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Independent review of teachers' professional development in schools: phase 1 findings

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Executive summary

Teachers' professional development is crucial to a high-quality education system.[footnote 1] When teachers, as learners themselves, base their everyday practice on an updated, coherent and integrated professional knowledge base, this can lead to improvements in pupils' learning outcomes.[footnote 2]

The government has recently introduced several reforms as part of its teacher recruitment and retention strategy. In 2019, the early career framework (ECF) was published, and in September 2021, changes were made to statutory induction across England.[footnote 3] The ECF reforms entitle early career teachers (ECTs) to 2 years of professional development after their initial teacher education (ITE). This is designed to help enhance their practice, knowledge and working habits. In addition, a reformed and updated suite of national professional qualifications (NPQs) has been available since November 2021.[footnote 4] These qualifications enable teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders to develop their expertise in specialist areas of teaching or leadership.

The Department for Education (DfE) has commissioned Ofsted to carry out an independent review of teachers' professional development. This review focuses on teachers' and leaders' experiences of the training and development they have engaged in since April 2021. This report sets out the interim findings from the first year of our review.

We took a mixed-methods approach to the review. First, we commissioned YouGov to carry out an online survey of 1,953 teachers and leaders from November to December 2021. The survey questions focused on the content of the professional development that participants had recently received; how well their training offer has been managed; the quality of the training and development provided; and participants' awareness of recent reforms.

We followed this up with research visits, led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), to 44 primary and secondary schools during the 2022 spring and summer terms. These visits were designed to complement the YouGov survey by obtaining a richer view of training and development experiences. During the visits, inspectors held discussions with school leaders, teachers (particularly ECTs and those studying an NPQ), mentors and staff with responsibilities for teacher development.

The research literature highlights that **teachers' professional development is important for pupil outcomes, and most schools know this**. The staff we spoke to commonly said that improving their teaching practice was a priority, because it would help pupils to make progress.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic affected schools' ability to give teachers enough development opportunities. Staff absence and the need for lesson cover often prevented teachers from attending planned face-to-face training. Most training during the pandemic took place online, but many teachers thought that it was lower in quality. Many staff were keen to move away from the mostly online training they had received during the pandemic. Furthermore, several leaders believed that the knowledge and skills of ECTs were more uneven than those of newly qualified teachers under the previous system. They attributed this to the pandemic, which likely exacerbated prior inconsistencies in the quality of ITE provision.[footnote 5]

Consequently, teachers and leaders want more time dedicated to professional development, including follow-up, but workload pressures often prevent this. Indeed, many experienced teachers mentioned that time was set aside by school leaders for teacher development, but other school responsibilities intervened. In some cases, this meant that teachers and mentors were using a significant amount of their own time for professional development. This was less of a concern for ECTs, who said that the protected time they were given as part of their induction ensured that development opportunities were prioritised sufficiently in their

timetable.

Generally, the training and development opportunities teachers and leaders had engaged in since April 2021 were wide ranging. **It is encouraging that schools have prioritised training and development around the curriculum.** This works well alongside Ofsted's focus on the quality of education in the education inspection framework (EIF).[footnote 6] Curriculum training was highlighted regularly in the YouGov survey and during the research visits. **However, in around half the schools visited, it was clear that the staff's understanding of planning and designing a curriculum remained limited, even though they had received some training and development.** In several cases, teachers had done courses on preparing for inspection, such as practising deep dives or preparing curriculum intent statements, neither of which are about the substance of education.

Teachers particularly want more training in teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is not surprising, because there has been an increase in the number of pupils identified as having SEND. Also, there is a shortfall in special school places. These factors have increased the pressure on SEND provision in mainstream schools.[footnote 7]

As a consequence of the pandemic, schools are focusing on mental health and well-being training. This is typically provided by external experts and aimed at helping pupils to re-engage in their classroom learning. It remains unclear, however, whether this is yet having an impact and how effectively schools are able to work with other bodies to address pupils' wider personal, behavioural and social needs.

While it is clear that leaders and teachers are receiving or planning for regular professional development, they are often unimpressed with the quality of their recent training and development. Only around two fifths of teachers who responded to the YouGov survey thought that recent training was relevant, sufficient and of high quality. In terms of the characteristics of high-quality professional development (as categorised by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), a high proportion of teachers felt that they rarely received training that allowed them to reflect on their practice and embed learning.[footnote 8]

In this context, the ECF and NPQs represent a significant step forward, because they are research-informed and designed to include both dedicated time for professional development and follow-up with mentors. Generally, ECTs and staff undertaking NPQs were more positive about their development experiences than other teachers, in terms of it being relevant and of high quality. One common factor that ECTs said they value, and would like more of, is the opportunity to speak to other ECTs on the programme.

However, some ECTs and staff undertaking NPQs said that these programmes are generic and not implemented consistently. For ECTs the lack of flexibility in the programme, a perception that course materials are irrelevant, the unavailability of their mentors (due to other school factors) and poor online provision were highlighted as issues. Staff undertaking NPQs also mentioned that occasionally the course content was repetitive or lacked relevance, and that they preferred face-to-face sessions over online provision. Such teething problems are not uncommon when major new programmes are being rolled out.

The wider teacher workforce appeared to have limited awareness of the ECF and reformed NPQs. Senior leaders were more aware of both programmes, although a small minority of leaders remained unaware of these developments.

We will continue this study into a second year. This will involve a follow-up YouGov survey to track the changes from year 1, and further research visits to gain insights into why these changes have happened. We have also commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies to track 40 teachers over 4 terms, and provide some case studies of individual teachers' development journeys. We will use these insights in

the year 2 report. The second year should help identify the shifting patterns of teacher development opportunities as schools become more settled following the pandemic. It should also provide further evidence of the impact of the ECF and NPQ reforms as participants complete the full package of training provided.

Introduction

What is teacher development?

Different terms are often used to describe teacher development. These can include:

- 'professional learning'
- 'continuing professional development'
- 'continuing professional development and learning'
- 'joint practice development',
- 'in-service training' (INSET)[footnote 9]

As a result, definitions of teacher development are not always clear and can take different forms.[footnote 10]

What teacher development consists of is often dependent on the school context, the stakeholder groups involved and the goals of individual teachers for their students or their own professional development.[footnote 11] Training activities can be formal and structured (staff meetings and training sessions), or informal, unstructured and collaborative (informal conversations and the sharing of advice). In addition, the resources and facilities available in school can often determine the type of development opportunities available. For instance, leaders and teachers can use pupils' assessment to directly inform development needs. Recognising and investing in teacher development acknowledges the active role that teachers play in improving pupil outcomes and enhancing the profession itself.

What are the features of high-quality teacher development?

A recurring theme in educational research is the importance of supporting high-quality teacher development. Equipping the workforce with high-quality training has been linked with improving pupils' outcomes, although ensuring all teachers can receive such training can be challenging.[footnote 12] Teacher turnover, lack of leadership support and limited time are all factors that can impede opportunities for development. Furthermore, the quality and, in turn, impact of such training can vary widely, and it is not straightforward to discern between effective and less effective training.[footnote 13]

Some reviews of the literature have provided insights into what effective features of professional development for teachers may include.[footnote 14] For example, practice has previously been thought of as effective when it is sustained over time, is collaborative, involves the active engagement of teachers, is focused on subject-specific content, draws on external expertise and is practice-based.[footnote 15]

It is important to note, however, that the presence of an effective feature in a teacher development programme does not guarantee success. This is generally more nuanced. For instance, allowing for collaborative activity alone is not enough; careful

consideration of the content and nature of the activity is crucial. Additionally, an important factor differentiating more successful from less successful programmes is not simply the length of a programme, but 'what the time was used for'.[footnote 16] Researchers have questioned whether it is useful to label discrete features of programmes as 'effective'.[footnote 17] They have also raised concerns about the way some reviews have focused on visible processes of teacher development to determine effective approaches.[footnote 18]

The EEF has recently carried out a meta-analysis to address some of these concerns.[footnote 19] This found some similar outcomes to those identified in previous research. For instance, aligning professional development to the needs of the school (as well as support from school leaders) remained important, as did having clear intended outcomes for teachers' development and subsequently for pupils. However, the EEF research also highlighted a range of learning mechanisms that they suggest are important to include in a programme design when developing an effective teacher development programme. These tended to relate to knowledge acquisition (or how one learns), rather than the format of professional development (such as lesson study, seminars, professional learning communities) or generic concepts (such as collaboration).

