



# Professional Development

Research review 2022-23



## Contents

Introduction .....	4
Leadership .....	5
Distributed leadership.....	5
Diversity .....	5
Systems leadership .....	6
Inclusive leadership.....	7
Leadership and wellbeing.....	8
Executive leadership .....	8
Headship .....	8
Senior leadership .....	8
Middle leadership .....	8
Ethical leadership.....	9
Professional development.....	10
Becoming expert teachers.....	10
Professional learning for leaders.....	11
Continuous professional development (CPD) .....	11
Designing CPD.....	12
Planning whole school CPD .....	13
Quality assurance of CPD .....	13
Skills/need audit .....	13
Coaching .....	14
Feedback .....	14
Deliberate practice .....	14
Leading CPD .....	15
Barriers.....	15
Evaluating CPD.....	15
Engaging with research.....	16
Initial teacher training/education (ITT/ITE) .....	18
Induction/early career teachers (ECTs).....	18
Mentoring.....	19
Purpose.....	19

Frameworks .....	19
Mentoring relationships .....	20
Recruitment and selection .....	21
Subject-specific specialists.....	22
Professional development .....	22
Assessment role.....	22
Performance management/ appraisal .....	23
Appraisal and capability .....	23
Accountability .....	24
Sources of evidence.....	24
Staff wellbeing .....	27
Mental health.....	27
Work–life balance.....	27
Workload .....	27
References .....	28

## Introduction

Teachers who are continually learning are more able to support pupil outcomes by focusing on the strategies that are more likely to work.

Effective professional development needs to be at the heart of the culture of a school as the research shows clearly that teachers thrive and improve in supportive environments. This in turn supports retention and recruitment to the profession.

Support of trainee teachers and early career teachers is an important element in maintaining a vibrant profession, and this should be entwined with the development of more experienced teachers who can act as mentors and internal experts within the school.

## Leadership

Leadership is a crucial element in successful outcomes for pupils (C. Day *et al.*, 2009; V. Robinson, 2007). Where leadership in schools is good, schools are more likely to be able to improve their Ofsted category. Conversely, where leadership is graded below overall performance, 93% of schools failed to improve (Teach First, 2016).

Ofsted recognises that schools receiving higher grades for leadership and management than overall effectiveness are disproportionately in deprived areas (Ofsted, 2020c).

The reformed NPQ framework seeks to support leaders in ensuring that their leadership enables all pupils to succeed: including children with SEND, and children identified as per the Children in Need Review (DfE, 2020b).

Recruitment to and retention in leadership roles continues to be challenging (NAHT, 2021).

*Recent thinking sees leadership operating at all levels of an organization with leaders working to create an environment in which everyone can grow and talent is developed. In fact, a simple definition of a leader is someone who creates an environment in which everyone can flourish!*

(Earley, 2017, p. 162)

After classroom teaching, school leadership is the second most important factor in student achievement (Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2019) closely followed by promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (Cordingley *et al.*, 2012).

Research into supervisors or bosses considers the significance of leaders as ‘special workers’ who make a range of organisational decisions. They are not just another factor of production but able to shape the nature of the organisation (Artz, Goodall and Oswald, 2016). In a school, teachers (workers) and leaders, are working jointly to achieve the desired outcomes, however the leader has an additional role in determining how these will be pursued. In this scenario, the importance of having an expert supervisor, one who understands the work and setting, is crucial to achieving a ‘cooperative equilibrium’ (Artz, Goodall and Oswald, 2016).

## Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership is a contested theory, but distributing leadership in the sense of increased trust and autonomy – working with and through teams as well as individuals – helps to build the school community and brings out the best in people (Harris and Chapman, 2002b; Worth and Van Den Brande, 2020). Effective leaders are those that empower teachers and other staff to reach their potential as it is through them that students will be helped to reach theirs (Earley, 2017). Leadership defined more broadly, or distributed leadership, can be a powerful engine for change (Harris and Muijs, 2003).

## Diversity

Commissioned evaluation of three National College of Teaching and Leadership (NCTL)-funded courses found that despite a gain in confidence and competence among aspirant headteachers, in some cases their desire to lead actually decreased as the courses progressed. However, for BME participants, an increased desire to become middle leaders was reported, despite some accounts of prejudicial treatment. Factors negatively impacting on the desire of participants to become leaders were work–life balance, accountability, faith, economic factors, and issues concerning gender (for women participants who saw themselves as leaders both at home and work) (Elton-Chalcraft, Kendrick and Chapman, 2018).

The lack of diverse leadership in schools has been attributed to the 'diversity trap' (Wallace, 2020) that some teachers – and specifically Black male teachers – are placed into. Wallace (2020) found that there is a pressure for Black male teachers to serve in particular racialised roles in a school, such as role models and community liaisons that do not lead to a leadership role.

school improvement across the schools they worked with. Contextual factors influencing structure and approach included: age (especially whether the MAT was established pre 2010 or post the passing of the Academies Act), size and growth model, context and composition, phase, and beliefs and values of the founding leaders. Five school improvement 'fundamentals' and five strategic areas for sustainability were identified as

How do MATs and federations sustainably improve schools?

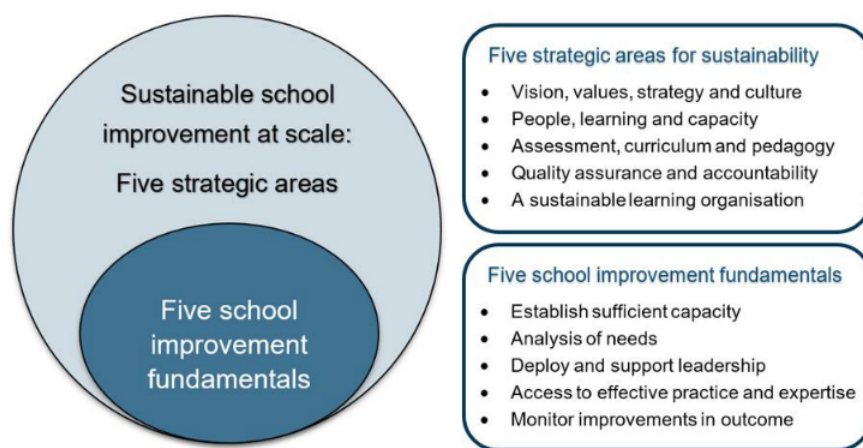


Figure 1.1: The five 'fundamentals' and five strategic areas in MATs and federations

(Source: Greany, 2018, p. 12)

### Systems leadership

Schools are complex systems. Matthew Evans considers how Kennedy's parsing of teaching practice (Kennedy, 2016) could be applied to leadership. He identifies the persistent problems school leaders face as: portraying purpose and values, enlisting staff efforts, exposing indicators of change, resolving conflicts and accommodating personal needs. He supports the value given to both domain-specific knowledge and the application of this knowledge (Evans, 2019).

Systems leadership is about how you lead across boundaries and departments or organisations. It may be about influence rather than managerial levers (Sorkin, 2016). It is the way you need to work when faced with persistent, or 'wicked' problems (White, 2019).

Research done in 2018 looked at how multi-academy trusts (MATs), teaching school alliances (TSAs), federation and local authorities (LAs) sought to facilitate continuous and sustainable

necessary for sustainable improvement at scale. (see Greany, 2018, Figure 1.1).

Work by Goodall and Baker sought to challenge the belief that leadership was less necessary in knowledge-intensive organisations. The belief that experts and professionals are driven by intrinsic motivation instead, they argue, means that the type of leader is more important.

