Planning and organisation of teachers' Continuous Professional Development in schools in England

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This article focuses on the planning and organisation of teachers' continuous professional development as part of the nationally representative *Schools and Continuing Professional Development in England – State of the Nation* research study (SoNS), commissioned by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). Thematic analysis of data developed from the literature review, qualitative research, and survey strands of the SoN study led to the identification of four issues related to the planning and organisation of CPD in schools in England: (1) there is a lack of strategic planning of CPD provision to balance effectively between individual and organisational learning needs and national policy priorities; (2) organisational choices made in schools about roles and responsibilities do not always support or help to develop effective CPD planning and provision; (3) little progress has been made in the promotion of the New Professionalism in schools through developing closer alignment between Professional Standards, Performance Management and CPD; (4) school systems and processes for evaluating the effectiveness of CPD provision tend to be developed without reference to planned outcomes, specific criteria or value for money judgements. The article concludes with a number of recommendations for policy and practice.

Keywords: strategic planning of CPD; CPD leadership; performance management; professional standards; continuous professional development; evaluation of CPD

Introduction

This article reports findings and recommendations for policy and practice in relation to the planning and organisation of CPD. This was the second of the three main themes that formed the focus of the 'Schools and Continuing Professional Development in England – State of the Nation' (SoN) study. This theme draws attention to schools and their influence on the quality and effectiveness of CPD. That schools influence the quality of

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teachers' professional learning opportunities through their leadership systems and practices and their organisational cultures and structures is now well established through more than 30 years of research (e.g. Rutter et al. 1979; Pollard 1985; Mortimore et al. 1988; Woods et al. 1997; MacGilchrist et al. 2004; Pedder 2006; Pedder and MacBeath 2008).

A recent example of such research is the 'Learning How to Learn' (LHTL) project (James et al. 2007). As part of this project, Pedder (2006) explicitly investigated the school-level factors that supported teachers' learning. The LHTL survey of 1212 teachers in England identified four organisational factors that accounted for 55.6% of the variation in teacher responses about their learning. These factors included: the involvement of teachers in decision-making; the communication of a clear vision; support for professional learning (via provision of opportunity, class cover, encouragement of experimentation, etc.); and auditing expertise and supporting networking. Additionally, Pedder (2006) reported a statistically significant relationship between the school-level factors – communicating a clear vision, support for professional learning, auditing expertise and supporting networking – and teachers' levels of enquiry and learning. Pedder's work thus demonstrated that:

> if schools are to embody the conditions that optimise and sustain the quality of teachers' and pupils' learning, they need to develop the processes and practices of learning organisations. (Pedder 2006, 175)

MacGilchrist et al. summarise well the connection between organisational learning and individual learning when they argue that:

> a culture of enquiry and reflection pervades the intelligent school and support for teachers' own learning is fundamental to this culture. (MacGilchrist et al. 2004, 94)

Research into school self-evaluation and self-inspection (e.g. Mac-Beath 1999, 2006; Ferguson et al. 2000) emphasises the importance of making explicit connections between pupils' learning, the learning of their teachers, and the organisational growth and learning of the school. Through developing critical and inclusive processes of school self-evaluation, schools can provide effective forms of support for teachers' continuous professional learning and development.

As trust and confidence are built in a school, members of the school community develop the disciplines (Senge 1990, 2000) and dispositions of double-loop organisational learning (Argyris and Schön 1978, 1996). More and more, the values and knowledge, norms and beliefs that shape practice and participation in every layer of school life become explicit and thus open to constructive challenge and critical introspection as a central

feature of the culture and orientation of the school. The use of tools for school self-evaluation, when used and understood as part of a wider organisational learning strategy, can bring into clearer view links and connections as well as misalignments and contradictions between the different spheres, functions, interests and values that make up life in schools.

Research commissioned by the TTA (now the TDA) (2005) suggests that schools, in the main, were struggling to find alignment between the competing needs of individual teachers and their schools. Ofsted (2006) reported that only the best schools had systems in place for effectively balancing between individual and organisational needs. CPD arrangements in schools tended to be too subjective in about a third of schools in so far as they tended to rely on staff's own perceptions of their needs and on the effectiveness of subject leaders to identify needs, while planning for personal professional development in these schools tended to be weak, with few individual training plans.