The EEF review also provides a way of classifying these learning mechanisms. It notes that professional development is likely to be more effective (in terms of improving pupils' outcomes) if it incorporates more techniques from all of the 4 categories it identifies.

1. Instil insight

- managing cognitive load
- revisiting prior learning

2. Motivate goals

- setting and agreeing goals
- presenting information from a credible source
- providing affirmation and reinforcement after progress

3. Teach techniques

- instructing teachers on how to perform a technique
- arranging social support
- modelling the technique
- monitoring and providing feedback
- rehearsing the technique

4. Embed practice

- providing prompts and questions
- prompting action planning
- encouraging monitoring
- prompting context-specific repetition

The EEF suggests that a programme that features a mechanism from each of these areas represents a 'balanced design'. If one or more group is missing, the programme may be less effective.[footnote 20] However, it is worth noting that this research predominantly focuses on pedagogical features of teacher development. These are less useful when teachers also need to think about pedagogical content knowledge and the foregrounding of what to teach.[footnote 21] Our report also

identifies some of these limitations.

Recent teacher development policy changes

The DfE published standards for teachers' professional development in July 2016. [footnote 22] These were designed to raise expectations in the workforce for effective professional development, to focus on achieving the greatest improvement in pupil outcomes, and to develop teachers as respected members of the profession. The standards specify that for professional development to be successful, it should:

- have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes
- be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise
- include collaboration and expert challenge
- be sustained over time
- be prioritised by school leadership

Early career teachers (ECTs)

Statutory induction for new teachers changed when the ECF was introduced in September 2021. [footnote 23] Teachers starting their induction are now known as early career teachers (ECTs) rather than newly qualified teachers (NQTs) as previously. [footnote 24] ECTs now have an extended induction over 2 school years. During the induction period they are entitled to:

- a 2-year training programme based on the ECF
- support from a dedicated mentor
- funded time off-timetable for induction activities, including training and mentor sessions: 10% non-contact time in year 1 and 5% non-contact time in year 2
- regular progress reviews and 2 formal assessments against the teachers' standards
- both a mentor and an induction tutor, who each perform different roles

Schools can choose from 3 approaches to delivering an ECF-based training programme. These are:

- a funded provider-led induction programme supplied by accredited providers
- development of their own training, using DfE-accredited materials and resources
- an induction programme designed and delivered by the school, but based on the ECF

The ECF specifies what all ECTs should learn about, and have time to introduce into their classroom practice, during their induction. The 5 focus areas of the ECF are: behaviour management, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and professional behaviours. The ECF is intended to provide a national standard and more consistency than the previous induction process.

National professional qualifications (NPQs)

NPQs are a set of voluntary qualifications designed to support the professional development of experienced teachers and leaders. A reformed suite of NPQs was introduced from November 2021 and consists of 8 qualifications that are available through accredited providers:

4 new specialist NPQs:

- leading teacher development
- leading behaviour and culture

- leading teaching
- leading literacy

4 revised leadership NPQs:

- senior leadership
- executive leadership
- headship – including the early headship coaching offer for those eligible
- early years leadership

There are currently 11 DfE-funded lead providers that deliver the ECF and NPQ courses to school staff. These will be inspected by Ofsted. In summer 2022, Ofsted carried out monitoring visits to 10 of the lead providers. Of these, 9 were found to be taking effective action towards ensuring that the ECF training and NPQ professional development are of a high standard, with one deemed not to be taking effective action.

Methods

Our review focused on:

- what teachers and leaders have recently received as part of their teacher development offer
- how well teacher development opportunities are managed for staff
- teachers' awareness of their entitlement to professional development and recent reforms
- the perceived quality of teacher development that teachers and leaders have recently received

The full set of research questions can be found in our published terms of reference. [footnote 25] This year 1 report covers the findings from an initial YouGov survey, research visits carried out by HMI and the inspection outcomes from monitoring visits to ECF and NPQ lead providers. Findings from the teacher cohort study mentioned in the terms of reference will feature in our Year 2 report.

We commissioned YouGov to carry out an online survey with teachers and leaders to find out more about the typical content they were taught during training and development courses, and their views on the quality of this content. We used criteria from recent research published by the EEF when designing several of the questions that focused on quality. [footnote 26] In total, 1,953 participants (1,711 teachers and 242 senior leaders) were recruited from YouGov's teacher panel. The survey was carried out from November to December 2021. The sample frame was based on the DfE's school workforce survey of full-time teachers. [footnote 27] The data from the survey has been weighted and is representative of all teachers in England by school type, teaching level, region, gender and age.

To complement the survey and provide further detail on the findings, 10 HMI carried out 44 research visits to schools during the 2022 spring and summer terms: 25 primary schools and 19 secondary schools. We selected schools based on the following criteria:

- the school's latest Ofsted overall effectiveness judgement (excluding inadequate schools)
- the level of deprivation (using the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) [footnote 28]
- the ECF programme route (sourced from the DfE)

We were particularly interested in schools with ECTs using the different ECF programme routes, hence the inclusion of this criterion in the sample design. This also ensured that we could identify which schools in the sample did not have ECTs, so that we could gain insights into the professional development of teachers who were not using ECF programmes. There was no available data for identifying staff on an NPQ programme, so views from this group were dependent on the schools selected having relevant participants who could contribute.

During the visits, HMI carried out semi-structured interviews with headteachers and other members of the senior leadership team, professional development leads, ECTs, ECT mentors, and teachers who had provided recent in-house training for colleagues. Focus groups were held with teachers and, in a few instances, ECTs and their mentors. The research visits took place over 1 or 2 days, depending on the size of the school.

All schools that participated in the research did so on a voluntary basis, and gave consent. Further details on the method, process of analysis and limitations of the study can be found in Annex A.

Main findings

Generally, teachers and leaders see improving teachers' practice as a priority

The majority of teachers and leaders suggest that their intentions for teacher development are to improve teaching and, therefore, enable pupils to learn the curriculum. The responses from the YouGov survey (figure 1) showed that around 70% of teachers and leaders engage in training to improve their teaching, while 74% of leaders consider teacher development to be important for school improvement purposes.

Figure 1: Responses to the question 'Which, if any, of the following are your main reasons for taking up professional development opportunities?' (in percentages)

Staff echoed this view during the school visits. They tended to see teacher development as being about improving their own knowledge and skills, improving pupils' outcomes and promoting a whole-school culture of development. Comments on improving pupils' outcomes included the following:

'For us, it's about pupils' outcomes. [Teacher development is] designed to make sure we improve outcomes and make pupils ready for their next stages.' **(Primary school headteacher)**

'Everything that is valuable for the teachers should be valuable for the pupils.' **(Secondary school teacher)**

'If you improve the quality of teaching, you improve the quality of education and children's lives.' **(Primary school ECT)**

Furthermore, several teachers mentioned that regular training remained important. This was often because teachers knew that the meaning of 'good practice' can change as teachers and leaders encounter new or updated research, theories and methods of teaching.