*Experts and professionals need to be led by other experts and professionals, those who have a deep understanding of and high ability in the core business of their organisation.*

(Goodall and Bäker, 2015, p.49)

They go on to present a theory of expert leadership in a model that they believe translates to better organisational performance based on a set of propositions:



1. Management skills and leadership experience and expert knowledge are both necessary prerequisites.
2. Expert leaders implement more profitable organisational strategies than manager leaders.
3. Expert leaders also create more appropriate work environments than manager leaders.
4. They hire better employees.
5. They are more credible and therefore more willingly followed by workers.
6. They also attract better potential employees.
7. They appear in a more positive light for external stakeholders.

(Goodall and Bäker, 2015)

There is no clear approach that is most effective in improving schools that are facing challenging circumstances. Leaders are not uniform in their leadership styles, but instead having a range of approaches was most effective (Harris and Chapman, 2002a).

## Inclusive leadership

A study by the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) identified 15 core competencies shared by inclusive leaders:

1. Individualised consideration – showing individual interest and offering one-to-one support for people
2. Idealised influence – providing an appealing vision that inspires others
3. Inspiration motivation – encouraging others to develop ideas and to be challenging
4. Intellectual stimulation – encouraging creative thinking
5. Unqualified acceptance – showing acceptance of everyone without bias
6. Empathy – being able to appreciate the perspective of others and endeavouring to understand how others feel
7. Listening – truly listening to the opinions of others
8. Persuasion – having an influence on people's actions without force or coercion
9. Confidence building – providing positive feedback to boost people's self-efficacy
10. Growth – providing opportunities for all employees to realise potential, make autonomous and unique contributions and progress with the organisation

11. Foresight – being able to consider the views of others about possible outcomes
12. Conceptualisation – being able to focus on how employees contribute to long-term objectives
13. Awareness – having self-awareness of how preconceived views can influence behaviour towards others
14. Stewardship – showing a commitment to leading by serving others for the good of everyone rather than for self-gain
15. Healing – showing a respect for the wellbeing of all employees.

(Source: ENEI, 2016, p. 4)

They define inclusive leadership as:

*Leaders who are aware of their own biases and preferences, actively seek out and consider different views and perspectives to inform better decision-making. They see diverse talent as a source of competitive advantage and inspire diverse people to drive organisational and individual performance towards a shared vision.*

(ENEI, 2016, p. 6)

A project at Sevenoaks School sought to examine the association between leadership style and student performance, focusing on teaching in mathematics classes in a secondary school environment. They found a strong positive linear correlation between inclusive leadership and student performance though the strength of the association declined with the increasing age of students. It should also be noted that this was a very small-scale study (Parham and Moss, 2021).

In defining inclusive education, and the leadership required, it is better to deem it a continuous process – it is not something to achieve, but something to continuously evaluate. Schools that are inclusive have leaders who lead with vision, motivation, autonomy and trust in their staff (Schuelka, 2018).

## Leadership and wellbeing

Technical competence of leaders has been identified as the single strongest predictor of a worker's job satisfaction. Even after controlling for fixed effects – i.e. staying in the same job/ workplace – a rise in the competence of a supervisor is associated with an improvement in the worker's wellbeing (Artz, Goodall and Oswald, 2016).

## Executive leadership

The NPQ in Executive Leadership describes an executive leader as being responsible for strategic leadership, working with and through colleagues to ensure excellent outcomes for pupils across several schools (DfE, 2020a).

The remit and responsibilities of executive heads or leaders vary both in terms of the number of schools they lead, and whether or not they hold a substantive headship in any of those schools. Executive leadership can be seen as a feature of the self-improving school system and the perceived need for increasingly complex governance structures.

A report by Sir David Carter from Ambition Institute identifies 10 persistent problems faced by school trusts, and therefore executive leaders by extension (Carter, 2020, p.4):

1. Defining the vision, values and ethos of the trust
2. Ensuring that governance is effective
3. Building an affordable and sustainable financial strategy
4. Embedding a culture of shared values across the trust
5. Improving standards in the schools and within the trust
6. Designing and delivering a trust-wide school improvement strategy
7. Being clear about the trust's approach to accountability
8. Ensuring that the trust is a great employer and developer of its workforce
9. Establishing a comprehensive approach to communications

## Headship

Headteachers are the main source of leadership in their school although their impact on pupils is largely indirect and relatively small compared to other factors (Day *et al.*, 2010). Whilst they interact with pupils in many circumstances, the greater impact comes from the work and relationships that exist in the classrooms and peer groups (Louis, 2015 in Earley, 2017). Therefore the role of leaders is primarily to achieve results through others (Day *et al.*, 2009).

It is clear that the headteacher or principal influences the culture of a school, but also that a strong culture is one where everyone shares values and beliefs and communicates these clearly and consistently (Shafer, 2018). In thriving schools, there is clear trust and support among staff, which builds confidence that comes from the 'circle of safety' (Sinek, 2017).

## Senior leadership

It is often claimed that the ultimate aim of senior leaders is to free teachers to solve the specific problems they face every day. Top-down decision making can actually stymie progress as it takes autonomy away from those in the best position to make decisions, for example about subject leadership (Newmark, 2019).

In most situations, senior leaders are in a position where they are supporting the headteacher, or exercising delegated responsibilities for particular aspects of the school, such as curriculum, professional development or behaviour. The function of leadership must therefore be to help build the organisational conditions that foster high quality teaching and learning, a function that requires opportunities for discretionary decision making. An especially positive influence on outcomes may come from distributed school leadership (Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2019).

## Middle leadership

Middle leaders have greater responsibility but less dedicated leadership time and around one in three are considering leaving the profession. There are



40% of middle leaders without a formal professional qualification and an NAHT survey showed a significant proportion received no CPD relating to their leadership role in the previous 12 months. Only around half of middle leaders aspire to headship or system leadership, discouraged by concerns about work–life balance (79%) and accountability pressures (69%) (NAHT, 2019).

Middle leader effectiveness, as measured by GCSE results, was particularly related to two factors: managing their team and attaching importance to planning and resource management. Middle leaders of relatively high performing departments were particularly likely to demonstrate characteristics relating to being professionally informed and bold, innovative and resourceful (Baars *et al.*, 2015).

Over half of middle leaders cite coaching and mentoring colleagues as a major driver of workload. More worrying is that less than half of

middle leaders aspire to headship or system leadership roles, and 1 in 3 are considering leaving the profession entirely (NAHT, 2019).

## **Ethical leadership**

In 2017 an independent commission was formed to develop a set of principles for ethical leadership in response to the concern that this was largely absent from the discourse on educational leadership. It developed a framework to use as a counterpoint to commonly used language about measurement, for training and reflection and to establish an Ethics Forum at the Chartered College of Teaching (Ethical Leadership Commission, 2019). A follow-up report on how the framework has been used in practice during a pathfinder project was published in 2021 (Sharma, 2021).

## Professional development

*If we create a culture  
where every teacher  
believes they need to  
improve, not because they  
are not good enough, but  
because they can be even  
better, there is no limit to  
what we can achieve.*

(William, 2015)

We know that great teaching leads to improved student progress (Coe *et al.*, 2014) through:

1. pedagogical content knowledge (strong evidence of impact)
2. quality of instruction (strong evidence of impact)
3. classroom climate (moderate evidence of impact)
4. classroom management (moderate evidence of impact)
5. teacher beliefs (some evidence of impact)
6. professional behaviours (some evidence)

The difficulty is finding an effective means of assessing teacher quality and ensuring that the system adopted has a positive impact on both teacher development and pupil outcomes. It is challenging to prove causal links between professional development and pupil outcomes but some studies have attempted to do so.

One meta-review of the randomised controlled trials of professional development interventions found a positive effect on student learning. They suggest that professional development has the potential to close the gap between the effectiveness of novice and experienced teachers and that the effect sizes are also greater than for other school-based interventions such as performance-related pay and lengthening the school day (Fletcher-Wood and Zuccollo, 2020).

