

PPD impact evaluation report

Academic year 2007/08



developing people, improving young lives

Introduction

- 1 In 2004, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) set up a triennial funding programme to support the postgraduate professional development (PPD) of teachers in England. Initially, 58 provider partnerships received funding in response to their applications. The TDA invited further applications for funding in two interim rounds in 2005 and 2006. By the third year of the programme, running in the academic year 2007/08, there were 71 PPD providers. More than three-quarters of the partnerships were based on universities or other higher education institutions (HEIs), and the remainder on professional associations, local authorities (LAs) and schools.
- 2 One of the funding conditions requires that each year providers should “Show how provision delivers postgraduate professional development which meets priority areas identified by the TDA.” Accordingly, in the summer of 2008, TDA officers posted a template¹ on the TDA website, asking PPD providers to prepare concise summary notes about the impact of their provision on practice in schools. Providers were also required to submit statistical returns on recruitment and, where possible, to include information on the profile of the PPD cohort. Providers were asked to submit their responses by 31 October 2008. However, the proximity to the start of the new academic year made this difficult for several providers who were granted extensions. All 71 responses were received by mid-December.
- 3 This report focuses principally on the significant features concerned with impact that have emerged from a detailed study and analysis of the providers’ responses. The main purposes of the report are to summarise the key findings for the benefit of the TDA and providers, and to give examples of interesting and helpful practice on which masters level (M-level) provision can be built in future. As the third annual report, it follows a similar format to the previous PPD impact evaluation reports, developing the themes, topics and issues that emerged in the earlier reports which remain relevant but also focusing on emerging practice and issues.

Executive summary

- 4 During the academic year 2007/08, the third year of TDA funding for PPD, there were more than 25,000 teacher registrations on M-level courses run by 71 university and other providers. This was an 11 per cent increase in registrations compared with the previous year. The responses to the TDA impact evaluation template were often supported by direct comments from participants, stakeholders and others that added depth of meaning to the commentary. For the majority of PPD providers, impact evaluation has taken ‘centre stage’ and many now judge the ultimate success of their programmes in terms of the benefits for children and young people, in accordance with the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda. Respondents explained and illustrated how PPD studies had developed teachers’ confidence, professional knowledge, understanding and skills. Although many of these were recurring themes from previous years, the consequences of PPD study were more often interpreted in terms of the impact on pupils. Providers understandably remained cautious about ascribing improvements in pupils’ attainment and achievement to the effects of PPD, when such improvements can seldom be observed immediately and other factors may intervene.

¹ See annex A.
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Nevertheless, with more longitudinal and follow-up impact studies, there is growing confidence and evidence that teachers' M-level study often makes a significant difference both to pupils' learning experiences and their results. Many providers now ensure that impact is considered at the outset of each PPD study programme. Participants are generally expected to report on the impact in their assignments and research studies. There was a continuing trend towards more bespoke school-based PPD in 2007/08, often linked closely with school improvement priorities. This trend follows increased demand from schools and evidence of its many beneficial outcomes, both in individual classrooms and across schools. However, there were a few concerns that entirely school-based PPD study might deprive participants of valuable debates with teachers from other schools and backgrounds.

Provision for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) improved significantly in 2007/08, with HEIs seeking to offer seamless progression and development from M-level study in initial teacher training (ITT) into induction year PPD. While some schools were concerned that new teachers should not be overburdened in their first year, there was growing evidence that this early PPD study could be helpful in meeting the induction standards. Providers often welcomed the introduction of a new Masters in teaching and learning (MTL) qualification for new teachers indicating the intention to build on successful PPD experience. At the same time, many were concerned that more experienced teachers should not lose the opportunity of access to the rich variety of M-level study available through the TDA-funded PPD programme, which has already shown significant impact on teachers, children and young people and more widely across schools.

Responses from PPD providers

- 5 The overall quality and usefulness of providers' responses was good, showing a further significant improvement on that noted last year. Many providers had taken great care in collecting, analysing and interpreting evidence of the impact of PPD on teachers, pupils and more widely in schools. They often drew on a variety of sources and many had amassed a wealth of useful information, which was summarised clearly in their responses to the questions in the TDA template. The best responses not only presented a well-constructed commentary but also included illustrative examples and, occasionally quantitative data. A significant number of participants have now completed full masters degrees through part-time PPD study and some of the original providers have begun to collect useful longitudinal evidence of the impact of their programmes. In contrast, one in eight PPD providers were new in 2007/08, so there had been little opportunity for their programmes to show significant impact. A minority of responses offered only very general comments or simply strings of quotes from internal evaluations that lacked an interpretive commentary.
- 6 Several providers have again included the gathering and collation of PPD impact evidence as part of the job description of a key member of staff or a designated researcher. A few have ongoing PPD impact research projects, sometimes supported through the TDA PPD collaborative funding. However, for some providers with few participants, PPD remains a 'marginal activity' with minimal institutional resources, and the responsibility of tutors with other duties in addition to teaching and evaluating the programme.

Recruitment to PPD programmes

- 7 Providers' statistical returns indicate that there were more than 25,000 registrations for 60-credit M-level PPD modules during the academic year 2007/08. This was an 11 per cent increase on registrations in the previous year, and 34 per cent above the first year of the programme. It is difficult to estimate how many individual teachers were involved in 2007/08 because although many take only one module per year, a few register for two or more. However, there was clearly an increase in the proportion of the total workforce that engaged in PPD study in 2007/08, from 1 in 16 to 1 in 15 full-time teachers. Overall, about 23 per cent of registrations were men, slightly below the proportion of male serving teachers. Providers were only able to give information about the length of service of less than half the participants. Even so, the available data indicated that the proportion (and absolute number) of NQTs registering for PPD had increased considerably from last year, as had the proportion of older teachers with more than 15 years' service. For the future, it would be helpful to have more complete information about the breakdown of the cohort in the different categories identified by the TDA.
- 8 Recruitment by individual providers varied considerably and was unrelated to the overall size of their provision. One quarter of providers recruited close to or above the number of allocated places, sometimes with large cohorts of hundreds or even thousands of participants. In contrast, about the same proportion achieved less than 25 per cent of their targets. It is difficult to account for such huge variations in recruitment: for example, some providers had the resources to advertise and promote their programmes, and others offered niche provision that was much in demand and/or have a longstanding reputation for postgraduate study that remained attractive to teachers. However, providers that nurtured active PPD partnerships with schools, LAs and professional bodies were most successful in registering and retaining PPD students.