The review of literature strand of the SoN study (McCormick et al. 2008; McCormick 2010, in this issue) suggests that such a lack of strategic planning and organisation of CPD results in ineffective CPD for both the school and the individual teacher. In light of the importance of strategically planned and well-aligned systems for promoting effective CPD in schools, the SoN study aimed to investigate: the balance between school and individual priorities and needs in CPD planning; alignments between systems and leadership of CPD, performance management and promotion of professional standards; the degree of integration of roles and responsibilities for leading and organising CPD; and processes for evaluating CPD.

Methods

The 'Schools and Continuing Professional Development – State of the Nation' study brought together the results of a mixed-method study comprising three main strands: a literature review of reports of empirical research into CPD since 2004 (see McCormick et al. 2008 for the full report); qualitative 'snapshots' in nine primary and three secondary schools (see Storey et al. 2008 for the full report); and a survey of a national random sample of primary and secondary school teachers in England (see Opfer et al. 2008 for the full report).

Findings

In analysing the results of analysis of data from our three strands (see the introductory article to this special issue by Pedder et al. for a detailed account of the research design and methods of data collection

and analysis), we were primarily interested in identifying overall patterns and themes emerging from the data rather than focusing on the analysis of variables in isolation. To aid in this thematic analysis and also to reduce the number of variables involved, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on responses to items in Sections A and C of the survey. Details of the development of these factors and our analytic procedures are presented in Opfer and Pedder (in press). This analysis allowed us to identify sets of underlying values and practices related to professional learning at both the individual teacher (Section A of the teachers' questionnaire) and school level (Section C of the teachers' questionnaire) (see Pedder et al. 2010, in this issue).

We felt that a thematic analysis of the data would provide us with the best chance of identifying cross-cutting issues related to the three main foci of the study and so inform future CPD policy and programme development at the national level. The thematic analysis of the data resulted in the identification of four issues related to the planning and organisation of CPD in England:

(1) There is a lack of strategic planning of CPD provision to balance effectively between individual and organisational learning needs and national policy priorities.
(2) Organisational choices made in schools about roles and responsibilities do not always support or help to develop effective CPD planning and provision.
(3) Little progress has been made in the promotion of the 'New Professionalism' in schools through developing closer alignment between professional standards, performance management and CPD.
(4) School systems and processes for evaluating the effectiveness of CPD provision tend to be developed without reference to planned outcomes, specific criteria or value-for-money judgements.

Each of these issues is now considered in turn in relation to data from the literature review, qualitative snapshot and survey strands of our research.

Issue 1: There is a lack of strategic planning of CPD provision to balance effectively between individual and organisational learning needs and national policy priorities

Effective strategic planning of CPD in schools involves alignment of school, department and individual staff priorities, set in the context of national policy priorities. As noted in the SoN study literature review

report (McCormick et al. 2008), such alignment requires complex planning processes (CUREE 2008), especially within a shifting policy context. Data from all three strands (literature review, qualitative snapshots and survey) suggest that the task of successfully balancing between national policy, school and individual priorities and ensuring that CPD provision effectively caters to different types of need has proved difficult for schools. Planning and identification of learning needs in the majority of schools in England tends to be unstrategic and erratic, and this results in ineffective CPD for both the school and individual teacher.

Our qualitative data point to a wide diversity of perception among staff at different levels of the school organisation about CPD planning. In four of the 12 snapshot schools informants claimed that their school had a strategic plan for CPD. Three schools were perceived as not having a strategy or a strategic plan, and teachers in the remaining schools expressed mixed views. Furthermore there was wide variation in what was understood by teachers and school leaders as constituting a strategic approach to CPD.