Professional development is most effective when there is continuous formative assessment, rather than high stakes summative judgements (DfE, 2016b). There must be a range of measures from different sources, using different methods, as there is a high risk of over-interpreting the evidence. In fact, when determining whether a teacher is above or below average in effectiveness, the research suggests we would be right only 60% of the time – a coin toss would give you 50% (Coe *et al.*, 2014) (Strong, Gargani and Lu, 2011).

The context is important when it comes to effective professional development (PD). Kraft and Papay demonstrated that teachers working in more supportive professional environments improve their effectiveness more over time than those teachers working in less supportive contexts (Kraft and Papay, 2014).

Despite the clear benefits of professional development, access to professional development is not equal and teachers from particular backgrounds have been excluded from professional development. Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) teachers have reported feeling unsupported from their line managers in their professional development (NEU, 2019b). Indeed, research has found that BAME teachers were more likely to have their requests for CPD rejected than their white colleagues (Lyonette *et al.*, 2016).

## Becoming expert teachers

Becoming an 'expert' teacher seems to take somewhere between 5 and 7 years.

Unfortunately, Berliner argues, teachers usually get no practise after training, and typically have little or no coaching or mentoring (Berliner, 2004).

One of the characteristics of expert teachers, according to Berliner, is that they develop automaticity and routines for repetitive operations that are needed. Importantly, the evidence reveals how circumscribed expertise is: knowledge is

bound to context and experts excel in their own domain and context, but may struggle when moving to another (e.g. to a new school) (Berliner, 2004). The implication for CPD in a school is that it must be linked carefully to context, with opportunities to practise routinisation.

Hobbiss *et al.*, however, present data that suggests that the development of automaticity in teacher's behaviour occurs at the point at which teacher effectiveness begins to level off, suggesting that habit formation can be a limiting factor in effectiveness. They suggest the need for professional development to involve repeated practice to overwrite/upgrade existing habits (Hobbiss, Sims and Allen, 2020).

The concept of a performance plateau, occurring some 3–5 years after qualifying (coincidentally around the same time as it takes to reach expert status according to Berliner), is widely accepted. However, this has been questioned by Papay and Kraft (2016) whose research suggests that teachers can continue to improve substantially beyond the first five years, with perhaps 35% of a teacher's career improvement happening after year 10. Teachers vary a great deal in how much they improve over time and the school plays an important role in promoting or constraining professional growth (Papay and Kraft, 2016).

## Professional learning for leaders

Whilst very similar to the characteristics of effective professional development delivery for leadership, the most notable differences are in the importance of external sources of peer support for leadership; the dimensions of leadership that have the most positive impact on student learning; and the flexibility/non-linearity required of such programmes (Cordingley *et al.*, 2012).

A range of evidence supports the benefits of coaching and mentoring, especially in the first few years of headship (Earley *et al.*, 2011). New headteachers have historically felt underprepared for the role, lacking the experience and networks or support and loyalty needed (Higham *et al.*, 2015). The value of ongoing peer support is particularly emphasised (MacBeath, 2011).

## Continuous professional development (CPD)

High quality CPD has a significant effect on pupils' learning outcomes, and a greater effect than other possible interventions such as performance-related pay or longer school days. It may be more cost-effective than, e.g., one-to-one tutoring, and it receives a more positive response from teachers in contrast to other interventions. Increasing the availability of high quality CPD can improve retention, particularly for early career teachers (Fletcher-Wood and Zuccollo, 2020).

Sustained professional learning is most likely to result when:

1. The focus is kept clearly on improving student outcomes.
2. Feedback is related to clear, specific and challenging goals for the recipient.
3. Attention is on the learning rather than the person or on comparisons with others.
4. Teachers are encouraged to be continual independent learners.
5. Feedback is mediated by a mentor in an environment of trust and support.
6. An environment of professional learning and support is promoted by the school's leadership (Coe *et al.*, 2014).

The Learning Policy Institute identified a similar set of features of effective professional learning:

1. content focused
2. incorporates active learning
3. supports collaboration
4. uses models of effective participation
5. provides coaching and expert support
6. offers feedback and reflection
7. is of sustained duration

(Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner, 2017)

The DfE has set out standards for teachers' professional development:

1. should have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes
2. should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise
3. should include collaboration and expert challenge
4. should be sustained over time (DfE, 2016a)

A review by the Teacher Development Trust sought to draw out more specific details around the features of effective CPD:

- The most effective PD lasted at least two terms, more usually a year (or longer).
- Programmes need to create a rhythm of follow-up, consolidation and support activities.
- It should have relevance to participants and their day-to-day experiences with, and aspirations for, pupils.
- Achieving a shared sense of purpose is an important factor for success.
- There needs to be a logical thread between various components of the programme.
- Both subject knowledge and subject-specific pedagogy must underpin PD.
- There should be clarity around learner progression – the start points and next steps. (Cordingley *et al.*, 2015)

However, there has been challenge to this apparent consensus view – that effective professional development (PD) is sustained, collaborative, subject-specific, draws on external expertise, has buy-in from teachers and is practice-based – some have found little detectable impact on student attainment (Sims and Fletcher-Wood, 2018). They argue that these features of effective CPD may in fact be recurrent but causally redundant and without direct correlation between specific interventions and attainment (Sims and Fletcher-Wood, 2020).

A response to this critique from CUREE, that produced one of the most influential systematic reviews by Crisp (2018) asserts that despite the claim that no claims were made about the relative importance of different characteristics, there is in fact a common feature, and that is ‘careful alignment of CPD activities and experiences with participants’ goals for their pupils’. The response also argues that the Fletcher-Wood and Sims article omits some core findings from *Developing Great Teaching* (Crisp, 2018).

A 2021 report by the EPI highlights the fact that teachers in England do fewer hours of CPD than their international peers – on average 55 hours at primary, and 43 hours at secondary a year as compared with the OECD average of 62 hours.

They also claim that much of this CPD does not meet the DfE’s standards. They propose a 35 hour entitlement to high-quality professional development for all teachers, every year (Van Den Brande and Zuccollo, 2021).

These findings underpin the proposal by the Chartered College of Teaching to introduce a system of quality assurance for professional development provision (Chedzey, Cunningham and Perry, 2021).

## Designing CPD

At the heart of good CPD provision is the understanding that we need to change what teachers do, not just what they know (William, 2015).

In contrast, Kennedy argues that we need to consider the *why* rather than focus on what teachers are *doing*. She argues that most studies were focused on generic teaching practices seen as effective, with a second stream concentrating on teachers’ content knowledge. Much of what happens in the classroom is spontaneous decision making rather than carefully planned behaviour, and therefore contingent on circumstances. Effective professional development therefore is about what to look for rather than what to do or say (Kennedy, 2019).

An international review found that carefully designed professional development opportunities with a strong focus on pupil outcomes have significant impact on student achievement. Several design features make it more likely to have a lasting impact on teacher practice and student outcomes:

- appropriate duration – at least two terms but usually a year or longer
- rhythm – of follow-up, consolidation and support activities
- designing for participants’ needs – buy-in comes from overt relevance of the content and day-to-day experiences
- creating a shared sense of purpose – a positive learning environment, sufficient time and a consistency with the wider

- context were more important than whether activities were voluntary or not
- alignment across various activities – a logical thread between components of a programme and creating development opportunities consistent with student learning mattered more than any particular type or configuration of activities (Cordingley *et al.*, 2015)

Building on the *Developing Great Teaching* review of 2015 which found that subject-specific professional development was more effective than generic pedagogic approaches (Cordingley *et al.*, 2015), another rapid review in 2018 explored further the effectiveness of subject-specific professional development. The findings on factors influencing the need for subject-specific CPD related to:

- teacher recruitment and skill levels
- phase
- size of school and stage on the improvement journey
- school cultures and existing levels of expertise
- performance review of needs (Cordingley *et al.*, 2018)

The perception of teachers' influence over their own professional development goals is associated with higher job satisfaction and a greater intention of staying within the teaching profession (Worth and Van Den Brande, 2020).

