in schools where the relevant roles, such as national strategy leader, performance management coordinator and CPD manager, were divided amongst too many people. In these schools no one had a strategic overview of CPD and the part it played in school improvement.

### **Recognising the need for relevant subject training**

34. A recent Ofsted survey in primary schools found that training for science, the foundation subjects and religious education was limited.<sup>6</sup> In the 2005/06 surveys of subjects, inspectors found that the arrangements for CPD in the subject they were inspecting were inadequate in about one third of the primary schools they visited. This did not mean that the school's arrangements for CPD were unsatisfactory, but usually that there had been little or no recent professional development in the subject being inspected. The need to update staff's knowledge and skills in these subjects was not a priority for those schools. On occasion, shortcomings in the teaching of these subjects had gone undetected or ignored by the schools' managers. The resulting decline in demand for specialist training

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<sup>6</sup> *The national literacy and numeracy strategies and the primary curriculum*, Ofsted, 2005  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs.displayfile&id=3851&type=pdf>

in subjects had led to a lack of provision in some local authorities. Even when subject leaders had been able to attend such specialist courses, they did not have the time or the skills to disseminate the training to the rest of the staff. In secondary schools, training is required in specific areas to meet new challenges. In science, for example, some staff lack confidence to teach across the full range of science subjects; the demands of citizenship, as a new subject for teachers and pupils, also calls for continuing training. The initiatives already underway to meet these needs are appropriate, for example in the expansion of the accredited in-service training programme for teachers of citizenship and the establishment of Science Learning Centres.

## **Restructuring the workforce**

### **Deploying, training and developing the support staff**

35. The national workforce agreement of 2003 was designed to reduce teachers' workload and to raise standards.<sup>7</sup> It has led to an increase in the number of support staff, and schools have recognised the need to enhance their role and to provide good training and development for them.
36. The primary and special schools in the survey had made good progress with preparing teaching assistants to work in the classroom with teachers and pupils. Often the professional development they provided was based on the needs of the pupils with whom the assistants were working. One primary school, for example, had struck a good balance between helping its large group of support staff to work with individual pupils and helping them to achieve their personal ambitions. It encouraged them to take the specialist teaching assistant award at a local university as well as funding their attendance at courses specific to the needs of the pupils they were supporting.
37. The teachers, too, had developed their skills in using the additional support. In one primary school, for example, an inexperienced teacher observed colleagues who modelled for her how to get the best out of a classroom assistant.
38. Managers in the secondary schools had widely differing attitudes to using support staff in the classroom – from those who found them a vital source of support, to those who, in the words of one headteacher, considered the idea 'total anathema'. Most commonly, the secondary schools allocated administrative staff to provide clerical support for faculties and departments, whose managers were responsible for training them in departmental working practices.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=3479>

See further information on page 25.

39. The schools that trained their support staff to work with pupils appreciated the benefits. Several, for example, found that using fully trained teaching assistants as cover supervisors was more cost-effective than using supply teachers and resulted in fewer behaviour problems. The advantages of an inclusive approach to staff development are illustrated clearly at the following special school:

*This school for pupils with severe learning difficulties had a number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Support staff had the same entitlement to CPD as teachers and attended all of the training on whole-school priorities. Two of the school's objectives, to develop its approaches to teaching pupils with autism and to improve the use of ICT, involved all staff in training throughout the year. Everyone, for example, was shown how to communicate with autistic pupils by using a visual communication system.*

*One benefit of this inclusive approach was that all staff became confident in dealing with pupils with ASD. At lunchtime, for example, the pupils could ask serving staff for the dish they wanted, which previously had not been possible. A second benefit was that teaching teams became more consistent in the way they managed their classes. The teacher and the assistants in an ASD class, for example, gave praise and encouragement in the same way, because they knew exactly the social skills they were trying to promote. A further benefit was the convenience of sharing expertise. A lesson which began badly because of a technical hitch with the interactive whiteboard was quickly salvaged because a teaching assistant was able to resolve the technical difficulty while the teacher continued to give the pupils her much needed attention.*