Changing styles and impact of PPD provision

"The increased focus on impact, whether on teachers, pupils, schools, or the wider community has proved very beneficial for PPD. It has had a very clear implication for the programme, namely the deliberate but gradual reorientation of our programme towards increased school-based work has been correct. The overall impact has been to increase the awareness of course tutors and participants that professional development must have an identifiable impact on the pupils and schools if it is to be worthwhile, and this is increasingly reflected in both the design of course components and in teaching."

- 9 Providers' responses indicated a steady consolidation of the previous trends in PPD provision. While there remained a demand for taught courses offered mainly at HEIs – for example, in subject-specific provision and educational management – the trend towards more school-based provision has continued. Providers often noted that basing courses or research studies in schools improved access to teachers who were 'hard to reach' because of physical constraints of time and travel to a HEI or study centre, or because of anxiety about risking (and possibly failing) postgraduate study. On starting the PPD course, one teacher described herself as "panic stricken and sweaty palmed and very tearful" but finished it "inspired, boosted and with much improved subject knowledge."
- 10 Almost all PPD programmes now involve teachers in some form of personalised enquiry within their classrooms or schools. However, the consolidation of school-based PPD saw a growth in collaborative studies involving teachers researching different aspects of a common concern, for example, working together to improve subject specific provision. A

few providers required a commitment to collaborative working before 'signing a school up' for a PPD programme.

- 11 Providers also noted some of the attendant difficulties of sustaining bespoke school-based PPD. At the very least, tutors needed travelling time to deliver sessions. But in many cases, much time was also spent in identifying and negotiating a suitable theme for collaborative enquiry and in setting up the provision. Several providers reported spending months on these preparations as a necessary precursor to successful PPD. This had major implications for staffing and resources. However, the opportunity to link a school-based PPD programme to school improvement priorities, and sometimes the outcomes from an Ofsted inspection imbued it with a high level of relevance. As one provider wrote: "School-based modules have been an exciting opportunity to provide whole-school training in order to meet the identified needs of schools. Headteachers have been unanimous in their support for this work in that it has ensured appropriate and relevant professional development across the whole school staff."
- 12 There were several comments on the importance of a good internal tutor and PPD coordinator in facilitating progress. Some providers had formally established the post of associate tutor. These tutors were often instrumental in making this form of PPD available in the school by:
- establishing it as part of the broader professional and curriculum development programme of the school
 - encouraging participation
 - maintaining momentum

One university provider explained that, in the past, when professional development activities mainly comprised taught modules followed by assessed assignments, it was straightforward for university tutors to provide regular guidance, support and encouragement. With the increased emphasis on school-based PPD studies, it had become more difficult for university tutors to watch over participants in this way but associate tutors in the schools were now supporting this role admirably. Providers have also begun to use suitably qualified associate tutors, some of whom have excelled in their own M-level study, to provide academic and professional guidance to PPD participants.

- 13 Several providers noted that the process of negotiating and setting up a school-based PPD course or collaborative research enquiry rarely meshed easily with the conventional academic year. One university provider stated the clear "need to break away from traditional university frameworks to recognise that schools often wish to embark on modules at times which sit outside the usual semester framework." This appeared to affect not only registration and teaching cycles but also assessment procedures and examination boards. Some providers indicated that overcoming 'traditional university frameworks' for a relatively small programme could be difficult.
- 14 Notwithstanding the growth in school-based provision, PPD has still only touched a relatively small number of schools. There were accounts of schools with sustained and continuing commitment to school-based PPD programmes, in some cases indicating that new cohorts built on the work of their predecessors. Elsewhere, when the school objectives of a PPD programme had been achieved, there appeared to be no immediate plans for continuation. In achieving the agreed outcomes for the school, teachers did not always submit work for accreditation and in some cases, not enough wanted to embark on or continue with their studies. This clearly points to the continuing need for alternative forms of PPD provision to enable teachers to pursue M-level studies regardless of whether or not their school is committed to school-based PPD.

- 15 More providers had recognised the importance of planning for impact from the outset of a PPD programme. As well as linking provision to school improvement priorities, as outlined above, more references were made to initial needs identification shaping the objectives against which the impact of the provision could be judged. Many providers emphasised that reports of the impact on children and young people were normally a required part of assignments and dissertations. Indeed, several providers had introduced assessment criteria that precluded the award of a pass grade without considering impact. Sometimes, PPD provision was matched to teachers' individual performance management targets. Providers also reported linking PPD directly to the various thresholds of the professional standards for teachers.
- 16 Although there were occasional references to NQTs benefiting from PPD in the first year of the triennium, providers began making specific provision for NQTs in the academic year 2006/07. Recruitment has now expanded considerably, with more than half of providers reporting NQTs registered on their programmes. At least one quarter of providers did not recruit any NQTs, but this contrasted with several that recruited in excess of 500 NQTs each – in one case, more than half of the total cohort. Much of the new provision was focused on the induction phase for NQTs, many of whom already held M-level credits gained during their PGCE ITT.

Impact on teachers

“Purposeful professional development for teachers produces a range of outcomes including positive benefits for pupils. Reflective practitioners who are able to critically articulate their practice are more aware of it and better able to improve that practice.”

- 17 Providers explained that the impact of PPD on teacher participants often became evident quite quickly, whereas any effects on pupils, and particularly on their achievement and attainment, were generally more attenuated. Thus, even providers with new PPD programmes identified examples of impact on teacher participants though they had gathered little evidence so far of impact in other areas.
- 18 The majority of providers with long-running PPD programmes submitted full and detailed analyses of the beneficial outcomes for teachers, as reported by participants, tutors, teacher colleagues and stakeholders. Although much of this evidence reinforced previous findings, there was considerably more emphasis on the impact on participants' personal qualities, attributes and capabilities. One university provider noted: “Overall PPD study improved professionalism, confidence, attitude and knowledge.” A teacher wrote: “...from the very beginning of the programme until now I have gained a deeper understanding of myself as a person, leader, achiever and team member.” Providers frequently reported specific evidence showing that participants' increased self-confidence, raised self-esteem and greater capacity for reflection were having a very marked impact on their professional capability. Of these, the most striking were the many references to what teachers felt more able to do as a consequence of the increased confidence gained through their PPD studies. Typical examples included:
- “Teachers tell us that they are more prepared to speak out at school meetings, to use language with confidence with which to challenge previously accepted orthodoxies and policies and to take more risks in their teaching...”
 - “I have been less afraid to express my opinions as I have had the back up from reading to validate what I say”
 - “I am on the senior leadership team and I now speak out much more, I have the confidence that I have the evidence to back up what I am saying”
 - “It has broadened my thinking and given me greater confidence in my ability to innovate”