Kennedy compares the effect sizes of PD programmes finding little difference between expensive structured programmes and an inexpensive 'bootstrap' approach of peer-support. Nevertheless, effect sizes were greater with more specialised content, e.g. by subject (Kennedy, 2019).

New guidance from the EEF based on work by (Sims and Fletcher-Wood, 2018) proposes an approach based on mechanisms, as opposed to traditional forms and characteristics as previously emphasised. Mechanisms are processes that directly change knowledge, skills or behaviours, and are grounded in evidence. They argue that the more mechanisms present, the more effective the professional development will be. They are

based around four areas: instil insight, motivate staff, embed practice, and develop techniques (EEF, 2021).

## Planning whole school CPD

In planning for professional learning, Weston and Clay argue that plans should span at least one academic year in order to ensure a sustained programme of learning rather than individual activities. It should begin with identifying aims and outcomes and analysing student needs, and be based on a culture that focuses on the organisational edge rather than the centre. This might be broken down into individual needs, team needs and whole school needs (Weston and Clay, 2018).

## Quality assurance of CPD

There have been recent calls to quality assure CPD (EEF, 2019) with a pilot scheme run by the Chartered College of Teaching, the Teacher Development Trust and Sheffield Institute of Education. The proposed model would have five stages:

1. registration
2. preparation
3. submission
4. assessment
5. award

with a requirement for reaccreditation every 2–3 years. Whilst there was some appetite for such an approach, there were also notes of caution (Chedzey, Cunningham and Perry, 2021).

## Skills/need audit

The idea of a skills audit is to identify gaps which can be addressed to improve performance. This can be done at an individual level but may be more effectively done at the level of a department or across a school. A range of evidence should be used.

Both Kennedy and Nuthall remind us that our ideas about teaching are formed to a great extent by our own experience of education and assumptions about what makes one teacher better than another (Kennedy, 2019). They also

point out that this may not correlate with learning in the way that many studies would suggest (Nuthall, 2005). Idealised models of teaching are appealing as they help us to distinguish teachers and teaching practice, but they often fail to consider the contingent nature of teaching, i.e. it assumes that learning is in the teachers' control, leading to attribution error (Kennedy, 2019).

Self-evaluation in the sense of a teacher reflecting on their own effectiveness, based on student outcomes or feedback from a peer or mentor, is an important part of development. However self-assessment, for example by rating themselves against the Teachers' Standards, should be discouraged. Not only is it bureaucratic and creates an unnecessary workload for little or no impact, it can encourage teachers to be overly self-critical and thus prejudice career and future pay progression (NASUWT, 2018).

## Coaching

Sims and Fletcher-Wood argue that instructional coaching incorporates characteristics proven to promote habit change, and therefore is a better means of PD (Sims and Fletcher-Wood, 2018). CUREE largely agrees that external input can be a common factor in successful outcomes, and note that this may be consistent with instructional coaching (Crisp, 2018).

A number of studies have considered the value of coaching for school leaders, or aspiring leaders. Themes that emerge include: having time to reflect, feeling safe to explore, focusing on what's important for me, and experiencing positive emotions (Nieuwerburgh *et al.*, 2020).

A CollectivED study of a headteacher coaching programme found a beneficial effect through productive coaching conversations that provided time for reflection. Success depended on the quality and independence of the coaching provision and had a positive impact on headteachers' self-belief and confidence as well as supporting them to develop and maintain effective management approaches (Lofthouse and Whiteside, 2020).

Studies have suggested that scaling up impact can be a barrier. A meta-analysis contrasting the effect of 'small' coaching programmes (<100 teachers) with 'large' (>100 teachers) found that the smaller had a greater effect on both teaching and student achievement (Kraft, Blazar and Hogan, 2018).

## Feedback

Focused feedback is an important element of professional development and is a key component of instructional coaching and deliberate practice.

In *Leverage Leadership*, six aspects of effective feedback are offered:

1. provide precise praise
2. probe
3. identify problem and concrete action step
4. practice
5. plan ahead
6. set timeline (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018)

## Deliberate practice

Malcolm Gladwell's suggestion of the 10,000 hours rule to become an expert has become well known, but it is nonetheless flawed. Ericsson, upon whose work Gladwell based his ideas, says the rule is an oversimplification of his work into what it took to become an expert musician. The number, he says, is arbitrary. The problem is that it focuses on the quantity rather than the quality of the practice. Ericsson distinguished between generic practice and the, more important, deliberate practice that is aimed at a particular goal – not mechanical repetition but continual adjustment for improvement over time to get closer to the goal (Hambrick *et al.*, 2014).

Practice with purpose, or deliberate practice is a key component of instructional coaching.

(Deans for Impact, 2016) identify five principles of deliberate practice as particularly relevant to developing teacher skill:

1. **Push beyond** one's comfort zone.
2. Work toward well-defined **specific goals**.
3. **Focus** intently on practice activities.

4. Receive and respond to **high-quality feedback**.
5. Develop a **mental model** of expertise.

## Leading CPD

Effective leaders are themselves involved in learning and take some form of personal involvement in successful PD programmes.

Cordingley *et al.* (2015) identified four core roles for school leaders in effective professional development:

1. developing vision
2. managing and organising
3. leading professional learning
4. developing the leadership of others

(Cordingley *et al.*, 2015)

The 2020 paper identifies two core principles for school leadership of CPDL:

- Model and orientate CPDL systems and activities towards building shared accountability among all staff for pupil achievement and wellbeing.
- Model and use a commitment to being open to learning as a way securing this and ensuring that CPDL similarly focuses on teacher development and wellbeing.

The research emphasises that the design of CPDL activities must align with aspirations for pupils (Cordingley *et al.*, 2020).

## Barriers

There are a number of forms of professional development that do not lead to positive outcomes for either participants or students.

These include:

- didactic models without opportunities to develop skills or inquire
- PD without a strong focus on aspirations for students and assessing the impact of changed teacher practices on pupil learning

(Cordingley *et al.*, 2015)

The Teacher Development Trust goes further to identify seven key issues that schools struggle with:

1. too many one-off activities
2. too much listening and not enough collaborative problem-solving
3. not enough time for professional learning
4. lack of high-quality external facilitation and expertise
5. not relevant or differentiated
6. no clear focus on pupils
7. not enough evaluation

(Weston, 2015)

There are other potential barriers to ensuring that all teachers receive high-quality professional development which have emerged in EEF trials:

- leadership support
- teacher turnover
- demands on staff, school, and systems

(Fletcher-Wood and Zuccollo, 2020)

## Evaluating CPD

Evaluation is a central element of understanding whether or not a professional development programme is effective. This must include some measurement of student learning outcomes – something too often missed when teachers make plans based on what they are going to do, rather than what they want students to know and be able to do (Guskey, 2002).

Guskey identifies a 5-level approach to evaluation of impact:

Level 1 – participants' reactions

Level 2 – Participants' learning

Level 3 – organisational support and change

Level 4 – participants' use of new knowledge and skills

Level 5 – student learning outcomes

He emphasises the importance of starting with the desired result of improving outcomes (Guskey, 2016).

One important element of evaluation to remember is to look for evidence, not proof that supports the outcome you wanted. It is also important to check for any unintended consequences (Guskey, 2002).