40. Although support staff underwent a good range of professional development, this rarely included subject-specific training. When it did, it had considerable benefits for that subject. One assistant, assigned to a languages department, for example, had studied Spanish and first aid, which enabled her to provide more informed support for pupils in lessons and to provide valuable assistance on study visits. More often, however, teaching assistants were limited in the amount of help they could give to pupils when they were working in subjects with which they were unfamiliar. On the rare occasions a teaching assistant taught a lesson to a full class in the absence of the class teacher, the schools did not ensure they had the relevant subject knowledge or the teaching and assessment skills required for that lesson. In one primary school, a teaching assistant taught some lessons planned by the class teacher, to whom she reported afterwards. However, her subject knowledge was insecure and she lacked the skills to assess pupils' progress. Elsewhere, a teaching assistant taught an ICT lesson, which had been planned without reference to her by the class teacher, and took insufficient account of the different needs and abilities of the pupils in the class.

## Using workforce reform for teachers' professional development

41. Teachers in the survey schools received their weekly entitlement to time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA). In the primary schools, time that had once been allocated to subject leaders for their roles had been reduced or lost because it had been redesignated as PPA time, even though subject leaders were entitled to separate time for leadership and management of their subject. Several headteachers regretted that, under the terms of the national agreement, they could not determine how PPA time should be spent. There is no obligation for teachers to use it for professional development purposes.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, staff who were keen to develop their knowledge and skills did use their planning time for related activities such as visiting other schools and libraries for research, or observing classes to learn about a department or key stage for which they had recently assumed responsibility.
42. Time gained in secondary schools through removing requirements to invigilate was often used for collaborative planning, which had incidental benefits for teachers' professional development. Similar benefits were evident in those primary schools which had enabled teachers to use their planning time collaboratively. Schools generally had not begun to consider how the time freed up for teachers by workforce reform could be used for CPD, although their headteachers recognised that one of the objectives of the reform was to raise standards.

## Evaluating impact

### When evaluation is done well

43. The weakest link in the chain was the way the schools evaluated the effectiveness of their professional development activities. Only 13 of the 29 survey schools did this well.
44. Evaluation was effective when the professional development activity had a clear, pre-defined outcome and a suitable method for collecting evidence of its impact. Good practice was evident in those survey schools which had planned to increase their use of ICT across the curriculum. Their intention was that all teachers would use new ICT equipment more confidently, more frequently and more imaginatively in lessons. Managers in these schools monitored the progress of their initiative through regular discussions and focused classroom observation. When the planned outcomes concerned improvements in pupils' attitudes or awareness, school managers used pupil interviews as the most reliable way of

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<sup>8</sup> Paragraph 36 of the national agreement states that PPA time is to be used for 'a combination of individual and collaborative professional activity...it is for the teacher to determine the particular priorities for each block of PPA time'.

ascertaining how well the outcome had been achieved. The best schools were alive to the fact that the defined outcome might be achieved only superficially and that its quality therefore needed to be assessed objectively by someone with relevant expertise. A project in one school, for instance, had successfully increased the use of investigations in mathematics but this alone was not enough; the headteacher's observations revealed that the change had led to a loss of pace in some classes. The need to evaluate quality and not just to monitor compliance included developments outside the classroom, as this case study exemplifies:

*This secondary school needed better pupil performance data, accessible for all staff. A head of department, an ICT expert, was given five hours each week to develop software for academic tracking, bespoke for this school. He also provided individual training for teachers in different ICT applications, relevant to their needs. As a result, staff began to use the assessment database more and with greater confidence. The head of department continued to monitor and refine the operation. His analysis revealed that some teachers were not using the full range of grades when assessing pupils, so he planned further training for them to achieve greater consistency.*

45. Occasionally, schools made good use of external expertise to provide an objective view of their achievement. Several drew on the experience of local authority consultants to help them to assess the impact of their professional development activities. A special school developing staff's skills for working with pupils with ASD underwent an assessment by the National Autistic Society.<sup>9</sup>

## **When evaluation is not done well**

46. Evaluation was not good in schools which had failed to build it in at the planning stage. They had not defined the desired outcomes of professional development activities in terms of pupils' learning and achievement, still less agreed how achievement of these outcomes would be assessed. Consequently, their managers relied on subjective impressions for evidence of the impact of CPD. Teachers who had been involved in whole-school initiatives on learning styles, for example, spoke enthusiastically of their own greater awareness, but were unable to adduce firm evidence to demonstrate how teaching and learning had improved, because they had not articulated the anticipated effect in these areas. One school which had invested time and resources in improving the way spelling was taught had not devised even a simple way of assessing whether pupils could spell any better at the end of the process.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.nas.org.uk/>

See further information on page 25.