The pandemic has had an impact on the availability and accessibility of teacher development opportunities

'It's like Jenga… You pull one person out, and the system collapses.' **(Primary school teacher)**

Around three fifths of the YouGov respondents thought that COVID-19 was a barrier to their engagement and participation in teacher development. This is complemented by the evidence from around half the schools visited, where staff said that disruption caused by the pandemic had hindered their school in providing good-quality teacher development opportunities. We also identified this issue in our education recovery briefings published last year.[footnote 29] These briefings highlighted that, in some schools, staff missed out on opportunities for professional development due to the pandemic, although a few schools found online training more accessible.

The greatest issues that leaders faced were often related to covering for high levels of staff absence. Leaders said that staff were experiencing post-COVID fatigue and were emotionally drained, which made scheduling training sessions increasingly

difficult. This was often compounded by the limited number of supply teachers available. Leaders stated that they found it challenging to roll out their professional development programmes in line with their pre-COVID plans, and required 'flexibility on their implementation' due to the lockdowns.

Subsequently, some staff explained that planned programmes of teacher development had slowed down. Staff from a few schools perceived that COVID-19 had 'changed attitudes and priorities' because staff were not always being released to do training. In addition, teachers frequently mentioned that, even if they did receive planned training, they did not always get time to implement the new approaches they had learned, or watch other teachers doing so.

The pandemic tended to affect ECTs in slightly different ways. For instance, leaders said that it had led to a large disparity between the knowledge and skills of ECTs joining the school and previous cohorts of NQTs. Some ECTs felt similarly about the transition from their ITE experience during COVID-19 to their first teaching job.

For example, a chemistry ECT said that, because of the pandemic, they had not taught a single practical experiment before they joined the school. In another school, several ECTs said that they needed support with subject knowledge, and that leaders assumed that they were more 'ready to go' than they actually were. This highlights that ECTs needed more support to get up to speed than expected, making training and development even more important. It also suggests that the pandemic exacerbated already existing inconsistencies in the quality of ITE provision.[footnote 30]

As a response to the lockdowns during the pandemic, it was common for schools to provide online training.[footnote 31] Studies exploring professional development activities for educators during the pandemic also showed that teachers faced new challenges in the use of educational technology.[footnote 32] The evidence from our research visits indicates that online training helped teachers to access professional development more regularly. A benefit mentioned by teachers was that it reduced their travel time and made meeting easier. However, the mode of delivery often presented challenges, and teachers frequently said that online sessions were increasingly boring and demotivating:

'Training has to be inspiring and engaging – people don't engage properly if learning is online.' **(Primary school leader)**

'Online training is a waste of time.' **(Primary teacher)**

'Death by PowerPoint was never going to motivate you to change your practice.' **(Primary teacher)**

In the main, there was a strong preference for face-to-face training. Teachers and leaders often said that collaborative working and knowledge-sharing were missing from the online training sessions they attended. A senior leader echoed the message we heard from several: 'Face-to-face courses allow staff to spark off each other.' Many teachers believed that a face-to-face environment was better for colleagues to share ideas with each other.

ECTs and staff doing NPQs often said how much they valued networking sessions to help inform their practice, and that they would prefer more of these in the future. Staff

also found it difficult to access or host their usual meetings with other local schools. This meant that they could not always share knowledge and maintain the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working that support professional development.

Workload pressures are seen as the main barrier to accessing teacher development

According to the YouGov survey, the majority of classroom teachers (87%) reported that workload pressures were a barrier to participating and engaging in training and development (figure 2). This was followed by the availability of staff to cover lessons (73%), the cost to the school (68%) and timetable conflicts (67%). In addition, it was notable from the school visits that COVID-19 was seen as compounding the pre-existing issues of time, staff support and funding, making it harder to find room for training. Interestingly, the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2018) in England indicates that these concerns were also prevalent before the pandemic. [footnote 33]

Figure 2: Responses to question 'To what extent do you agree that the following are current barriers to your participation and engagement in professional development?' (in percentages)

Based on responses from 1,711 participants.

Participants could select multiple responses.

Participants responded to the following scale: strongly agree, slightly agree, neither agree nor disagree, slightly disagree, strongly disagree and don't know. The chart shows the strongly agree and slightly agree responses combined.

Source: YouGov.

View the data in an accessible format.

Teachers from many of the schools visited reported that workload was a considerable barrier to them accessing planned teacher development activities. They pointed out that while time (dedicated hours) was often allocated for this, other responsibilities sometimes got in the way. In some cases, teachers said that they were using a significant amount of their own time for school-based professional development. In these instances, teachers mentioned that the pressures and restrictions of having a full-time timetable made committing to professional development difficult. Commonly, it was regarded as 'a lot on top of teaching'. Other comments included:

> 'Having to balance workload and training is a hard balance. Do I mark, or do I listen to a National College webinar?' **(Secondary teacher)**

> 'There is a lack of time to reflect on and further your own subject knowledge, and time to step back and decide the next steps in your subject area.' **(Primary teacher)**

Staff from smaller primary schools saw this as especially overwhelming. Middle leaders were often 'wearing many hats' at a time, such as teaching multiple subjects and managing their responsibilities in relation to pupils with SEND, while also trying to procure development opportunities.

However, teachers thought there were some instances where their training was too general to be useful, or was organised to meet an immediate need rather than planned in advance. Several teachers said that they had experienced constant change in training initiatives at their school, which made it difficult to keep up with what was essential. This made it 'arduous and overwhelming' for teachers to find the time to implement any new learning. Furthermore, even when staff attended courses that covered useful content, some found that they had no allocated time to reflect on what they had learned. Rarely did they have the opportunity to share and discuss their new knowledge with colleagues, or put what they had learned into practice. These concerns highlight the importance of leaders providing careful strategic planning of teacher development training so as not to overburden staff.

This concern was not echoed by ECTs, who tended to find that, while their workload was difficult to manage, they had sufficient time to access training and development opportunities and embed their learning in practice. This was largely due to the protected time they receive for this, as part of their ECF induction period.

Some mentors interviewed said that there was an assumption being made about their capacity to fully meet the needs of ECTs, even though they also had routine teaching duties. They highlighted the following challenges:

> The time that school leaders allocated to them for mentoring sessions was not always available in practice, owing to their other responsibilities in the school. This meant that some ECTs' mentor sessions were happening during the mentors' non-contact time, preventing the mentors from doing other work such as lesson preparation or marking.

> Lead providers did not always make course materials and resources available to mentors promptly. This meant there was limited time for mentors to read the course materials and plan sessions with ECTs. Where this was the case, much of what mentors provided appeared to be based on their interpretation of the training rather than content that closely followed the ECF.

As a consequence, some school leaders feared that these mentors might not carry out this role with future cohorts of ECTs due to the heavy additional workload it entails.

Teacher development was not always clearly prioritised, especially for more experienced teachers

The standards for teachers' professional development state that professional development must be prioritised by school leaders.[footnote 34] Although 90% of school leaders confirmed that they knew this (see figure 10), leaders do not appear to prioritise teachers' professional development sufficiently and consistently. Figure 3 shows that only 52% of teachers responding to the YouGov survey thought that their professional development was prioritised.

Figure 3: Responses to the question 'To what extent, if at all, do you think your professional development is currently prioritised by your school leaders?' (in percentages)

Base: all classroom teachers (n=1,711).

Figures are rounded and may not add to 100.

