National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Teaching Schools Evaluation:

Emerging Issues from the Early Development of Case Study Teaching School Alliances

Research report

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1. Executive Summary

This interim report is the first publication from the two-year study (2013-2015) on the evaluation of teaching schools commissioned by the National College for Teaching and Leadership. The report provides a summary of the emerging issues from the *early development* of case study teaching school alliances (TSA).

In November 2010, the Schools White Paper 'The importance of teaching' set out the UK Government's plan to establish a national network of teaching schools as part of the policy aim of developing a self-improving school system. The first cohort of 97 teaching school alliances were designated in September 2011, followed by the designation of a second cohort of 86 teaching school alliances in March 2012 and a third cohort in February 2013. By November 2013, there were 357 teaching schools and 301 teaching school alliances in England.

The broad aim of this project is to gather robust qualitative and quantitative evidence for understanding the effectiveness and impact of teaching schools, and the quality of external and internal support required to enhance these. This will be achieved through case studies, a national survey of teaching schools, and secondary research and analysis of national performance and inspection results.

This report summarises learning from the first visits to 18 case study teaching school alliances in the summer term of 2012/13. The research team interviewed people with a wide range of roles and responsibilities within each teaching school, their strategic partners, and a number of schools that have received support from the teaching school. In this report, special attention is given to themes that help to provide a baseline description of how the lead teaching schools have established their roles, their alliances, and their initial work against the 'Big Six' (the six strands of the teaching school remit).

1.1 Governance of teaching school alliances

We found a range of governance arrangements operating in the case study teaching school alliances. The extent and depth of the distribution of responsibilities and clarity of accountability arrangements differed. There were examples of layered governance in 15 case study teaching school alliances which illustrate the models described by Rea & Hill in their work for the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) (2012). Involving key strategic partners in the formal governance of the alliances was found to have helped to spread the workload, increase a sense of ownership, and deepen the partnership between the core alliance members. It also enabled the teaching school alliances to play to the strengths of the strategic partners and, through this, enhance their chances of other schools joining them.

There is variation in the extent and depth of school governor involvement from the sample of case study alliances. In some teaching school alliances, governors are formally involved in the progress and direction of the teaching school alliance, although the most common arrangement is for the head of the teaching school to provide updates to his/her governing body.

1.2 Leadership of teaching school alliances

Building and leading a teaching school alliance is seen as a hugely time consuming but worthwhile enterprise by the case study teaching school alliances. For all the teaching school heads or executive heads in our sample, their leadership is driven by a strong altruistic mission to support other schools and, through this intervention, make a difference to the learning and life chances of all children. Their leadership practice demonstrated five essential elements: i) Building *a clear vision and a sense of direction* within the alliance; ii) A sustained focus on and strategy for *developing people*; iii) (*Re)structuring the organisation* of teaching school alliances in order to establish necessary work conditions for their strategic development; iv) *enhancing effective teaching and learning* within the alliance through leading and developing the teaching school's remit; v) *Building, developing and deepening partnerships* within (and beyond) teaching school alliances, in order to create the necessary social capital for collective learning and development.

The main leadership concerns include: i) succession planning for the leadership of teaching school alliances; and ii) the increased risks, through the new Ofsted framework, of losing their 'outstanding' designation and, as a consequence, the infrastructure for support collapsing.

1.3 Business management

The ways in which the case study teaching school alliances are managing their finances vary. So far, a minority of teaching school alliances have set up a separate company to manage the finances, whilst the majority are still holding the money in school accounts. Arrangements for charging schools for services also vary considerably amongst the case study teaching school alliances. Most alliances are charging on a pay as you go basis with no membership fees attached. However, a minority are using a club membership system (partners pay an annual fee for being part of the alliance); whilst others are using a combination of the two. Some alliances offer discounts to alliance partners for professional development and training programmes. Some activity is also being provided free of charge.

Sustainability, of what are currently quasi-business models, is a challenge for almost all the teaching school alliances in this evaluation, with scarce resources of time and

money being used by them to sustain and develop the teaching school alliance work. The most significant perceived risk is the reduction and uncertainty in funding to teaching schools and especially the potential end of the central start-up funding.

1.4 Delivery of the 'Big Six'

In almost all of the 18 case study teaching school alliances, there is good progress in the delivery of initial teacher education, continuing professional development and leadership development, and school-to-school support. Those that previously were training schools, or have been involved in school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT), have found their experiences helpful to these aspects of the teaching school work.

1.4.1 Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)/Leadership Development

1.   The quality of the ITT and CPD/Leadership Development provision is seen as having the potential to act as a magnet to attract more schools to join the case study teaching school alliances. School Direct is a major motivator for almost all the teaching school alliances in this evaluation. Feedback from our initial visits suggested that alliances had few difficulties filling primary places, although there were challenges recruiting in priority subjects for secondary places. The Improving Teacher Programme (ITP) and the Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP) are well established across almost all the case study teaching school alliances. The impact of these programmes on participants' and facilitators' professional learning and development, and then on teaching and learning in the classroom, will be an important part of the evidence base for the evaluation. The coaching approach has been welcomed by the schools and the trainees.

1.4.2 School-to-school support

2.   **School-to-school support** is perceived, by almost all the case study teaching school alliances, as a bespoke and practitioner led response to local need. This contrasts with a perception from the alliances of an off the shelf method of delivery from previous local authority training and support, and is welcomed by the supported schools that we spoke with for this study. Major challenges are related to capacity for teaching school alliances to manage the demand, or lack of demand in the local/rural area, and relationships with some local authorities.

1.4.3 Specialist Leaders of Education

3.   There is clear evidence that some excellent work, which contributes to school improvement, is being carried out by the Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) recruited and deployed by the case study alliances. The SLE role is providing valued and attractive leadership development opportunities and experience for excellent middle and senior leaders, beyond their employing school. However, recruiting SLEs can be a challenge. In some case study alliances, there has been a lack of enthusiasm from alliance schools.

4.   SLE deployment can also be a challenge. This appears to be more acute in the primary sector, and smaller schools, where there are fewer resources available to buy in external expertise. Some case study teaching school alliances commented that SLEs' work entails a challenge of applying skills used in one context to another. Systematic assessment of the impact of SLE deployment is not straightforward. Evidence is needed to understand whether, and the extent to which, SLEs are acting as system leaders in the delivery of their role.

1.4.4 Succession planning & talent management

5.   There is clear evidence of talent management and leadership development in the case study teaching school alliances. The teaching school work is perceived to have provided new opportunities to develop and retain outstanding colleagues within the teaching school and their alliance. However, it has also proved to be a challenge to develop and implement a succession planning strategy in a short timescale for the case study teaching school alliances. There is also a challenge for all teaching school alliances, as part of their standard leadership development practice, to follow the example of the best chains and create a structure/system that provides opportunities for emerging and aspiring leaders to have assignments, lasting from a few weeks to a whole term or a school year, in other schools to complement formal training and, through this, translate their vision into action.

1.4.5 Research and development

6.   The development of research and development work varies across the teaching school alliances in this evaluation. For some, research and development is seen as generally underpinning all aspects of the 'Big 6', rather than being a discrete aspect of the teaching school alliance work. Partnerships with higher education institutions were perceived to have provided promising research and development opportunities for them. For others, this is an area for further development. Research and development is time consuming and can seem initially daunting for teachers. It is felt that there is a need to continue to steer research and development towards

evidence-based teacher inquiry and joint practice development and see it not as an add-on but as part of the mainstream school-to-school improvement.

1.5 Development of teaching school alliances

All the teaching school alliances in this evaluation have progressed since their designation and are working to develop and/or deepen partnerships within and beyond their alliances. Such development is driven by a clear sense of direction, shared values, and recognition that all partners have talents, experience and skills to share, regardless of their particular Ofsted grading. However, the ways in which the case study teaching schools interpret what constitutes the membership of a teaching school alliance vary. The scope and depth of different partners' engagement in the teaching school activity also vary significantly. To date, relationships with the local authorities and the balance between collaboration and competition with neighbouring teaching school alliances appear to be the major challenges for some.

In the second phase of the evaluation, our intended approach is to track the development of the 18 case study teaching school alliances, and also, to engage in the examination of the performance and impact of all teaching school alliances through a national survey, and secondary research and analysis.

2. Introduction

This two-year study, commissioned the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), investigates the effectiveness and impact of teaching school alliances (TSA) on system-wide leadership development, standards and improvement. The figure below outlines the framework for this evaluation project:

Figure 1 Framework for the evaluation of teaching school alliances

All Teaching School Alliances:
Secondary Research and Analysis (led by NCTL)
(assessment of progress against KPIs, self-evaluations, national performance and inspection results)

All Teaching School Alliances:
A National Survey

Case Studies of 18 Teaching School Alliances
- Interview of key stakeholders
- TSA action plans, self-evaluations and performance against KPIs
- Assessment of TSAs' progress with implementing the Big 6 teaching school priorities (adapted from Hargreaves, 2012)

Drawing upon our first visits to 18 case study teaching schools alliances, the first phase of the study (April-August 2013) provides a baseline description and analysis of how the lead teaching schools have established their roles, their alliances, and their initial work against six key objectives, known as the 'Big Six'.

The Big 6 teaching school priorities are:

1. play a greater role in recruiting and training new entrants to the profession (initial teacher training);

2. lead peer-to-peer professional and leadership development (continuing professional development);

3. identify and develop leadership potential (succession planning and talent management);

4. provide support for other schools;

5. designate and broker Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs);

6. engage in research and development activity.

In particular, the detailed case studies that have been prepared following our initial visits investigate how the 18 teaching schools are building, extending and deepening partnership and governing structures, and also how, in order to do so, they are adapting their practices to suit (and influence) the many different contexts in which they operate to deliver the 'Big 6'. For our purposes, such contexts include the key characteristics of teaching schools (e.g. school phase, type, socioeconomic levels of their student intakes, leadership values, experience and capacity), those of their strategic and alliance partners, and the scope and depth of partnerships that they had established prior to and after the designation of teaching school status.

This interim report presents the progress and initial findings from the 18 **case study teaching school alliances**. It includes:

1) a summary of the progress of the project to date

2) a summary of the case study teaching school alliances

3) summary reflections from initial case study visits

4) context of the schools being supported by case study alliances

5) proposals for the Phase 2 investigation (September 2013–July 2014)

This interim report does not include analysis of the progress or impact of all teaching school alliances; this will be a feature of the second and third phases of the evaluation.

3. Key summary points on progress

A total of 18 teaching school alliances were recruited for case studies. There were 9 from Cohort 1 teaching schools (designated in July 2011) and 9 from Cohort 2 (designated in April 2012). The sampling criteria are summarised in Table 1. below. The robustness of the criteria enabled us to identify a sample which is representative of the key contextual characteristics and performance indicators shared by the first two cohorts of 183 teaching school alliances.

Table 1 Sampling criteria for case study teaching school alliances

Sampling Criteria	Description of Indicators
Geographical locations	Geographical regions in England and urban/rural contexts
School contexts	Free school meal bands as a key indicator to select schools serving communities of contrasting socioeconomic contexts
School phase & sector	Nursery, primary, middle, secondary, and special schools
School structures and governance	Academies, chains and free schools
School size	With <=100, >100 and <=250, and >250 pupils
Size and composition of the alliance	Number of teaching schools, school members and strategic partners in an alliance, and the composition of the alliance (e.g. secondaries only)
Ofsted judgement results	Number of schools in the alliance with overall ratings of outstanding, good, requirement for improvement (previously satisfactory) and inadequate
Number of schools which appear to have left the alliance	

We visited all 18 case study teaching school alliances between April and June 2013. The primary purpose of these visits was to map the landscape of these alliances and establish the baseline position for each of the 'Big Six' elements of their role.

We interviewed people with a wide range of roles and responsibilities in each teaching school, including, for example, executive heads, heads, chair of governors, members of the SLT, directors of teaching schools, business managers, and middle leaders. Two teaching schools arranged for us to speak with their pupils – which turned out to be a very interesting and useful exercise and may influence how we approach pupil interviews in the second visits. The teaching schools also enabled us to interview a wide range of their strategic partners, either during the visits or with follow-up phone calls (including other schools, local authorities, regional training agencies, and HEIs), In addition, we also interviewed a number of schools which have received support from and are working with the case study TSAs.

The 18 case study reports form the empirical basis for issues and discussion presented in this interim report.