47. These schools monitored their CPD activities by checking that intended structural changes had been implemented, but gave little consideration to their quality. For example, one school felt its development of ICT had been successful because teachers were using the new equipment more, but did not reflect on how well this was being done. This failing was also illustrated in the following primary school:

*Several staff had been developing their skills in target-setting. The school's new policy was to have class targets displayed on the walls, individual pupils' targets stapled to the front page of their books, and the lesson's targets written on the board. Internal monitoring suggested that the policy was working because the teachers had put it into operation. Indeed, in a Year 6 lesson these structures were in place. However, on the board, the lesson's 'learning intentions', each underpinned by a lengthy 'success criterion', were worded in way that was meaningless to the pupils and had no effect on the way they worked. The structural changes had been made, but no one had asked the question, 'So what?'*

48. Most of the schools used questionnaires as part of their evaluation methodology. Many of these had serious shortcomings. They were used to evaluate external training courses and rarely considered other types of CPD, such as activities organised in the school. They focused on short-term actions and ignored long-term impact. The few forms which did ask staff about the impact of a professional development activity seldom secured a useful answer because the staff did not know exactly what kind of impact was anticipated.
49. Few of the schools evaluated the impact of professional development on staff's management skills. Primary schools which had aimed to develop the role of the subject leader in their improvement plan did not assess at the end of the year to what extent the subject leaders understood and were carrying out the role. A secondary school, whose previous Ofsted report had recommended improvements in middle management, relied on a local authority report to confirm this issue had been resolved. The evidence for the adviser's judgement was merely that a number of managers had followed the 'Leading from the Middle' programme, not that they were carrying out their responsibilities more effectively.
50. School managers did not assess the cost-effectiveness or value for money of their professional development policy. At best, they identified courses and providers which word of mouth suggested were not worth using again. Many doubted that a value for money assessment was feasible. And yet they were making a considerable investment in CPD activities, but could not establish convincingly if they were worth the money. Only one school had begun to make some progress with this matter; the headteacher calculated the cost and time of each training course attended by the teachers and considered their evaluations before grading its value for money on a four-point scale.

## The impact of CPD

### The impact of CPD on teaching and achievement

51. Despite weaknesses in the evaluation methodology of the survey schools, well planned professional development had improved teaching, helped to raise standards and contributed to staff retention and promotion.
52. Teachers who had been involved in CPD that was carefully designed, for example to develop their competence in areas such as assessment or ICT, had made gains in their knowledge and understanding. This was beginning to be reflected in their teaching and in pupils' learning. The keys to success were thorough, focused planning, and regular monitoring. The following example from a secondary school illustrates the point.

*The new head of the languages department planned in detail how to tackle weaknesses identified by an Ofsted inspection. He tackled each criticism with appropriate actions and well chosen CPD activities. These activities included support from the school's senior managers, external training, and visits to other schools. Time was set aside for him to meet with and support his team, and to discuss progress with the headteacher every fortnight. The plan identified the ways in which improvements would be recognised; for example, better motivation of boys would be seen in higher numbers choosing the subject in Key Stage 4 and post-16. The considerable impact of this comprehensive approach included more vibrant teaching, better GCSE results, greater numbers continuing with the subject, and more enthusiasm from boys.*

### The impact of CPD on staffing

53. The survey schools found that well planned CPD had a positive effect on the recruitment and retention of staff. It contributed to high morale and enthusiasm for teaching. The headteacher at one secondary school, for example, made effective use of newly created posts, such as secondments to a city learning centre, to refresh some of the long-serving staff. At one of the primary schools, the headteacher exploited national initiatives related to CPD to inspire an able staff to pursue ambitious career plans; as a result, the school boasted an enviable blend of fast track, advanced skills and leading teachers.<sup>10,11</sup> The following case study reflects the picture in many of the survey schools:

*A teacher in a primary school spent her induction year developing the skills she had learned during her placement at the school as a trainee. She spent her second year shadowing and supporting the subject leader for*

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.fasttrackteaching.gov.uk/templates/index.asp>

See further information on page 25.