Source: YouGov.

View the data in an accessible format.

In around three fifths of the schools visited, inspectors noted that leaders had put in place coherent and well-planned teacher development programmes. In these schools, professional development appeared to be prioritised more effectively. Typically, the senior leadership teams had put in place a named professional development lead who had responsibility for overseeing all staff development. In this model, professional development tended to be closely linked to the school development plan. The professional development lead would use the plan, alongside performance management discussions and careful consideration of the roles and responsibilities of staff, their experience and their interests, to make informed decisions on the type of training that their teachers required and who would be best placed to attend.

In these schools, further thought was also given to not overloading staff with too many initiatives at once. For example, this might mean that teachers would attend training and then cascade what they had learned to other staff. Leaders also planned for staff meetings to include time to revisit ideas and concepts, so that staff could feed back on the effectiveness of any changes made or actions taken as a result of training.

Typically, leaders in these schools said they were developing a culture of teacher development that was well embedded as part of a continuous cycle of improvement

for all. Most staff agreed with this, and said they were supported well and offered plenty of development and training opportunities. However, other teachers thought that their development was not always valued or prioritised by leaders. In these cases, the process was more rigid and inflexible. Here, the priority was placed more on the schools' needs. Teachers' development interests were something that individual teachers were expected to plan for and manage in their own time. There was, therefore, some variability in how these schools implemented their teacher development programmes.

In about two fifths of the schools, the approach was much more unplanned and piecemeal. In these circumstances, leaders still recognised the importance of professional development and often linked it loosely to the school's development needs, but tended to be more opportunistic in their approach. For instance, leaders would concentrate on finding training and development that was free of charge, or that would allow for the costs to be shared (particularly with other schools). The teachers spoken to said that this sometimes led to them receiving training that was not relevant to current priorities or their actual needs. Although, at the same time, they also described leaders as responsive. For example, if they asked to go on a course or undertake some specific training, more often than not their request was accepted.

Arguably, these schools were not making sure there was a coherent development programme for their staff. This situation often occurred in schools where recent changes in senior leadership roles had led to weaker management and oversight of teacher development

In one further model, teacher development had been omitted from the school improvement plan of a few of the schools visited. Teachers were expected to take responsibility for planning and securing their own external training and development opportunities. The evidence from the YouGov survey also shows that around 1 in 6 classroom teachers said that they were solely responsible for identifying their own needs and planning their own professional development.

Most training and development opportunities were being provided in-house by school staff

Most training that teachers receive appears to be provided during directed hours and through ways that schools can control, either formally (through INSET days) or less formally (in staff meetings). Figure 4 shows that training from external sources, while happening, is much rarer. This may be related to COVID-19 and the fact that leaders' and teachers' preferences for face-to-face training are being met through these conditions.

Figure 4: Responses to the question 'Which, if any, of the following are the 3 most common ways that you receive your professional development?' (in percentages)

Base: All teachers (n=1,953).

Participants selected their 3 most common forms of professional development.

Source: YouGov.

View the data in an accessible format.

Unsurprisingly, the YouGov survey also shows that school leaders and other internal staff were the main providers of professional development opportunities, as they would tend to lead INSET days and staff meetings (figure 5). However, it is worth noting that this places the provision of high-quality development opportunities on the shoulders of internal teaching staff. Indeed, responses from the survey show that teachers doing professional development courses through external trainers or professional organisations were more likely to be confident about the knowledge and expertise of the trainer, compared to those doing in-house training.

Figure 5: Responses to the question 'Who typically delivers your professional development?' (in percentages)

Base: All teachers (n=1,953).

Participants could select multiple responses.

Source: YouGov.

Evidence from the school visits shows that leaders and teachers typically receive ongoing professional development throughout the year, although the form this takes is variable.

Generally, leaders and teachers said that training and development usually happened during the weekly hour-long staff meeting that formed part of teachers' directed time. A few schools had chosen to call this a teacher development or curriculum development meeting. The content varied depending on school development priorities at that time. For instance, a few primary schools were providing whole-school training on a phonics programme. This was in response to the DfE's requirements for schools to adopt an approved scheme and make sure that all staff used it.

In secondary schools, subject leaders would tend to lead sessions in which they disseminated the external training they had recently received, reported back on network meetings or shared research that they had undertaken themselves.

Leaders from some of the schools had a strong preference for in-house development. Indeed, there was generally a positive response among staff when leaders chose to work in formal or informal clusters with other schools, or in multi-academy trusts, to provide regular professional development. One school leader echoed the comments of others when saying, 'If we can do it ourselves, we will.' This offered teachers the networking and face-to-face training that they value. Teachers also said that it allowed for training to be more bespoke and relevant, particularly when they could collaborate and share experiences with other teachers who worked with the same age groups or phases. Increasingly though, schools seemed to be returning to providing more training in person by external experts, as they moved away from post-lockdown models of online training.

Curriculum has been the main recent focus for teacher development

Figure 6 shows that respondents to the YouGov survey had typically received more training and development on knowledge of the curriculum (36%) than any other topic. In particular, over half of the small number of ECTs who responded identified this as a priority area of their development. Given that the curriculum represents the substance of education, this is a welcome finding. Our previous curriculum research showed that secondary schools may be further ahead in this regard.[footnote 35] So, it is encouraging to find that, in this YouGov survey, more teachers from primary schools indicated that they had recently received training on the curriculum, compared to secondary staff.

Figure 6: Responses to the question 'Please think about the professional development you have received through school since April 2021… Which of the following content areas did it cover?' (in percentages)

Base: All teachers (n=1,953).

Participants could select multiple responses.

Source: YouGov.

View the data in an accessible format.

Interestingly, training on how to teach pupils with SEND and adaptive teaching approaches were identified as priority areas for training and development in the future (figure 7). This resonates with findings from TALIS 2018 in England, which also identified that teachers were keen to develop further in this area before the pandemic.[footnote 36] It is also not that surprising, given the increasing number of pupils who have been identified or misidentified as having SEND following the pandemic.[footnote 37] Our recent inspection evidence, gathered separately from this project, suggests that this is an area of weakness, owing to the misunderstanding in some schools that pupils with SEND need a different curriculum, when this is not necessarily the case. They should follow the same curriculum, but perhaps at a different pace, at greater or lesser depth (depending on whether pupils can access more complex content) and with more opportunities for recap and consolidation.

Figure 7: Responses to the question 'What content areas do you feel you need more professional development in?' (in percentages)

In around half the schools visited, teachers and leaders mentioned that curriculum had been a priority training area for them. Most had a strong understanding of the curriculum objectives that their training had focused on. They generally discussed the content in terms of improving subject-specific knowledge rather than generic concepts, and knew the importance of ordering a scheme of work so that it gradually built on pupils' prior knowledge. They also recognised curriculum design concepts such as spaced practice and spiral curriculum, knew about cognitive load theory and the limits of working memory, and understood the importance of repetition for consolidating skills.

In most of the secondary schools visited, teacher instruction and pedagogy were also keenly emphasised. In these schools, teachers said that effective questioning, adaptive teaching, retrieval practice and dual coding were commonplace concepts in their professional development. However, it was not always clear if this training was related to individual subjects.

However, in some schools, it was apparent that curriculum training was limited, and that more development for staff was needed in this area. In these cases, staff were often vague about the content of their training. For instance, some referred to it as helping them to align the curriculum to their school's needs, or to embed the curriculum across the school. Some staff also said that training had enhanced teaching and learning in the school, but could not specify how they had actually gone about doing this in practice. Similarly, several mentioned concepts like retrieval practice and sequencing, but did not provide any further information that showed they really understood what these processes involved.

