

Teachers' Professional Development Expert Group – *The Standard for Teachers' Professional Development*

Dear Nick,

The Standard for Teachers' Professional Development and accompanying guidance

As the Teachers' Professional Development Expert Group we were asked to create a Standard for Teachers' Professional Development and accompanying guidance.

Developing this standard has been a privilege, a challenge and, we believe, an important undertaking with the potential to help transform teaching.

We involved a wide range of people in the course of the development of this Standard. We were fortunate to have had varied and constructive engagement from organisations that included, amongst others, the teacher and headteacher unions, subject associations, universities, schools, private sector training providers and Ofsted. A summary of the call for evidence is included as an annex.

From the start we were clear that the standard needed to be based on the best available evidence about what makes professional development effective – and that it should communicate this in a clear and usable way to everyone in the teaching profession.

There are pockets of excellent teacher development practice in England and we aspire to make this the norm in all schools. Done well, professional development can have a central role in improving classroom practice, and can support teachers and schools in managing teacher workload by helping them to prioritise their time and focus.

Teachers need professional development that is relevant to their practice and which has significant impact on pupil achievement. They need more than narrow 'CPD' comprising stale, irrelevant and one-off events. They need readier access to evidence and expertise to allow them to make informed decisions about their professional development. They need clear opportunities to develop their careers and be recognised for greater knowledge and expertise.

In a complex system, greater understanding about what constitutes high-quality professional development can break the spiral of poor CPD. Schools need greater expertise in commissioning support and training, and providers should respond with depth, rigour and scholarship.

The Standard for Teachers' Professional Development will help this directly; enabling everyone to raise their expectations of professional development and to understand what is necessary for teachers' professional development to be effective.

How the standard can help improve professional development throughout the education system

Everyone who works in schools and with schools needs to use the Standard to continually improve the way they contribute to developing great teachers. However, for system-wide impact all of those in governance, commissioning and quality-assurance roles need to put this Standard at the heart of their work, modelling effective practice to lead by example. This includes those with a monitoring or oversight role, such as Regional School Commissioners and Ofsted; those supporting improvement and delivery, such as academy sponsors and unions; and those funding, commissioning or providing professional development. In an increasingly school-led system Teaching Schools and Multi-Academy Trusts have a particularly important role.

Supporting activity

The challenges that hinder the effectiveness of teachers' professional development are not easily solved. They raise important questions for the teaching profession and others in the system to consider:

Leadership: A sea-change in approach to professional development can best take place when leaders are effectively trained and understand how to develop the most effective professional development practice and ethos. **All those delivering and accrediting headteacher and school leadership training should make the leadership of teacher development, based on this Standard, a top priority.**

Identifying expertise: Whilst the standard and guidance should help all schools to create effective professional development, it will often require a level of expertise beyond that which one school can provide. **Every school leadership team should include someone with a good understanding of teacher development or work closely with someone else who does. Further, leading organisations, for example teaching schools and subject and professional bodies, should develop training and accreditation for the leadership of professional development, based on the Standard**

Ensuring quality: Too often, teachers and their pupils are let down by poor quality training. Whilst there are obvious potential pitfalls, we believe that **there is a need for robust quality assurance of professional development** to help teachers and schools to identify the best support. **Leading subject, specialist and professional bodies should work together to develop this. In time, this activity could be a key role of the emerging College of Teaching.**

Statutory and annual training:

Statutory and other annual training can take up a significant amount of time, particularly where there are greater numbers of children with additional needs. Navigating the cyclical training deemed necessary for the safe operation of a school can act as a barrier to investment in, and prioritisation of, professional development. There is a danger that these activities, while important, take the place of the high-impact professional development which teachers and other professionals need to provide the best teaching and secure greatest pupil outcomes. **This is an area that the specialist sector should explore further.**

Evaluation and Review

The standard should, we hope, mark the beginning of a step change where professional development for teachers is prioritised and improved in all schools. This should not be assumed, and so it is vital that the impact of the standard should be evaluated. Measuring changes in professional development are not straightforward, but can include surveys of: awareness of the standard; reported numbers of hours of professional development; money spent on professional development; demand for more effective forms of professional development and satisfaction with professional development over time. **The Department for Education should monitor the impact of this new Standard as part of its regular information-gathering from teachers and schools** and work with the profession to update the Standard in light of these findings, as appropriate.