In some schools, CPD opportunities for individual teachers were reported to be very tightly aligned to the school improvement plan and systems of school self-evaluation, and in some cases to national education priorities and developments. In marked contrast, a laissez-faire approach characterised the leadership at one of the snapshot secondary schools; the head teacher, deputy head teacher, CPD leader and a 'senior assistant head teacher' all expressed the view that the staff were dedicated and professional and therefore should have scope for engaging in their preferred CPD activities. Such heavy reliance on staff's own perception of their needs, accompanied by weak personal professional development planning, points to a lack of strategic and aligned approaches to CPD planning. As Storey reports in relation to the SoN CPD study:

> The many different interpretations of what schools mean by 'strategic' CPD in this research serves to explain an earlier Ofsted assessment of CPD as lacking effective strategic thrust (Ofsted 2006). (Storey 2009, 129)

Our qualitative data confirmed that school contexts, culture, structures and recent history directly shaped or influenced teachers' perceptions and experience of CPD planning and provision. CPD programmes at schools with a changed status, such as schools placed in special measures, were usually structured around school-wide targets. In primary schools these focused on improving numeracy and literacy, or some other assessed deficit of performance. However, a common pattern of CPD provision reported by teachers in the snapshot schools emphasised numerous one-off, externally provided, seize-the-moment CPD events of short duration from a range of providers external to the school. These included

individual educational professionals known to the CPD organisers, repeat commercial providers seen as successful, and other teachers in partner schools.

The pattern of a lack of strategic planning for CPD in schools is further reflected in teachers' survey responses about the reasons prompting them to attend CPD (see Table 1). Teachers are prompted to engage in CPD activities for many reasons. The top four reasons teachers recorded in their survey responses were:

- to seek out training they want;
- to seek out training that will help them attain their career aspirations;
- because the activities are related to their performance management review; and
- because their school required them to take part.

Teachers are less likely to attend CPD because of a professional development plan, because an informal opportunity was provided, or because of collective decisions at the school, year or subject level. Thus, the reasons prompting teachers to take part in CPD (taking the responses of all teachers in the sample together) tended to be more personal than collective, and not part of an overarching strategic design, as Table 1 shows.

Table 1. Percentage of teachers responding for reasons prompting participation in CPD.

Reasons prompting participation in CPD	Percentage of teachers responding			
	Not at all	Not a lot	Quite a lot	A lot
I sought out whatever training I wanted	9%	27%	48%	15%
I sought out activities that would help me attain my career aspirations	17%	30%	37%	15%
My line manager and I identified activities related to my performance management review	16%	22%	44%	18%
The school required my participation	12%	17%	48%	24%
A colleague asked me to produce a professional development plan, which I followed	52%	21%	20%	7%
A colleague informally offered opportunities to a group or to me individually	40%	30%	25%	7%
Our school made a collective decision	26%	21%	39%	14%
Our year-level/subject team decided collectively	45%	26%	21%	9%

There are statistically significant differences in the reasons prompting teachers' participation in CPD between school sectors, locations, regions and achievement bands. With regard to school sectors, secondary school teachers sought out activities that would help them attain their career aspirations more often than primary teachers ($p = .028$, Mann-Whitney U). Primary school teachers were significantly more likely than secondary teachers to pursue CPD for the following reasons:

- activities were identified through a performance review ($p = .000$);
- the school required them to participate ($p = .000$);
- colleagues informally offered opportunities ($p = .005$); and
- the school made a collective decision to participate ($p = .000$).

There are four significant differences in the reasons prompting teachers to participate in CPD between different regions. Teachers in the North East, West Midlands and South West are significantly less likely to participate in CPD activities because they will help them attain their career aspirations ($p = .026$). Teachers in the North West are less likely, and teachers in the West Midlands are more likely, to attend CPD activities because their school required them to do so ($p = .020$). Teachers in the East of England region are significantly less likely to attend CPD activities because a colleague informally offered them the opportunity ($p = .043$). Teachers in the North West are less likely, and those in the West Midlands are more likely, to attend CPD activities because their school made a collective decision ($p = .000$).

Three reasons prompting participation in CPD yielded significant differences between teachers from schools in different achievement bands. Teachers from schools in the highest achievement band are more likely than teachers in any of the other achievement bands to attend CPD activities because:

- they sought out whatever training they wanted ($p = .000$); or
- they sought out activities that would help them attain their career aspirations ($p = .035$).