**The Learning-Transfer Evaluation Model**  
Abbreviated as LTEM (Pronounced "L-T-E-M")

1	Attendance	Learner signs up, starts, attends, or completes a learning experience. <i>A metric inadequate to validate learning success—because learners may attend but not learn.</i>
2	Activity	Learner engages in activities related to learning. • <b>Measures of Attention</b> <i>A metric inadequate to validate learning success—because learners may pay attention but not learn.</i> • <b>Measures of Interest</b> <i>A metric inadequate to validate learning success—because learners may show interest but not learn.</i> • <b>Measures of Participation</b> <i>A metric inadequate to validate learning success—because learners may participate but not learn.</i>
3	Learner Perceptions	Learner is queried in a way that does NOT reveal insights on learning effectiveness. • <b>Examples: Measures that target Learner Satisfaction, Course Reputation, etc.</b> <i>A metric inadequate to validate learning success—because such perceptions are not always related to learning results.</i>
4	Knowledge	Learner is queried in a way that reveals insights related to learning effectiveness. • <b>Examples: Measures that target Learner Comprehension, Realistic Practice, Learner Motivation to Apply, After-Learning Support, etc.</b> <i>Such measures can hint at outcomes but should be augmented with objective outcome measures.</i>
5	Decision Making Competence	Learner answers questions about facts/terminology. • <b>Knowledge Recitation</b> —during or right after learning event. <i>Usually inadequate because focusing terminology does not fully enable performance.</i> • <b>Knowledge Retention</b> —after several days or more. <i>Usually inadequate because remembering terminology does not fully enable performance.</i>
6	Task Competence	Learner makes decisions given relevant realistic scenarios. • <b>Decision Making Competence</b> —during or right after learning event. <i>Not a fully adequate metric because learners may forget decision making competencies.</i> • <b>Remembered Decision Making Competence</b> —after several days or more. <i>Adequate TO CERTIFY DECISION MAKING COMPETENCY.</i>
7	Transfer	Learner performs relevant realistic actions and decision making. • <b>Task Competence</b> —during or right after learning event. <i>Not a fully adequate metric because learners may forget their task competencies.</i> • <b>Remembered Task Competence</b> —after several days or more. <i>Adequate TO CERTIFY TASK COMPETENCY.</i>  <small>NOTE: "Tasks" comprise both decision making and action taking. For example, a person learning to write poetry could <i>decide</i> to use metaphor, could <i>act</i> to use it, or could do both.</small>
8	Effects of Transfer	When learner uses what was learned to perform work tasks successfully—as clearly demonstrated through objective measures. • <b>Assisted Transfer</b> —when performance is substantially prompted/supported. <i>Adequate TO CERTIFY ASSISTED TRANSFER.</i> • <b>Full Transfer</b> —when learner demonstrates full agency in apply the learning. <i>Adequate TO CERTIFY FULL TRANSFER.</i>  <b>Effects of Transfer:</b> including outcomes affecting (a) learners, (b) coworkers/family/friends, (c) organization, (d) community, (e) society, and (f) the environs. <i>Certification at this level requires certification of transfer plus a rigorous method of assessing transfer's causal impact—including positive and negative effects.</i>

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A further evaluation model is the learning-transfer evaluation model (LTEM) devised by Thalheimer. In this, the lower levels address attendance and activity but only lightly touch on learner perceptions. The higher levels seek to evaluate decision-making competence and ultimately the transfer of learning and effects of transfer (Thalheimer, 2018).

## Engaging with research

Engaging critically with research and selecting evidence-based approaches are now specific features of the reformed National Professional Qualifications (DfE, 2020c) and the CCF/ECF.

Most teachers value research evidence with classroom teachers primarily drawing on research evidence to integrate and trial in their own practice. At an organisational level, strongly research-engaged schools were highly effective and well-led, integrating evidence into all aspects of their work with an ethos of continual improvement. School leaders' support for engagement with research is an important driver (Coldwell *et al.*, 2017).

Teachers are most likely to trust research evidence when it is supported by other evidence sources (Coldwell *et al.*, 2017). To enable greater adoption of evidence-informed approaches, the first challenge is to achieve clarity and purpose around what we mean by terms such as evidence-informed, or research-led. The second is to articulate the benefits clearly to teachers, and the third to enable leaders to build the capacity to integrate these approaches into whole school systems (Griffiths and Stefanini, 2020).

One approach is to see evidence-informed practice as drawing on research, but alongside experience, expertise and professional judgement, as well as recognising the specific context, as in the figure below (Griffiths and Stefanini, 2020).

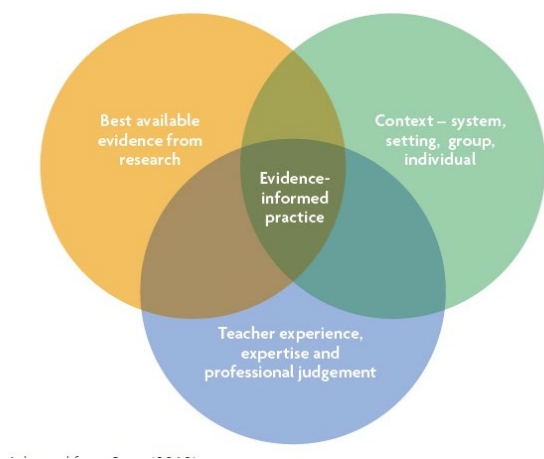
The Kirkpatrick model of training evaluation encourages viewing it as part of the design process: identifying the goals for the programme, the structure and content, what you want to confirm along the way and report at the end.

- Level 4 results: what are the outcomes and key metrics you want improved as a result of the programme?
- Level 3 behaviour: what do you expect programme members to do on the job as a result of the training? What support and accountability will be provided?
- Level 2 learning: what data might be collected in relation to the learning?
- Level 1 reaction: how interested are you in knowing what participants thought about the programme itself?

Beyond these levels, they also suggest that training evaluation focuses on what happens after the training, when programme members are attempting to apply what they have learnt in their daily practice. They identify four important required drivers for support:

1. Monitoring – how will you know?
2. Reinforcing – send the message that the outcome is important, possibly offer refreshers.
3. Encouraging – offer ongoing support.
4. Reward – maybe introduce a formal reward system or informal e.g. praise

(Kirkpatrick and Kayser Kirkpatrick, 2018).



(Source: Figure 1, Griffiths and Stefanini, 2020)

Also referred to as practitioner enquiry, some schools have integrated classroom action research into their performance management approaches (Tomsett and Uttley, 2020).

## **Initial teacher training/education (ITT/ITE)**

Initial teacher training has undergone significant change recently, with the introduction of the core content framework (DfE, 2019b) and the market review and reaccreditation process (DfE, 2021b) (DfE, 2021c). There is a perceived tension in the sector between the need to prepare teachers to enter the classroom as quickly as possible (partly in response to a challenging recruitment context) and educating them to be critically reflective practitioners entering the profession for a prolonged period. The training routes available reflect this tension in part, with school-centred training via SCITT providers, Schools Direct or Teach First, and more traditional routes via universities (Brooks, 2021).

One of the challenges of ITE/ITT is that the learning process is split between the provider and the school/s in which placements take place. In some cases, such as Teach First and Schools Direct salaried routes, the school is the employer. This means that the school mentor has a significant responsibility for, and influence on, the progress and development of the trainee.

In its research into ITE partnerships, 'Building Great Teachers', Ofsted suggests that one example of poor practice lies in a focus on how to maximise progress 8 scores, rather than in subject knowledge pedagogy (Ofsted, 2020a). This may challenge any direct attempts to measure teacher effectiveness by pupil outcomes, and raises an important question about how to evaluate progress and performance in trainees.

## **Induction/early career teachers (ECTs)**

The introduction of the Early Career Framework (DfE, 2019a) lengthened the induction period of newly qualified teachers from one to two years. It also provided a framework for a support entitlement, delivered either by schools or through providers (DfE, 2021a). Again, the school-based mentor has an essential role in this development and support provision.

## Mentoring

School mentors play an essential role in the training of teachers and also early career teachers. Arguably, they can also play an important role in supporting school leaders.

