

Wellcome CPD Challenge *School Stories*

Meeting the challenge of providing high quality
continuing professional development for teachers



Volume 1
2019

Contents

Introduction	1
The Wellcome CPD Challenge	2
School Stories	
• All Saints Catholic High School	4
• Dobcroft Infant School	6
• Forge Valley School	8
• High Storrs School	10
• Malin Bridge Primary School	12
• Maltby Manor Primary Academy	14
• Meadow View Primary School	16
• Montenev Primary School	18
• Nether Edge Primary School	20
• Tapton School	22
List of All Participating Schools	24
References	Back Inner

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Introduction

Wellcome exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive. We support researchers, we take on big challenges and campaign for better science, and we help everyone get involved with science and health research. We are a politically and financially independent foundation.

Excellent science education underpins our vision. We want young people to be enthused by science and encouraged to consider science and science-related careers and teachers play a vital role in this. Furthermore, quality of teaching is the most important in-school factor for improving pupil outcomes, so it therefore makes sense for science teachers to be supported throughout their careers.

We believe that all science teachers should participate in high quality subject-focussed continuing professional development (CPD) every year but we recognise that this is unlikely to happen for science teachers unless there is systemic change for all teachers – of all subjects and in all phases.

With this in mind, we set out to discover what schools and the wider education system would need to put in place in order for all teachers to participate in CPD every year and established the **Wellcome CPD Challenge**.

The CPD Challenge is funded by Wellcome as part of its extensive programme of work on teachers' professional development, managed by **Sheffield Institute of Education**, part of **Sheffield Hallam University**, and independently evaluated by **CFE Research**.

We are delighted to support the publication of this book of 'stories' from the first year of the Challenge – and we very much hope you will find inspiration from them as your school continues its own professional development journey.



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The Wellcome CPD Challenge

The case for sustained continuing professional development (CPD) for all teachers is supported by a robust evidence base.

However, teachers in England generally participate in less CPD than their colleagues in high-performing countries. Furthermore, despite the fact that teachers find it more beneficial – and the evidence supports them – they participate in less subject-specific CPD than generic CPD.

In response to this, the aim of the Wellcome CPD Challenge is to understand what changes need to take place within the education system in order for schools to meet defined criteria relating to the quality and quantity of teacher professional development.

The criteria, based on evidence from research and stakeholder testing, are designed so that, if schools meet them, all teachers are able to participate in a transformational amount of high quality, relevant and impactful CPD every year.

By setting schools the challenge of meeting these criteria, we are learning about schools' approaches to CPD, how they work towards improving its quality and quantity, and the benefits, challenges, enablers and barriers to the changes they make.

Forty primary, secondary and special schools from South Yorkshire and Derbyshire, representing the full range of contexts, are taking part. The full list of schools is available at the end of the booklet. Each school has identified one or two CPD Challenge Champions to lead change in their school.

The CPD Challenge criteria:

- CPD meets the needs of the individual teacher and is predominantly focussed on subject-specific development;
- CPD is high quality and aligns to the Department for Education's Standard for teachers' professional development (DfE, 2016);
- every teacher participates in a minimum 35 hours of CPD annually.



Sai Patel

CPD Challenge Facilitator

The schools are supported by Sheffield Institute of Education through:

- twice-yearly meetings of all schools participating in the Challenge;
- ongoing discussions with a CPD Challenge Facilitator, external to the school;
- a bursary of £7000 funded by Wellcome.



The support provides CPD Challenge Champions with opportunities to access and reflect on the best available evidence about CPD, and to have a critical friend to talk to about their CPD practice. The funding is a recognition of the time needed to engage in the Challenge; it is not intended to provide access to sufficient professional development to meet the criteria.

During this first year of the CPD Challenge, CPD Challenge Champions, working alongside their colleagues, have been reflecting critically on their schools' approaches to CPD and making some fundamental changes to practice in order to meet the CPD Challenge criteria. Some schools have chosen to focus on how CPD meets individual teachers' needs, others on the provision of greater subject specificity and still others are considering how they identify and build on the outcomes of CPD.

While each school in the CPD Challenge is taking its own approach to meeting the CPD Challenge criteria, the ten stories here, written by CPD Challenge Champions, offer learning and reflections which are applicable across all schools.