Related to this, teachers from schools in the highest achievement band were the least likely to attend CPD activities because their school had made a collective decision to do so ($p = .001$).

We hypothesised that school cultures characterised by a strong commitment among teachers to school improvement priorities supported by well-developed formal systems of professional development support constitute an important organisational condition for schools balancing effectively between individual and organisational needs and priorities. Such cultures provide space and opportunity for teachers to find and

develop a sense of personal and professional value in undertaking CPD with an explicit orientation to school improvement priorities. In response to our factor 'Promoting commitment to the whole school [among staff] and providing formal systems of professional support', teachers recorded fairly high levels of practice by their school, but these perceptions of practice were lower than their values (see Table 2).

There were, however, significant differences between school sectors. Mean scores for whole-school commitment among staff at primary schools were significantly higher than for staff at secondary schools (see Table 3). Whereas primary school teachers recorded high levels of practice in line with high levels of value, secondary school teachers recorded low levels of practices that were significantly behind the values they placed on them. This appears to indicate difficulties faced by secondary schools in building aspects of school culture that are conducive to the development and use of strategic approaches to CPD planning, possibly related to their size and the strength of subject identities and sub-cultures.

We investigated spending on CPD activities in schools by asking school leaders to provide the percentage of their CPD costs, during the previous 12 months, that was spent on external courses, supply cover to allow teachers to undertake CPD work, school-led CPD, including costs for speakers and consultants, and material and physical resources related

Table 2. Patterns of practices and values for 'promoting commitment to the whole school and providing formal systems of professional support' (scale 0–100).

Promoting commitment to the whole school and providing formal systems of professional support	Values*			Practices**		
	Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α
	81.13	12.41	.80	73.95	20.60	.72
The senior leadership team promotes commitment among staff to the whole school as well as to the department, key stage or year group						
Members of staff see the school improvement plan as relevant and useful for teaching and learning						
Staff development time is used effectively to realise school improvement priorities						
Formal training provides opportunities for staff to develop professionally						
Teachers are helped to develop skills to assess pupils' work in ways that move their pupils on in their learning						

Note: n = 1056.
*Significant differences between mean values (t, 6.046, $p < .001$); **Significant differences between mean practices (t, 19.690, $p < .001$).

to CPD activities. There appeared to be significant variations in the costs provided by schools.

In analysing the costs for all the responding schools, school leaders reported spending a significant proportion, although not a majority, of the costs on supply cover for CPD. Another substantial proportion of their costs was spent on external courses, with less being allocated to school-led CPD and materials.

We also investigated schools' costs for CPD activities by school characteristics, including school sector (primary or secondary), school location (non-rural or rural), region and achievement band.

There are significant differences between primary and secondary schools' spending on CPD activities in all areas of spending. Secondary schools spend significantly more on external courses ($p = .000$, Independent Samples *t-test*) and materials for CPD ($p = .005$) than primary schools. Primary schools spend significantly more on supply cover ($p = .021$) and school-led CPD ($p = .003$) than secondary schools. Significant differences also exist on expenses for school-led CPD ($p = .003$) and materials expenses ($p = .005$) – primary schools spend significantly more on these than secondary schools.

The only significant difference in spending on CPD between rural and non-rural schools was on supply cover for CPD activities. Non-rural schools spend significantly more ($p = .001$, Independent Samples *t-test*) than rural schools on supply cover.

There is one significant difference in spending on CPD between different regions. Costs differ significantly ($p = .000$, ANOVA) between regions on school-led CPD expenses. While there is variation across the regions in budgetary allocation, the rest of the recorded variation is not statistically significant.

Thus, a significant lesson learnt from our analysis of school spending on CPD is that cost allocation is heavily dependent on the individual needs, contexts and staff interests of specific schools.

The picture of CPD planning that emerges from the survey and snapshot schools is a disjointed and erratic one. Schools in England tend

Table 3. Comparison of practices and values recorded by primary and secondary teachers for 'promoting commitment to the whole school and providing formal systems of professional support'.