*[A] mentor is a suitably experienced teacher who has formal responsibility to work collaboratively within the ITT partnership to help ensure the trainee receives the highest-quality training.*

## Purpose

The aim of initial teacher education and the early career framework is to ensure that teachers have the qualities, skills and characteristics that will enable them to have a successful career in education (Tickell, 2019).

Changes to initial teacher education and a proliferation of alternative routes, particularly an increase in school-based training, have changed the nature of the relationship between school mentors and trainees. Along with an increased entitlement to support for early career teachers, this means the quality of mentor practices is ever more important (Lofthouse, 2018).

There is a lack of clarity around the purpose of mentoring in teacher education. This can lead to unrealistic expectations but also explains variability and inconsistency, with a focus on hoop jumping rather than teacher development (Hobson and Malderez, 2013). It must be remembered that a mentor should not only be supporting the beginner teacher in the current context but enabling them to thrive in any future professional context.

Following the Carter Review in 2015 (Carter, 2015), a set of non-statutory standards for mentors in ITT were produced in 2016 with the threefold aim of:

- fostering greater consistency in the quality of mentors by identifying effective characteristics
- raising the profile of mentoring and providing a framework for professional development of mentors
- contributing towards building a culture of coaching and mentoring in schools

(Teaching Schools Council, 2016)

## Frameworks

An institutional framework for developing mentoring is essential in supporting teachers. Effectiveness will be compromised as long as approaches are inconsistent. According to Cunningham, a fully-fledged mentoring system goes beyond supporting trainee teachers and encompasses supporting newly qualified teachers, under-performing teachers, or developing new mentors (Cunningham, 2007).

Cunningham further highlights the practical challenges around the ability of institutions to motivate staff to undertake mentoring, the provision of adequate and effective induction and support systems for mentors and mechanisms for evaluating the outcomes of mentoring to ascertain areas for future improvement (Cunningham, 2007).

Hobson and Maxwell highlighted that Cunningham's work was not based upon empirical evidence and have developed this work further to reconceptualise the architecture for mentoring. They add a superstructure to the substructures outlined by Cunningham (Hobson and Maxwell, 2020).

Design features for effective mentoring (Cunningham, 2007)		Empirical support for these features (Hobson and Maxwell, 2020)
1	An institutional commitment to mentoring	Organisational commitment – mentors recognised, valued and rewarded particularly through time
2	An appropriate institutional ethos	Overlap with 1
3	The physical resources for mentoring	Insufficient evidence
4	Mentor induction, training and support	Emphasis on importance of skill set for mentoring, not just experience
5	The selection and accreditation of mentors	Perceived variability in quality due to absence of rigorous selection methods – ‘by default’ approach  Insufficient evidence around accreditation/certification
6	Clarity and consistency regarding mentoring roles	Key factor in presence or absence of explicit account of roles and responsibilities and entitlements of both mentors and mentees
7	Subject/age phase specificity	Adds significant value to mentoring through supporting wider range of PD needs
8	Evaluating the impact of mentoring	Insufficient evidence

The CUREE national framework for mentoring and coaching identifies a set of 10 key principles for mentoring and coaching:

- a learning conversation
- a thoughtful relationship
- a learning agreement
- combining support from fellow professional learners and specialists
- growing self-direction
- setting challenging and personal goals
- understanding why different approaches work
- acknowledging the benefits to the mentors and coaches
- experimenting and observing
- using resources effectively

It also draws out some differences between mentoring and coaching and lists key skills required for each role (CUREE, 2005).

The UCL mentoring handbook suggests a programme framework but also outlines roles and relationships (UCL, 2019).

The Education and Training Foundation has commissioned a national mentoring framework

and accompanying guides for mentors, mentees and leaders (Education and Training Foundation, 2021).

The GROW model is a way of structuring effective coaching conversations and is often used in mentoring.

- Step 1: what are your Goals?
- Step 2: what is the Reality?
- Step 3: what are your Options?
- Step 4: what Will you do?

(Performance Consultants, 2020)

## Mentoring relationships

*[Mentoring is] a formal, one-to-one relationship, usually between a relatively inexperienced teacher (the mentee) and a relatively experienced one (the mentor), which is intended to support the*

*mentee's (though may also support the mentor's) learning, development and well-being.*

(Hobson and Maxwell, 2020)

The mentoring relationship in initial teacher education is a relatively short one, taking place over weeks rather than years. Whilst additional mentoring is now an entitlement through the ECF, this does not ensure continuity of the mentoring relationship. It is important, therefore, to establish a rapport quickly in order to enable an open and trusting relationship to develop (Tickell, 2019).

Hobson and Maxwell address the question of pairing of mentees and mentors, with a number of factors identified as increasing the likelihood of achieving a successful pairing. They suggest it is vital that the mentor has credibility with mentees and is seen to have relevant knowledge and experience beyond their subject/vocational specialism. They further argue that mentoring was perceived as more effective when line managers were not also mentors (Hobson and Maxwell, 2020).

The openness of the mentoring relationship can determine the effectiveness of that relationship as it may make it difficult for the mentee to reflect honestly on their experiences (Tickell, 2019).

Many mentors do not volunteer, but are asked or even directed to undertake the role (Tickell, 2019).

Performativity culture also pervades the mentoring relationship, with the mentor also performing the role of 'judge' against the Teachers' Standards. This affects the relationship and will influence the dynamics, although the impact on the effectiveness of the process is hard to ascertain (Tickell, 2019).

An earlier study by Scandura considers the relational dysfunction that can occur within the mentoring relationship as having significant potential negative consequences. It highlights how formalised mentoring relationships can create a potential source of conflict and their questionable

efficacy in terms of performance. Dysfunctional mentoring has been categorised as comprising one or more of the following:

- negative relations
- sabotage
- difficulty
- spoiling
- submissiveness
- deception
- harassment (Scandura, 1998)

## **Recruitment and selection**

The Carter Review found variability in the methods used for identifying and recruiting mentors, as well as in training and quality assurance. The review called for greater status and recognition within schools and the ITT system. Whilst changes have been seen within ITT and the new ECF, it is unclear what, if any, changes have been made within schools (Carter, 2015).

Recommendation 11 in the Carter Review called for selection of excellent teachers as mentors, those who can explain and demonstrate outstanding practice (Carter, 2015).

Weak methods of mentor selection have contributed to variation and idiosyncrasies in mentoring. Mentors may lack appropriate knowledge, skills and characteristics required (Hobson and Malderez, 2013).

The key element of what makes a good mentor is often identified as good communication skills, particularly actively listening but there is relatively little empirical evidence.

In 2016 The Teaching Schools Council drew up a set of non-statutory mentor standards following the Carter Review. These identify four separate but related areas with the first being personal qualities:

*Establishing trusting relationships, modelling high standards of practice, and empathising with the challenges a trainee faces.*

This is further elaborated by reference to being approachable, making time for the trainee and prioritising meetings and discussions. But also using effective interpersonal skills and offering support with integrity, honesty and respect (Teaching Schools Council, 2016).

The Carter Review identified four characteristics of effective mentoring:

1. outstanding teachers who are skilled in deconstructing and explaining their practice
2. subject and phase experts, aware of the latest developments (should be members of subject networks and associations)
3. secure understanding of teachers' standards and a range of methods for assessing against those standards
4. strong role models of all the Teachers' Standards and in their engagement with research (Carter, 2015)

## Subject-specific specialists

The ITE framework requires mentors to 'draw on and model expert application of their own knowledge and skills, relevant to their subject and phase'. The ability of mentors and other trainers to provide high-quality subject training will be part of the evaluation of ITE (Ofsted, 2020b).

The role of the mentor in developing subject-specific curriculum and pedagogical understanding requires mentoring practices to be developed in relation to the subject. Using shared scholarship as the basis for reflective discussion is beneficial to both mentor and mentee and forms part of the induction into a community of practice (Healy, 2019).