- “Teachers are now more willing to innovate and take risks and move away from conventional teaching”
- “My professional practice has been more innovative and has certainly enhanced my ability to teach modern foreign languages in the primary sector. I have a deeper and clearer vision of what is vital to motivate young children and develop their language acquisition...”
- “The teachers involved began to take pleasure in reflecting on their practice, sharing the impact on their lessons with others and not being afraid to take risks in the classroom”
- “Since starting the course, I have secured the post of inclusion officer... . After 27 years in the classroom I am now leaving that security behind and embarking on a new role... . This change has been made easier by the confidence and increased self-esteem I have gained from this course”

19 For many teachers, this newfound confidence seemed to be rooted in a deeper subject and professional knowledge. Teachers described how fresh subject content knowledge, and improved understanding of subject pedagogy and subject leadership, had enabled them to develop their own teaching and to take a lead in the department or school – sometimes reported by those early in their careers or without formal posts of responsibility. Others cited evidence of being more skilful in the use of higher level questioning skills, assessment for learning (AfL), identification of individual learning needs etc, which had improved their teaching and pupil response. However, this year’s reports suggest that a fresh understanding of educational and learning theory and context had equipped many participants with the capacity to reflect on and evaluate their practice. Comments from teachers showed that the capacity for effective reflection had a deep impact on their professional work and lives, for example: “ ...the real gains were much more personal in that the process allowed me to reflect upon my own role as an educator and reasserted the importance of reflection within the teaching profession.”

20 The combination of greater self-confidence and new knowledge seems to have re-energised some ‘who had run out of steam’. For others there was not only a feeling of being more confident but also an increased capacity to advise and influence others. Some participants noted that they had greater credibility with colleagues or that they were held in higher regard by fellow teachers, including senior leadership, and had inadvertently become advocates for M-level study. In contrast, there were occasional accounts of teachers reporting frustration that their new expertise was not recognised or was dismissed by their colleagues.

21 Many providers reported an increased emphasis on aspects of behaviour and classroom management both in the number of applications for taught modules and also in teachers’ small-scale research projects. Participants often explained that their new knowledge, skills and understanding of behaviour and classroom management had not only improved pupils’ learning experiences but also their own quality of life. However, there were also references to significant changes in teachers’ behaviours arising from PPD – for example, moving away from punitive approaches towards restorative justice systems and increased mentoring work. One teacher wrote: “Being in my fourth year of teaching I found myself starting to get perhaps a little casual about some classroom issues.... Studying for this PPD module has made me reconsider my lessons and my learners, and the way I plan for them... . It has helped me to consider new ways of improving behaviour within my classroom and also helped me to see the theoretical background behind some of the approaches I use.” Another confided: “Until I did the improving school behaviour module I thought behaviour management was only about pupils. But it is about teachers and our behaviour and how what we do impacts on learners. I developed new strategies to deal with negative behaviour. There was no longer as much disruption because of the way I now handled the situations.”

- 22 Another theme to emerge strongly from the responses was participants' greater awareness and recognition of the role of research in educational development and school improvement. Engaging in M-level study had moved many teachers away from pragmatism to basing key decisions on evidence. For example:
- "I now question new teaching ideas and check the research behind them rather than just accepting things at face value. I use research to support any new initiatives I want to follow, and I look into ways to improve my teaching practices."
 - "Instead of just having an idea, I now look for evidence before I sell it to others. I have a cycle of 'research it, try it, and tell others'. It has made me more confident about the changes I want to bring to the school..."
- 23 Again, this year, frequent references were made to PPD outcomes for teachers in the form of promotion or change of role. It is difficult here to link cause and effect as many factors influence a teacher's promotion prospects. Nevertheless, some providers recorded a large proportion of participants on some courses gaining promotion during or soon after completing their PPD studies, particularly where these involved specialist training (eg in special educational needs, educational management). Teachers also reported increased job mobility, or using material from their PPD studies as part of the evidence towards gaining advanced skills teacher (AST) status. In contrast, other participants said they were not interested in promotion or changing schools.
- 24 In their original applications for funding, a few providers hoped that PPD might also aid schools' recruitment and retention of teachers. Although only a few responses referred to this, there were indications that the availability of M-level study in schools has aided both recruitment and retention:
- "The existence of M-level provision in schools is sometimes used in advertising for teachers, particularly teachers in the early stages of their careers"
 - "Early indications suggest an improved retention rate among secondary mathematics teachers in schools encouraging M-level work in this form"
 - "Feedback suggests that some partners are now using PPD as part of a recruitment and retention strategy to attract new teachers into the LA"
 - "For the most part, teachers commit to the MA programme for three years, which keeps most teachers in their school where they continue to work with a mutually supportive MA cohort"
 - "I would have definitely left the profession had it not been for the xxx course"
 - "Staff retention has also been a factor – at least three stayed at school because of the M-level programme"

PPD and newly qualified teachers

"Overall, I believe that this module helped me to improve my teaching and progress faster through my NQT year than I would have been able to on my own, and therefore it actually helped to reduce my workload."

- 25 PPD providers recognised the importance of making suitable provision for NQTs and those very early in their careers. Several referred to a 'continuum from ITT to PPD'. Providers reported that the opportunity for such 'joined-up' study had increased the motivation of PGCE trainees to complete assignments to M-level standard and to continue quickly with PPD. To this end, some providers offered training to enable school-based mentors to support trainee teachers in doing so. Providers also noted the importance of consistency of approach and parity of standards between the PGCE and PPD and had begun moderating M-level assessments internally and externally across both programmes. Several encouraged NQTs to accredit their induction year through a portfolio route; others had developed special 30-credit modules (for example, critical evaluation of the NQT year,

personal and professional development in the NQT year) that could be added to 30 M-level credits from the PGCE to create a PG certificate. In some cases, this provision had been developed in partnership with the LA induction programme.