4. The Case Studies

Appendix 1 provides a summary of the key characteristics of the 18 case study teaching school alliances (based upon data reported to the NCTL in early 2012). They are located in different geographical regions across England, are of different sizes (size of alliance ranging from 6 to 52 in 2012), and are led by teaching schools in different phases, of different types and sizes, serving communities of different socioeconomic disadvantage, and of different urban/rural locations. NCTL advised the research team that we should prioritise alliances which are led by rural teaching schools because the majority of the designated teaching schools are based in urban areas. In addition, the performance of the member schools in each alliance (as judged by Ofsted inspection results and in terms of Key Stage SATs and GCSE results) varies.

4.1 Complexity of membership

The size of the teaching school alliances in terms of the number of members involved (including higher education institutions (HEIs) and others) was a key sampling criterion. However, evidence from our fieldwork suggests that the ways in which the case study teaching school alliances are interpreting the notion of being a 'member' of an alliance varies. This has implications for NCTL, since its database does not necessarily reflect the reality – which is largely related to the ways in which teaching schools interpreted this term when reporting their numbers. For example, the NCTL database showed that the smallest TSA in our sample comprises 6 member schools. However, our visit to the alliance suggests that it is led by a strategy group of six members and that it has created a broad alliance of 75 schools encompassing the two existing networks that both teaching schools were part of.

The scope and depth of different partners' engagement in the teaching school activity also vary significantly. Moreover, we found that the strategic partners of some alliances in our sample are limited to outstanding schools (as judged by Ofsted inspections). In contrast, other TSAs named a mixture of satisfactory/requires improvement, good and outstanding schools (as judged by Ofsted inspections) as their strategic partners. Furthermore, teaching school alliances are evolving in their composition and structure. For example, one case study TSA, which is led by one teaching school, now includes two other teaching schools in the alliance. This change this will materially affect the way in which the alliance operates in future. The research team's second visits to such alliances will have to recognise these differences.

Understanding the complexity and fluidity of this membership issue is, therefore, key to understanding whether, how and why teaching schools might make a difference to

improvement. The variable definition of and practice of alliance members and strategic partners will also have important implications for the quantitative assessment being undertaken by NCTL.

It would seem necessary, therefore, to identify different groupings of teaching school alliances in the exploration of associations between 'levels of engagement' and 'impact'.

4.1.1 Cohort 1[1]

South Lakes (TS: Queen Elizabeth School, North West), **Hallam** (TS: Notre Dame High School, Yorkshire and the Humber) and **George Spencer Academy** (TS: George Spencer Academy and Technology College, East Midlands) teaching school alliances represent the many alliances that are led by *a single secondary teaching school*. All three lead teaching schools serve communities of relative socioeconomic advantage, with the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals at 6 per cent or less in each school. The alliance members of South Lakes are all secondaries whilst the other two have a more balanced composition of primary (including nursery) and secondary schools. Moreover, South Lakes is included because it is led by a teaching school which serves a wide rural area.

Portswood (TS: Portswood Primary School, South East) and **Shiremoor** (TS: Shiremoor Primary School, North East) teaching school alliances are each led by *single primary teaching schools* which serve urban communities of contrasting socioeconomic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at Shiremoor is well above the national average. Both alliances are comprised mainly of primary schools whose performance range from inadequate to outstanding as judged by Ofsted inspections.

Cultivus (TSs: Elmridge Primary School and St Chad's Church of England Primary School, North West) and **West Hertfordshire** (TSs: Bovingdon Primary Academy and Hammond Academy, East of England) represent teaching school alliances which are centred on *two primary teaching schools*. Both alliances are comprised mainly of primary schools. They were selected as case studies also because the lead teaching schools serve rural or semi-rural communities.

Denbigh (TS: Denbigh School and Shenley Brook End School, South East) Teaching School Alliance includes *two secondary teaching schools.* The Shenley Brook End Teaching School, designated as a teaching school in 2012, is working

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[1] The descriptions of the 18 case study TSAs are based upon data collected during the first school visits in **April-June 2013.**

within the Denbigh teaching school alliance, with the formal accountability currently being exercised through Denbigh. The alliance, comprised of 9 strategic partners, has a strong local Milton Keynes focus and sees itself as having a responsibility for helping to provide an excellent education for all children in Milton Keynes.

The Partnership Teaching School Alliance (TSs: Fiveways and Fosse Way Special Schools, South West) is representative of the 22 alliances in the first two cohorts that are led by special schools and especially the only two that are jointly led by *two special schools*. The two designated special teaching schools are of contrasting sizes (with 180 pupils at Fosse Way School versus 60 at Fiveways Special School), provide for different levels of special need, and are at opposite ends of Somerset so provide geographical spread across the county.

4.1.2 Cohort 2

The Salop (TS: The Priory Business and Enterprise College, West Midlands) and **Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy** (TS: Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy, North West) teaching school alliances are centred respectively on *a single secondary teaching school*. **Chesterton/Wandle** (TS: Chesterton Primary School, London), **Transform** (TS: Sneinton St Stephen's CofE Primary School, East Midlands) and **Sheringham Primary National** (TS: Sheringham Community Primary School, East of England) teaching school alliances are each led by *a single primary teaching school*. **Buckingham** Teaching School Partnership (TS: Turnfurlong Infant School, South East) is the only alliance led by an infant school.

Sneinton St Stephen's Church of England Primary School and Chesterton Primary School are the only two amongst the six designated teaching schools which serve socioeconomically disadvantaged urban communities. Sheringham was selected because its alliance serves a wide rural area and also, because the performance of its named strategic partner schools currently ranges from inadequate to outstanding (as judged by Ofsted inspections). Bishop Rawstorne is the other alliance led by a teaching school which serves rural communities. In addition, almost all the strategic partners of Bishop Rawstorne and Buckinghamshire are good and outstanding schools.

everyonelearning@ Teaching School Alliance (TS: Hawthorns Community School, North West) is led by an urban special school whose pupils come from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Its member schools are also predominantly urban schools. Initially the Greater Manchester Challenge's key partners became key strategic partners in the alliance. Since designation, the partnership has grown organically and is now reduced from 24 to 18 with more concrete and secure partnerships and clearer roles and expectations.

Ebor TSA (TSs: Manor Church of England Academy Trust & Robert Wilkinson Primary School, Yorkshire and the Humber) is jointly led by *a secondary school and a primary school*. **Cambridge All Through** TSA (TSs[2]: Swavesey Village College, Parkside Federation & Histon and Impington Junior School, East of England) is led by two secondary schools and a primary school, although it is also connected in the Cambridge Teaching Schools Network with two other secondary schools. One of the main reasons for their selection as case studies was that their designated teaching schools serve rural communities. Also, the composition of their strategic partners covered a good urban/rural spread.

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[2] Based on the alliance composition as at May 2013.

5. Summary Reflections from Initial Case Study Visits

5.1 Governance of the alliances

5.1.1 Positive Developments

We summarise below our learning from our initial visits about the formal accountability structures that have been established to oversee the 18 teaching school alliances. There are a range of different governance arrangements that have been established, with a minority involving school governors. The extent and depth of the distribution of responsibilities and clarity of accountability arrangements differ. There are common features in what they are seeking to achieve:

- monitor progress against an action plan

- hold headteachers and directors of alliances to account for delivery

- involve key strategic partners in determining the direction for the alliance

We found examples of layered governance in 15 TSAs. They illustrate the models described by Rea & Hill in their work for NCTL which is included in the National Teaching Schools Handbook (2012). Involving key strategic partners in the formal governance of the alliances was found to have helped to spread the workload, increase a sense of ownership, and deepen the partnership between the core alliance members. It also enabled the TSAs to play to the strengths of the strategic partners and through this, enhance their chances of other schools joining them.

1) George Spencer, Bishop Rawstorne and Sheringham represent the majority of alliances in our study that are led by a single core group (or strategic board/executive group) to oversee the **strategic** development of the TSA work. Operational groups have been formed to lead the delivery of particular strands of the 'Big Six'. These operational groups include representatives from the teaching school and the key strategic partner schools.

> The Buckingham Teaching School Partnership provides an example of a TSA with formal partnership agreements in place, with named responsibilities for each of the 'Big Six', and the head of the teaching school provides regular reports to the executive group and partnership board on progress.

2) Denbigh provides an example of a **formal, centralised** governance structure which is supported by formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Partnership Agreements. A subset of governors of the governing body of the lead accountable teaching school is involved in the strategic leadership of the TSA work.

There are clear lines of **accountability** for groups at different levels. Their leadership and operational roles and responsibilities are also clearly defined for each of the 'Big Six', co-ordinated by the deputy headteacher of the accountable school who works as director of the alliance for three days a week. Emerging evidence suggests that this layered accountability structure, underpinned by strong, long-term relationships between strategic partners, has made an important contribution to the good progress that the alliance is making.

Denbigh's partnership structure has four tiers of governance:

a) **Governing body** of teaching school & chairs committee (responsible for formal accountability of the TSA);

b) **Strategic group** comprising one representative from each Strategic Partner and two from the teaching school, chaired by director of teaching school (responsible for strategic direction of teaching school)

c) **Director of teaching school** (responsible for operational management)

d) **Personnel** at three secondary strategic partners (responsible for delivery and implementation of the 'Big Six')

Denbigh's experience demonstrates that clear and robust arrangements for governors have enabled them to oversee the progress of the alliance work. In South Lakes, Portswood, Salop and everyonelearning@ teaching school alliances, members of the governing body were also involved in the teaching school steering/executive and/or strategic groups. Their participation was perceived to have made an important contribution to the strategic and operational management of the alliances' work.

There are also examples where there are clear **operational** leadership structures but with limited formal involvement from governors. Cultivus and Shiremoor represent the TSAs that are led by directors of teaching school alliances (or teaching school lead) who take a lead on all operational aspects of the teaching school work. They are responsible for the day-to-day development of the teaching school, including chairing of alliance meetings and working groups, induction of new member schools, reporting to NCTL and design of alliance events. They involve different strategic partners for the delivery of different strands of the 'Big Six'. The

headteacher of the teaching school has become an executive head with responsibility for strategic leadership of the alliance and they provide regular (e.g. termly) feedback to governors.

Shiremoor provides an example of one of the case study TSAs where the teaching school work is led by the executive head with the support of a designated administrator (or project manager). Strategic/alliance partners contribute to the delivery of different strands of the 'Big 6'. This may be manifested, for example, in the form of running ITT or CPD courses. There are formal partnership agreements within the alliance; and membership of the alliance is free and open to schools/organisations that can contribute to the teaching school work.

Although formal accountability and governance structures are found to be necessary to secure good progress, good informal communications and contact between schools were also universally said to be crucial to attract and maintain the commitment of partners.

5.1.2 Challenges

Key challenges for the governance of teaching school alliances from the initial visits to case study alliances are summarised as follows:

- **Accountability**

  There is variation in the extent and depth of school governor involvement from the sample of case study alliances. Although some TSA school leaders are being held to account by governors, it does not appear to be the case in others. In some TSAs, governors are formally involved in the progress and direction of the teaching school alliance, although the most common arrangement is for the head of the teaching school to provide updates to his/her governing body. There is also a perceived need for greater governor education on how to exercise their accountability roles for the teaching school work. Evidence suggests that there is still some scepticism from governors about the benefits of the role of the teaching school, especially in terms of its huge demands on the teaching school: the time and focus of the head/senior leadership team, the time that their most able teachers will spend away from their classes and working with other schools, and the overall risks to the lead school in terms of the workload and resources.

  Several case study TSAs commented that given the nature of and complexity of alliance relationships across the different and overlapping strands of work (e.g. managing School Direct with potentially more than one HEI across a wide spectrum of schools), there was also a challenge as to whether their existing governance systems were fit for these new purposes.

Moreover, accountability structures need to be constructed so that they are able to take account of succession planning, involve key partners, and enable other key staff to begin to experience decision-making. In the cases where limited companies have been formed, the key directors are limited to a small group of heads that has the potential to limit this wider experience and make succession planning more challenging.

- **Complexity of governance**

The case of the West Hertfordshire Teaching School Alliance illustrates this challenge. It has one limited company for the teaching school and a separate multi-academy trust for schools that it is sponsoring. In addition, the TSA (as with a number of other alliances) is also part of a licensed leadership development consortium which involves a separate contractual arrangement.

The case of the Cambridge All-Through Teaching School Alliance also points to the complexity of governance structures which are evolving in some TSAs. At the time of the first visit in April 2013, CATTSA was jointly led by a group of three schools[3]. After its designation, it worked together with a Cohort 1 alliance – the Cambridge Area Teaching School Alliance (CATSA) based on Comberton Village College – to form the Cambridge Teaching School Network (CTSN). In 2013, a Cohort 3 teaching school alliance led by Saffron Walden County High School joined them to provide an Essex-facing part of the CTSN.