Joelle Halliday
CPD Challenge Facilitator

A new opportunity



Rachel Hobkirk & Carolyn Siddall All Saints Catholic High School

All Saints had a strong CPD offer prior to joining the CPD Challenge, which included development days with whole school CPD sessions and external opportunities, and a full calendar of after-school CPD events, which staff were able to opt into.

However, we recognised that this CPD offer had run its course and that, for some people, it had become a burden where attendance became a feeling of ‘What shall I do this week?’ rather than ‘What do I need to do to improve my teaching?’ The CPD Challenge provided the opportunity for us to think differently about our CPD offer. In the first year of the CPD Challenge we decided to make changes in **two areas**.

1 Increasing subject specific CPD

The CPD Challenge helped us to re-think how we focused on high quality subject specific CPD for all. The disaggregation of three days in our school calendar gave us extra time outside lessons to work on a number of different strands to make this happen. We wanted to recognise the valuable contribution of departments by providing more departmental time for developing quality day-to-day subject practice. In the summer term 2018 we drew up a timetable for department meetings covering the whole year. We tried to balance out areas prescribed by the Senior Leadership Team for development with time for subject leads to identify and deliver CPD to meet the needs of their department. Overall, in this first year of the CPD Challenge, department time has become more focused on subject pedagogy, rather than ‘housekeeping’

2 Meeting the needs of the individual

We adapted our appraisal process for teaching and support staff so that it included an opportunity for each staff member to identify an inquiry question to investigate over the course of the year. The inquiry had to have a tight focus on learning outcomes and classroom practice, such as ‘How does a focus on key words and command words impact upon student progress in chemistry for Pupil Premium students?’

We supported this initiative by allocating time to it, providing additional resources such as funding for external visits, reference books and resources for specific projects (for example, student rewards) and articulating a clearly defined outcome (an academic poster). Each teacher and some support staff produced their own poster, and these have been shared through a summer term poster presentation event.

The involvement of staff in these mini-research projects has helped us to translate key areas of the School Development Plan into interventions relevant to individual teachers or small groups of teachers. The approach has reinforced the need for teachers to be proactive in finding ways of working to engage and improve outcomes, with collaboration across departments where teachers from different subjects have identified similar research areas.

After reviewing this year’s CPD programme and, in response to staff feedback, we are planning some further development of the inquiry questions model for next year. We found that people were ambitious in the scope of their study, but this made some inquiries too broad to create an impact. Next year, we will restrict the areas of study to a smaller number of topics linked to specific teaching groups and more closely linked to the School Development Plan.

In addition, we will use some of our CPD Challenge bursary funding to offer a temporary post with additional responsibility. This will enable another member of staff to lead on an aspect of our CPD project and to benefit from additional leadership CPD.

“We hope that as we widen the leadership of CPD, our school learning community will develop and grow, and that the result of all our actions will help move us towards our aim of embedding a professional learning community across the school.”

Questioning, changing and evaluating provision

Zoe Singh
Dobcroft Infant School



Staff development has always been important at Dobcroft Infant School and we joined the CPD Challenge to gain clarity around whether our CPD was having an impact and how we could improve our CPD provision.

Overall, school staff generally felt comfortable with the level of CPD they were receiving. However, we did not have a comprehensive record of what CPD had been undertaken by individuals. Whilst changes to practice might have been taking place as a result of CPD we did not systematically evaluate the impact.

Quick win

The most significant institutional change has been our attitude to the question “What is CPD?” An in-service training day at the beginning of the year gave us time and space to consider this question. We worked together to develop a list of characteristics of CPD. This has enhanced the school’s definition of CPD and provides a useful aide memoire for teachers to refer to when completing their CPD log. In addition, where previously the school had kept a “Training Log”, the subtle shift in emphasis to a “CPD log” means that valuable events such as internal moderation, conversations with specialists, and joint lesson observations are now included as professional development. Teachers are now thinking about CPD in different ways.

Long-term change

Our involvement in the CPD Challenge has helped us to develop a more consistent whole school approach to CPD.