<sup>11</sup> See further information on page 25.



*literacy to develop her understanding of the role. In her third year she became subject leader for the performing arts. She also spent time working with the SENCO and improving her use of ICT. Throughout this period she enjoyed a range of professional development, including relevant in-service training courses, working with local authority advisers, and coaching in management by the headteacher. By the end of her fifth year she was well placed to become an advanced skills teacher and take a role in the school as a 'leader of learning'.*

54. Many of the schools were reaping the benefits of providing high quality professional development for their support staff. This led to better support for teachers and pupils and, on occasion, provided a solution to staffing problems, as the following case study illustrates.

*A secondary school with a long-standing difficulty in recruiting good religious education teachers recognised potential in a voluntary helper. The headteacher appointed him as a teaching assistant, supported him through a part-time foundation degree in the subject at a local university, and then gave him the opportunity to work in the school as an unqualified teacher. He joined the Graduate Teacher Programme and is about to gain qualified teacher status.<sup>12</sup> Because of its support for this teacher the school has resolved a difficult staffing problem.*

## Conclusion

55. Although inspectors found much that needed to be improved in schools' arrangements for CPD, there was also much good practice on which they could draw. The survey schools fully recognised the opportunities afforded by the government's CPD strategy and other related initiatives, and exploited them successfully through careful planning to raise standards. They had a clear and accurate view of what they needed to achieve, and planned a good balance of varied activities to support whole-school development. Each link in the chain was systematically managed to achieve the intended outcomes. In the very best schools these outcomes were rigorously evaluated to inform the next cycle of planning; the chain was cyclical not linear.

## Notes

In 2005 and 2006, a survey into the effectiveness of CPD was conducted. Four HMI visited 29 schools (14 primary, 13 secondary, and two special – covering 19 local authorities), whose section 10 reports had identified good practice in managing and using CPD. This evidence was supplemented during the same period by evidence from Ofsted's surveys of National Curriculum subjects in over 130 schools; specialist inspectors assessed, as a minor focus on these

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.tda.gov.uk/Recruit/thetrainingprocess/typesofcourse/gtp.aspx>  
See further information on page 25.

visits, the effectiveness of CPD in the subject they were inspecting. The findings from these subject visits need to be interpreted with care; although the inspectors judged that the arrangements for professional development in a particular subject were inadequate in about one third of the primary schools, this does not indicate that the arrangements for CPD throughout the school were unsatisfactory.

The survey sought to answer the following questions:

- How well do schools assess the CPD requirements of individual staff and the workforce as a whole in relation to the organisational needs?
- How well do schools plan to meet the CPD needs of their staff?
- How well do schools secure high-quality CPD?
- How effectively is CPD linked to performance management?
- To what extent is the 'space' being created by remodelling the workforce in schools being used to meet CPD needs?
- What has been the impact of the government's CPD strategy on standards, teaching and learning, and middle management?

Its aim was to enable Ofsted to identify and describe good practice, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of CPD in schools nationally, and to make recommendations to the government and to schools about how provision might be improved.

### **Further information**

In September 2005 the TDA assumed responsibility for the government's strategy for CPD. Originally introduced in March 2001 and relaunched recently to reflect new initiatives, the strategy's aims were:

- to promote the benefits of CPD
- to help teachers make the most of the choices available to them
- to build schools' capacity for effective professional development so they can make informed use of their delegated funding.

The DfES defines CPD as 'any activity that increases a teacher's knowledge and understanding and their effectiveness in schools and can help raise children's standards and improve teachers' job satisfaction' (Teachernet website). The TDA defines it as 'a planned and sustained series of activities, designed to improve a teacher's knowledge and skills'.

In 2003, the government, employers and trade unions (with the exception of the National Union of Teachers) agreed to the principles of Raising Standards and tackling workload: a national agreement, which aimed to reduce teachers' workload and raise standards over a three-year timescale. The resulting

increase in the size and nature of the workforce in schools meant that schools began to confront a wider range of CPD needs than before.