The structure of this Network is built upon the trust and commitment of the principals of the four designated teaching schools. There is no formal written agreement (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)) underpinning this structure. Irrespective of the challenges that the Network faces in the course of its organic development, its partnership model adds to our understanding of the teaching school concept and a self-improving school system. It offers a different debate regarding concerns about the inherent dilemma between collaboration and competition between teaching schools locally and nationally (which will be addressed in the Section below).

Although NCTL has accepted CTSN as a single unit with one action plan to submit, there are on-going concerns about accountability obligations and the designation of SLEs. Each teaching school decided to receive their funding individually (rather than networked), and is thus required by NCTL to complete a funding accountability form individually. Also, each SLE has to be assigned

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[3] It is a group of two schools now.

to a single teaching school alliance for accountability purposes, rather than to the Network in which three teaching school alliances work as a unit.

The complexity of the arrangements within CTSN has proved challenging for NCTL's systems, which are yet to develop further to fully embrace the diverse and fluid development of teaching school partnership structures and models.

5.2 Leadership of the alliances

> Now there is a real appetite in the government for teaching schools to genuinely take the lead... to move to a much more school-led system.
>
> John Stephens, NCTL

The leadership of teaching school alliances is 'the latest manifestation of system leadership' (Matthews and Berwick, 2013: 17). For all the teaching school heads or executive heads in our sample, their leadership is driven by a strong **altruistic mission** to support other schools and through this intervention, make a difference to the learning and life chances of *all* children.

In line with Matthews and Berwick's observation, we have also found that a strong sense of moral purpose is an essential ingredient of the leadership of teaching school alliances. The commitment to a self-improving school system is clear and strong. For example,

> We are clear about why we are doing it: to enhance the community, to work with the educational community. … It is my greatest joy to see other schools improve and see their children achieve. You are behind the people whom you support. We celebrate their success. That is what it is all about.
>
> Executive head, Cultivus Teaching School Alliance

Becoming a teaching school is perceived by most in this study as a 'natural progression' from teaching schools' track record of school-to-school (S2S) support, initial teacher training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD) work. All teaching schools will have cited evidence of this track record in applying for the role. The teaching school concept has helped to remove some 'invisible barriers' to S2S support and, more importantly, has provided a 'formalised' structure for some schools' previous work, and enabled them to extend its scope and depth.

For the Partnership TSA, developing the role of special schools during a time of significant educational reform and raising the profile of both special schools in their localities were also important motivational factors behind their decision to become a

job-share teaching school. Such a desire to contribute to the improvement of local schools can also be seen in many other TSAs in this evaluation, especially at a time when traditional support from local authorities is declining or in flux.

Building and leading a teaching school alliance is unanimously perceived as a hugely time consuming, but worthwhile enterprise. As evidence presented below shows, it has the potential to open up 'exciting' and 'stimulating' capacity building opportunities – at micro (individual), meso (school/organisational) and macro (across schools/system) levels.

However, to realise such potential is 'sheer hard work'. The leadership practice of most heads of teaching schools and/or leaders of TSAs in our evaluation demonstrate five essential elements.

1) **Building a clear vision and a sense of direction within the alliance**. There are examples of purposeful leadership to respond to local issues. At the heart of West Hertfordshire Teaching School Partnership's vision, for example, is a desire to use and maximise the expertise within primary schools to recruit and develop teachers and leaders and so improve outcomes for children and young people.

   This is also the case for Transform where there is a 'strong moral purpose', altruism and a shared mission to improve the quality of education for children in the local community, the city and the surrounding area. This mission starts with training high quality teachers for work in urban contexts.

   In the case of Sheringham, its decision to apply to become a teaching school was based upon a recognition that Norfolk needed more teaching schools to recruit new quality entrants to the profession and to drive improvement and standards. Its bid for teaching school status was seen as a proactive response to such a local need which then underpinned the outreach and direction of their teaching school work in close collaboration with the local authority. On the teaching school alliance website, it states:

   > Teaching Schools should be motivated by a desire to improve teaching and learning working in partnership with other schools. … We recognise and draw on the strengths of all the schools involved in the partnership … to aim at consistently high levels of pupil performance and to significantly impact on high quality teacher training.

2) *Developing people.* This is a key part of what it means to be a teaching school for the case study alliances, and is an important part of their strategies. Becoming a teaching school is seen by all teaching schools in this evaluation as the best CPD opportunity for their staff. It has created and significantly extended

opportunities for leadership development and succession planning within and beyond teaching schools and through this, promoted teachers' collective responsibility for their learning and development.

For example, in the eyes of the staff at Turnfurlong Teaching School, the teaching school status has created a range of leadership development opportunities for the career advancement of middle and senior leaders; improved the capacity and expertise of all staff across the school, including helping them to analyse more effectively the progress of their pupils and raise their expectations of pupils through their reflections as a teaching school and sharing of good practice; provided more opportunities for them to work with adults in other schools; and boosted the confidence of the staff through the number of visits to their school to observe good practice.

Similarly, at the Priory School: A Business and Enterprise College (designated teaching school of the Salop TSA), the staff were highly positive about the opportunities for them to develop through working with others– which has helped enhance school improvement through an outward facing culture. A facilitator of the Improving Teacher Programme (ITP) and Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP) reflects on her increased confidence:

> It has widened my outlook in terms of the subject. I reflect on my own teaching. People have the space and time to share experiences [on these courses]. I have got as much out of it as any of the delegates – they feel valued, not pressured, they are very positive. Practice in the classroom is changed, improved and this is lasting. It has refreshed me. It is a bright spot – we can see the value in it for ourselves and the students.

The positive impact of such inclusive CPD on capacity building was also shown to have extended to staff at strategic partner schools. At the everyonelearning@ Teaching School Alliance, for example, strategic partners were effusive about the value of being involved in the TSA and had seen their school culture change as a result:

- 'regarding openness to change, going out and coming in'; there is 'a much more open culture';

- 'lots of staff are involved in one-to-one support with others, involved in scrutiny and observation.   The quality of discussion and thinking has improved';

- 'it has advanced the open door policy in the school'; having others in school has been challenging but helpful;

- 'it raises the profile of your own school and practice, makes us proud of the professionalism of our staff but also challenges us to do more';

- 'I can't tell you the impact it has had on my school – opening the doors for others to evaluate is so powerful and has raised the game enormously';

- 'the TSA is an absolute sharing of good practice and support; they do not set themselves up as fonts of all knowledge because they value what others have to say and their impact on the TSA as much as the TSA on them';

- 'working with the TS has a massive impact on the culture and ethos – we have to know what we are talking about'.

3) **(Re)structuring the organisation of teaching school alliances.** As we have noted in 3.1, teaching school alliances' organisational and governance structures are enacted in different ways. This is also in line with Matthews and Berwick's observation (2013).

   i)   For some, the ways in which TSAs are organised are related to the partnership histories that teaching schools have with their strategic and/or alliance partners, as in the cases of the Cambridge Teaching School Network, Cultivus, Bishop Rawstorne, everyonelearning@, and Hallam TSAs.

   ii) The appointment of a director for the teaching school alliance has been a useful model in some alliances (e.g. everyonelearning@, Ebor, George Spencer, Bishop Rawstorne, Salop, Transform and Hallam). It has freed the headteacher or executive headteacher to be able to adopt a more strategic role within the teaching school and its alliances. Where there is no such senior appointment – and the alliance's co-ordinating post is at a more administrative level – a considerable burden is generally placed on the headteacher(s) (e.g. Shiremoor).

iii) The experiences of the majority of the case study TSAs show that the distribution of leadership to strategic groups/partners which mirror the 'Big 6' elements of the teaching school role provides a useful model for TSA leadership. It enables them to draw on expertise from other partners, distribute responsibility and accountability, and build upon the strengths of their partners.

iv) In addition, (re)structuring the organisation helps to create new opportunities for leadership development within teaching schools and their alliances. This enables them to identify, nurture and develop talent and more importantly, attract and retain the talent within the alliance.

In many case study TSAs in this study, opportunities to distribute the leadership of the alliance across a number of senior leadership posts within the teaching school have allowed the schools to develop and grow their existing staff

> We have watched people really growing. (SLT member, Sheringham).

v) Joint leadership of an alliance helps to overcome the loss of TSA leadership when the head moves on. As the cases of the Cambridge Teaching School Network and everyonelearning@ show, where more than one teaching school is in a TSA or a teaching school network, this helps to guard against the risk of de-designation should one of the teaching schools lose its outstanding status.

4) **Managing and enhancing effective teaching and learning within the alliance.** This is at the heart of the leadership of the teaching school work. Different aspects of the teaching school work have generated new opportunities for increased staff communication and collaboration within teaching schools as well as their alliances. Examples of R&D projects (e.g. Cultivus, Portswood, George Spencer, Transform, everyonelearning@), learning walks and joint observations (e.g. Buckinghamshire; South Lakes) and SLE designation and deployment within TSAs all have a specific focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

For example, in the Portswood Teaching School Alliance,

> An additional action research group has been set up to look at assessment in partnership with the local authority. Portswood is also undertaking a national research project on developing great pedagogy across the alliance, working with nine schools and focusing on developing a coaching culture. Throughout all of this activity, the focus is on using a research-based mentality in order to raise the quality of

teaching across all partner schools, keeping in mind the alliance aim of 'every lesson at least good.

<div align="right">NCTL, 2013: Part 2</div>

Our case studies also show that mentoring and coaching approaches are commonly used across teaching schools to encourage their staff and those whom they support to be reflective about their practices of teaching and learning. For example, a local school supported by Cultivus has seen three of their four underperforming staff develop and thrive as a result of intensive coaching. The same approach was also used to develop members of the SLT in this local school which improved from requires improvement to good as judged by Ofsted within a short timeframe.

5) **Building, developing and deepening partnerships within (and beyond) teaching school alliances.** The partnerships create the necessary social capital for collective learning and development. In their think piece on teaching schools, Matthews and Berwick (2013) pointed out that '[t]he success of partnerships between London schools owed much to building substantial organisational and social capital' (2013: 19). They argue that teaching schools and their alliances 'provide ideal circumstances for generating reservoirs' of such capital – 'the prerequisites for shared learning and accumulating and disseminating knowledge' (2013: 19).

Our observations resonate with their argument. Initial teacher training (ITT) courses and programmes, CPD sessions, SLE deployment and school to school (S2S) support all create opportunities for schools to work together in sustained ways. They also enable schools to extend the scope and depth of their networks and partnerships.

In this sense, the building of person-to-person and school-to-school relationships permeates the everyday leadership work of teaching schools and their alliances. **The benefit of such relationships is that they provide both the conditions and the necessary social basis for communities of learning, and through these, for joint practice development to take root within the alliance**. Hargreaves (2012) calls this kind of inter-organisational property 'collaborative capital' which in turn 'enhances the collective capacity on which a self-improving system depends' (2012: 23).

> For everyonelearning@ TSA, for example, one key to success is seen to be the executive head's ability to network and gather good people together, including Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) beyond the local authority. She is 'absolutely passionate' that the head (of the teaching school), senior leader team and other staff work beyond their school in the delivery of the teaching school work because 'everyone has something to give'. Strategic partners recognise her enthusiasm, humility, relationships and ability to inspire and engage people to work with her: 'she draws people together', as commented by a strategic partner, 'there are loads of strong people at everyonelearning@'.

The evidence from our case studies shows that strategic staffing at administration and leadership levels is key to securing the successful delivery of the teaching school work.

Key challenges from our initial visits in leading teaching school alliances are summarised as follows:

- **Succession planning**

  What happens when heads/leaders retire? There is a sense of vulnerability amongst the staff in some teaching schools, especially in those where heads/leaders face retirement in the near future. When governors advertise a replacement post, clarity is needed, for example, about whether the focus should be placed upon the leadership of the teaching school work, or whether on recruiting someone who has previously led an outstanding school. If governors are not certain about the continuing designation of teaching school status over the medium-term they may be reluctant to commit themselves completely to its mission and work.

- **Failure to sustain improvement**

  A number of alliances mentioned the increased risks through the new Ofsted framework of losing their designation and, as a consequence, the infrastructure for support collapsing. Such risks, again, add to a sense of vulnerability in the minds of some leaders. Also, the process for passing on the alliance mantle needs to be clearer. Schools are likely to feel reluctant to invest and commit seriously to the alliance if there is a prospect that the designation could be rescinded.