Hobson points to scholarship as a strong basis for shared discourse and professional learning (Hobson *et al.*, 2009).

## Professional development

Mentoring brings benefits to the mentors as a professional development opportunity, and for building the capacity of the whole school. Good programmes will give careful thought as to how to train and recognise mentors effectively (Carter, 2015). Mentoring can provide a focus for a model of individual professional learning and institutional growth, to support and sustain teachers (Lofthouse, 2018).

Whilst we can draw on the science of learning in designing training, it is important to consider key differences between andragogy and pedagogy. The importance of understanding 'why' and the self-concept and prior knowledge of the learner, are key to developing an effective mentoring relationship which will benefit both partners (Tickell, 2019). Teacher education also heavily focuses on experiential learning and reflection, aligning with Kolb's model (Kolb, 1984).

## Assessment role

Mentors take on a wide range of roles: as educator, model, acculturator, sponsor and emotional support. However, they may also adopt the role of judge, revealing their own judgements or evaluations of a mentee's planning and or teaching through feedback or comments. This can compromise the mentoring relationship and its potential benefits (Hobson and Malderez, 2013).



## Performance management/ appraisal

Performance management has a statutory basis which outlines what an employer must do by law. The mandatory provisions are set out in two documents:

- the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (Secretary of State for Education, 2012)
- the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) (DfE, 2019c)

The appraisal process is intended to be supportive and developmental, enabling teachers to continue to develop their professional practice. Objectives should contribute to plans for improving educational provision and performance, and improving the education of pupils at the school (DfE, 2012).

Too often the appraisal process is used judgementally, holding teachers to account, often for outcomes over which they have limited control.

## Performance-related pay

Since September 2014 all schools have been required to have a performance-related pay (PRP) system, but schools are left to determine the nature of the scheme themselves (DfE, 2018). This is in spite of the evidence that PRP does not motivate teachers and has no significant impact on student outcomes (Marsden, 2009) (EEF, 2020). There is some evidence that a bonus system (rather than PRP linked to progression) had some positive impact but it was unclear whether it demonstrated a positive response to direct financial incentives in terms of extra effort, or that effort was diverted from other activities. The report concluded that cohort variation was a far more significant indicator of performance variation than teacher effectiveness or incentive schemes (Atkinson *et al.*, 2004).

A look at the overall picture reveals no relationship between average student performance in a country and the use of performance-based pay schemes (OECD, 2012). Not only that, but further research suggests that

the use of PRP can lead to discriminatory outcomes, with an NEU survey published in 2018 finding that the teachers most likely not to have received a cost-of-living pay increase were female, disabled, LGBT+, non-white British and part-time teachers (NEU, 2019b).

A DfE report into teachers' pay reform found that whilst a majority of teachers were positive towards the implementation of their school's pay policy, it also revealed that 40% did not agree that it treated all staff equally without favouritism, 43% didn't agree it was clear and easy to understand and 48% thought that it was not applied consistently across all teachers. More importantly, only 27% agreed that it helped to motivate underperforming teachers and 38% that it helped to motivate teachers already performing well. A further concern was that a majority of teachers (66%) thought that their school's current pay policy had added to their workload and 58% thought that it had made no difference to the way they worked (Sharp *et al.*, 2017).

After numerous reports of demoralised staff following denial of progression (Whittaker, 2019), a number of schools and trusts have now ended the use of performance-related pay due to the anxiety it caused for teachers and the lack of impact on student performance (Roberts, 2020).

## Appraisal and capability

The DfE has provided a model that schools may choose to adapt and adopt, which outlines the sorts of questions school need to ask in order to determine their policies, for example setting objectives (DfE, 2012). Importantly, the guidance to implementing policy highlights that objectives 'should not be based on teacher-generated data and predictions, and school and trust leaders should not make pay progression for teachers dependent on the assessment data for a single group of pupils'. (DfE, 2018). Further guidance from the Workload Advisory Group explains that 'Suitable teacher performance goals include those related to their classroom instructional practices, their contributions to the development of school curriculum and the relationships they uphold with pupils, colleagues and parents'. (Teacher Workload Advisory Group, 2018, p. 17). Where

targets are set in relation to pupil performance, the data must be robust and they should not be used in isolation from other factors (DfE, 2018). The NEU advises against setting objectives relating to specific percentage targets or outcomes from tests or examinations (NEU, 2019a), and NASUWT calls on teachers to resist the imposition of such targets (NASUWT, 2018).

Capability procedures should only be used in cases of serious underperformance which the appraisal process has been unable to address. Appraisal reviews should contain no surprises, so there should have been informal efforts to support before moving to capability (DfE, 2012).

## Accountability

At the heart of leadership is the challenge to balance trust and autonomy for teachers and staff with accountability and quality assurance. A deficit model that assumes carrot and stick as the simplest model to incentivise teachers, ignores the reality that the vast majority of teachers are already motivated to do the best they can for pupils. Current systems based on target grades for example, encourage institutional isomorphism and create perverse incentives to focus on things that may not benefit the many, but only the few (Didau, 2020).

A system of checks and balances is necessary, but the methods need careful consideration. However, when the pressure intensifies we can confuse 'looking good' with 'being good' (Evans, 2019).

Intelligent accountability is most likely to result in positive behaviours and improved performance when:

1. We know we will be accountable to an audience before we are judged or commit to a course of action.
2. The audience's views are unknown.
3. We believe the audience is well informed and interested in accuracy (Didau, 2020, p. 82)

## Quality assurance

Quality assurance can be seen as the process of providing confidence in how a process is

performed or how a product is made. In a school, this usually relates to the teaching of a lesson, however the desired outcome may be the performance of students in external exams. The relationship between the two is a complex one and cannot be attributed to an individual teacher.

Didau suggests that the process of quality assurance goes wrong when we tell teachers what 'right' looks like before they begin. In other words, we are checking that they have done things in the way they have been told (Didau, 2020). This puts compliance above innovation. It reinforces existing methods and approaches, rather than enabling teachers to consider whether or not there are better ways and/ or whether they are having the effect we intend.

With the example of marking, we can consider the desired outcome – students' work is excellent/ improving. An accountability process might check for a teacher's marking and question where it is absent, or not having an impact. An intelligence process might look for evidence that the outcome has been achieved, and ask questions only when it has not, regardless of the marking (Didau, 2020, pp. 90–91).

## Autonomy and trust

Teachers' autonomy over their professional development goal setting is particularly low, but it is the most associated with job satisfaction. Greater autonomy over professional development goals has great potential for improving teacher job satisfaction and retention (Worth and Van Den Brande, 2020).

## Sources of evidence

The DfE highlights the most common types of evidence used to assess teacher effectiveness (Sharp *et al.*, 2017):

- pupil progress
- classroom observation
- Teachers' Standards
- measures linked to the school improvement plan and
- pupil attainment

Fewer used:

- feedback from parents/carers

- feedback from colleagues
- additional responsibilities

## Pupil progress

Measuring pupil progress is problematic (CEM, 2019), making it an uncertain method of evidence to measure teacher effectiveness. David Didau challenges the very concept of progress in terms of an implicit belief that results should always be improving, arguing that it is not possible for student learning to progress in a short time, or at a great rate, and continue for an extended period (Didau, 2015).

Learning progressions such as those espoused in KS3 levels or assessing pupil progress (APP) were abandoned as it was recognised that huge lists of descriptors assigned a linear progression which did not match the progression of most students (Ashman, 2019). Evaluating teachers by tracking pupil progress may have a negative impact by distorting pedagogy (Gibbons, 2019) and Ofsted has stated that internal school data will no longer be used as evidence relating to progress (Harford, 2018). In the absence of levels, many secondary schools have adopted flight paths that reduce GCSE grades to a linear progression. As GCSE grades are summative and norm-referenced, and grounded in the curriculum, applying a grade to a Year 7 or suggesting they move from a grade 2 to 3 in Year 8, just replaces one inaccurate and vague system with another (Ford, 2016a). We need to understand what it means for a student to get better at a subject without the use of meaningless grades (Ford, 2016b), before we can even begin to think about using pupil progress across a one-year period as being a valid means of evaluating teacher effectiveness.