In addition, **the Department for Education should champion the use of the standard, and use it to inform policy development and any commissioning of professional development.**

Links to teacher appraisal

We were asked to consider changes to the model appraisal policy and regulations. On balance, our view is that a change to the model appraisal policy without a fundamental improvement in understanding of effective leadership and practice of teacher development could be more harmful than helpful at this stage. As practice develops, however, we believe that a fundamentally *developmental* approach to appraisal needs to become embedded across the system.

Closing thoughts

The wisest school and system leaders have always known that teacher development requires investment and priority. Whether seeking to improve teaching or to bring in new resources or ideas, there can be no success without a deep commitment to invest time and resource to develop the expert practice that our pupils deserve. After all, developing great teaching everywhere is the route to educational excellence everywhere.

Yours sincerely,

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Professor Jonathan Shepherd

Honorary Fellow, Royal College of Surgeons; commission member, Chartered College of Teaching; council member, Academy of Medical Sciences

Enclosed:

- 1) *Standard for Teachers' Professional Development*;
- 2) *Standard for Teachers' Professional Development: Implementation Guidance*;
- 3) 'Summary of the Teachers' Professional Development Expert Group Call for Evidence'.

Enclosure 3

Summary of the Call for Evidence

Introduction

As part of the process of developing the new standard, the Teachers' Professional Development Expert Group conducted a call for evidence, which was open for six weeks, from Monday 7 September to Friday 16 October. It received 195 responses by the closing date.

The call for evidence asked five questions to help the group gather more information from key stakeholders. It was led by the group, which used the responses to inform the standard. This annex gives a broad summary of the key messages from the call for evidence responses.

Main findings from the call for evidence

The call for evidence generated a large number of different and at times contradictory views. These covered the different aspects the standard should emphasise, the form the standard should take, and how to improve professional development in the sector.

Key findings

The largest areas of consensus centred on the need for an evidence-informed approach to professional development; for teachers to have more time for professional development; and for collaboration between teachers, schools and other bodies with regard to professional development.

These three themes are reflected in the standard and include, in particular, the need for providers and teachers to understand how and why practices are intended to work and how to implement them successfully (Part 4); the need for school leaders to ensure professional development activities use participants' time efficiently (Part 3); and the need for school leaders to encourage professional development activities that are sustained (Part 5) and provide structured collaboration (Part 3).

Further areas of consensus

There were other themes in the call for evidence responses that also generated some consensus. All of these have played a role in shaping the standard and the report.

On professional development itself, respondents generally noted the need for it to be relevant to classroom practice; for there to be some form of quality assurance; and for subject knowledge to be a key aspect of activities.

On teachers, respondents made clear the importance of teachers evaluating their professional development activities effectively; having a choice of professional development activities; and having some form of entitlement to professional development.

Finally, respondents broadly mentioned the need for schools to have more money or to make better use of money. Brief outlines of the responses to the individual questions are provided below.

Question 1 – examples of great professional development

Question 1 asked for examples of great professional development. A variety of examples were given (from tailored on-going programmes to structured inquiry and collaboration) and were interwoven with general views on what makes for effective professional development, providing wider evidence to support the group's work.

Question 2 – promoting effective professional development practice

Question 2 asked how the standard could help to promote effective professional development practice which has a positive impact on pupils' education.

The responses were wide-ranging. The more substantial responses stated the need for an evidence-informed approach, and for teachers to evaluate their professional development activities. A large number of responses also gave specific courses or examples of professional development, or research into professional development.

Question 3 – improving the provision of professional development

Question 3 asked how the standard could help shape or improve the provision of professional development, including school-based professional development activities. Responses were characterised by calls for there to be a greater choice of professional development activities in schools and for the standard to recognise the variety of professional development activities.

There were similar responses to those in question 2 about the need for an evidence-informed approach and the need for teachers and schools to share practice and to collaborate.

Question 4 – removing barriers to professional development

Question 4 asked what short, medium and long term approaches might help to remove barriers to professional development and could be reflected in the standard. Responses were predominated by those suggesting time for teachers was a significant barrier to professional development.

Other fairly numerous responses suggested the need for schools to be given more money and/or to use money better for professional development, as well as the need for some form of entitlement to professional development for teachers. There were also a number of responses with specific suggestions.

Question 5 – other contributions

Question 5 asked whether there was anything else respondents wanted to contribute to help the group shape the standard so that it is useful in different types and phases of school. Responses included many specific courses or examples of professional development or research.

Other themes that were mentioned in relatively large numbers were in broad agreement with those in questions 2-4: the need for an evidence-informed approach; the need for teachers and schools to share practice and collaborate; and the need for professional development to be relevant to classroom practice and to be mindful of its impact on pupils.