  This is a key area of dependency and therefore, potential failure if the self-improving system does not continue to self-improve in terms of Ofsted judgements. It challenges and, to some extent, contradicts the notion of

autonomy which is claimed to be the underlying principle underpinning the organic development of a self-improving school system.

- ▪ **Excessive workload**

The workload demands and pace of change can be challenging for leaders of teaching school alliances. In all our case studies, we were told that a vast amount of uncosted leadership time goes into the TSA work, including headteacher management time, writing bids for funds, developing joint practice with strategic and alliance partners, and producing action plans. There are also concerns about the sustainability of the huge workload and pace of work of the heads/leaders of TSAs over time. At one teaching school, the Partnership Board noted in its minutes that:

> … the future feels overwhelming because schools are expected to become involved from training new entrants to teaching, to training new headteachers, to supporting schools facing challenges.

Whilst it is possible that this is a particular problem in the start-up period which may settle down as systems and structures are put in place, it is not a foregone conclusion that this will be the case. This will remain a particular point of investigation for the second phase of the study

How teaching schools are using project funding to support and mitigate the leadership load is an area which will be explored further on our return visits.

5.3 Business Management

5.3.1 Positive Developments

In most case study TSAs central money has been used to fund directors of TSAs (n=10) and/or business/marketing managers (n=15) to co-ordinate the work of the alliance. Some TSAs have also used the money to employ a full-time or part-time administrator in order to help with the administration of their alliances. The benefits of creating these positions have been discussed above.

In Portswood, for example, the initial TSA grant was spent on a part-time administrator, and paying for some of the time of the executive principal, the director of teaching and learning and the executive school business manager, who were all working across both Portswood and a strategic partner school.

It is perhaps not surprising that almost all the case study TSAs have commented that they are highly unlikely to make a financial margin (additional income above and beyond costs that can then be allocated to other areas) on most of the 'Big 6' streams of work (e.g. R&D and ITT). However, CPD and leadership development programmes can provide opportunities to develop income streams – though alliances are keen to ensure that their operations are not seen as only being driven by a commercial motive.

The charging scheme varies considerably amongst the case study TSAs. Most alliances are charging on a pay as you go basis with no membership fees attached. However, a minority are using a club membership system (partners pay an annual fee for being part of the alliance) whilst others are using a combination of the two. Some alliances offer discounts to alliance partners for professional development and training programmes. Some activity is also being provided free of charge.

The business management of TSAs, use of resources, and sustainability of the financial models are important areas that we will explore further on our return visits, including whether there are differences between cohort 1 and cohort 2 teaching schools.

5.3.2 Challenges

Key challenges from our initial visits for the business management of teaching school alliances are summarised as follows:

- **Managing finances**

  The ways in which the case study TSAs are managing their finances vary. For example, one alliance had a clear grip on finances and another was struggling to set up a separate trading account and construct a budget profile which could be monitored on a monthly basis. So far, a minority of TSAs (n=4) have set up a separate company to manage the finances, whilst the majority are still holding the money in school accounts.

- **Appropriate charges for CPD**
  Many of the case study teaching school alliances are still working their way to appropriate business models for charging. For example, schools within one TSA were originally not charging each other for participating in alliance programmes. However, the alliance has now moved to a system where the full cost of coming on a course or programme is charged to schools outside the alliance, with schools that are part of the alliance enjoying a 20 to 25 per cent discount.

Schools in another TSA, for example, recognise that CPD programmes are not yet bringing in any additional resources that could be used for other projects. The alliance is analysing this and considering whether teachers are not coming out of their school as much for CPD, and there is more exchanging of good practice within school; and also with more providers offering courses, schools are finding it more difficult to judge how to make the best choices about the CPD in which they do take part.

- **Sustainability**

  Is a commercial model financially sustainable? Case study TSAs commented that some of the schools in most need of improvement (e.g. small primaries; schools in areas where the role and scope of local authority support is diminishing) struggle to access funding to buy in support.

  Sustainability of what are currently quasi-business models is a challenge for almost all the TSAs in this evaluation, with scarce resources of time and money being used by them to sustain and develop the TSA work. The most significant perceived risk is seen as the reduction and uncertainty in funding to teaching schools and especially the potential end of the central start-up funding[4].

  Some alliances are concerned that there was a belief that teaching schools and partners could carry out the work without any additional funding. Case study alliances led by small primary and/or infant schools and special schools said they do not have the reserves of funding and capacity available to a large secondary-led alliance.

  > Core schools put in lots of time and effort. A continuing grant may be needed to sustain our current level of TSA work.

  The continuation of funding is seen as essential in enabling them to maintain (and where necessary, expand) the capacity for the teaching school work.

  Others are worried that the withdrawal of the central money will push teaching schools to prioritise profit-making programmes and projects and squeeze out projects (e.g. R&D work) which are significant for the greater good of the education community. There is a strong sense of reluctance amongst the teaching schools to become 'just another commercial CPD

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[4] Since our first visits, the decision has been taken to extend the core funding for a further year.

provider' because of the moral imperative that initially attracted them to apply to become a teaching school. Also, the need to focus on how different activities will bring in income has at times compromised their ability to be truly innovative.

5.4 Delivery of the 'Big Six'

5.4.1 Initial teacher training (ITT)

Positive Developments

1) **There is good progress** in developing a new model of initial teacher training centred around a teaching school alliance; and this is the case in the majority of the case study TSAs. Those that previously were training schools or have been involved in school centred ITT have found these experiences helpful to this aspect of their teaching school work.

2) **The quality of the ITT provision** is seen by the majority of the TSAs in this evaluation as having the potential to act as a magnet to attract more schools to join the TSAs. In the West Hertfordshire TSA (WHTSP), for example, the head of one strategic partner described the opportunity to be involved in delivering ITT as a 'major draw' to be part of WHTSP. Another partner said that her staff were 'keen' to be involved.

3) **School Direct (SD) is a major motivator** for almost all the TSAs in this evaluation (n=17). Feedback from our initial visits suggested that alliances had few difficulties filling primary places, although there were challenges recruiting in priority subjects for secondary places. The main benefit was viewed as allowing the alliances to nurture their own talent from ITT, and enable them to design the training to support their own schools and develop staff who would be effective in teaching in these schools. Also the alliances can highlight context, faith and/or particular subject expertise. The Salop TSA along with others have seen clear benefits of being able to 'grow your own teachers'.

All the alliances were positive about the opportunities that were being provided to have greater ownership over teacher training. They said that School Direct provided excellent opportunities for them to get involved in all aspects of the recruitment of trainee teachers, from interviewing to quality assurance of placements. In the Transform TSA, for example, ITT/SD is seen as an 'exciting' development to train and recruit to improve education in the City, working with an outstanding HEI to improve quality, and retain teachers who are expert in the context of teaching in an urban setting; and in time this had the potential to lead to better succession planning and talent management.

Within the case study alliances, early feedback suggested the School Direct route was attracting high quality candidates. School Direct was also enabling some partner schools who had struggled to recruit staff to be able to work with higher calibre candidates than previously.

Previous experience in ITT is perceived as an important step in readiness for SD activity by the case study alliances. Feedback from the initial visits suggested that some alliances would welcome the opportunity to work with outstanding higher education institutions (HEIs) as a way of improving quality. By July 2013, a minority of TSAs in this evaluation (n=4) had gained school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) status.

A major investment (in terms of time and capacity) that has brought benefits to the case study alliances in terms of recruitment and course development has been the appointment of project leads for both primary and secondary SD, including those where it is an individual from a strategic partner. They have been actively developing the bespoke courses with HEIs.

In some case study TSAs, there are examples of strategic planning work that addresses the needs of local schools when allocating School Direct trainees. For the Hallam TSA, School Direct has enabled them to build leadership capacity in local Catholic schools from 'the start of the supply chain' (strategic partner). It has also given them the autonomy to improve the supply of high quality teachers in Religious Education (RE). It is noted that recruitment and succession planning of RE teachers are 'a crisis in church schools'. It is, however, too early to report successes yet.

4) **Evidence from the case study TSAs supports the view that ITT is integral to the CPD continuum**. The Sheringham TSA, for example, has reconfigured the 'Big 6' into four key strands of activity, with ITT and CPD being combined as one (for more examples, see CPD).

5) **A coaching approach** was mostly welcomed by the schools as well as the trainees. In everyonelearning@, for example, a school providing support commented:

> Several teachers wanted to mentor. It is great for the school and the teachers personally. It raises your practice and benefits the children.

Portswood and Cultivus describe coaching as central to their training and school improvement programmes. The case of the West Hertfordshire TSA also illustrates the potential power of a model which transforms the role of mentor teachers who become much more teacher coaches and modellers of practice to trainees:

The alliance is using a group apprentice model with mentor teachers and students in each school working closely together. Different schools have responsibility for leading different aspects of curriculum development for the ITT students.

The students have used distance learning based on a week-by-week guide from the University of Nottingham to undertake the academic part of their training and support their assignments. Joint study days facilitated by Nottingham have taken place in a facility that one of the schools, Bovingdon Primary Academy, has been able to create following receipt of some windfall funding from the local authority.

The programme has been positively received by students, staff and schools recruiting newly qualified teachers. For the staff involved in mentoring the students it has made them think and reflect more on their teaching – particularly as they have to model practice for so much more of their time. Students interviewed at Bovingdon were extremely positive about their experience. A number of the ITT students have secured permanent appointment in alliance schools and one alliance head (not involved in the ITT provision) commented: 'WHTSP's ITT students were streets ahead of those that were interviewed and had come through the PGCE university route.'

Challenges

1) **Capacity**

   School Direct demands a great deal of time and capacity from the case study teaching schools and their strategic partners to undertake the administration. The pace of this crucial new development is also demanding – which has meant considerable investment from schools and their partners. This has been under-estimated by some alliances. Capacity is a 'massive issue' in terms of co-ordination and finding placements, contacting schools and arranging the placements, and interviewing prospective students.

2) **SD recruitment**

   School Direct recruitment has been challenging for the case study alliances in secondary, particularly in priority subjects. For example, in one TSA, the number of applicants did not always match the number of places available:

> In respect of secondary School Direct trainees in 2012/13 the TSA had 21 places including 5 places for priority subjects. For 2013/14 the alliance was allocated 60 places (including nine places for maths and eight for physics), but is expecting to recruit only around 40 trainees mostly related to the relative lack of applicants across the country.

Some TSAs' experience of recruiting teachers through SD also raises the question of whether there should be an element of regional co-ordination of SD by alliances, particularly at secondary level.

In addition, investment in securing and interviewing candidates had not always converted to acceptance of places for the case study TSAs. In one TSA, for example, the lack of a clearing house for dealing with ITT applications with Schools Direct has been detrimental. Student teachers have been called in for interview and/or offered posts, only for them to respond that they have accepted a place elsewhere. Low conversion rates are seen by some (usually secondary providers) as wastage. Others (usually primary providers) see this as an opportunity to recruit the best.

Such recruitment inefficiencies in the SD model can be more acute for rural schools. One TSA, for example, found that candidates may be applying to more than one School Direct provider and also for a PGCE, with the schools not knowing whether they are definitely accepting a place until a very late stage. However, working in the rural area, they are spending a lot of senior staff time recruiting for a small number of SD places.

The case study teaching schools have not found the School Direct website particularly helpful. There is little advice on the website – which means TSAs and candidates have to spend a great deal of time searching for the information that they need. This has added to the inefficiency of the SD model in this early phase.

3) **Focus of the SD model**

Concern was expressed by several alliances that the School Direct model may become too narrow in its approach to ITT.

> My fear is that when school people no longer have knowledge of university PGCE course content, there will be a master/apprentice model of training.
>
> Vice-principal at Cambridge Teaching School Network

Such a concern over the loss of HEI expertise was also shared by Ebor. The head believed that 'a mixed economy is the way forward' and sees School Direct as a joint venture between the TSA and their HEI partners.

4) **HEI involvement**

There is a need for more analysis of respective roles of HEIs and schools around the Professional Studies and Quality Assurance (QA) aspects of ITT. The relationship with the HEI partners is to a significant extent driven by the role they are (or are not) playing in helping to deliver ITT and other programmes (such as Masters' courses). However, in the Denbigh, George Spencer, Ebor, Transform and everyonelearning@ TSAs, the partnership with a local HEI indicates the potential for engaging in different and broader types of initiatives (e.g. R&D activity).

5) **Funding models**

The delivery and funding models varied considerably across the case study TSAs. Some were using distance learning for professional studies whilst others used the accredited teachers within their alliances.

Each teaching school alliance has to decide the curriculum for SD trainees. Some had found that it was less of a challenge to use the ITT curriculum of a local HEI. Agreeing the funding model with HEIs can be demanding. HEI accountability demands have meant some delays in recruiting – which contributes to inefficiencies.