- 26 Although provision for NQTs is relatively new, several responses included significant examples of the impact of PPD on NQTs in helping them prepare for a career in teaching:
- “I have enhanced my knowledge of how to extend and challenge Y10 history students”
 - “It helped me to reach the NQT standards and encouraged continued reflective practice”
 - “...made me look at my teaching and think of alternative methods to use in the classroom which may be more effective”
 - “I have shared the results of my first enquiry with other NQTs, the CPD coordinator and members of the department. As a result, some individuals have developed their own personal practice in the light of the findings of the piece of research that I conducted”
- 27 While such new knowledge, understanding and insights give NQTs added confidence in carrying out their professional role, it can be difficult for them to judge the extent to which “putting their heads above the parapet” will be welcomed by their schools or perceived as enthusiasm that needs to be curbed. One provider also noted that some ‘successful’ schools were reluctant to support NQTs in continuing with M-level studies. These schools often claimed ‘good quality’ induction programmes that fully met NQTs’ needs. They were apparently concerned not to burden NQTs with extra work that might deflect them from the “real business of getting to grips with teaching.”
- 28 The opposite view was summarised by an NQT: “I completed a PGCE with M-level credits in 2007 and started work in a local primary school. I decided to continue my MEd during my first year of teaching, selecting modules that suited my work and interests. I have used action research as a tool which has empowered me as a teacher. I have enjoyed thinking reflectively about my teaching and this has helped me to focus on finding solutions for practical problems in order to survive the complexities of my first year. It has facilitated my integration into the profession by providing me with a better understanding of myself as a teacher, my students and my roles and responsibilities.”

Impact on children and young people

“There are links between PPD and pupil achievement and some of this can be attributed to teachers’ ability to critically reflect on their professional practice, and the confidence that emanates from increased subject knowledge, and enhanced pedagogical and class management skills.”

- 29 It is the core objective of the PPD programme to focus on the benefits for children and young people and, wherever possible, to contribute to improved attainment and achievement. It is clear that many providers judge the ultimate success of their provision in terms of the impact on children and young people. Indeed, the whole thrust of PPD provision indicates that providers have embraced the ECM agenda. Even so, providers continued to find it easier to demonstrate beneficial outcomes in relation to pupils’ experiences and working environment than their academic achievement. They remained cautious about the latter because of the complexities of linking improvements in pupils’ achievements directly with their teachers’ involvement in M-level study. Notwithstanding this caveat, providers, and particularly participants and stakeholders, were still keen to proffer specific examples and illustrations of the impact on children and young people. Perhaps because the PPD programme is now well established and longer periods of study

allow for more follow-through, providers seem more confident about the validity of the beneficial outcomes reported by participants and senior staff in schools. In citing examples of improvements in pupils' attainment and achievement, one provider suggested a consensus view that many of these would be difficult to account for other than as a consequence of the PPD. Another provider emphasised that "...effective well-planned PPD contributes to other improvement and development activities that can collectively improve pupils' experience, thereby producing higher levels of pupil achievement."

30 There were many examples of the consequences of changes in teachers' actions, including:

- improved teaching approaches and strategies
- taking pupils into new areas of learning
- better organisation in the classroom
- more effective assessment
- improved pupil/teacher relationships
- better identification of and support for special needs.

In other cases, the impact was indirect but no less significant: for example, through better leadership at department or school level resulting in an improved curriculum or more consistency of approach.

31 Pupils benefited from participants' new knowledge, skills and understanding. There were many examples of PPD helping "teachers to create learning contexts for pupils that were richer, more flexible and more adaptive to their needs and situations." There were frequent references to teachers understanding and deploying interventions more effectively, for example: "...a big impact on the way I now focus on what difference interventions make, looking at their impact on pupils' progress." Teachers' better understanding of how children learn improved the outcomes for pupils of all abilities including those with special needs and the gifted and talented: "The learning experience of gifted and talented pupils was enhanced through the development of thinking skills and enhancement rather than extension activities."

32 Several providers reported that as teachers gained in confidence through their studies, they often became more enthused in their teaching and they not only created a better and more productive learning environment but their enhanced confidence was also translated to pupils. For example: "...pupils spoke of feeling more confident in tackling new work, having better skills in working productively with their peers, and being more effective in formulating questions when seeking help from the teachers." Another provider reported: "...pupils are more confident in discussing their mathematics in front of the class, not afraid when they get it wrong, and willing to share their misunderstandings."

33 Some striking changes in the learning environment derived not only from participants' fresh approaches to teaching but also from more informed and skilful classroom and behaviour management techniques (see paragraph 21 above). The following were directly attributed to PPD:

- "Improved attitudes of pupils due to better behaviour management"
- "...helped me improve my classroom management and therefore helped me build better relationships with my pupils. This has led to increased engagement and improved behaviour"
- "...pupils are more motivated, better behaved and achieve higher"
- "Improved behaviour of pupils through greater awareness of their difficulties"
- "Improved pupil attendance, behaviour and engagement"
- "A 'before and after' study showing a change in attitude, a much calmer learning environment and a willingness to write and engage"