Promoting commitment to the whole school and providing formal systems of professional support	Values		Practices	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Primary (n = 635)* **	83.56	11.21	81.80	16.14
Secondary (n = 421)* **	77.51	13.23	62.11	20.96

*Significant differences between mean values and practices ($p < .001$); **Significant differences between primary and secondary teachers ($p < .001$).

to lack the strategic planning systems essential to the provision of balanced, effective and well-aligned CPD. Commonly, the patterns of activity and the links that make up a school's 'strategy' were not apparent to key participants. As one head of CPD not untypically observed:

> They [the senior leadership] do their own things well but don't see the connections ... there should be a heart to it and that's what's missing. I think that that's what's stopping the expansion of it [CPD].

Issue 2: Organisational choices made in schools about roles and responsibilities do not always support or help to develop effective CPD planning and provision

The literature review reinforced the claim that CPD is most effective in schools where senior leaders and managers understood its potential and were committed to using CPD as a key driver for school improvement and for enhancing the quality of classroom teaching and learning (e.g. Ofsted 2006). This view found support in both our survey and qualitative data. Organisational choices made by senior leaders about roles, responsibilities and systems were important determinants of the extent to which schools' CPD provision was planned strategically.

Our different data-sets suggest that CPD leadership tends to be diffuse. According to our survey data, only governors (72 per cent) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (67 per cent) are identified as substantial organisers of CPD activity for schools and teachers. Beyond these two groups, the range of organisers varies, with all types of professionals playing some role in the organisation of the CPD offered to teachers in schools.

However, what is also clear from our survey data is that the organisers of CPD activities are rarely the leaders of CPD activities. The organisation and leading of CPD are carried out by different professionals, including subject leaders, consultants and other teachers, and this is reflected in an inverse correlation between those leading and those organising CPD (see Table 4).

The roles of advanced skills teachers (ASTs) and excellent teachers are worth highlighting. Despite the few responses received from ASTs and excellent teachers, they often gave distinctly different responses about their CPD compared to other types of teachers. For instance, the reasons prompting them to participate, and for deciding to participate, in CPD differ from other teachers' reasons; their description of the activities they engage in is different from other teachers' descriptions; and the impacts they report are also different. The CPD that they report taking part in has more effective features, and its impacts are more collective than personal.

Table 4.   Leaders and organisers of CPD activities in which teachers spent the most time.

Percentage of teachers identifying the person as leading or organising the CPD in which they spent the most time		
Person or persons	Led	Organised
Excellent teachers in my school	71%	29%
Excellent teachers from another school	68%	32%
Advanced skills teachers (ASTs) in my school	59%	41%
Advanced skills teachers in another school	74%	27%
Peers	82%	18%
Senior leadership team	67%	34%
Subject leaders	86%	14%
Local authority	72%	28%
CPD leader	57%	44%
Governors	28%	72%
Consultants	83%	17%
University staff	71%	29%
National organisation	67%	34%
DCSF	33%	67%
Non-teaching staff	55%	45%
Other type of professional	77%	23%

While these patterns are tentative, given the few responses, it appears that ASTs and excellent teachers could play an important leadership role in helping schools align programmes of CPD with strategic priorities and performance management.

The challenge of developing strategic approaches to CPD leadership through more integrated systems of roles and responsibilities is reflected in the extent to which performance management and CPD are aligned in schools. Some snapshot schools reported close integration between performance management processes and CPD opportunities. However, the dislocation of CPD and performance management processes in others could be largely attributed to the organisational decision to appoint different members of senior staff to lead these two areas. CPD and performance management systems at the snapshot schools were usually well developed, with known routines and sequences of action attached to each of them respectively. However, alignment between their different and independently developed systems and functions remained undeveloped. One CPD leader criticised the neglected links between CPD and performance management review:

> I should be involved in performance management in order to see links between school and individual priorities. ... [There's] a schism ... and no automatic discussion of CPD.