6) **Realising the potential for teaching school alliances to develop a strategic approach to teacher recruitment/development**

A number of the alliances we visited have been considering their strategic approaches to offering support to teachers throughout their careers, or across a regional area. There are two dimensions to this challenge:

   a. across teachers' early careers – training them, supporting them through the NQT year, and then starting to spot and develop their leadership potential;

   b. across the local authority or sub-regional areas – creating and/or co-ordinating a School Direct offer for all schools in the area. In areas that struggle to recruit, this could help to brand an offer (e.g. a faith aspect or expertise in teaching in an urban context) and provide a shared process for appointing and allocating placements.

5.4.2 Continuing professional development (CPD)

Positive Developments

1) **Teaching school status is seen by the case study TSAs as a 'career development opportunity for all':** it is 'one of the most fantastic CPD opportunities for the rest of the staff' (executive head, Elmridge Primary School, Cultivus). There is a sense that everyone is learning from the opportunities associated with the teaching school work. These include participants, facilitators and school leaders within the teaching school and beyond.

All teaching school alliances in this evaluation are providing a broad range of CPD courses for schools, from conventional INSET courses to franchised CPD programmes. Feedback on the quality of provision is being monitored by the alliances.

The Improving Teacher Programme (ITP) and the Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP) are well established across the majority of the alliances in this evaluation (n=16). The impact of these programmes on participants' and facilitators' professional learning and development, and then on teaching and learning in the classroom, will be an important part of the evidence base for the evaluation. The examples below illustrate that the ripple effects are felt of both facilitating training and bringing back ideas to the schools and classrooms.

> Facilitating courses such as OTP/ITP gives opportunities to staff across the everyonelearning@ TSA.
>
> > They really enjoy it. It is really beneficial, for example, on how to deliver to adults; you can then get the best out of staff meetings; you don't have to have all the answers. It is a different way of working
> >
> > Strategic partner
>
> Facilitators are constantly developing: 'After each session we revisit and reflect and develop'.
>
> > My staff are good but they are now buzzing, understanding leadership. They are challenged in their thinking. The courses are well differentiated.
> >
> > Strategic partner

2) **Developing programmes that are bespoke or address local needs** (or distinctive gaps) is perceived to be a strong feature of mature system leadership which is aiming for sustainability. The majority of case study TSAs are promoting

a blend of training which combines classroom-based tasks, lesson observations and coaching. Some (though not the majority) are also promoting classroom-based action research to encourage reflective teaching and learning and joint practice development amongst their staff. This contrasts with a perception from some alliances of a one size fits all method of delivery from previous local authority training.

In the Salop TSA, for example, the development of Recently Qualified Teachers (RQTs) was identified as a gap in teachers' careers in the local area and thus a priority for development. The partnership with Edge Hill University was particularly fruitful in this respect as accreditation is possible and could award a full Master's degree for those who gained M level credits during their ITT course.

A further strategic development is providing post-16 experience for teachers in the locality as many schools are 11-16 only. The partnership with Shrewsbury Sixth Form College is proving pivotal in this respect. Local CPD is seen as more cost effective, more pertinent and specific to needs and as having greater impact than external or local authority courses.

The TS is trialling video filming of lessons as an effective way of improving teaching and learning. The decision was taken to buy inexpensive kit rather than purpose made commercial packages. Three methods are being trialled and evaluated in the summer term.

Co-designing a programme with the participants is a way of ensuring that the programme addresses need. Evidence shows that practitioner-led input lends credence and is an alternative to the previous model of CPD 'being done to' participants. In the everyonelearning@ TSA, for example, any CPD intervention is seen as an opportunity to 'learn from the learning' – and this researching into the process of designing a programme feeds back into subsequent offers and products. The TSA has been running a Good or Better Schools training programme. The TSA devised this programme and is now involving five to six schools in the second cohort. These schools co-design a programme to meet the pressing needs and challenges of their individual schools.

In some areas, the CPD offer has been very positively taken upon by small rural schools lacking in other networks to engage high quality training (e.g. South Lakes TSA).

3) **Coaching and mentoring** are seen as critical tools in CPD and in school improvement (e.g. Cultivus). In the Portswood TSA, for example, 'there is an ethos of continual development,' a teacher said. The coaching programme is seen as crucial to this, with coaching leaders saying, for example, 'That was good. But have you thought of …?' Similarly, there is also considerable peer coaching activity at middle leader level across the Transform TSA.

4) **Teaching school alliances can provide a development spectrum** from teaching assistant through ITT to executive headship in a way that single schools cannot. This enables them to identify, nurture and retain talent accordingly. Linking this CPD development to School Direct helps create a powerful localised mechanism for succession planning and talent management – growing not only teachers but also leaders.

The vision in the Sheringham TSA is to have a series of learning pathways for staff at different points in their careers and be able to deliver the relevant courses to schools locally through alliance hubs:

   i)   starting with NQT sessions on classroom management, effective planning, or behaviour management;

   ii) looking at how staff can explore their career pathways by offering NPQML, ITP, mentor training, or subject leadership training;

   iii) developing leadership in staff through OTP, advanced mentor training, NPQSL, or SLE development;

finally looking at leadership beyond a school through NPQH, the headteacher support programme, or local leader of education development.

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5) **Working with an external partner on CPD** is shown to be able to provide economies of scale in marketing and QA. For example, working with the Eastern Leadership Centre (ELC) offers the Cambridge Teaching School Network (CTSN) economies of scale on CPD, providing schools in the Network with access to a range of programmes, such as qualifications for school administration and work with teaching assistants. The ELC has the capacity to carry out marketing and quality assurance of the National College's course framework. The ELC has developed a cluster delivery model, with ELC capacity complemented by local TSA knowledge and personnel. In a similar vein, George Spencer and Transform TSAs have been proactive in establishing links with partners outside education (in the private and voluntary sectors) to support development, for example, in finance and HR.

6) **The involvement of HEIs** in Masters' level courses and development through R&D is welcomed due to the expertise and external perspectives they can offer.

Challenges

1) **Affordability:**

Some CPD courses (particularly those franchised by other organisations such as ITP and OTP) have high costs. Evidence from the case study alliances is that some schools are finding these costs too high in the current economic climate. Some case study TSAs have found tensions when they want to provide similar courses more cheaply. Alternatively courses might become more bespoke and attract differing course fees.

2) **External competition:**

There was a concern that a TSA can be undercut on CPD by bigger organisations moving into the area, especially if the bigger organisation has also received funding to offer specific courses.

One TSA had failed to win a licence to deliver the new NCTL modular courses. They will be working with one of the regional providers, and have now reached an agreement that their leadership courses will gain credits towards the NCTL courses. The funding of leadership courses by NCTL and others in the South West makes training opportunities offered by these providers much more financially attractive to schools, and therefore difficult for the teaching schools to compete on price.

5.4.3 Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs)

Positive Developments

1) There is clear evidence that **some excellent work which contributes to school improvement** is being is carried out by the SLEs recruited and deployed by the case study alliances. There are examples of long term deployments, especially in hard to recruit subjects areas, and to support vulnerable schools.

The SLE role is providing valued and attractive leadership development opportunities and experience for excellent middle and senior leaders beyond their employing school. This opportunity is seen as career enhancing and a way to contribute to enhanced student learning and improvement across the sector. It is, then, not surprising that in a number of the case study TSAs, this strand of

work is seen as part of the leadership development and talent management strand within the alliances.

Moreover, the issue of taking SLEs out of their own classrooms and/or school is felt to be outweighed by the benefits. In the Salop TSA, for example, their vision of school improvement is 'using good people to effect that change'. The SLE role and other opportunities associated with their work have enabled expert teachers and leaders who might otherwise 'hide their light under a bushel' (SLE, Salop).

> It has made me much more self-assured about my own skills and abilities. … it has made me respect the skills of others. To be able to help other people questioning and to be able to see that you can have an impact on how other people perceive themselves. It is very rewarding. It ultimately gave the chance to reflect on my own practice, on my own leadership skills….

> It enabled me not only to share my own expertise but also to be able to bring it back into school strategies and other areas of excellence that I have recognised that could benefit our own school. I have been able to bring that back and share it with the head, with the staff and with the children in the class and with my teachers as well. So the impact has been twofold: not only for the school in which I have supported so far, but also back into our own school here.
>
> SLE, Cultivus

2) **Recruitment processes** are being conducted seriously and thoroughly in the case study TSAs. There are examples of teaching schools working closely with their strategic and alliance partners to identify suitable candidates and organise training and support for their applications. In some alliances, a rigorous assessment of the skills that are seen as important for school-to-school support is carried out as part of the recruitment and designation progress.

> In the Denbigh TSA, for example, SLEs described the application and interview process as rigorous. When applying, applicants had to provide an example of an issue on which they had made an impact. The interview process included a presentation followed by questions and answers and a discussion on a scenario which was observed.

There were examples of some Advanced Skills Teachers (AST) not being designated as a result. In the Cambridge Teaching School Network, one of the SLEs contrasted his work as an SLE with that of an AST:

> 'The AST role is mainly about teaching, whereas SLEs are in the leadership of change at a higher level.' This SLE has supported schools in humanities, supporting heads of department in structuring their department, tracking data, assessment strategies and long-term planning. He reflects that the experience of supporting other schools has given him 'experience of working in a wider school context. Making an impact in another school will also help my next career step to assistant principal.

For existing SLEs, the case study TSAs are committed to organising regular meetings in order to create a sense of community and peer support amongst SLEs.

3) Where **relations with the local authority** remain positive and the LA has capacity, the LA can have a proactive role in the deployment of SLEs. In such cases, SLE support is seen as part of the support activity for other schools. For example, in Cultivus, most SLE deployment has been a result of the local authority's request for school-based support: 'A lot of our deployment has been from funds that we were given to work with other schools for S2S support, so it is tied into S2S support.'

4) **The SLE training** developed by Ashton on Mersey School is perceived as thought-provoking and the SLE events organised by NCTL have provided an excellent opportunity for networking and knowledge exchange.

5) Almost all alliances have established **a clear charging system for deploying SLEs** (n=16) – which includes part of the fee going to the teaching school to help cover the cost of brokerage.

> In one TSA, for example, the aim is to develop a range of SLE expertise across the range of domains listed by the College. The plan, subject to training being provided, is to deploy the new SLEs and use the existing SLEs more systematically from September 2013 onwards. WHTSP is working to a policy of SLEs being charged out to schools at £280 per day plus a £20 administrative cost).

Challenges

1) **SLE deployment**:

Evidence from the case study TSAs was that where SLEs had not been deployed there was disappointment and some frustration for both the SLEs and their schools. Such frustrations appeared to be more acute in the primary sector

where there were fewer resources available to buy in external expertise and support.

In addition, there is a need for efficient co-ordination between the TSA and the LA on the designation and deployment of SLEs. The diminished capacity in some local authorities can mean that deployment of SLEs can become less targeted to need. The local authority of one TSA, for example, is concerned about the poor geographical spread of teaching schools and SLEs across the county. A county-wide strategic approach to the provision of training and support has, in the view of the LA, become increasingly difficult as a result.

Moreover, there is concern over whether SLEs are being deployed in a way that reflects a school's strategic needs, as part of a wider team not just on their own, and whether deployment can be steered by an individual leading the support for a vulnerable school, for example an NLE. Some SLEs found it difficult to strategically plan their school-based support because they were not sure whether their visit was one-off or whether there would be longer-term, follow-up visits. 'We would have used a very different approach if we had a better understanding of the overall situation' (SLE). Understanding the implications of this and how it is addressed will be part of our further evidence gathering.

2) **SLE recruitment & designation**:

Recruiting SLEs can be a challenge. In some cases there has been a perceived lack of enthusiasm from some alliance schools, as illustrated in the experiences of the Partnership TSA.

Some case study TSAs commented that SLEs' work entails a challenge of applying skills used in one context to another. Some SLEs are a better fit than others when working in the new context. They said it was unclear how SLEs would be de-designated should the need arise.

3) **Workload tensions**:

There is evidence that points to workload tensions for some deployed SLEs and their employing schools. For example, some case study TSAs mentioned that there were tensions between SLEs' own school commitments and the support for other schools. Although some alliance schools had signed up and agreed to designate one of their staff as an SLE, there were times when they did not have the capacity to release their SLEs.