In a few cases, schools appeared unsure about what curriculum training should involve. We understand that it should include the subjects – and particularly subject content and pedagogy – specified in our overview of research for the EIF.[footnote 38] However, these schools had instead opted for training in carrying out deep dives into subjects or writing curriculum intent statements. There was also a tendency in these schools for staff to discuss teacher development in terms of being able to 'talk the talk for Ofsted' or focusing on getting an 'outstanding' judgement. However, that content is more about getting ready for an inspection, so is likely to have limited value in developing teachers' essential knowledge of curriculum design.

The post-lockdown environment was influencing decisions about the focus of teacher development

The evidence suggests that an enduring impact of COVID-19 is the way that it has shaped development opportunities for teachers. Notably, the effects of the pandemic were apparent in some schools' lack of focus on curriculum training. For instance, several leaders commented that the pandemic had resulted in 'slower refinements to curriculum planning and sequencing'. Their programmes of curriculum development were only then coming back to the forefront of their thinking. As a primary school teacher noted, 'We have only just started talking to [our feeder] secondary school about linking the KS [key stage] 2 to KS3 curriculum, and the infant school KS1 to KS2 linking has been limited this year.'

We have previously commented on the situation where concentrating on preparing for examinations, especially in core subjects, can 'trump the pursuit of real, deep knowledge and understanding of subjects'.[footnote 39] The way that schools think about their curriculums can indicate what they prioritise in their teacher development activity. We have noted from the school visits that primary schools were tending to prioritise staff training in English and mathematics. Teachers and leaders said that one of the main reasons for this was to help pupils catch up. They indicated that many of their pupils had fallen behind in their learning during the pandemic, and as a result had developed considerable gaps in their knowledge. To address this, their schools prioritised core subjects over the development of the curriculum in other foundation subjects. A few schools said that they were prioritising English and mathematics as part of a whole-school development strategy to manage poor pupil outcomes in these subjects.

Our school visits also found that teachers and leaders were using their development time to focus on pupils' mental health and well-being and other pastoral activities. This was so that they could better support pupils to re-engage in their learning following the pandemic. Over half the schools visited acknowledged this as the most important aspect of teacher development for the academic year ahead. Additionally, many staff regularly referred to the emotional toll of COVID-19, and how this was currently affecting all aspects of schooling. Consequently, several leaders noted that training in classroom practice was, as one put it, 'low on the list of priorities at the moment'.

The quality of the teacher development opportunities received was highly variable

Figure 8 shows that that only two fifths of respondents to the YouGov survey thought they had received enough relevant, high-quality training since April 2021. However, ECTs and teachers studying NPQs were much more positive.

Figure 8: Responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree or disagree that you have frequently received the following since April 2021?' (in percentages)

Base: All teachers (n=1,953).

Figures are rounded and may not add to 100.

Source: YouGov.

View the data in an accessible format.

As part of the survey, we also asked respondents about aspects of training that they did or did not receive from teacher development activities that they had recently participated in. These features were defined using criteria from the EEF's recent research on the characteristics of effective teacher development.[footnote 40] Figure 9 indicates that less than a third of participants found that these important elements were always or often present in their recent training experiences.

Figure 9: Responses to the question 'Think about the professional development you have received through school since April 2021. How often did it do any of the following?' (in percentages)

When asked which of these elements had made the training high quality, 41% said there had been opportunities for teachers to share advice among colleagues[footnote 41]. This corroborates teachers' views that face-to-face training allows for better collaboration and enables them to share ideas with fellow staff.

During the school visits, staff regularly commented that the training they had recently received was sometimes irrelevant. This concern applied to both in-house training and courses provided by external experts and organisations. A common issue, which correlates with the survey findings, was that the content was not always well matched to the school's context or the teacher's prior knowledge.

A few teachers said that it was difficult to engage in courses when the materials focused on generic content rather than being specific to the subject they taught, or the immediate issues they were dealing with. For instance, teachers who attended training sessions covering a mix of school phases found that they were not given enough examples of how educational content might apply in different subjects and phases.

By comparison, ECTs tended to find the focus and content of the ECF to be well aligned with their needs in terms of quality and relevance. Only on a few occasions did ECTs say that the training was irrelevant and unengaging. Where this occurred in relation to the ECF lead providers, there was a view that the pitch of the ECF providers' materials could sometimes be 'insultingly low'. In addition, ECTs thought that programmes which included revision or consolidation of topics were 'covering aspects we have learned before and are obvious'.

Interestingly, teachers and leaders commonly used relatively vague language to describe the features of high-quality teacher development. For instance, there were expectations that the training should be relevant and useful, with sessions being interactive and delivered by specialists.

Awareness of recent teacher development reforms tend to be limited to those who they affect

At the time this research was carried out, much of the wider teacher workforce was not aware of the introduction of the ECF or the recent reforms to NPQs. Senior leaders, as might be expected, appeared to have greater understanding, particularly of the concepts that the new programmes offered, compared to other teachers. However, a small minority of leaders remained unaware of these developments (figure 10), which might prove critical to the effectiveness of induction training for ECTs or developing the leadership potential of other teachers in these schools.

Figure 10: Responses to the question 'How aware, if at all, are you of the following?' (in percentages)

Participants responded to the following scale: very aware, quite aware, not very aware, and not aware at all.
The chart shows the very aware and quite aware responses grouped together.
Base: Senior leaders (n=242); Classroom teachers (n=1,711).

Source: YouGov.

View the data in an accessible format.

ECTs were generally satisfied with their programme, but identified some challenges

Generally, the evidence shows that ECTs were more positive about their teacher development experiences than other teachers. They tended to believe that their training and development had been well prioritised for them, the induction was meeting expectations in terms of coverage (curriculum, pedagogy and assessment) and what they were receiving was frequently relevant and of high quality. The ECTs we spoke to were particularly complimentary about the support that they were receiving from their mentors and school leaders:

'My mentor is good at making the training immediate and relevant to us.' **(Secondary ECT)**

'We see each other daily to swap ideas. I can ask questions [of my mentor] whenever I require. They are constantly in and out of classroom with hints and tips.' **(Secondary ECT)**

'Leaders regularly feed back on the learning I am implementing.' **(Primary ECT)**

> 'Leaders manage our ECT time effectively by providing additional time if we ever require it.' **(Secondary ECT)**

Figure 11 shows that ECTs were generally more positive about the effectiveness of the teacher development they had recently received. However, the sample size of the ECT cohort from the YouGov survey is relatively small, so the responses should be treated with caution when compared with those of all teachers.

Figure 11: Responses to the question 'Think about the professional development you have received since April 2021. To what extent, if at all, do you think it has been effective in…?' (in percentages)

Participants responded to the following scale: very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, not at all effective, and don't know. The chart shows the very effective and somewhat effective responses grouped together.

Base: All teachers (n=1,953); ECTs (n=68).

The 14 percentage point difference for the professional habits and behaviours response is significant at the 5% level, as is the 17 percentage point difference for the building professional confidence response.

Participants responded to the following scale: very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, not at all effective, and don't know. The chart shows the very effective and somewhat effective responses grouped together.

Source: YouGov.