- 34 There were also many examples of productive PPD projects and studies that associated pupils' improved engagement in their work and consequent higher attainment with increased motivation, enjoyment, raised self-esteem and sense of well-being, improved behaviour etc. These outcomes were often linked to teachers' improved ability to create learning situations that allowed pupils to be effective independent learners, to have more autonomy, and to judge their own progress through AfL. For example:
- "Research into AfL has improved pupil achievement. The focus group achieved higher levels than they did before the intervention. Contributing factors included the reduction in low level disruption and the improvement in motivation and engagement"
 - "Greater pupil autonomy as a result of setting their own targets"
 - "Developing pupils' questioning techniques led to pupils demonstrating greater autonomy and the ability to question and challenge information"
 - "The students said they had learned about how to develop an argument, they had clearly benefited from engaging in this public debate and had developed their critical thinking skills"
 - "...pupils seem to be more motivated because they think they have more control of their work ... there is a better, calmer atmosphere with greater personalised learning ... pupils are taking more responsibility for their learning"
- 35 Providers' responses suggested a growing awareness of pupil voice. Participants referred to recognising the importance of using pupil voice to determine their classroom needs: one provider explained that many teachers found "...pupils' views often not to be what they expected, leading to a reassessment of widely held assumptions on a number of issues. Had it not been for their focused PPD enquiry, these views would have remained unknown and possible ways of making improvements undiscovered."
- 36 There was also a rise in providers and individual participants reporting beneficial effects from involving pupils overtly in the teacher's PPD research and sharing progress with them. Increasingly, providers have recognised the importance of high ethical standards in respect of the differences between teachers' normal professional responsibilities and their obligations and responsibilities to pupils and their parents/guardians when undertaking classroom-based research. Transparency of the processes of classroom-based research seemed generally to have benefited relationships between teacher-researchers and their pupils, who often displayed respect for what the teachers were seeking to achieve.
- 37 Sometimes the school-based research involved seeking the views of pupils about new or innovative approaches and practices, for example: "The success of the project was judged by the students and the response was extremely positive." However, an increasing number of teachers seemed to have involved pupils more actively in the research, sometimes as co-researchers. One participant wrote confidently that undertaking research with the pupils was "...giving them more skills for life." Another commented: "...the children showed great enthusiasm during the project and have subsequently asked about the next project." A third reported: "...my pupils have benefited immensely...and have enjoyed the opportunity to undertake a range of enquiry-based activities." Elsewhere, a head of department engaged her pupils in a collaborative enquiry to investigate their perceptions of, and engagement with, various AfL techniques. Their evaluative comments about the experience led the teacher to recognise that in order for pupils to realise the true benefit of AfL to their learning they required a more focused explanation of different assessment methods and training in the higher-order skills of peer assessment.
- 38 Providers made important references to the benefits of children and young people seeing their teachers as learners. Teachers found that sharing their experiences of studying on an

award-bearing programme led to discussions of 'ourselves as learners' and 'what lifelong learning actually means'. These comments capture other perspectives:

- "Many of my A-level students have been interested in the fact that I am studying – and I feel that this has resulted in a more collegiate atmosphere between us...the students were keen to be part of a series of 'experimental' lessons. It is also good for students to be let into the teaching secret – this does improve their motivation"
- "Teachers on this PPD provision are modelling to their children a love of lifelong learning...this impacts on the children who notice and appreciate changes and, importantly, that their views are often canvassed by their teachers as part of their research. This sends positive messages that their views matter and that the school values them and what they have to say...they all share the responsibility for improving what goes on in their classroom"

But several teachers also reflected on the reverse circumstances:

- "PPD study has made me think about the students and what affects their lives...being in the role of learner has made me more understanding of their situation..." and "...why children sometimes find it difficult to concentrate"

39 Although providers remain reluctant to make unsubstantiated claims about improvements in children's attainment arising from teachers' involvement in PPD, several cited anecdotal evidence from participants and schools, including:

- Placing maths in real learning contexts led to reports of "tangible improvements to pupils' progress in maths across the key stages"
- "As a direct outcome of the AfL interventions I made in one class as part of my study, the pupils exceeded their targets. There were real gains in pupils' punctuation and sentence structure and they could see real progress"
- "...she was able to report significant increases in achievement in the key stage 2 SATs, including some previously predicted under-achieving pupils, particularly boys"
- "Key stage 2 SATs results at the end of the year showed that pupils with English as an additional language had made good progress and achieved expected levels or above"
- "[Since PPD] SATs results in science have improved year on year from 79 per cent (level 5+) and 55 per cent (level 6+) in 2007 to 80 per cent (level 5+) and 69 per cent (level 6+) in 2008. The gender gap has also been closed. Students feel they have gained a wider range of skills..."
- "There was a dramatic increase in marks from D to C grade after completing the scheme of work written as part of my enquiry"
- "Coursework grades showed six students with one grade higher, three with two grades higher and three with more than two grades higher"
- "There was an identifiable impact on the target groups' performance. My intervention was trialled on two groups: one from key stage 3 where all but one pupil exceeded target; and one from key stage 4 where they have progressed from one grade C to 14 grade Cs on the written exam"
- "...the group of students involved in this study did amazingly well in their GCSE. They got almost 40 per cent A*-A and 80 per cent A*-C, and were collectively quite shocked at this..."

40 This year's responses reveal growing confidence among providers in reporting the different ways in which children and young people benefit directly and indirectly from their teachers' involvement in M-level study.

Wider impact within and beyond the school

“In-service PG certificate professional development projects are identified through negotiation with headteachers, heads of department, year leaders etc with focused and direct impact on school organisation, staff development and school improvement planning needs...Professional development projects are reported directly to line managers and the senior management team. This means that findings from evaluative projects from pupil learning to structural and organisational practices all lead to direct and reported recommendations in the teacher’s school.”

- 41 While it has always been common for PPD participants to disseminate and share their findings at staff meetings, there is growing evidence of wider and more extensive impact within and beyond the school. In previous years this was a particular feature of educational management courses and provision that addressed areas of common concern, such as special educational needs and inclusion. However, the twin factors of longer-running PPD courses and of increased school-based research – particularly collaborative enquiries involving several teachers within a single school or across several schools – have resulted in wider significant impact.
- 42 The research and enquiry processes often had an effect on others. Providers wrote about the wider school being involved in the research processes, sometimes through other teachers contributing evidence from their classrooms and teaching assistants undertaking limited specific studies or interventions involving individual pupils. There were reports of increased interaction and discussion with staff, more constructive dialogue with colleagues and improved working relationships with teaching assistants. Sharing findings appeared often to have moved beyond the token slot at a meeting. There were several accounts of former and current PPD participants providing in-service training for colleagues in the same and other schools; sometimes, teachers reported their PPD findings at governing body meetings.
- 43 It was apparent that other teachers were influenced by the successful new practices of PPD participants. There were reports of ‘flagship’ classrooms, modelling good practice and participants providing demonstration lessons in their own and other schools, and one participant wrote that a colleague “...had opened their eyes to issues in their classrooms that they had not even noticed were there before.” There were also examples of rigorous PPD enquiries that had influenced policy at various levels, by:
- driving forward a departmental development plan
 - “dramatically changing” the approach in a kindergarten
 - influencing one school’s policy on single sex teaching.

Sometimes it was the work of less senior teachers that had begun to bring about changes in policy and practice, for example:

- “My analysis of NQT support has been used by leadership within the school to further develop the programme and they now plan to offer a programme of CPD for teachers in their second and third year of teaching”
 - “The quality and force of the MA research was such as to enable the headteacher confidently to implement change to the way pupils selected their options”
- 44 There was evidence that M-level study was increasingly linked to school improvement priorities and objectives. Not only did participants’ PPD work contribute to realising these objectives but incidentally resulted in them:
- gaining a greater understanding of the difficulties facing schools

- developing a sharper political awareness
- understanding the organisation and the macro-environment in which it operates
- being more reflective on whole-school issues and the problems and obstacles that need to be overcome.