4) **Impact**:

Systematic assessment of the impact of SLE deployment is not straightforward. Evidence is needed to understand whether and the extent to which an SLE

working in isolation can still have a strategic impact – along with the lines of that provided by a National Support School (NSS). Positive evidence is emerging from this evaluation though. In Denbigh TSA, for example, feedback from both SLEs and schools that had used them was positive. This will be a key feature of our discussions on subsequent visits and through subsequent analysis.

5.4.4 School to school support (S2S support)

Positive Developments

1) Section 4.0 provides examples of **how teaching schools have helped schools to improve**. The ethos of successful S2S support builds on the history and learning from 2006 of the NLE/NSS programme, and is seen as an appreciation that context matters.

2) **Forms and scope of support may vary considerably, depending upon context** (e.g. availability and sources of funding). From the case studies, we have identified a spectrum of school-to-school support, ranging from **informal mentoring and coaching** (e.g. executive heads of George Spencer and Portswood TSAs, and heads in the South Lakes TSAs working with heads of schools who approached them for partnership and leadership support), to **deployment of SLEs or other staff** (e.g. SLEs from Transform and Hallam TSAs having supported the development of literacy and/or numeracy in two socioeconomically disadvantaged schools); to **intensive CPD such as attendance at ITP/OTP courses** (a popular form of support in almost all the case study TSAs); to **comprehensive whole-school support/intervention package** from a range of practitioners or federations/sponsoring academy conversions. For example, West Hertfordshire, Cultivus and Bishop Rawstorne have sponsored/are in the process of sponsoring a local school as an academy. Appendix 2 outlines the background information of three schools supported by the Ebor TSA. It provides an example of how our case study TSAs respond to the different needs of schools in different socioeconomic and performance contexts in order to make a difference.

There are some creative S2S responses to appointing hard-to-staff subjects, developing teachers and leaders in closing schools, and making strategic appointments for succession planning. The difference in form and depth of support could also mean that the level of impact that teaching schools have on the improvement of other schools might vary significantly. Feedback from supported schools suggested that informal support can be just as valuable as a planned intervention.

3) S2S support is perceived by almost all the TSAs in this evaluation as a **bespoke and practitioner led response to local need**. This contrasts with a perception from some of the alliances of an off the shelf method of delivery from previous local authority training and support, and is welcomed by the supported schools that we spoke with in this study. Feedback from the schools receiving support suggested that S2S support worked well when it was bespoke to their needs and culture. For example, a local school receiving support from the Cultivus TSA commented: 'They woke us up to how the data should be collected and used to inform teaching and learning' (Deputy Head). The staff especially appreciated the NLEs' and SLEs' respect for their experience whilst helping them transform the curriculum and develop school-based learning and assessment policies.

Some TSAs are seen as the first port of call, and if they are unable to support, they will find/broker support from the wider networks and connections that they have established.

4) S2S support draws upon existing NLE/LLE/SLE expertise and strengths of individuals are becoming known. For many **there is a moral imperative** to help other schools for the education and achievement of all children.

5) **In most case study TSAs, the local authority and the alliance share intelligence** and work closely together to provide responsive and effective S2S support. This may presuppose positive on-going relations between the TSA and the LA. Also, support may be easier to arrange where the LA is funding it (e.g. Cambridge Teaching School Network, Sheringham).

For example, the Sheringham TSA is working closely with the local authority and sees the importance of an agenda that offers the opportunity for schools to lead their own improvement, as well as providing a much-needed support and training offer to Norfolk primary schools. The LA sees the work with the teaching school alliance as a good example of their new commissioning role, and offering good value for money in their drive to improve Norfolk primary schools.

The local authority/teaching schools strategic steering group uses its meetings to review a data dashboard of all 420 primary schools in Norfolk, to determine the improvements needed, the support required, and the accountability mechanisms to demonstrate progress. This has been an important step in ensuring complete transparency of LA data across the teaching school alliances.

The steering group has been meeting DfE representatives regularly, and expects to meet the new HMI regional school improvement support. Alongside the meetings of the steering group, the Norfolk Primary Heads Association (NPHA) - 22 representatives, four from each of five regions and two country-wide representatives - has linked its work with the teaching school alliance priorities. The most recent meeting of the NPHA demonstrated the importance of the Norfolk teaching schools to the improvement agenda for primary schools across the authority. Sheringham regard this alignment as very important – to demonstrate there is unity of purpose between the local authority, the teaching school alliances, and the NPHA.

The case of the Sheringham TSA also provides examples of alliances effectively supporting large number of schools within a short frame of time.

To date, they have given support to a considerable number in the first year: 47 Norfolk Schools, including 22 schools with new headteachers. Initial LLE data and pupil progress data confirm a positive impact. For the immediate future, the alliance wants to support up to a further 50 Norfolk primary schools to raise achievement to national averages and above. There are significant numbers of schools requiring support in the region of Great Yarmouth and Norwich. The alliance's plan is to look to two key partner schools to lead the support work in these areas and develop mini-hubs of local short-term support.

Challenges

1) **Capacity:**

In some areas capacity is an issue and more TSAs are needed to cope with demand. It is also difficult for TSAs to manage the ebb and flow of requests for support. Where there are few TSAs in a local authority or region, there may be a considerable distance from schools needing support. On the other hand, there may not be enough S2S work in the TSA's own area. If this is the case, the TSA may have to look elsewhere to carry out S2S support.

2) **Relations with the LA**:

In some areas the local authority is still brokering much of the S2S support. In some case study TSAs, this may be a transitional arrangement:

> Nearly half the schools that are formally part of a case study TSA are National Support Schools led by NLEs, but their deployment is mostly being brokered through the local authority. This TSA may be unusual in the extent to which it has maintained a school improvement function but based it round using the resources of the schools within the authority. This is an area which the alliance will continue to discuss and work with the local authority.

In other areas, there may be tensions between the local authority and the TSA on school-to-school support. A local authority in the North West of England still has general link advisers for schools and their role could overlap in the future when the 3 local TSAs mature, with a regional alliance of system leaders, comprising representatives of the three teaching schools, the local authority, an HEI, and the NCTL Associate. The regional alliance of system leaders will also monitor performance data and broker support. The LA staff expressed considerable anxiety at the effect of the expansion of the number of TSAs on local authority provision for school improvement: 'We are in a huge transition' (LA staff).

3) **Inspection framework:**

Comments by the majority of the TSAs in this evaluation were that the Ofsted framework does not yet fully recognise S2S support. It was emphasised that S2S support is a key aspect of the teaching school work which constitutes a great deal of intellectual, financial, human resources and time investment from the teaching schools and their alliances.

4) **Fear of being taken over and becoming sponsored academies**:

Some schools that needed support appeared to be wary of seeking help from a teaching school alliance due to concerns about becoming a sponsored academy. For example, the Cambridge Teaching School Network reported that a secondary school had felt 'that they might take us over' and this had prevented it from asking for support from the Network. This secondary school rejected £15,000 of NCTL support, because it may have included a sponsored academy solution. Such concern is likely to be related to some schools' lack of knowledge of TSAs' role in supporting other schools for improvement and in developing a

self-improving school system, and will be similar to other schools' concerns about take over by a national support school.

5.4.5 Leadership development and succession planning and talent management

Positive Developments

1) Alliances see leadership development, succession planning and talent management as one **inter-connected block of work**. In all TSAs, succession planning is seen as being delivered through the spectrum of development opportunities from ITT to the mentoring and coaching of emerging and aspiring leaders, and through working as a group to build leadership capacity across the alliance.

   Significantly there are also examples of alliances following the example of chains or federations of schools by providing opportunities for aspiring or emerging leaders to be posted (for half a term or a term) to each other's schools to broaden their leadership experience.

   > In Hallam, there is a 'massive' project of supplying a senior deputy headteacher from the teaching school as the headteacher of a school without a leader.
   >
   > One primary school is working jointly with the teaching school to develop a newly appointed assistant headteacher into a deputy and beyond.   The partner describes this as a 'unique leadership development opportunity'. The school had not appointed a deputy when a limited field of two applied. The headteacher and director of the teaching school then devised and marketed an information event for a 'leadership development opportunity' that was attended by ten interested aspirant leaders of Catholic primary schools, four of whom applied, and the school could select from a strong field.

2) There is clear evidence of talent management and leadership development in teaching schools and their strategic partners and alliance partners. **The teaching school work has provided new opportunities to develop and retain outstanding colleagues** within the teaching school and their alliance. Talent beyond teaching and learning, for example, from business is also being spotted and actively managed to increase financial and business capacity in TSAs.

> There is a commitment to being 'business savvy' in Transform, notably in the appointment of the director of TSA and broader range of SLEs than focus on teaching and learning. One SLE talks of a 'new generation of thinking' as a school needs a good teacher to lead and also a good business person: 'schools are businesses whether we like this or not'. This SLE is a clear example of talent spotting within Transform. With 25 years' experience in banking and being a parent governor at her children's school, she was recruited to the staff as business manager, became staff governor, and four years later SLE for business and finance, a source of expertise across the alliance where these areas are less developed.

There is also evidence of proactive succession planning and talent spotting at ITT and leadership levels. School Direct fits this overall strategy of developing talent in a locale.

> The Salop TSA, for example, had advertised a very well attended School Direct event locally using local press, job centres, existing contacts e.g. headteachers canvassing their support staff who may not previously have considered teaching. There is a market for providing pathways into teaching for support staff in the schools. The teaching school has created a hub for Osiris courses that cater for the development of a wide range of personnel.

3) Fourteen alliances are involved in the delivery of NCTL modular leadership programmes. Links with **licensed leadership consortium** are working well in some alliances but there are tensions in others. Licensed leadership consortia have provided a way of bringing different teaching schools together across LA boundaries.

The Buckinghamshire Teaching School Partnership has stated that the aims for this strand are:

To provide a Buckinghamshire hub that identifies programme facilitators to support National College leadership training at levels 1, 2 and 3; and encourages Buckinghamshire schools to nominate teachers for leadership training.

The work is being undertaken with the Thames Valley Partnership (TVP) who are the licence holder for the NCTL leadership programmes. TVP work with a lead school locally (in this case Turnfurlong) and work across a number of authorities (Milton Keynes, Berkshire[5], and Buckinghamshire). They are working with four or five other teaching school alliances across the region. 300 staff are on all of the partnership programmes, with 50 on the first cohort of NPQH/NPQSL; in the future there will be two cohorts per year with 30/40 staff on each.

The role of the Partnership is to organise the placement schools, working with other schools, and draw on headteacher capacity to deliver the training. All the administration and management is provided by the TVP. They need to develop facilitation experts in schools using their current expertise. TVP provides the materials and carries out quality assurance; the schools have facilitators, venues and the approaches.

There were a number of clear strengths from the work so far identified by TVP, including the numbers of people on the programmes; schools taking control of middle leadership programmes, and having more control than on Leading from the Middle; the ability for TVP to provide support to the schools through administration and management; and the opportunity to tailor the central offer to the needs of the alliance.

Challenges

1) **Timescale**:

   It has proved to be a challenge to develop and implement a succession planning strategy on a short timescale for the case study TSAs. At the time of our visits to TSAs, succession planning was in transition from a local authority responsibility

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[5] Based upon data collected during the first schools visits in April 2013. Berkshire is now composed of 6 Unitary Authorities and TVP do not work in them all.

to a TS responsibility; it was too soon for mature models to have already been established by the alliances.

2) **Potential of favouritism:**

Some case study TSAs felt that succession planning may become very localised around the TSA. It may also favour a local choice of TSA allegiance where partners feel they need to join the local TSA in order to protect local promotion opportunities for their staff.

3) **Post-training support/mechanism for leadership development:**

There is a challenge for all TSAs as part of their standard leadership development practice to follow the example of the best chains and create a structure/system that provides opportunities for emerging and aspiring leaders to have assignments (lasting from a few weeks to a whole term or a school year) in other schools to complement formal training. This will enable emerging and aspiring leaders to translate the vision into action, and for them to visit, work in, be assigned to and be supported across schools in the local area.

4) **Strategic planning:**

There are examples of existing links with LAs and the use of sub-regional data for succession planning. However, this is an area which will need to be probed further on our return visits. There is not yet clear evidence from all TSAs that suggests that they have a formal strategy for succession planning across the alliance, for example, by identifying the numbers of new leaders that they need to develop through using regional/LA data on demography and projected retirements.

5) **Delivery of the modular curriculum:**

It is a considerable commitment for schools involved in delivering the modular curriculum as part of being a licensed consortium. Capacity in schools to facilitate at the levels needed was cited as a challenge by a number of alliances. There is an example of a senior leader being assigned to work full time on leading this strand of work. Schools can be vulnerable to sudden crises which could divert senior leaders: 'Within a self-improving system, what is the capacity for leaders to do this beyond running their own schools?'