View the data in an accessible format

Despite this, a few of the ECTs we spoke to during the school visits thought the induction experience provided by accredited providers could be improved:

- Several ECTs said that there was limited flexibility in the programme and that it was too prescribed and generic, with no scope to develop aspects bespoke to the teacher or the school they worked in.
- Some commented that the focus of the training and the materials used were irrelevant. For instance, a couple of ECTs said that the content did not always match their developmental needs. One ECT also had difficulties in accessing materials due to the lack of adjustments made for their dyslexia.
- One common view was that ECTs valued the opportunity to speak to other ECTs on the programme but were rarely given the chance to do so.
- In the main, ECTs mentioned that they were dissatisfied with the online platforms

being used. Some found them confusing to navigate. Others highlighted that the content was repetitive and not as detailed, useful or enriching as they had expected. However, as previously mentioned, this may show that some ECTs do not understand how revisiting prior knowledge can help them to build on new concepts.

Staff undertaking NPQs thought that the new courses benefited their knowledge, practice and confidence

Staff who were doing NPQs were also typically positive about the effectiveness of the training they had received. Figure 12 shows that around two thirds of staff who responded to the YouGov survey, and were doing an NPQ, said that the qualification they were studying was developing their knowledge, practice and confidence to lead.

Figure 12: Responses to the question, 'When thinking specifically about your NPQ professional development so far, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?' (in percentages)

Base: All teachers currently doing an NPQ or leadership training qualification (n=318).

Figures are rounded and may not add to 100.

Source: YouGov.

View the data in an accessible format.

Furthermore, these respondents also pointed to some clear strengths in the courses that they were studying. Figure 13 shows that around 7 in 10 were confident that the lead providers had relevant expertise and strong subject knowledge. Three fifths were also confident that the training they received was high quality.

Figure 13: Responses to the question, 'When thinking specifically about your NPQ professional development so far, how confident are you with the following statements?'

The staff spoken to during the visits often said that the strength of their course related to the relevance of the content. For instance, a few leaders commented that the executive leadership NPQ had been valuable in improving their pastoral and subject-specific knowledge, as it was contextually relevant to their individual needs and those of their school. Most explained that the content of their NPQ was having a beneficial impact:

'The NPQ programme has broadened and challenged my understanding of current leadership thinking and its impact.' **(Secondary teacher)**

'The research and theory behind strategies and actions really helps you make informed decisions.' **(Primary headteacher)**

'It has refreshed a lot of things for me. I was jaded and it has unjaded me.' **(Secondary teacher)**

Many of the staff doing NPQs also highly valued the peer collaboration that their course was offering. It was providing them with networking opportunities that enhanced the quality of discussions between teachers and leaders on the course, as well as building useful professional relationships for the future. As one primary headteacher said, 'I have a network to share ideas. There is a wealth of experience and others [helpfully] signpost.'

It is worth noting, however, that the YouGov responses also highlight that a minority of staff doing NPQs were not as impressed by the training they had received. The views of some participants from the school visits revealed that, for them, the course

content was occasionally repetitive or lacked relevance. For a few participants, there were also concerns about the limited amount of communication they had from the lead provider of their course. However, it is worth noting that, at the time of the visits, these courses were still relatively new and being embedded. We will investigate this further in our Year 2 report.

Teachers and leaders also mentioned that there were some school factors that hindered their progress on their NPQ. Workload and timetabling constraints were frequently mentioned as a burden. They were rarely given the time to practise, embed and implement learning, which aligns with the views, already mentioned, of teachers receiving other forms of professional development. Some staff said that this meant they were doing NPQ activities in their own time and several made it clear that this was an unreasonable ask. One headteacher said, 'The NPQ course was full on and I'm not sure it was worth doing due to the amount of time involved without the commensurate impact.'

Inspections of ECF and NPQ lead providers suggest that the reforms are being implemented successfully

The DfE has contracted 11 lead providers to provide ECF training and NPQ professional development. These organisations coordinate this work through national delivery partners such as teaching school hubs, universities and multi-academy trusts. During the summer term 2022, we carried out monitoring visits to 10 of these lead providers. At this time, 5 were offering ECF and NPQ programmes, 4 focused solely on NPQs and 1 provided ECF training only. Our monitoring visits found that 9 of the 10 were taking effective action towards ensuring that ECF and/or NPQ training was of a high standard.

The monitoring visits found that effective communication between the lead partners, delivery partners and schools is essential. Most delivery partners reported that communication with their lead provider was helping them to feel supported. Where open communication was most effective, lead partners were working closely with stakeholders to ensure that any emerging issues could be resolved quickly. This was particularly the case when dealing with operational issues, such as making sure learning platforms and portals were running smoothly and remained easily accessible for participants on the ECF and NPQ programmes. This helped to maintain the quality of the training on offer and in some cases was leading to additional enhancements in provision.

There were a few instances, however, where communication between lead providers and delivery partners could have been better. For instance, delivery partners were not always fully informed about the lead provider's responsibilities or how they would be supported to deliver ECF and NPQ programmes effectively.

The close working relationships between lead providers and delivery partners meant that together they could coordinate and teach a high-quality curriculum. In general, the lead providers were implementing the ECF and NPQ programmes effectively. Most had developed a strong curriculum offer that was research based, took account of teachers' prior knowledge and was adapted to the needs and experiences of participants.

This was particularly the case for teachers doing an NPQ. They often mentioned that their courses were being tailored to their specific learning contexts. As a consequence, they thought that the programme was helping to develop their leadership ability. Some of the lead providers had also developed good-quality resources to show teachers how to apply learning in the relevant subjects and school phases. This was helping delivery partners to teach the ECF and NPQ programmes effectively and consistently.

Many of the lead providers had set up strong quality assurance and governance systems to ensure the programmes were being delivered as intended. Again, the open communication and collaboration between partners was an essential component, as this created clear lines of accountability and made sure that quality assurance processes were manageable and effective. Typically, lead providers were able to check the quality of the training being provided through visits to delivery partners. Also, they frequently shared information on quality and outcomes with their governing boards.

Several lead providers had also set up user feedback groups, and used surveys to help improve provision and shape the programme for the future. For instance, one provider drew on user feedback to make appropriate adaptations for ECTs who joined training at times other than the start of the academic year.

The views of ECF and NPQ participants who inspectors spoke to during the visits also revealed some commonalities with the evidence collected from the research visits and the YouGov survey. The majority said they were happy with the quality of their training, and believed it was helping them to improve in their roles. However, where issues were identified, these typically related to the additional workload the programmes had created.

On the ECF programmes in particular, inspectors noted that communication with some delivery partners was not always as effective as it could be. This limited the support that delivery partners were able to offer mentors, and the availability and quality of mentoring.

Where lead providers were judged not to have taken effective action, inspectors identified the following problems:

Systems for managing the day-to-day delivery of the programmes had been established, but had significant weaknesses, such as delayed responses to stakeholders' concerns and system issues that limited access to up-to-date information.

Different teams and individuals carried out self-evaluation activities, but findings were not pulled together in a coherent way to inform planning for improvement.

Leaders did not have an accurate overview of the quality of the professional development and training provided by their delivery partners.

What is the impact of professional development?

The teachers' professional development standards indicate that professional development should focus on improving pupils' learning of the curriculum. However, it is difficult to single out how any one form of teacher development activity may make pupil outcomes better. As this report has already noted, teachers and leaders receive many types of development opportunities, which are provided through different mediums, taught by different trainers and generally have variable content. Furthermore, schools tend to have many other initiatives and interventions underway at the same time, which can make it difficult to clearly identify the attribution of each teacher's personal development programme.