One Foundation Stage teacher noted:

“When I think about CPD I used to think, ‘What course should I go on?’...now I think, ‘What do I need to do to fill that gap or improve my practice?’ It opens up many more possibilities such as professional discussions with peers or building relationships with other schools. It made me much more outward focused.”

The following are quotes from Year 2 teachers:

“When we conduct CPD together, things get implemented, changes in practice happen, because we are all focused on the same vision, we’re all singing from the same hymn sheet. The extra work that change incurs doesn’t feel stressful like it can when you’re trying to do it on your own. It feels like we’re following our passion, like we are proud of what we’re doing. That’s the difference.”

“We are no longer just consumers of CPD, we are producers. It’s made me think about what constitutes quality CPD.”

One of our year group teams was already involved in action research and continuous studies that progressed over a year or two. This team felt that this approach to CPD worked well, and they could identify evidence of positive impact on academic attainment and on the development of our curriculum vision. However, the approach to action research was not consistent across all year group teams. Our involvement in the CPD Challenge has led us to reflect on this and embed action research as part of a whole school approach.

In addition, the CPD Challenge has prompted us to focus on getting the most out of CPD; as a result practitioners now attend and conduct CPD in teams or pairs. This provides opportunities for professional dialogue and maintaining the momentum of CPD in school.

Evaluation, evaluation, evaluation!

Our new CPD log will enable us to monitor the impact of our revised CPD practice. For the first time it will be evaluated using criteria we have developed based on the Department for Education’s Standard for teachers’ professional development (DfE, 2016). As practitioners complete the log they are prompted to reflect on whether the CPD was high quality, individualised to meet their needs and whether it meets the needs of the school.

The information collected in the school CPD log will be used to prompt discussions about evidence of impact and practitioner feedback in the log about quality and impact will inform CPD choices for next year.

The balancing act: CPD and other school priorities

Donna Lee
Forge Valley School



The profile of CPD at Forge Valley has strengthened over the last few years and we saw the CPD Challenge as an excellent opportunity to support this development, particularly as increasing subject specific CPD was a school target.

The priorities in our School Development Plan and feedback from school learning walks fed into our CPD and as part of the Tapton Schools Academy Trust (TSAT) we need to balance our school's CPD needs with the TSAT CPD programme (see pages 22-23). The Wellcome CPD Challenge criteria added another dimension so we developed a **three-pronged approach** for CPD to balance these priorities.

1 Best Practice CPD to address the School Development Plan's focus of academic engagement

Towards the end of the 2017-2018 academic year we started a programme to maintain an academic focus on teaching and learning. Our aim was to reflect on current academic texts and consider how they could help to address areas of the School Development Plan. The programme involves **five steps**, as detailed on the right.

The focus for the academic texts varied each term. Colleagues were given discussion points to aid conversation and were expected to submit a summary of the discussion.

Feedback from staff at the end of the last academic year indicated that staff had been overwhelmingly positive about the launch of best practice CPD. As the year has progressed we have reflected further on the impact of this approach, and taking the criteria for the CPD Challenge

Our Five Step Programme

- 1 Selection of academic text based on a teaching and learning focus
- 2 Independent reading time for staff
- 3 Cross-curricular discussion groups
- 4 Departmental discussion groups with time to implement ideas
- 5 Personal reflection time

alongside further feedback from colleagues into account, it has become evident that cross-curricular discussion was adding less value than other parts of the programme. As a result we have adapted the plan so that two departmental discussions enable a consideration of how new ideas can be implemented in subject areas. Further feedback suggests that departments would like to select their own academic texts. Teacher autonomy in respect to CPD is therefore developing as subject leaders now plan to select their own relevant academic texts.

2 CPD on 'Mindframes' delivered through the TSAT CPD programme

TSAT's CPD programme Mindframes for Visible Learning contains ten sessions. For Forge Valley, we selected the six most relevant to our school needs, freeing up time for school-specific CPD as well. To achieve our aim of providing more subject-specific CPD we asked department teams to sit together in sessions to encourage more subject-specific discussion. The benefits of this have been: more time spent on teaching and learning discussions, reflecting on practice and evaluating the impact on pupil learning. To improve this further next year our whole school theme will be based around one Mindframe so the theme of communication will be contextualised in each subject area.