In some of the snapshot schools a 'strategic' organisational decision not to appoint ASTs and excellent teachers had been shaped by the perception

that such appointments were 'divisive'; in these cases, head teachers had offered new and different roles in the school to retain those who were capable of holding such posts. Elsewhere, current CPD plans were utilising the skills of 'Teaching and Learning Responsibility' (TLR) post-holders. Custom and practice, school context and culture all influenced organisational decision-making. However managed, the absence of ASTs and excellent teachers might be viewed as valuable resources lost. Arguably, more careful distinctions made about the remit of these two roles could contribute fruitfully to CPD planning, provision and leadership.

Issue 3: Little progress has been made in the promotion of the 'New Professionalism' in schools through developing closer alignment between professional standards, performance management and CPD

Ten years after the Green Paper, *Teachers: Meeting the challenge of change* (DfEE 1998), performance management review systems, professional standards, career aspirations and career stages all form recognised elements of the 'New Professionalism' modernisation agenda. In 2008, the reformed performance management system had been operating in schools for a year, although its earlier variants had been experienced by teachers over a number of years.

Bolam and Weindling's (2006) systematic review of 20 studies concluded that there was little direct evidence to demonstrate how the 'New Professionalism', through the recently revised systems of performance management or the *Professional standards for teaching* framework (TDA 2007), was being realised in schools. Furthermore, only weak evidence was available in the reviewed studies to argue that increased teacher retention, a projected outcome of the 'New Professionalism', had resulted.

Aligning performance management with CPD and professional standards

The scarcity of evidence about actual developments in school systems requires further research. Three items on our teachers' survey asked teachers to record values and practices in relation to how they perceived that performance management processes help teachers: (a) become more aware of professional standards; (b) see how their personal professional learning goals relate to school improvement priorities; and (c) achieve their professional learning goals. These items formed the 'Performance management' factor. In relation to this factor, teachers recorded levels of practices that were consistent with their values at reasonably high levels, as Table 5 shows. However, primary teachers recorded levels of both practice and values that were significantly higher than those recorded by secondary teachers (see Table 6).

Table 5. Patterns of practices and values for primary and secondary teachers for performance management practices and values (scale 0–100).

Performance management	Values*			Practices**		
	Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α
	70.91	22.58	.89	68.57	26.80	.89
Performance management processes help teachers become more aware of professional standards						
Performance management processes help teachers to see how their personal professional learning goals relate to school improvement priorities						
Performance management processes help teachers achieve their professional learning goals						

Note: n = 1075.
*Significant differences between mean values (t, 9.155, $p < .001$); **Significant differences between mean practices (t, 18.740, $p < .001$).

Table 6. Comparison of practices and values recorded by primary and secondary teachers for performance management.

Primary/Secondary	Performance management values		Performance management practices	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Primary (n = 644)	74.58	20.09	76.09	23.16
Secondary (n = 431)	65.43	24.88	57.35	27.94

As well as primary school teachers, senior leaders, head teachers, ASTs, excellent teachers and teachers with less than two years' experience placed high value on performance management. And, in addition, there was a great deal of regional variation in terms of teachers' performance management practice and values scores (see Table 7).

The regions that recorded highest levels of practices and values for the helpfulness of performance management for supporting teachers in becoming more aware of professional standards, seeing how their personal professional learning goals related to school improvement priorities and achieving their professional learning goals were Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands, North East and North West. Markedly lower levels of practices and values for performance management were recorded by teachers in the London and Eastern regions respectively. More research is needed to understand what lies behind these regional

Table 7. Comparison of teachers' recorded practices and values by region for performance management.

Region	Performance management values*		Performance management practices**	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Yorkshire and Humber (n = 124)	73.52	20.91	72.92	25.09
East Midlands (n = 113)	71.61	21.41	72.20	26.93
North East (n = 165)	73.59	21.43	71.97	25.14
North West (n = 91)	65.75	26.04	69.69	28.88
West Midlands (n = 86)	69.12	25.32	69.48	26.86
South East (n = 202)	72.21	19.92	69.31	24.05
South West (n = 47)	69.15	24.26	67.91	29.13
London (n = 126)	72.49	22.49	65.94	26.81
Eastern (n = 121)	65.91	24.63	56.41	29.24

*Significant differences between mean values (F, 2.130, $p < .05$); **Significant differences between mean practices (F, 4.433, $p < .001$).

variations and variations in approaches to systems leadership and support at the regional level.