During the visits, some leaders had strong views about the benefits of professional development. They could 'see the effects' of teacher development and training

because it 'plays out in staff's roles every day'. Likewise, teachers also reflected on where their training may have influenced their practice:

> 'Students are now scoring much higher thanks to the newly learned techniques. The modelling strategy has been particularly successful in helping raise standards in science.' **(Secondary teacher)**

> '[Pupils'] handwriting has got better after staff had all received training on this.' **(Primary teacher)**

> 'Training in identifying and tackling racism led to an increase in incidents being logged and reported.' **(Primary school leader)**

There was a common view across the schools that effective training improved teachers' confidence and well-being:

> 'There is more of a coaching atmosphere [after COVID-19] and that has made me feel much more confident when my lessons are visited.' **(Primary teacher)**

There were also some suggestions that staff motivation and morale had increased, particularly where more face-to-face development opportunities were becoming available following the pandemic.

However, most schools were not collecting any additional information to determine the efficacy of professional development. Many recorded the type of formal training that staff had received, but details were rarely collected on whether the aims of the training had been met, whether it would be suitable for other teachers to attend, and teachers' views on the quality. Several schools were using their existing summative assessments to monitor pupils' progress. Even so, it was difficult to see how these could be used to draw a direct line between training and development and pupils' attainment, given other factors that could be influencing outcomes.

Leaders from a few of the schools were able to provide a clearer picture of whether their teacher development was working, though. They regularly used different mechanisms to discover the likely impact of training and development activities. These included teacher evaluations, pupil questionnaires, gathering feedback after staff meetings and INSET days, informal learning walks, lesson observations and incremental coaching.

Furthermore, a minority of leaders could also clearly explain their strategies for professional development. In these cases, training appeared to be well planned, relevant to the schools' needs, linked to teachers' performance management and embedded as part of a continuous cycle of development.

For instance, in one primary school, leaders had noted that teachers were lacking in confidence when teaching computing, largely because they had weak subject knowledge. In response to this, leaders carried out research, and then invested in a new computing scheme. The scheme came with the support of a computing expert,

who audited the current situation in the school and worked with the computing lead to update the curriculum and implement whole-school training. Over a series of training sessions, they showed other teachers in the school how to plan lessons from the curriculum, teach subject-specific content and assess pupils' understanding. Staff mentioned that this had raised their confidence and improved their subject skills enormously. Therefore, the quality of teaching in computing was now considered by school leaders to be 'so much better than it was before'.

However, it is worth noting that, despite the positive outlook on teachers' confidence that emerged from the school visits, the YouGov survey shows that only just over half of the respondents thought that their confidence had been built up (figure 14). It is likely that this less positive picture is due to the effect of the pandemic on recent professional development experiences, such as the use of online training, as described previously.

Figure 14: Responses to the question, 'Think about the professional development you have received since April 2021. To what extent, if at all, do you think it has been effective in the following?' (in percentages)

Base: All teachers (n=1,953).

Figures are rounded and may not add to 100.

Source: YouGov.

View the data in an accessible format

Annex A: further details of methods

This research follows a mixed-method sequential explanatory design, in which the quantitative YouGov survey is followed by qualitative interviews and focus group discussions carried out during research visits. The rationale for using this approach was that the quantitative method provides a general picture of the uptake of current professional development activities, while the subsequent qualitative methods enable us to refine and explore more deeply the substance of professional development. [footnote 42] This allows us to gain both breadth and depth in answering the research questions and triangulate findings from the 2 types of data.

Research questions

We worked with the DfE to determine the areas of interest for our study. This covers the following research questions that can be found in the published terms of reference:

What teachers and leaders are receiving

- Who is receiving training and professional development, what is their experience in teaching and what are their responsibilities?
- What is the content of the training and development that teachers and leaders are receiving? Does it meet the aims of the recent reforms?
- Who is involved in training or mentoring teachers, what is their experience in teaching and what are they responsible for?
- How does this vary across different schools and training routes?

Management of professional development

- Do senior leaders value and prioritise the development of teachers?
- Are school leaders effectively managing and supporting teachers to develop in their schools?
- How well do school leaders work with providers/partners to ensure that professional development is delivered effectively?
- How does this vary across different schools and training routes?

Awareness of professional development

- Are teachers and leaders aware of their entitlement to professional development?
- How knowledgeable are teachers and leaders about the concepts in the government's new reforms?
- How does this vary across different schools and training routes?

Quality of professional development

- Is professional development of high quality?
- Is the quality of professional development improving? Are the recent reforms a factor in any noted improvements?
- What are the barriers that prevent planned professional development from being delivered effectively?
- What are the main features of effective models?
- How does this vary across different schools and training routes?

Impact of professional development

- Have improvements in professional development led to improvements in teaching and leadership in schools?
- Are more teachers and leaders becoming involved in high-quality professional development?
- Have improvements in professional development had an impact on pupils catching up with their education that was affected by the pandemic?

Several of these research questions will be answered in greater detail in our Year 2 report.

YouGov survey

The main aim of the online YouGov survey was to capture teachers' and leaders'

views of the professional development training they had recently received. A secondary aim was to generate a baseline for a follow-up survey in year 2, to see how these views change over time.

YouGov managed the recruitment of participants, using its teacher volunteer respondent panel. The DfE's school workforce survey for full-time teachers was used as the sample frame. ECTs and school leaders (for NPQ take-up) were oversampled for the purpose of the analysis. Despite this intention, the number of ECTs included in the survey (n=68) remained low due to the numbers that were signed up to the respondent panel. Therefore, comparisons between ECTs and other groups are indicative and should not be generalised for the whole ECT population. In total, 318 teachers in the survey responded that they were currently undertaking an NPQ. The figures were weighted to be representative of all teachers in England by school type, teaching level, region, gender and age.

The purpose of the questionnaire and its role in this review were explained to respondents, and Ofsted was named as the commissioner. YouGov piloted the questions with participants before the full survey went live, to ensure that the language was clear and that responses were providing relevant information. The questions gathered data on the following areas:

- respondents' characteristics
- professional development opportunities, including frequency, form and content
- views on the effectiveness of professional development experiences
- attitudes towards professional development
- views on perceived barriers to professional development
- awareness of professional development reforms
- experiences of current ECF-based training
- experiences of current NPQ training

YouGov analysed the data and provided us with a summary report of the findings.

Research visits

During the spring term 2022, it proved challenging to recruit schools to participate in this review. This was often related to COVID-19. Headteachers said that they could not commit to the research because of the additional workload and burden on staff, although many were interested in doing so later in the year once the situation had improved. This has some implications for selection bias. For instance, we may have recruited more schools that were particularly keen on being involved in the study.

We selected schools to provide a balanced yet varied sample, based on the following criteria:

- ECT route (sourced from the DfE)
- latest Ofsted overall effectiveness judgement (excluding schools that were judged as inadequate)
- level of deprivation in the school's local authority (using the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index)[footnote 43]
- primary and secondary phases

A typical teacher visit involved the following activities:

- meeting with senior leadership team (lasting 15 to 30 minutes)
- interviews with senior leadership team, and leaders with teacher development responsibilities (about 60 minutes)
- focus groups with teachers (about 60 minutes)

- focus group with ECTs (about 40 minutes)
- interview with mentors and induction leads (about 40 minutes)

A 2-day visit allowed us to carry out more focus groups with teaching staff. It was not possible to follow a fixed schedule across all schools, so we ensured the visit timetable was flexible to minimise the additional burden on school staff.

Alongside collecting the primary data, we also asked inspectors to summarise the data after the visit to aid analysis. We used a deductive thematic approach to coding the data. The coding framework was developed using the available research literature, including Ofsted's overview of research for the EIF,[footnote 44] and concepts found in the key research questions in the terms of reference.[footnote 45] We also identified new themes as they emerged from the data.

Caution is required when generalising the findings from the research visits. The sample design, while balanced to ensure that we could visit a range of settings, does not include any schools judged as inadequate at their last inspection, to manage the burden of inspection on these schools. Therefore, the sample construction is not fully representative.