3 Bespoke CPD based on emerging needs identified from learning walks and elements of the School Development Plan

Whole school Teachmeet style sessions have been used to share practical teaching ideas to respond to emerging needs identified through learning walks. Following each Teachmeet, time has been allocated for departments to discuss how they can implement some of the ideas from the Teachmeet, as feedback from staff has indicated that they value departmental discussions on teaching and learning.

Next year, time spent as a whole school teaching staff will be limited further, allowing increased departmental time to ensure ideas can be embedded in subjects.

“The CPD Challenge has been an excellent tool to promote CPD at Forge Valley School. Teachers are clearer about the importance and purpose of CPD and feedback from the CPD log has informed senior leaders' plans to further improve our provision for next year.”

Putting subject pedagogy centre stage

Sara Tiffin
High Storrs School



A lot of thought and planning goes into reviewing and developing CPD at our school. When we first heard about the CPD Challenge we were starting to reflect on the focus of our CPD.

For the previous two years the spotlight had been on general pedagogy and we had run cross-curricular teaching and learning groups. More recently we had started to think and talk more about subject pedagogy. This was in part linked to curriculum developments including new A Level and GCSE specifications, and it was also related to an increasing awareness of subject specific CPD needs. When Mary Myatt (2018) writes about curriculum she emphasises ‘the dignity of the thing’ and reminds us that each subject discipline is very different. The CPD Challenge criterion linked to increasing the amount and quality of subject specific CPD was absolutely the right focus for us.

Reviewing CPD Time

As a result, we began to rethink how we used our CPD time. We reviewed our meetings calendar and in-service training time and made adjustments so that we could create some extended time for departmental staff to work together.

Previously department time had tended to be spent on business rather than professional development and we now wanted to shift the focus towards subject pedagogy. To do this we introduced subject Teaching and Learning Groups.

Feedback from Subject Leaders at High Storrs:

“Subject Teaching and Learning Groups have been very insightful; I have enjoyed training other staff who are non-specialists and working with other colleagues to further my own understanding of new specifications.”

Teaching and Learning Groups

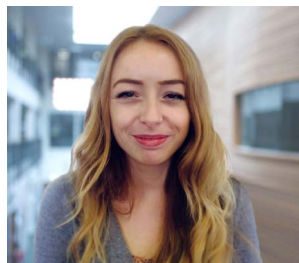
The remit for the Teaching and Learning Groups was to focus on professional development discussions rather than departmental business. We supported subject leaders to identify areas for development and to plan appropriate sessions in which groups develop specific areas of subject knowledge and/or share best practice across the department.

We continue to run cross-curricular Teaching and Learning Groups, and colleagues still set personal teaching and learning performance management objectives. However, we now encourage colleagues to think about the context of their subject and its unique pedagogy when setting these objectives. We have allocated additional time to support this work and we used some of the CPD Challenge bursary to buy all staff a book or resource of their choice to get them started. For example, the subject leader for Business purchased 'Closing the Vocabulary Gap' (Quigley, 2018) to support her department in responding to more demanding examinations.

The time devoted to subjects and subject specific CPD has certainly been well received, as illustrated by staff feedback, and will be built on next year. Professional development at the school will be kept centre stage and subject leaders will have an important role to play as we further develop our CPD offer by looking more closely at the individual needs of staff.

“The opportunity to work with colleagues on subject pedagogy, curriculum development and our own subject skills and knowledge has been fantastic... the CPD undertaken (in the form of subject Teaching and Learning Groups) this year has been some of the most useful I have experienced as a teacher.”

A focus on the individual



Kirsty Matthews
Malin Bridge Primary School

When we joined the CPD Challenge in September 2018, CPD was already ingrained into our practice; our school development plan has a clear emphasis on the importance of meeting the individual needs of both teachers and pupils.

We saw the CPD Challenge as an excellent opportunity to find out how other schools are delivering CPD and how this is having an impact on the development of their teachers and pupils. After considering the CPD Challenge criteria, we decided to focus on meeting the individual needs of teachers and some of the aspects of 'high quality'. We are particularly interested in:

- the impact of CPD on pupil progress
- promoting collaboration between colleagues
- using approaches that are underpinned by evidence and expertise.