Taking into consideration findings from the SoN CPD literature review, school snapshots and survey data, we conclude that balancing and coordinating systems and processes of performance management that align well with CPD and the *Professional standards for teaching* framework remains a substantial challenge for schools in England.

Professional standards and CPD

In the snapshot schools, strong links were recognised by staff between CPD and the *Professional standards for teaching* framework (TDA 2007) for teachers in some schools, but not in others. Where the link between CPD and the professional standards was recognised and enacted in school systems, there was often an awareness of appropriate professional development activity to achieve a new career-stage position or role.

Teachers involved in mentoring and coaching trainees and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) reported doing so with reference to the *Professional standards*. Mentors and coaches were also conscious that in supporting beginning teachers through mentoring and coaching they were meeting some of their own standards in the process. NQTs at some of the snapshot schools reported that the standards were viewed by them as a new way 'to recognise what we are good at' and as an opportunity for staff beyond NQT stage to retain focus. In other schools, teachers were less aware of the framework of *Professional standards*, and there was little CPD planning and organisation in relation to them.

In about half the snapshot schools, the perspectives expressed by our informants and focus group participants in relation to CPD activities tended to vary by a teacher's career stage. Beginning teachers' perspectives were particularly distinctive. For example, they tended to be more approving of accreditation because of its potential as a means for career-stage promotion. Beginning teachers also saw CPD as an entitlement and something that would equip them for the next career stage or role development. By contrast, more experienced teachers, and those near retirement, were less interested in CPD for career development. Instead, for many of these teachers, the value of CPD was expressed in terms of its influence on their classroom practice.

In about half of the snapshot schools, focus groups rated accreditation of CPD last or almost last in terms of CPD prioritisation. A common view expressed by informants was nicely reflected by a teacher who remarked: 'You can be accredited all you like, but if you are no good in the classroom you are not doing the children any good.'

There was no consensus about whether the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) degree would significantly raise the status of the profession, function as an attractive recruitment element or act as a factor that would encourage retention.

Evidence of a culture change in teaching in the snapshot schools was noted by experienced teachers and was seen to be located in a series of structural changes: the phased introduction of the *Professional standards* framework, the performance management review processes and, arguably, a more systematic set of CPD opportunities being planned and provided for teachers.

Issue 4: School systems and processes for evaluating the effectiveness of CPD provision tend to be developed without reference to planned outcomes, specific criteria or value-for-money judgements

A dominant view emerging from the literature is that evaluation processes constitute a problem area for schools (Goodall et al. 2005; CUREE 2008). The TTA reported in 2005 that:

> Most schools do not have established processes for evaluating the impact of CPD at school, teacher or pupil level. (TTA 2005, 6)

Bolam and Weindling (2006) concluded that schools found it difficult to evaluate the impact of CPD. The later CUREE study for the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) (CUREE 2008) also noted similar limitations with regard to schools' systems of CPD evaluation. The literature review for this study (McCormick et al. 2008) does not reveal any improvement.

Goodall et al. (2005) report that the focus of CPD evaluation in many schools tends to be on participant self-satisfaction of a CPD event, value for money, participant learning, knowledge and skills, views/attitudes, behaviour, participants' use of knowledge and skills, support from the school, and changes in pupil behaviour.

The main form of evaluation reported by teachers in the snapshot schools is the elicitation of the views of participants, usually through questionnaires in relation to a specific CPD event and its level of interest, perceived relevance, and usefulness for developing knowledge and skills. Ofsted reported that:

> Few of the schools evaluated successfully the impact of CPD on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement because they did not identify the intended outcomes clearly at the planning stage. (Ofsted 2006, 4)

Our data from the snapshot schools are fully consistent with Ofsted's finding.