Annex B: data tables for figures

Data for figure 1: Responses to the question 'Which, if any, of the following are your main reasons for taking up professional development opportunities?' (% of respondents)

Main reasons for professional development	% Senior leaders	% Classroom teachers
Improving my teaching	71	70
Enriching my thinking in an area of professional interest	60	48
Supporting whole-school improvement plans	74	43
Motivating and challenging myself	58	41
Taking ownership of my professional journey	56	38
Meeting performance management targets	36	39
Feeling invested in and committed to my career	44	32
Gaining a qualification	31	23
Gaining promotion	29	19
Building a sense of community with other practitioners	25	15
Other	4	3

See Figure 1

Data for figure 2: Responses to question 'To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are current barriers to your participation and engagement in professional development?' (% that agreed)

	% of respondents that agreed
Workload pressures	87
Availability of staff to cover my lessons	73
Cost to school	68
Timetable conflicts	67
COVID restrictions	59
Lack of choice/range in professional development offer	52
Lack of incentive to participate	41
Lack of support from employers/leaders	38
Lack of course/programme prerequisites	31
Travel requirements	30
Lack of support from mentor/coach	26

See Figure 2

Data for figure 3: Responses to the question 'To what extent, if at all, do you think your professional development is currently prioritised by your school leaders?' (in percentages)

	All classroom teachers
Highly prioritised	9
Quite well prioritised	43
Not prioritised much	29
Not prioritised at all	14
Don't know	5

See Figure 3

Data for figure 4: Responses to the question 'Which, if any, of the following are the 3 most common ways that you receive your professional development?' (% of respondents)

Professional development training	% of respondents
INSET days	70
Staff meetings	62

One-off training sessions	36
Self-study	21
Teacher/leader network participation	19
Through a series of linked sessions	18
Conferences or seminars	11
Qualification programme	7
Research activity	5
Other	2
Don't know	3

See

Data for figure 5: Responses to the question 'Who typically delivers your professional development?' (% of respondents)

Professional development provider	% of respondents
Your school leaders	59
School colleagues	46
External trainer (professional body)	30
External trainer (private)	20
Your multi-academy trust	19
Local authority	14
Staff from other schools	10
Teaching school	5
Other multi-academy trust	3
University	2
Other	3
Don't know	4

See

Data for figure 6: Responses to the question 'Please think about the professional development you have received through school since April 2021… Which of the following content areas did it cover?'

Professional development areas covered since April 2021	% of respondents
Knowledge of the curriculum	36
Teaching students with SEND	33

Theories of learning	31
Student behaviour and classroom management	27
Knowledge of your subject field	24
Pedagogical competency – generic	24
Teaching remotely	23
Student assessment practices	19
Analysis and use of student assessments	18
Pedagogy in teaching your subject field	17
Approaches to individualised learning	15
School leadership	14
Teaching cross-curricular skills	13
ICT skills for teaching	12
School management and administration	10
Multicultural or multilingual teaching	6
Teacher–parent/carer cooperation	4

See

Data for figure 7: Responses to the question 'What content areas do you feel you need more professional development in?'

Areas would like to see covered	% of respondents
Pedagogical competency – generic	6
School management and administration	8
Knowledge of the curriculum	11
Student assessment practices	11
Theories of learning	12
Knowledge of your subject field	12
Analysis and use of student assessments	12
Pedagogy in teaching your subject field	12
Multicultural or multilingual teaching	12
Teacher–parent/carer cooperation	12
Teaching remotely	14
Teaching cross-curricular skills	14
Student behaviour and classroom management	16

ICT skills for teaching	18
School leadership	19
Approaches to individualised learning	21
Teaching students with SEND	30

See

Data for figure 8: Responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree or disagree that you have frequently received the following since April 2021?'

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Relevant development opportunities	12	32	19	19	15	3
High-quality development opportunities	11	32	19	19	16	3
Sufficient development opportunities	12	30	19	19	17	3

See

Data for figure 9: Responses to the question 'Think about the professional development you have received through school since April 2021. How often did it do any of the following?'

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Not applica
Focus on one well-defined area of teaching practice per professional development session	7	29	36	11	8	4	5
Incorporate opportunities for teachers to share advice among colleagues about using a specific teaching technique	7	27	37	15	7	3	4

Involve setting goals to focus on specific aspects of your teaching practice	5	21	36	17	13	3	5
Provide evidence supporting the teaching practices that were the focus of the professional development	4	21	36	16	12	6	5
Involve explicit instruction about how to use a certain teaching technique in the classroom	4	22	38	17	12	3	5
Involve observation and feedback on your classroom practice by somebody else	4	16	31	20	20	2	6
Involve somebody else modelling the use of a specific teaching technique	4	17	36	20	16	2	5
Require you to use what you had learned in one of your own lessons before the next professional development session	4	20	34	18	15	3	6
Involve	3	18	36	18	15	5	6

revisiting closely related content across multiple sessions							
Bring evidence of how your practice has changed to the next professional development session	3	17	32	20	18	4	5
Incorporate opportunities to rehearse the use of a given teaching technique during the professional development session	2	14	31	23	21	4	5
Include time for you to incorporate what you had learned in your lesson planning for specific lessons	2	17	32	21	20	3	6

See Figure 9

Data for figure 10: Responses to the question 'How aware, if at all, are you of the following?'

	Senior leaders (very aware or quite aware)	Classroom teachers (very aware of quite aware)
The responsibility of school leaders for ensuring you can receive professional development	90	66
Your entitlement to professional development	86	71
The new early career framework	78	43

The concepts held within the early career framework	67	36
The reforms to the existing suite of national professional qualifications in leadership	64	26
The government's reform of teacher development	54	28
The new national professional qualifications for classroom teachers	52	23
The new package of targeted support for those new to headship	37	15

See

Data for figure 11: Responses to the question 'Think about the professional development you have received since April 2021. To what extent, if at all, do you think it has been effective in…?'

	All teachers (very effective or somewhat effective)	ECTs (very effective or somewhat effective)
Developing new practices	57	65
Developing new pedagogical knowledge and understanding	56	60
Developing my professional habits and behaviours	56	70
Building professional confidence	52	69
Developing new subject-specific knowledge and understanding	51	60

See

Data for figure 12: Responses to the question, 'When thinking specifically about your NPQ professional development so far, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?' (in percentages)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
It is supporting me to develop my knowledge	28	39	16	7	3	7
It is supporting me	29	37	16	7	4	7

to build confidence for leadership					
It is supporting me to develop my practice	26	39	15	8	5	7
It is supporting me to develop my working habits	20	39	18	11	5	7

See figure 12

Data for figure 13: Responses to the question, 'When thinking specifically about your NPQ professional development so far, how confident are you with the following statements?'

	Very confident	Quite confident	Not very confident	Not confident at all	Don't know
Training is motivating	21	37	20	11	11
Training is high quality	21	41	21	6	11
The curriculum offered is structured to suit my experience	17	46	19	7	11
Providers have expertise and strong subject knowledge	24	47	16	3	10
Providers are encouraging and supportive	28	44	13	5	10

See Figure 13

Data for figure 14: Responses to the question, 'Think about the professional development you have received since April 2021. To what extent, if at all, do you think it has been effective in the following?'

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not effective at all	Don't know
Developing new practices	10	47	24	12	7
Developing new pedagogical knowledge and understanding	10	46	24	13	7
Developing my professional habits and behaviours	9	46	26	12	7

Building professional confidence	11	42	26	15	7
Developing new subject-specific knowledge and understanding	11	41	23	19	7

See [Figure 14](#)

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Topics

Government activity