The government's CPD pages on the teachernet website can be accessed through this link:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/>

The TDA's CPD pages can be accessed through this link:

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/>

A copy of the national workforce agreement may be obtained through this link:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=3479>

The NPQH is a training programme designed by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) to prepare candidates for headship. On 1st April 2004 this qualification became mandatory for all new headteachers. Further details:

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes/npqh/index.cfm?CFID=433903&CFTOKEN=14191400>

'Leading from the Middle' is a professional development programme designed by the NCSL for middle managers. Further details:

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes/lftm/index.cfm?CFID=433903&CFTOKEN=14191400>

The Primary National Strategy and the Secondary National Strategy form the basis of the government's approach to improving schools and raising standards. They include a range of methods for supporting schools, including training, consultancy and resources. Further details:

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/about/>

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3/downloads/sns0506launch1651005schimp.pdf>

The Primary Leadership Programme, established in partnership with the NCSL in 2003 as part of the Primary National Strategy, aims to strengthen collaborative leadership in participating schools. Further information:

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/programmes/plp/index.cfm>

The modern languages Pathfinder projects were established by the DfES in 2003 and ran until 2005 as part of the strategy to offer all pupils in Key Stage 2 a languages entitlement. Further details:

[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/languages/DSP\\_sub.cfm?sub\\_id=4&cn\\_pagename=primary&area\\_id=3](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/languages/DSP_sub.cfm?sub_id=4&cn_pagename=primary&area_id=3)

The Ofsted evaluation of the project can be found at:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs.summary&id=3948>

Coaching and mentoring are helpfully described in a framework developed by the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education. The framework can be accessed through the TDA website with the following link:

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/induction/coachingmentoring.aspx>

The Fast Track teaching programme is a DfES-backed, accelerated leadership programme for teachers in the early stages of their careers. Further details:

<http://www.fasttrackteaching.gov.uk/templates/index.asp>

Leading teachers are teachers identified as exemplary practitioners in a particular field, such as behaviour management or numeracy, who can be used as a reference point by other teachers in the same and in other schools.

The National Autistic Society exists to champion the rights and interests of people with autism. One of its services is to provide autism-specific accreditation for relevant organisations. Further details:

<http://www.nas.org.uk/>

The Graduate Teacher Programme is a programme of on-the-job training which allows graduates to qualify as a teacher while they work. Further details:

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/Recruit/thetrainingprocess/typesofcourse/gtp.aspx>

## Annex

### Schools visited for this survey

#### School

Adams' Grammar School  
 All Saints College  
 Backwell School  
 Bailey's Court Primary School  
 Batheaston C of E Primary School  
  
 Bridgnorth Endowed School  
 Bucklers Mead Community School  
 Chase Terrace Primary School  
 Chelmsford County High School for Girls  
 Claydon Primary School  
 Heworth Grange Comprehensive School  
 Holley Park Primary School  
 Holy Cross Roman Catholic School Aided  
 Hookergate School  
 Kings Norton Girls' School and Language College  
 Lakers School  
 Lawford Mead Junior School  
 Lawley Primary School  
 Oxclose Village Primary School  
 Parkside School  
 Pheasey Park Farm Primary School  
 Polesworth High School  
 Priory Primary School  
 Ramsden Hall School  
 Saltford C of E Primary School  
  
 Sefton Park Junior School  
 St Bernadette Catholic Secondary School  
 St John The Baptist C of E Primary School  
 The Gilbert School

#### Local authority

Telford and Wrekin  
 Newcastle Upon Tyne  
 North Somerset  
 South Gloucestershire  
 Bath and North East  
 Somerset  
 Shropshire  
 Somerset  
 Staffordshire  
 Essex  
 Suffolk  
 Gateshead  
 Sunderland  
 North Tyneside  
 Gateshead  
 Birmingham  
 Gloucestershire  
 Essex  
 Telford &Wrekin  
 Sunderland  
 North Tyneside  
 Walsall  
 Warwickshire.  
 North Tyneside  
 Essex  
 Bath and North East  
 Somerset  
 City of Bristol  
 City of Bristol  
 Leicester City  
 Essex