5.4.6 Research and development (R&D)

Positive Developments

1) **HEI partnership provides promising R&D opportunities**. For example, in the everyonelearning@ TSA, research opportunities with the University of Manchester are seen as enriching. The Transform TSA is leading an Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) Knowledge Exchange project with the University of Nottingham which promotes the application of academic knowledge on leadership for learning.

2) **Opportunities for practitioner research are strengthened** through 16 TSAs. R&D work on *Closing the Gap*, for example, has a lot of potential (e.g. South Lakes). There are also examples of clusters of schools showing real understanding that R&D is directly related to teacher inquiry and school improvement (e.g. Portswood, West Hertfordshire, George Spencer, Cultivus, Bishop Rawstorne).

3) **The development of R&D work varies** across the teaching school alliances in this evaluation. For some TSAs, R&D can be a central approach, researching into all aspects of the TSA work and feeding back into development: "*learning from the learning*" (a principle coined and adopted by everyonelearning@). For some, R&D is thus seen as generally underpinning all aspects of the 'Big 6' rather than being a discrete aspect of the TSA work (e.g. George Spencer, Bishop Rawstorne).

Challenges

1) **Role of teacher inquiry:**

   R&D can seem initially daunting for teachers. However, there appears to be a growing recognition that there is a need to continue to steer R&D towards evidence-based teacher inquiry/joint practice development, and that this is not an add-on but as part of the mainstream school-to-school improvement.

2) **Prioritisation:**

   Some TSAs have not yet prioritised the R&D work and recognise they need to develop further.

3) **Time commitment:**

   It is felt that the speed required in demonstrating impact may mitigate against quality R&D which takes time to undertake and embed. Also, because it can be a time-consuming activity, some alliances did not prioritise this strand of work.

4) **Funding:**

There is some frustration that some specific TSA projects are not funded but their potential impact is substantial. For example, the lead teaching school of one TSA has partners in Singapore, via the British Council. Each year colleagues visit Singapore and host two primary and two secondary colleagues from Singapore.   This collaboration is now embedded after five years. The TSA is seeking funding to take this development further

5.5   Development of the alliances: creating and deepening partnerships

5.5.1 Positive Developments

All the TSAs in this evaluation have progressed since their designation and are working to develop and/or deepen partnerships within and beyond their alliances. Such development is driven by a clear sense of direction, shared values and recognition that all partners have talent and experience and skills to share regardless of their particular Ofsted grading.

At the West Hertfordshire TSA, for example, the original form of the alliance comprised 11 primary schools, including Bovingdon and Hammond. It also included seven NLEs and two local leaders of education (LLEs). This helped to provide a concentrated focus of expertise though the fact that so many of the founder schools had 'outstanding' status proved to be initially off-putting to other schools and the headteachers have had to work hard to communicate the openness and vision of the alliance and involve a broader cross-section of schools.

In May 2013 there were 24 schools that were strategic partners in the alliance comprising 18 primary, one primary special school and five secondary schools. One of the secondary schools and one of the primary schools have been designated as teaching schools in their own right but by being involved and contributing to the leadership development work of WHTSP, it enables the alliance to provide a cross-phase offer in this area. Some of the original strategic partners have dropped out as heads of the two lead teaching schools have made it clear that membership of WHTSP involves being an active member – every partner school is expected to contribute and help lead.

At the heart of WHTSP's vision is a desire to use and maximise the expertise within primary schools to recruit and develop teachers and leaders and so improve outcomes for children and young people. In addition to the relationship with Nottingham University SCITT, WHTSP had also teamed up with the Pilgrim Partnership (another accredited provider of teacher training). From the beginning of 2013 WHTSP has been licensed to deliver NCTL's modular leadership development programmes and is undertaking this in conjunction with the Best Practice Network. WHTSP has branded this aspect of its work the 'Outstanding Leaders' Alliance'.

The experience of WHTSP, and that of all the other case study TSAs shows that the teaching school status has given schools access to a wider network of partners and a wider range of support, resources and ideas. They and their strategic/alliance partners universally said that they enjoyed the autonomy and opportunity to work with like-minded, inspirational leaders and teachers. TS status has also given them increased development opportunities, for example, in broadening horizons and moving beyond previous local authority boundaries. There is much to be gained from this involvement because it 'raises the game' for outstanding schools as well as schools aiming to improve.

As noted above, strategic and/or alliance partnerships that are built upon existing close and trusting collaboration are more likely to thrive early on. Almost half of the

teaching school alliances have included another teaching school(s) as a strategic partner. In some cases, this was because partner schools were granted teaching school status in the second or third cohorts of applications and continued to collaborate with the lead teaching schools in the delivery of aspects of the 'Big Six'.

However, irrespective of old or new partners, evidence from the case study alliances suggests that reciprocity and trust – two essential ingredients of social capital (Hargreaves, 2012) – will only take root in alliances where partners are seen as equals who also have something to offer.

In addition, it is felt that deep and trusting partnerships rest upon professional and personal respect for the individuals involved. Commitment is enacted at a personal level and is underpinned by values. Evidence shows that personal and word of mouth reputation are crucial to the successful development of teaching school alliances.

The example of Transform illustrates how shared vision and trust, supported by clear leadership and governance structure, have enabled many TSAs in this evaluation to deepen the partnerships within their alliances.

Trust has been established through the sharing of values and because of the openness to discuss strengths and areas for support. Already headteachers are beginning to discuss data in order to discuss early intervention: 'We feel a lot of trust within the alliance. I don't see the competition'.

All partners participate in working groups, therefore there is a sense of 'ownership by everyone of school improvement; they all have a stake in its success. Every voice is heard and all have a role to play.' The generosity of sharing, with the aim of improving education for the City's children, is all the more impressive 'where no money changes hands and when time is challenging'. The collaborative partnerships in place are strong. The head of the lead teaching school is 'overwhelmed by the generosity of time and spirit' of other headteachers.

A secondary headteacher saw the opportunity within Transform to investigate transition work, SEN, teaching and learning across phase and build on existing strengths in the school, for example the long tradition of talent management. Existing strengths of 'very strong succession planning, talent management and CPD ethos' can be developed further via Transform. One headteacher who led the City's Talent Spotting and Talent Management felt it was a logical development to offer this expertise to Transform.

Evidence from this evaluation points to the emerging popularity of multi-teaching school partnerships and/or networks where more than one designated teaching school is formally involved. As noted above, such a partnership model is seen to help guard against the danger of de-designation if a teaching school loses its Outstanding status. This model also helps to demonstrate that the leadership of the teaching school goes beyond a single school.

The improvement in flexibility of NCTL's approach has also facilitated this move. In Cohort 2, joint bids became possible and the Cambridge All-through Teaching School Alliance welcomed this change of rules. It provided an opportunity for it to become one of the few all-through teaching school alliances in the first two cohorts.

In our case studies, the quality of relationships between teaching school alliances and their local authorities varies considerably. Some teaching school alliances do not have a close work relationship with the local authority; however, there are also examples of strong relationships between TSAs and local authorities where the LA is commissioning the teaching school to deliver CPD and support other schools, and see the offer from the teaching school as integral to the improvement offer from the LA. At Denbigh, for example, the facilitating role played by the local authority on school improvement has helped to ensure that the efforts of the two teaching school alliances are strategically co-ordinated.

Another dimension of partnership development is the ways in which almost all alliances have partnerships with more than one HEI – and even where a school is participating with an alliance programme, it may also have its own side arrangements with a university.

Challenges

Key challenges in developing the case study alliances are summarised as follows:

- **Sustainability:**

  The biggest challenge is rather more **strategic in character** – namely how sustainable is the whole teaching school concept in the medium term. There are concerns about how easily public policy can change. With this in mind, governors in a lead TS have kept the finances of the teaching school separate so that in the event that the teaching school initiative were downgraded or abandoned, the school would not be over-exposed to financial risk and the school could absorb the increased number of staff it had taken on as a result of teaching school activity.

- **Relationship with the LA:**

It is not easy building a strong relationship between a TSA and the LA, so that each exercises complementary roles. Also, finding the best strategic role for an LA in a TSA can be a challenge. Portswood, Salop, Sheringham, Cultivus, Shiremoor, Chesterton, for example, have done this successfully, with the authority finding a different way of working. For example,

> In Portswood, the LA school improvement team is very small and LA officers recognise that the expertise and capacity to deliver school improvement now lies in the Portswood TSA. Complementing this, the LA has statutory functions and has 'robust conversations' with school heads where the school is performing poorly. The statutory functions are: monitoring (school standards and assessment arrangements), challenging schools, and developing NQTs. The TSA does the last of these and the LA works in partnership with the TSA on the others. The LA sees the TSA as building local school improvement capacity. Where the TSA meets difficulties in the supported school in implementing its improvement strategy, it may turn to the LA and ask it to use its statutory powers.
>
> The LA officers praised the work of the NLEs in the TSA: 'The current improvement in Southampton schools is down to the deployment of the NLEs.'

Others are still in the process of finding how best to work with their LAs and some alliances report that local authorities feel as though the TSA is a competitor.

- **Collaboration & competition:**

Relationship of a TSA with neighbouring TSAs can be difficult and could benefit from a Memorandum of Understanding. Some TSAs, however, appear to have deeper concerns. It is felt that a lack of strategic management of the allocation of teaching schools across the country (e.g. 4 TSAs in a small local authority; spread of TSAs in rural areas) can cause a greater sense of competition, rather than collaboration, between neighbouring TSAs.

- **A lack of partnership rigour:**

Teaching schools appear to have been doing the softer working around support and development but not been able to hold to each other to account (or other schools in the alliance) if performance and progress starts to slip in a school. This area will be probed further on the return visits (e.g. whether

alliances have formal arrangements for challenging each other written into their MoUs).

6. Schools Receiving Support from Case Study Alliances

As we have noted in the section on S2S support, the scope and depth of support that TSAs provide for other schools may vary significantly. Some may be just buying into a CPD course or they may be receiving a major coaching programme. Others may be involved in a wider range of programmes and also receive focussed bespoke support targeting at teaching, learning and leadership development. There are also examples of the supported school becoming part of the multi-academy trust led by the teaching school.

For the purpose of this interim report, we present how the Denbigh TSA has helped three very different schools improve over time. **Appendix 2** outlines the background information on the three schools supported by this TSA. The key contextual characteristics of these schools (e.g. school phase, type, socioeconomic levels of their student intakes) vary and their performance levels differ.

School 1

Example 1 provides an example of how the Denbigh Teaching School Alliance, has been supporting another secondary school.

Example 1: School-to-school support for the Stantonbury Campus

Stantonbury Campus is a large mixed 11-18 school of around 2,300 pupils, though as result of demographic changes numbers are falling. Over two thirds of students are White with the other third coming from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds, the largest currently being of Black African (Somali) heritage. Nearly a quarter of pupils are entitled to the Pupil Premium.

In 2011 the school was given a Notice to Improve but since then under the leadership of a new headteacher results have improved significantly. The proportion of students gaining 5A*-C grades, including English and mathematics, increased from 38 per cent in 2011 to 54 per cent in 2012. In March 2013 Ofsted re-inspected the school and found that:

> The school has made rapid progress since its previous inspection because of strong and effective leadership at all levels, especially that related to improving teaching.

However, Ofsted also reported what the school already knew and had been acting on, namely that there was still much to be done to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Ofsted assessed the school as requiring improvement.

Stantonbury had been working with other schools in Milton Keynes for a number of years – for example, it participated in the city-wide NQT training programme. The assistant principal of the school 'wasn't sure' initially about the teaching school concept but he knew and trusted Andy Squires and had a high regard for one of the alliance's SLEs. Stantonbury is five miles – or a 10 minute drive – from Denbigh. Drawing on funding made available by the local authority he decided in September 2012 to commission the alliance to provide four programmes, some of which have been completed and some of them are on-going:

- the Developing teacher programme which ran from February to April 2013. Six teachers participated. The aim was to help move these teachers from 'requiring improvement' to 'good'. In May 2013 five of the teachers were assessed as 'good' and the sixth is leaving the school at the end of the summer term;

- NQT lesson planning through providing an experienced mentor. Four of the five participants were by June 2013 assessed as 'secure' in terms of their planning, with one still requiring improvement. All of the NQTs were expected to reach all the professional standards by the end of the academic year;

- the Middle leaders' development programme – four of Stantonbury's middle leaders, who were new to their role, are participating in the programme being run by the alliance which was due to finish in July 2013; and

- the Outstanding Teacher Programme in which six teachers from Stantonbury have been participating.