- 45 Teacher's individual research studies often impinged on colleagues, but when several teachers in a department or across a school or schools, undertook a collaborative enquiry with a common theme, the impact was often felt more widely and immediately. A strong multiplier effect and synergy derived from a group of interrelated enquiry projects undertaken by different teachers, which sometimes provoked more productive informal professional discussions in staff rooms. Providers often reported that M-level study had resulted in the formation of robust learning communities and learning sets, sometimes 'kick-starting' a process of change across the school. Collaborative PPD enquiries also brought to light existing good practice that could be shared across departments benefiting pupils through greater consistency of practice.
- 46 In general, there was increased peer support and empathy for those undertaking M-level study. Participants also reported that many schools gave greater recognition to the value of their research findings. However, where the infrastructure or school culture was less conducive, enthusiastic teachers have had to tread warily in sharing insights from their M-level studies: "I have to be subtle about sharing my learning with colleagues in school – ideally it is better when I am asked." Occasionally, participants said they did not feel that school managers saw the work they did on the PPD programme as relevant. Fortunately, such negative comments were rare.

Impact on tutors

- 47 Each year, a few providers have reported significant benefits for tutors from engaging in the PPD programme. More were included in this year's responses. They focus mainly on tutors' professional and academic development arising from working closely with experienced teachers. Again this appeared to be most evident in school-based PPD provision. One provider wrote: "Tutors indicated that teaching on the PPD programme is very inspiring and acts as a form of staff development for them... working with teachers at the 'cutting edge' of developments." Another noted that "University tutors ... have enjoyed and benefited from working with schools on M-level PPD." Others referred to the consequential benefits to the their ITT programmes, for example: "...a significant number of ITT tutors ... understand that PPD is a rich context for their own professional development and that of the ITT school mentors with whom they collaborate." The respondent added that working closely with teachers and schools through the PPD programme enabled university tutors to develop "...their understanding of higher order professional skills and understanding of advanced professional knowledge applied directly to practices in schools." Several references were made to the particular benefits of developing everyone's understanding of how M-level work can be embedded in PGCE initial training.

Ethical considerations

- 48 Again this year, a few providers made specific reference to ethical issues in relation to school-based research. Guidance offered by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) is helpful here and has been adopted by several providers. One respondent noted that encouraging participants to adopt strict ethical codes and follow BERA guidelines in their PPD work transferred to other aspects of their professional lives. However, it remains unclear at what point the 'research' undertaken by a PPD participant goes beyond their normal legitimate duties and responsibilities as a teacher, thereby requiring explicit consent from pupils and parents. Tutors clearly need to be mindful of these concerns while not

letting them impede legitimate developmental activity linked to M-level study. More examples of such situations would be helpful in building up case law.

Sources of evidence of impact

- 49 Over the past three years, there has been increasing sophistication in the ways that providers have collected evidence of the impact of their PPD programmes. Approaches have also become more consistent with providers seeking information from multiple sources. While it remains common practice to gather opinions from participants through end-of-module or end-of-stage questionnaires, from course tutors' own evaluations and from external examiners' reports, these now appear to be but a small part of the battery of techniques adopted.
- 50 There was an increased use of semi-structured interviews with present and past participants to explore the impact of the PPD on individuals, pupils and schools in more depth than was possible through questionnaires. Many gave graphic examples of valuable evidence gained in this way. Sometimes, providers reported varying success in gaining the cooperation of past students in giving feedback. One university wrote: "It is a challenge to maintain an ongoing link with participants in order to follow up longer-term impact – tutors have maintained online discussion groups, designed to provide ongoing support. This has enabled tutors to track progress in terms of participant and pupil impact over a sustained period of time." Several reported collecting impact evidence from headteachers and other stakeholders through interviews and questionnaires. There were references to interviews with pupils in order to include student voice. This wider range of sources facilitated corroboration and triangulation of impact evidence.
- 51 Where PPD programmes were well established, providers had begun to focus attention on long-term impact, though they were often cautious and drew attention to the unknown effects of other intervening factors. Also, "...sustained and unexpected impact usually takes longer to emerge and may need to be triangulated through eliciting other views and evidence beyond the teacher's own perspective."
- 52 Assignments and research reports were often felt to be an excellent indication and source of evidence of impact. For example, "Assignments, including practitioner research dissertations, provide a continual stream of data and analysis that add considerable weight to claims of causal links. This evidence is varied and comes regularly in the form of recorded classroom observations, interviews with independent subjects (e.g. colleagues, line managers, pupils) as well as from research diaries, pupils' work, questionnaires, teacher records and assessments and other ephemeral artefacts." Increasingly, providers have made incorporating evidence of impact one of the key assessment criteria. Although approaches varied, the overall objective was the same:
- "Participants complete 'impact audit forms' when submitting an assignment – impact on their own personal, professional and career development, on the practice of colleagues and on the pupils they teach"
 - "The final impact assignment documents the extent to which the work on the course has had an impact on the personal professional development of the teacher, the learners and the school within which the participant works"
 - "...developed an evaluation template which serves as an assessment task so that teachers gain credit for their evaluations – either as a separate assignment or incorporated into a research report or presentation"
- 53 Disseminating PPD outcomes to peers and colleagues through formal presentations sometimes yielded valuable evidence of impact. For example, "All taught modules include an oral presentation using PowerPoint in which participants are required to provide evidence of impact on professional practice." Some providers also allowed a presentation

as an alternative, or adjunct, to a written assignment. One provider explained, "...as part of the assessment process, tutors attend presentations given by participants to their senior leadership teams in schools, using their research assignments as the basis of impact analyses or evidence of decision making processes behind the recommendations they are making for initiatives and other plans of action."