In a 2005 study, Goodall found that the most commonly used evaluation tool by schools was a survey or questionnaire. The use of this method across schools, however, was found to be highly variable and in many cases problematic, since the completion of the survey or questionnaire was viewed as an end in itself and did not lead to further review of school systems and practices. In the same study, schools highlighted a need for CPD provision to help them carry out evaluation more effectively (Goodall et al. 2005, 11).

In their study for the GTC, Cordingley and colleagues at CUREE (2008) report that the gap between this problematic situation and the aspiration of 'strategic evaluation' is a wide one. CUREE pointed to such processes as annual department review, a systematic use of data monitoring, the use of coaching, and assessing goals and targets through the performance management system, with follow-up support mechanisms to achieve agreed goals as useful and effective (CUREE 2008, 31).

In 10 of the 12 snapshot schools evaluation forms were used, but in some cases the purposes of these were not evident. Teachers in three of the snapshot schools reported the involvement of pupils in the CPD evaluation process, yet they also reported that the involvement of pupils in CPD evaluation was more of a promising development than an embedded feature of the evaluation process. Overall, data from the snapshot schools suggest that evaluation of CPD is instinctive and pragmatic with reference to outcomes that are insufficiently specified and insufficiently linked to pupil learning outcomes, school improvement

and self-evaluation. There was no evidence in the 12 schools of a detailed and criterion-referenced value-for-money calculation of a CPD activity in which teachers had participated or might do so, as part of an established evaluation and action process.

Conclusions and recommendations: planning and organisation of CPD

The planning and organisation of CPD in schools is hampered by a lack of strategic planning which reflects and reinforces difficulties schools have in balancing successfully between national policy, school and individual development priorities and ensuring that CPD provision effectively caters to different types of need. As a result, CPD tends to be fragmented and to consist of one-off events from a range of external providers. Consistent with the widespread absence of strategic approaches to CPD planning, the reasons that prompted teachers to participate in CPD tended to be personal and not linked to collective decision-making or an overarching strategic design. The problem that CPD in schools in England lacks strategic thrust is further complicated by the diffuse and uncoordinated nature of much CPD leadership and organisation in schools. Organisational choices made in schools about roles and responsibilities do not always support or help to develop strategic CPD planning or provision. CPD activity in schools tends to be organised and led by different people. There is also a lack of integration in schools' performance management and CPD systems and only patchy alignment between professional standards, performance management and CPD. Finally, our data support the common pattern of findings in the research literature that most schools lack established and well-embedded systems for the evaluation of the impact of CPD at school, teacher or pupil level. In the light of our data, we arrive at the depressing conclusion that CPD in schools in England is, in the main, erratic, poorly planned and poorly evaluated, and not an articulated, coherent strand of schools' coordinated school improvement strategies.

In the light of these issues related to the planning and organisation of CPD in schools in England, a number of recommendations for policy and practice were made. First, all staff in schools need to be supported in understanding core elements and processes of a genuinely strategic plan for CPD and in understanding in specific school contexts what constitutes an optimal balance between the range of individual teachers' development needs and school development and policy priorities. In relation to this balance, school leaders need to know and inform staff of the full range of CPD processes and provision at school, and their rationale.

Second, school leaders need to be supported in appreciating that organisational choices about role functions and systems can encourage or undermine strategic planning and implementation of CPD. School leaders need to be alerted to the disadvantages of disparate systems, led by different teams, for CPD and performance management processes and to be helped to find ways of developing more integration between the two. More specifically, school leaders could profitably be alerted to the distinctive remit of ASTs and excellent teachers and further develop the potential of these post-holders within schools' CPD contexts.

Finally, clear guidance is needed to help school leaders develop appropriate evaluation systems and processes that are explicitly linked to planning, especially to planned outcomes related to pupils' learning and school improvement. Staff at all levels of the school organisation need to be helped to 'see' and understand the potential of strategically planned and evaluated CPD for enhancing the quality of pupils' and teachers' learning opportunities and outcomes, and for school improvement. In relation to this, school leaders also need to be supported in building capacity for developing methods and procedures for undertaking criterion-referenced value-for-money analyses of costs and benefits associated with different and particular forms and processes of CPD.

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