In order to address these areas we have implemented **three new approaches** to the delivery and evaluation of CPD.

1 The Pillars of Great Teaching

This document is based on the School Development Plan and current research about effective teaching and learning strategies - some of which we had already implemented. The document is split into three categories: high expectations and starting points, clear and challenging destinations, and reflecting on outcomes. These categories summarise our whole school approach to the planning and learning process. Each category has a range of key questions followed by resources or examples of how this can be implemented in the classroom. By asking teachers to rate themselves against the

key questions in the Pillars of Great Teaching and to identify three target areas to focus on, whole school development areas were tailored to the individual needs of each teacher.

2 Achievement Meetings

We have also changed the way in which our achievement meetings are held. Previously these focussed on individual teachers' progress towards a school target, informed by regular 'drop-ins' and 'book looks'. Now, individual teachers meet with the headteacher and deputy headteacher once every half term to discuss progress, outcomes, and reflections on CPD including personal goals and individual areas to develop. Discussions have become more personalised and this tailored approach means that there is clarity on what progress looks like for every teacher and for the children they teach, rather than there being a generic target that everyone is expected to meet.

3 The CPD Library

For this new initiative we have built up a library of books and resources to support professional development. All teaching and support staff have been asked to choose and read a book or an article that they feel will support their own professional development. At the end of the year, staff will complete a book review and share what they have learnt in a phase meeting. Giving a choice of book or article, rather than imposing a topic or area of research, has enabled staff to take ownership of their development and has encouraged honesty and reflection around areas of individual professional development. Teachers can link their library choice to their Pillars of Great Teaching personal goals.

We now feel that we have a much stronger CPD offer for our staff. We evaluate the impact of the new approaches through teacher feedback and discussions about pupil progress linked to personal development areas. Teams will continue to collaborate to identify development areas that will then be worked on at a year group level and our plan for next year is to continue to develop, embed, and evaluate these three initiatives to support a tailored approach to CPD.

Taking action to meet individual needs

Catriona Wilby & Gemma Smith
Maltby Manor Primary Academy



The CPD Challenge came at a time when we were ready to develop our CPD beyond whole school training for the core subjects.

Following an Ofsted visit in 2014, the priorities for the school were identified as Maths and English and all CPD had focused on teaching and learning and core subject knowledge. In 2017, Ofsted graded the school as 'Good'. Maths and English teaching was consistently good but further development around the wider curriculum was needed to "improve pupils achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics" (Ofsted, 2017). The new Ofsted framework for schools inspection from 2019 has created a feeling of urgency around developing teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum.

Meanwhile, our monitoring showed that the provision of Foundation subjects in school was not consistently good; children were gaining basic knowledge of the curriculum but there was insufficient progression across school. After joining the CPD Challenge and reviewing the Challenge criteria we decided that "CPD meets the needs of the individual teacher and is predominantly focussed on subject-specific development" was the issue most relevant to our context. We wanted to develop a culture of enquiry where teachers felt confident to investigate an area of their own classroom practice. We realised that this was a long-term goal and that teachers would require support from the Senior Leadership Team and time to engage with the process.

We decided to adopt a lesson study approach because it had already been a good vehicle for developing learning and teaching in the core subjects. We started with a structured lesson study model to develop our inquiry curriculum; teachers

The following quotes from staff illustrate the impact and progress made as a result of involvement in the CPD Challenge:

"For my research project, I looked at the quote 'Creating a safe place for our kids to learn might begin with creating some space for them to breathe' (Osten Gerszberg, 2019). This led me to research in more detail the practice of Mindfulness and how this might improve the emotional wellbeing of vulnerable children."

were provided with a focus for each lesson observation and some background reading, and allocated time in meetings for discussion and feedback. Staff indicated that they liked the opportunity to focus on the children in their class and to evaluate new strategies and ideas in a non-threatening and non-judgemental way. As teachers became more familiar and confident in using the approach we encouraged them to take more ownership of their CPD, with the aim of teachers developing their own action research based around the needs of their class and their own professional interests.