- 54 As noted in paragraph 15, planning for impact from the outset has become more widespread, particularly where provision was linked to school improvement priorities or personal development targets. Some providers had introduced 'impact toolkits' designed to make participants aware of the need to gather evidence of impact throughout. Participants on one PPD programme were required to complete a "professional development plan right at the start of the course ... which ensures that they were aware of the potential impact and can build this into their early planning for assessed work."
- 55 An experienced provider had articulated a forward-looking approach to PPD by bringing together planning, provision, impact and evaluation into a single statement. This provider stated confidently that its school-based "PPD programme has an impact on teachers, pupils and schools because:
- the programme is designed to provide a coherent structure from needs identification to impact evaluation
 - provision is based on, and tailored around, the needs identified by each school
 - projects are planned several months before delivery allowing time for careful thought, discussion and preparation prior to commencement
 - the project is organised for each school, ensuring that the five stages – arranging, planning, delivery, review, dissemination – are part of a coherent whole, each stage informing the next
 - prior to a formal project planning meeting, the headteacher responds to questions about needs analysis and links with school improvement planning, inspection reports etc
 - at the project planning meeting stakeholders compose a project agreement, which forms the focus for the design and delivery of the project
 - at the project planning meeting, means of monitoring impact are also anticipated"

Adding that, "Evidence is gained by triangulating evidence from semi-structured interviews, tutor evaluations and participants' evaluations, assignments etc. Headteachers are also interviewed several months later."

Actions following impact evaluation

- 56 Many of the actions following impact evaluation were particular to the circumstances of specific providers, for example:
- relating to barriers to participation
 - making adjustments to the timetable, course calendar or delivery methods to take account of the realities of professional life and help maintain a better work-life balance
 - piloting the online submission of assignments and dissertations
 - making teachers more aware of practice-based PPD opportunities
 - developing outreach strategies to aid recruitment
 - developing more weekend and residential components to encourage in-depth study and discussion
 - improving consistency across the PPD provision
 - reducing a plethora of minuscule modules to enable participants to engage more deeply with a topic
 - aligning provision more closely with the professional standards for teachers

- seeking to improve and gain more from the evaluation of their PPD provision and, particularly, ensuring that impact evaluation is central to the programme and explicit at all stages by implementing 'a planning for impact cycle'.

- 57 Several common themes indicated that providers were following trends already begun elsewhere. For example, more providers seemed to be striving for even greater flexibility in future provision that would allow for more personalised programmes and quicker response to local school and individual needs. This sometimes involved delicate negotiation around amending established university procedures for assessment and examination boards.
- 58 Impact evaluations that pointed to the beneficial outcomes from school-based PPD seemed to be leading many providers towards making this a more major part of their provision. Several reported plans to increase whole-school provision because their evaluations suggested this was the most effective form of PPD, providing a vehicle for sustained whole-school development. However, a few providers identified an unresolved tension between the benefits and immediacy of basing PPD activities in a single school and the additional value when "participants come from different schools and, therefore, offer a range of experience, perspectives and practice from different contexts."
- 59 In striving to promote and develop school-based PPD and stimulate recruitment, one provider plans a new introductory programme designed to help convince potential students who would not otherwise consider PPD that this programme is accessible and rewarding, and to give them the knowledge and skills to undertake collaborative enquiry. Elsewhere, evaluations have identified a similar need to offer clearer guidance and instruction on research methods early in the PPD programme. Another provider wrote about meeting the challenge of matching supervisors to student research projects and expediting decisions to enable rapid progress on the projects.
- 60 Several providers explained ways in which they proposed to refine provision for NQTs based on the early experiences of offering this programme. Widespread agreement exists about the linked aims of a seamless progression from ITT to PPD through provision that is appropriately aligned with the established induction arrangements and professional standards for teachers. Some were considering making the first NQT module free of tuition fees to encourage take-up. Providers were also mindful of the need to convince some headteachers that M-level study was not incompatible with NQTs completing the induction year successfully.
- 61 Other plans reported as a result of PPD impact evaluation included:
- ensuring quality and consistency of tutorial guidance for school-based provision by developing suitably qualified teachers as associate tutors, who could provide more one-to-one support in-school and facilitate learning conversations
 - adding to the range of online resources and creating virtual learning environments
 - strengthening the possibilities of extending the accreditation of prior experience and learning (APEL) or accrediting other forms of relevant training by introducing short conversion modules or enabling additional M-level assessments
 - attempting to reduce the perceived burden of long written assignments, by investigating the possibilities of different assessment methods including piloting presentations and making more use of professional practice portfolios
 - developing more learning communities within and across schools.

MTL and concerns for the future of PPD

- 62 Reflecting on the implications of their evaluations of impact for longer-term provision, many providers referred to the advent of an MTL qualification. The majority welcomed the opportunities offered by the MTL, reporting plans to build on their successful PPD

experience in developing this new provision. Several explained that they believed their recent PPD provision for NQTs to be an excellent springboard for the future and that good practice developed as part of PPD would be subsumed into the MTL. At the same time, many providers expressed concerns that valuable and important features of PPD should not be lost, stating that they hoped to be able to continue offering TDA-funded PPD to experienced teachers who would not be the initial focus of the MTL. There is sufficient evidence to show that TDA funding for PPD, which often enables providers to set low tuition fees, has been crucial in achieving the high take-up of M-level study by experienced teachers. Fees often feature prominently in lists of barriers to teachers' participation in PPD. Consequently, there were serious concerns that without TDA funding, PPD programmes would no longer be viable and the goodwill of institutions in subsuming some of the extra costs of school-based PPD provision would be withdrawn.

Summary of main findings

- 63 The TDA is grateful to the many providers that have taken great care in preparing their responses to the questions in the TDA template. Overall, these responses have yielded a wealth of valuable material that, due to restrictions on length, cannot be fully reflected in this report. Again, the most useful responses were those with carefully constructed analytical commentaries supported by cogent examples and quotes from their detailed evaluations. Many of the quotes from participants, stakeholders and others provided additional depth of meaning to key points made in the commentary. Now that the PPD programme has been running for three years for most providers, there were many recurring common themes. However, there have also been major developments in school-based PPD, the provision for NQTs, and the universal recognition of the paramount importance of impact. While there remains understandable reluctance by providers to ascribe improved attainment by pupils to the PPD, the responses again gave useful indicators and proxies, particularly in respect of increased motivation, better behaviour, and judgements by participants and stakeholders, that improved test and examination results could be attributed to the PPD.
- 64 In summary, the main themes and issues to emerge this year include:
- i. Overall, a strong message that PPD provision strengthens the capacity of schools to improve through learning from practice
 - ii. Widespread evidence that 'impact' is being considered from the outset of, and throughout PPD, with growing expectations that participants report on impact in assignments
 - iii. It is rare for PPD not to include some form of enquiry in teachers' schools or classrooms
 - iv. In response to demand, school-based provision has now become a significant part of many providers' PPD programmes
 - v. School-based provision took two distinct forms:
 - (i) adapting core provision and delivering a version of a course in school and matched to the needs of that school – now apparently waning in favour of
 - (ii) bespoke provision designed to address aspects of school development identified as school improvement priorities
 - vi. Recognition of the importance of in-school leadership and advocacy for PPD to encourage participation and retention
 - vii. Development of the role of associate tutor to support participants on a day-to-day basis particularly within school-based PPD
 - viii. Increased awareness of the significance of pupil voice in teaching and learning
 - ix. Beneficial outcomes of engaging pupils overtly in PPD projects