Stantonbury is positive about its engagement with the alliance and is taking one of the Schools Direct placements. Now the school is not in an Ofsted category it may lose access to the funding from the local authority and will have to consider how it funds further support from the alliance. But the school now considers that it is in a position where it could provide as well receive support in certain areas and could envisage that it might become a strategic partner in the alliance at some point.

School 2

Attached as **Appendix 3** is a case study written by the local authority which describes how Denbigh School supported mathematics teachers and, in particular, the subject leader at a local junior school – which is around three miles from Denbigh. The head of Denbigh, Sarah Parker, in her role as a NLE played a key role in the project; the alliance also provided an expert teacher. This included helping to establish the project and attending six-weekly Targeted Intervention Board meetings to review progress. The support lasted a year and in addition to the positive impact on attainment explained in the case study, the head of the junior school reported that his mathematics subject leader became 'much more confident' about her role and subject. When Denbigh was visited in May, the school was confident that the progress in attainment had been maintained in 2013. The link between the junior school and Denbigh has continued with Sarah mentoring the headteacher on sharpening up the school's self-evaluation and with Denbigh providing a coach for the junior school's deputy head on driving improvement at a faster rate.

School 3

The alliance also supports schools outside Milton Keynes and example 2 provides a recent example.

Example 2: School-to-school support for Northampton Academy

Northampton Academy opened in 2004 under the sponsorship of United Learning. There are 1,320 pupils of whom 43 per cent in 2012 were in receipt of the Pupil Premium, 21 per cent did not speak English as their first language and 8.9 per cent had a SEN statement or were on School Action Plus.

Despite improving its results from 14 per cent of students gaining five or more A*-C grades (including English and maths) to 40 per cent, the school had struggled to move beyond satisfactory since it was first inspected in 2007 and then again in 2010. In September 2011 the deputy principal, Anne Hill, became principal of the academy and when Ofsted conducted a monitoring visit the next month it reported 'good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement'. However, the inspector also identified actions needed to further improve the quality of teaching and learning. The academy's schools results improved with

the proportion of pupils achieving 5A*-C grades including English and mathematics moving from 35 per cent in 2010, to 47 per cent in 2011 to 55 per cent in 2012. But Anne was still aware of the challenge to deliver consistently good teaching across the board and that she did not have sufficient capacity to address the problem.

In addition to internal support from United Learning and as part of its initiative of collaboration between schools, Ann was introduced to the Denbigh Teaching School Alliance and following discussion it was agreed to provide two forms of support:

- in January 2013 five teachers from Northampton went on Denbigh's OTP programme. The feedback from the first five was "really positive" and a second five have now been through the programme; and

- in March 2013 Chris Holmwood from Shenley Brook End facilitated a bespoke middle leader development programme which concluded in July. This included a coaching element involving coaches from Northampton and Shenley. The leaders being supported also visited Shenley because in the principal's view 'it was important for my middle leaders to see what outstanding looked like'.

Northampton was inspected again in January 2013 and this time its overall effectiveness was found to be good with teaching being described as 'typically good and sometimes outstanding'. Building on this improvement in its drive to become outstanding, the academy actively appreciates the benefits of collaborative working and the importance of the Denbigh alliance in helping achieve this.

The relationship between Northampton and the alliance is still evolving and Anne does not rule out potentially becoming a strategic partner within the alliance. Working with the alliance schools:

> Makes staff reflective about their practice. We were far too insular. Bringing back best practice is having such a positive development in our school. I absolutely see the benefit from collaborative working. It is improving teachers and teaching, so why wouldn't I continue with it?

Anne Hill, Principal, Northampton Academy

7. Summary

Teaching schools are 'the fulfilment' (Matthews and Berwick, 2013: 5) of the Government's vision to create an efficient and sustainable national network of outstanding schools which 'lead and develop sustainable approaches to teacher development across the country' (HM Government, 2010: 23). They are at the heart of the movement towards a self-improving school system where 'more control and responsibility passes to the local level in a spirit of mutual aid between school leaders and their colleagues, who are morally committed to imaginative and sustainable ways of achieving more ambitious and better outcomes' (Hargreaves, 2010: 23).

Our first visits to the 18 case study teaching school alliances suggest that they have made a good start, and that they are continuing to evolve in terms of the scope and depth of their partnership work. In all the case study TSAs, a collective sense of commitment to the learning and achievement of children binds partners together and drives the development of the teaching school work. However, in terms of how each TSA partnership operates (e.g. its governance structure), how membership of a teaching school alliance is perceived, and how each TSA fulfils the teaching school priorities, there are considerable differences across our sample. The development of these case study teaching school alliances, at this early stage, also points to challenges relating to the sustainability of the teaching school movement and tensions between competition, autonomy and collaboration.

The development of these case study alliances will be reviewed again in Spring 2014 and 2015, and findings will be tested at a national level through a survey of cohort 1, 2 and 3 teaching school alliances.

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Appendix 1: Summary of Case Study Teaching School Alliances (from the NCTL database of key information 2012)[6]

Alliance Name (Cohort 1)	Region	Teaching School Name (funded)	Number of members inc HEIs and others	Teaching School Phase	Teaching School Second Phase	Number of schools rural	Teaching School Rural
South Lakes Teaching School Alliance	North West	Queen Elizabeth School	14	Secondary		7	1
Portswood Teaching School Alliance	South East	Portswood Primary School	50	N&P		0	0
Hallam Teaching School Alliance	Yorkshire and the Humber	Notre Dame High School	33	Secondary		3	0
George Spencer Academy Teaching School Alliance	East Midlands	George Spencer Academy and Technology College	21	Secondary		1	0
Shiremoor Teaching School Alliance	North East	Shiremoor Primary School	25	N&P		3	0
Cultivus	North West	Elmridge Primary School St Chads CoE Primary School	52	N&P	N&P	9	1
West Hertfordshire Teaching School Partnership	East of England	The Hammond Academy and Bovingdon Primary Academy	14	N&P	N&P	1	1
Denbigh Teaching School Alliance	South East	Denbigh School	9	Secondary	Secondary	1	1
The Partnership Teaching School	South West	Fiveways Special School	6	Special	Special	0	0

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[6] The data listed here illustrate how the case study teaching school alliances started. The size and composition of these TSAs have changed considerably since then. We will update the table on our return visits to illustrate more clearly how the size and composition of TSAs change over time.

Alliance Name (Cohort 2)	Region	Teaching School Name (funded)	Number of members inc HEIs and others	Teaching School Phase	Teaching School Second Phase	Number of schools rural	Teaching School Rural
Cambridge All Through Teaching School Alliance (CATTSA) [7]	East of England	Swavesey Village College	15	Secondary	N&P	2	2
Transform Teaching School Alliance	East Midlands	Sneinton St Stephen's CofE Primary School	7	N&P		0	0
everyonelearning@	North West	Hawthorns Community School	40	Special		1	0
The Salop Teaching School Alliance	West Midlands	The Priory School A Business and Enterprise College	15	Secondary		3	0
Ebor Teaching Schools Alliance	Yorkshire and the Humber	Manor Church of England Academy Trust	20	Secondary	N&P	5	1
Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy Teaching School Alliance	North West	Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy	17	Secondary		4	1
Chesterton Teaching Alliance	London	Chesterton Primary School	15	N&P		0	0
Buckinghamshire Teaching School Partnership	South East	Turnfurlong Infant School	13	N&P		0	0
Sheringham Primary National Teaching School Alliance	East of England	Sheringham Community Primary School	13	N&P		3	1

Appendix 2: Background information on the schools supported by the Ebor Teaching School Alliance

Supported School: Secondary, primary, special?	No of pupils	Pupil Premium %	EAL %	% having SEN statement or on School Action Plus	Reason for support e.g. (in an Ofsted category, below floor target, schools requested support, LA identified need etc)	Form of support (bullet points on key interventions – eg ITP/OTP, deployment of NLE, LLE or SLE etc)	Impact of support (Any quotes from Ofsted report or LA, increase in results, views of school receiving report)
Secondary 11-16	<350	21%-30%	0%-10%	11%-20%	Requires improvement April 2013, 2012 Ofsted inadequate, closure because of falling rolls.	2 teachers employed by Teaching School and deployed at X school. X school staff appointed at TS including principal and assistant head. Key support at whole school level: developing staff in a closing school, updating eg NC, progression to new employment, developing especially single subject teachers and non-specialists. At least half day development for each staff member through TSA, mostly observation in the larger school, some adapted to address individual needs. Support for SLT. Tailored revision support for Y11. Joint INSET with TS.	X School: 'Everything we asked for – if [TS] cannot, they will find a way'. Support for science and maths very good and English good with potential for better. Ofsted grade improved.
Secondary 11-16	<800	31%-40%	0%-10%	0%-10%	Ofsted Inadequate February 2012. National College initiative for schools in the LA to link with outstanding schools. Y school linked with TS. Y due to close September 2014 (notification 2006).	TS and Y joint solution to secure three good quality teachers through TSA, as good teachers were leaving a closing school. Candidates were interviewed jointly at TS for a position at Y; 2 teachers employed by TS and deployed in Y (English and maths, one is taking on role of HoD). One day per week maths intervention also from TS.	Ofsted May 2013 third monitoring visit: Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Supported School: Secondary, primary, special?	No of pupils	Pupil Premium %	EAL %	% having SEN statement or on School Action Plus	Reason for support e.g. (in an Ofsted category, below floor target, schools requested support, LA identified need etc)	Form of support (bullet points on key interventions – eg ITP/OTP, deployment of NLE, LLE or SLE etc)	Impact of support (Any quotes from Ofsted report or LA, increase in results, views of school receiving report
							Y sees impact in 'raising aspirations' for example display in maths focussed on 'gaining a grade C, now on grades A/A*' Impact depends on suitability of teacher for this role/context.
Secondary 11-16	<800	21%-30%-	0%-10%	11%-20%	Grew out of TSA involvement	2 colleagues participated in leadership development. School Direct involvement in English and maths – mentor training and course delivery.	Personally the HT has 'learned a lot' and the two colleagues 'gained a great deal'. English and maths SD trainees recruited.

Appendix 3: Denbigh TSA: Using NLEs to support school improvement

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Using NLEs to support school

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Case study - A Junior School

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Overview

A Junior School is a junior school with 184 on roll. The FSM (6) is 57.9% The end of KS2 results in July 2009 showed standards were well below average with 48% achieving L4+ in maths, 60% in English and 36% in English and maths. The school was placed in LA intervention. In July 2010 the Headteacher resigned. The LA was instrumental in seeking an interim Headteacher for one year, partly funded by the LA. The school received an Ofsted monitoring visit of Grade 3 schools in September 2010. It judged pupil achievement to be satisfactory with 'good intervention from the LA'. In October 2011, the school was inspected again, one month after the substantive headteacher took up appointment. The school was judged to be satisfactory. KS2 results in 2011 improved such that 70% of pupils achieved L4+ in English, 67% in maths and 63% in English and maths. As part of the revised LA plan, a local secondary NLE was commissioned to support the school to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics

Key actions

A bid was submitted to the LA by the NLE to support the junior school to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly that of the more able and to improve the quality of teaching so that at least 75% was good or better by summer 2012. 6 days support from the NLE was agreed and £2000 allocated to the schools by the LA to facilitate the project.

A programme of visits was arranged by the maths AST of the NLE's school for A Junior teachers to observe outstanding maths teaching and learning in Y7. The AST followed this up with the teachers to highlight what made the lessons outstanding. The AST supported the maths leader to draw up a two term action plan to improve planning to meet the needs of more able pupils; ensure maths was used and applied across the curriculum and in real life situations; embed written methods across the school with end of year expectations for the four operations and planning for more investigative work across the school. A learning walk was carried out by the AST and maths leader to

identify good practice in the junior school. Gap tasks were set for teachers in the school.

The NLE attended the Targeted Intervention Board meetings to report on progress towards the two priorities in the plan. In February 2012, the focus of support was adapted to address the gaps in learning identified after the Y6 assessments.

Impact

All targets in the action plan were met or exceeded. In summer 2012, 90% of pupils achieved L4+ in maths. Progress in maths in Y6 was 5.2 APS; Y5 5.2; Y4 4.3; Y3 4.11. Evidence from pupil progress data, lesson observations, work scrutiny and planning showed that 75% of mathematics teaching was judged to be good or better. 20% of pupils achieved L5 in maths, 7.4% higher than 2011. The impact is sustainable as the maths leader now has the skills to monitor and evaluate provision and outcomes.

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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