We were conscious that this approach would need time so we allocated phase meetings to develop the project. Senior leaders in the school have been developing their own action research projects for a few years so the CPD Challenge Champions felt confident in introducing staff to an action research approach and in sharing examples of their own research projects. Teachers discussed their areas of interest and we grouped colleagues with similar interests so that they could support each other and share their findings. Members of the Senior Leadership Team were assigned to support each group.

In this first iteration, action research projects include examining the impact of positive relationships and emotion coaching, how personalised planning can make an impact with children with special educational needs, the conditions that foster boys talking, and whether speaking and listening interventions narrow the gap for vulnerable children in reading and writing. The final outcomes of the projects will be summarised as posters, which will be shared in staff meetings and collated into a display book for visitors and colleagues to read on our entrance hall display.

Encouraging colleagues to take ownership of their research has created a more positive attitude to CPD in school. Teachers can clearly identify how it has changed their own practice and had an impact on their pupils. This, combined with high quality subject specific CPD led by expert practitioners, has helped us to work together to develop a bespoke curriculum for the children in our school. We plan to continue developing action research projects so that we can continue to foster teaching and learning in foundation subjects.

“My research project has made me think deeply about the implementation of emotion coaching into my daily teaching to improve the self-esteem and wellbeing of my pupils. It has challenged me to link this into my daily teaching.”

“I have found Lesson Study extremely beneficial to my development as an NQT. It has allowed me to observe good practice in different year groups throughout school, reflect upon my own practice and build strong relationships with colleagues in school.”

Investing in teachers through CPD

Trish Keenan
Meadow View Primary



At Meadow View, teacher CPD is valued highly and we encourage staff to access CPD to enable them to meet their responsibilities.

When we introduced the CPD Challenge it became apparent that we had different ideas about CPD. Many staff talked about external courses, but they did not consider our staff meetings or in-service training days as professional development. We realised that we needed to start the CPD Challenge by developing a shared understanding of CPD. One of our first actions was to start to call our staff meetings 'CPD sessions' and to use this term whenever we planned or discussed the content of the sessions.

We used one of our first CPD sessions to discuss the CPD Challenge definition of CPD and to explore the different types of CPD opportunities we were already engaged in. Each year the Senior Leadership Team keeps a log of internal and externally-led CPD, but we had not shared this with staff. We made the log available to staff and it helped individual staff to identify the breadth of CPD opportunities they had accessed. These included peer mentoring, coaching and networks.

Supporting subject specific CPD

Discussions with our CPD Challenge facilitator helped me to reflect on our CPD offer and to identify processes we had in place which could be further developed. Subject leaders already attended local subject leader networks and shared their learning. Now, we have developed the ways in which our subject leaders use new knowledge and skills to support staff across school including, modelling, providing examples of good practice, and sharing resource packs. Bespoke CPD

“Once teachers recognised the wider range of CPD opportunities they were involved in it became clear that they were well on the way to achieving the 35 hours of CPD per year criterion.”

packs are compiled by each subject leader to illustrate how theory links to practice in our school. For example, the maths leader shared videos of her teaching to illustrate the mastery approach, and the literacy leader gave examples of what metacognition could look like in a reading lesson. A CPD session on the language development of pupils with English as an Additional Language at different ages and stages was enhanced with good practice examples contextualised in literacy and maths lessons.

Meeting individual needs

We have a number of strategies in place to meet teachers' individual needs. We have adapted our weekly CPD sessions to offer a more bespoke approach so that we can target different staff groups. This is informed by evidence collected by subject leaders from learning walks, discussions and even feedback from staff following a CPD session.

Teachers' autonomy in planning their CPD is supported through the Performance Management process and our Teacher Improvement Plans (TIPs). TIPs are set and organised by individual teachers to identify their own areas of CPD. They include one area of personal professional development and one area of expertise to share with colleagues. Needs are met through different forms of CPD including action research, coaching or peer mentoring opportunities, and exploring best practice in other settings. Individual needs identified through Performance Management are supported by the Head or Assistant Heads via coaching and mentoring.

High quality

The Senior and Middle Leadership Teams are using feedback from teachers and The Standard for teachers' professional development (DfE, 2016) to identify high quality CPD. Teachers have reported that they value time to implement new ideas in class and an opportunity to reflect on the impact of changes to classroom practice so we will continue to incorporate this into our weekly CPD sessions.