- x. Much clearer explanation of how increases in teachers' knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence can lead to improvements in classrooms, or more widely in the schools, and have identifiable beneficial impact on pupils
- xi. Evidence that teachers' confidence and capacity to make sound professional judgements is enhanced by individual (and group) enquiries supported by pertinent academic and theoretical underpinning
- xii. PPD provision is focused more closely on the professional standards for teachers and is, increasingly, being linked with individuals' performance management objectives
- xiii. As a result of M-level study, teachers feel more confident to help and support their colleagues, to engage more effectively in professional discussion in staff meetings, to disseminate the findings of their studies, and to lead by example
- xiv. Significant growth in the provision for NQTs, designed to mesh with their induction year training and provide a seamless progression from M-level study in the PGCE to postgraduate professional development
- xv. Growing awareness of the importance of moderating M-level assessments across PGCE initial training and PPD
- xvi. Continuing recognition that engagement in PPD can cause disturbance to the work-life balance for some participants, and the development of a range of strategies to ameliorate the difficulties they encounter

65 Notwithstanding the many positive features and outcomes from the PPD programme, several aspects need to be addressed, some of which are recurring:

- i. There remain significant variations in the levels of recruitment and retention of PPD participants, regardless of the target numbers proposed by providers
- ii. Although there has been a further increase in recruitment, PPD continues to involve only a relatively small proportion of the teaching force
- iii. Not all teachers receive the whole-hearted support and encouragement of their schools in participating in PPD
- iv. Incomplete data in the statistical returns made it difficult to describe the profile of the national PPD cohort
- v. A variety of PPD provision needs to remain available to cater for teachers' differing circumstances and aspirations
- vi. Further consideration may be needed about the relative merits, on one hand, of tightly focused school-based collaborative projects and, on the other, of providing opportunities for participants to engage in more widely in professional and academic debates with teachers from other schools
- vii. While providers welcome the advent of the MTL qualification, many expressed concerns that this new development should not be at the expense of the PPD programme, which enables experienced teachers to engage in professionally relevant M-level study at convenient locations and with manageable costs
- viii. There is widespread concern that the PPD provision would shrink rapidly without TDA funding

66 One final point was made by several providers, and evidenced by the late responses to the TDA template of others:

The TDA schedule for reporting evidence of impact was out of phase with the internal procedures of providers. Consequently, some found it difficult to prepare a thorough report for the TDA at the same time as starting courses in the new academic year. It is recommended that the TDA reverts to a closing date of 30 November for the receipt of impact evaluation responses in 2009.

PPD impact evaluation summary report

Introduction

PPD criterion 7 states that providers should:

‘Show how provision delivers postgraduate professional development which meets priority areas identified by the TDA’.

This information is required by TDA by Friday 31 October 2008. The evaluation of the programme’s impact on practice in schools should be sent in summary form using this template.

PPD partnerships have already specified their approach to impact evaluation in their application. Please note that TDA welcomes different approaches across the partnerships.

The purposes of this summary template are as follows:

- To support providers and ensure that the process of reporting is not unduly burdensome
- To achieve consistency in how this information is reported
- To enable TDA to disseminate effective practice across providers
- To inform the future development of the PPD programme

We are interested in how you have evaluated impact, what conclusions your evaluation has led to and how this evaluation will inform your future provision. Please note that these summaries will be made available for the external quality assurance of PPD that we have commissioned. We will not use this information to make judgements which affect existing funding arrangements but we may wish to contact providers for further detail in cases where the summary is unclear.

Guidance

Further guidance on completing this form is provided. You may also find it helpful to review the TDA’s report on PPD impact evaluation and the examples of effective practice provided on our website www.tda.gov.uk/partners/cpd/ppd/evaluating_impact.aspx

The boxes will expand if additional space is needed. However, we would urge providers to be as concise as possible. For the purposes of this summary report, we are interested in your approach to evaluating impact, outcomes and your appraisal of provision this year, rather than in the detail and the methodology which lies behind the findings. Please note, however, that TDA’s quality assurance of the programme may involve further discussion based on the evidence which supports providers’ evaluation of impact. This evidence should therefore be available on request.

Section A of the template relates specifically to impact:

- 1: Part 1: What kinds of impact have you discovered on participants, pupils, schools and others?
- 2: Part 2: How do you know this has been an impact of PPD? How did you approach this exercise?
- 3: Part 3: What are the implications of your findings for your current and future provision?

Section B relates to collaborative funding. We are interested in the impact you believe collaborative funding has had on your provision. We are also interested in how this funding has been used. This will enable us to monitor the effectiveness of collaborative funding and also to disseminate to other providers how this funding has been used to good effect.

Provider name:

Section A: Evaluation of impact

Part one: What kinds of impact?

Q1a: What kinds of impact has the provision had on participants?

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Q1b: What kinds of impact has the provision had on pupils?

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Q1c: What kinds of impact has the provision had on the wider life of the school/other schools?

--

Q1d: (optional) Has your provision had other forms of impact not covered by the questions above?

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Part two: How do you know?

Q2: How do you know that these are areas of impact related to PPD? What evidence did you collect? Who did you consult? What strategies did you use?

--

Part three: Implications for your provision

Q3a: How have you already responded to your evaluation of impact in the current academic year (2007/08)?

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Q3b: What are the implications of your evaluation of impact on your provision in the longer term?

Section B: Collaborative funding

Q4a: Please provide a breakdown of how the collaborative funding for 07/08 was used.

Q4b: How did the collaborative funding benefit your provision in 07/08?

Thank you for completing this evaluation form please return it electronically to:
ppd@tda.gov.uk

Or by post to:
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