When progress metrics are used as part of the appraisal process, there is a real risk of teacher bias distorting the accuracy of results (Christodoulou, 2019).

## Classroom observation/learning walks

Key question: does observation improve teaching? In most schools observations are used as summative rather than formative assessment

of teacher effectiveness, despite the lack of reliability and validity of such judgements made three times a year. For this reason, Ofsted abandoned grading individual lessons, although many schools still continue to grade lessons using Ofsted categories, or others of their own devising (Ofsted, 2018). As Mary Myatt points out, what goes wrong is when schools simply aggregate grades from lessons observed and state that these equal the quality of teaching overall (Myatt, 2014).

The problems with lesson observation come from concerns relating to both reliability and validity (Coe, 2014). In terms of reliability, studies looking at whether two independent observers can make judgements that agree have found a wide range of outcomes. Studies show a range of 0.24 to 0.68, meaning that if a lesson was judged 'outstanding' by one observer, the probability that a second observer would give a different judgement was between 51% and 78% (Mihaly *et al.*, 2013). The best case after 12 days' training was an inter-rater reliability of 0.7 (Sammons *et al.*, 2006) with the worst case being untrained raters using their own criteria and achieving an inter-rater reliability of just 0.24 (Strong, Gargani and Lu, 2011).

Is observation even a valid means of determining teacher effectiveness? Experienced teachers and headteachers untrained in observation correctly identified above and below average teachers less than 50% of the time – worse than pure chance (Strong, Gargani and Lu, 2011). At this level of accuracy, fewer than 1% of those judged inadequate are genuinely inadequate, and only 4% of those outstanding. At the root of the problem, is that we see what we expect: if we expect them to be effective teachers, then we interpret whatever occurs in a positive light, and vice versa (Didau, 2020).

Overall, 63% of judgements will be wrong. In other words, we don't know good teaching when we see it!

The main reasons for this are the beliefs held by teachers around observation:

1. Observation provokes a strong emotional response e.g. based on preferred style.

2. Learning is invisible e.g. we judge using poor proxies for learning.<sup>1</sup>
3. Accepted 'good practice' may be more fashionable than effective.
4. We assume that if you can do it you can spot it.
5. We don't believe observation can miss so much – inattentional blindness.

This means we need to do observation in the most defensible way:

- Stop assuming that untrained observers can either make valid judgements or provide feedback that improves anything.
- Apply a critical research standard and the best existing knowledge to the process of developing, implementing and validating observation protocols.
- Ensure that good evidence supports any uses or interpretations we make for observations. It follows that appropriate caveats around the limits of such uses should be clearly stated and the use should not go beyond what is justified.
- Undertake robustly evaluated research to investigate how feedback from lesson observation might be used to improve teaching quality (Coe, 2014).

The evidence of classroom observation having a measurable impact on student outcomes is limited. One study demonstrated no impact (EEF, 2018).

## Teachers' Standards

*'Teachers' performance should be assessed against the relevant Teachers' Standards to a level that is consistent with what should reasonably be expected of a teacher in the relevant role and at the relevant stage of their career. Headteachers and other appraisers should use their professional judgement when appraising teachers' performance. It is not necessary for schools to adopt rigid models that seek to set out exactly what the relevant standards*

*mean for teachers at different stages in their careers and teachers should not be expected routinely to provide evidence that they meet all the standards.'* (DfE, 2018)

NASUWT warns against self-review in any guise being part of the appraisal system. It is not required by the 2012 regulations and it creates additional work and bureaucracy. They also argue that such systems encourage teachers to be overly self-critical which could prejudice career and future pay progression (NASUWT, 2018).

## Link to school improvement plan

This is uncontroversial, provided objectives are reasonable, focused on improving student outcomes and within the control of the teacher.

## Pupil attainment

Whilst there is a lot of discomfort around the talk of genetic determinants of educational outcomes, there is strong evidence that out-of-school factors have a far greater impact on educational outcomes. One such study claims that the teacher factor may only account for 1–14% of outcomes (Shakeshaft *et al.*, 2013). Student performance does reflect school effectiveness, but also individual intellectual ability, motivation and the difficulty of assessment. If students' exam scores are only partially attributable to teaching quality, and results are volatile from cohort to cohort (despite teaching practices staying the same), should schools and teachers be held accountable (Crawford and Benton, 2017)? As a result, 'the success of an education professional cannot be gauged using the metrics of progress and attainment of their students' (Rogers, 2017).

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<sup>1</sup> Poor proxies for learning: Students are busy: lots of work is done (especially written work)

- Students are engaged, interested, motivated
- Students are getting attention: feedback, explanations
- Classroom is ordered, calm, under control

- Curriculum has been 'covered' (ie presented to students in some form)
- (At least some) students have supplied correct answers (whether or not they really understood them or could reproduce them independently) (Coe, 2013)

## Staff wellbeing

Teach First considers wellbeing to be about how comfortable, happy and healthy you are in your workplace.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on teacher wellbeing since 2020, particularly for those in leadership roles. The 2020 Teacher Wellbeing Index took place during the COVID-19 lockdown, when schools were closed to the majority of pupils. Its main findings were:

1. Stress levels remain high.
2. Symptoms of poor wellbeing have increased.
3. High workload is a key factor influencing staff retention.
4. The barriers to reaching out for help remain.
5. Mental health support varies between educational institutions.
6. The wellbeing of UK education professionals is consistently lower than the general population.

(Education Support, 2020)

According to Education Support's Teacher Wellbeing Index 2021, 54% of all staff have considered leaving the education sector in the last two years – 63% of senior leaders and 53% of school teachers. The main reason given was workload, however relationships with the senior leadership team are the ones that affect wellbeing most negatively (Scanlan and Savill-Smith, 2021)

## Mental health

31% of all educational professionals have experienced a mental health issue in the past academic year, with 38% considering that their organisational culture had a negative effect on their mental health and wellbeing (Education Support, 2020).

A considerable majority (61%) of staff feel they do not receive sufficient guidance about their mental health and wellbeing at work (Scanlan and Savill-Smith, 2021).

## Work–life balance

Whilst often conflated with wellbeing, this is about the division of time between work and family or leisure activities. The nature of that balance therefore depends not only on the context of each individual, but their personal preferences and interpretation. This may also change throughout a career in teaching.

## Workload

Workload, particularly the type of work, is driving teachers from the profession, and the burden is not decreasing (Jerrim and Sims, 2019). Some school leaders have stated that tackling workload should be at the heart of any school improvement strategy (Tomsett and Uttley, 2020).

More than three-quarters (76%) of senior leaders and 65% of school teachers cited workload as the main reason for considering leaving their jobs (Education Support, 2020).

Managing workload is a key element of wellbeing which itself is central to focusing on the things that will make the biggest difference to pupil outcomes. A key concept to recognise is that there will never be enough time to do all the things you are expected to do, want to do, or to do them as well as you want to do them (Yusuf, 2020).

## Marking

The time demand of marking is a common complaint but there are numerous ways in which to reduce the burden, from whole class feedback, to highlighting comments.

## Time management

Again, self-awareness is crucial: what times of day are you personally most effective or productive; which tasks can be completed quickly, and which require more time and focus? Consider fixed (meetings, lessons etc.) and flexible times (PPA and non-contact time) (Yusuf, 2020).

## Collaborative strategies

Protecting time to collaborate with colleagues can reduce planning and preparation burden and can improve productivity and wellbeing (Yusuf, 2020).

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