“Next year we will continue to work closely with our staff to evaluate and further develop our CPD offer.”

Identifying and drawing upon the expertise of staff

Hannah Hides
Monteney Primary School



We joined the CPD Challenge because it provided an opportunity for us to reflect on our current CPD practice.

At the start of the Challenge the school's Senior Leadership Team reviewed the CPD Challenge criteria. We felt that our CPD programme was close to meeting all the criteria and that only minor adjustments in the programme were required. However, the changes we have made have had a significant impact on teachers' perceptions of CPD and on the development of middle leaders in school.

The Monteney CPD offer is underpinned by the needs of our staff and our children so that it has a positive impact on both teaching and learning. Our Academy Improvement Plan directly informs our annual CPD plan. There is flexibility built into the CPD plan so that we can respond to emerging needs throughout the year. The majority of our staff are proactive in identifying their own CPD needs and seeking out different forms of CPD.

Reflecting on CPD provision

When we reviewed the data from the first data collection for the CPD Challenge we were surprised to find that some teachers reported that they did not participate in 35 hours of CPD. We reflected on the reasons for this and decided to discuss the data with staff. We realised that, for some staff, CPD was synonymous with external courses, in-service training days and staff meetings, so we worked together to clarify our school definition of CPD.

One teacher's reflection:

"Traditionally, I always thought of CPD as an external course or a staff meeting. But there have been so many different opportunities to develop my practice this year. One of the most useful was being given a 'Magpie morning' in which I visited teachers across school to observe good practice."

We collated all the different approaches we use in school to develop our practice and, by opening up these discussions, staff have become more confident in identifying the types of CPD that they feel will benefit them.

Identifying and meeting individual CPD needs

As a result of these discussions, we have noticed a shift from staff requesting specific CPD to identifying CPD needs. Now our CPD offer is more closely linked to individual needs.

We are able to support most professional development needs by identifying and drawing on the expertise of staff across our multi-academy trust and we have increased the amount of peer-to-peer support. This has reduced the amount of external CPD we need to access and provided opportunities for the development of our middle leaders who are now taking more responsibility for delivering subject specific CPD that is closely linked to the needs of our children.

The CPD Challenge Criteria

We are continually evaluating our CPD provision against the CPD Challenge criteria. This year we have been successful in delivering a minimum of 35 hours of high quality CPD and teachers are more confident in identifying their own needs and recognising the different CPD opportunities available to them to address these needs.

Next year, we will explore ways to effectively disseminate learning from CPD so that it has a wider impact across school. CPD will focus on developing our foundation subjects and I am keen to explore the involvement of experts and professional associations such as the Historical Association for subject-specific CPD.

As one subject leader noted after a subject leaders' CPD session in school on monitoring and evaluation:

'It's really helped me develop an understanding of how to lead small teams and develop my subject knowledge.'

Improving teaching - improving progress

Katie Hall & Homaira Ibrahim
Nether Edge Primary School



At Nether Edge CPD for teachers is a high priority and we applied to join the CPD Challenge because the opportunity to work with a range of professionals interested in CPD appealed to us.

Before the CPD Challenge we were a school who ‘delivered’ training for teachers to implement in their classrooms; most often, this was driven by the School Improvement Plan. Although this is crucial, we were not focusing on the individual needs of the teaching staff and it was becoming increasingly apparent that this style of CPD was having variable impact in the classroom. We began to question the purpose and reason for working in this way. We knew that effective methods of developing teachers would positively influence daily teaching practices in school (Loughran, 2006) and so we needed to reflect on what would work for us.

We began to research effective teacher development. The most influential work we have used so far is ‘Unleashing Great Teaching’ (Weston & Clay, 2018), which discusses the layers of expertise needed to develop great teachers. It focuses on the need to provide CPD on the ‘operational edge’ (i.e. not too operational, but also not too theory- and research-driven). We were aware of the divide between theory and practice and began to question how we could transfer what we knew worked well into something meaningful for teachers which also had an impact on children. Our aim was to provide research-informed CPD and to challenge teachers’ beliefs and practices by directly linking theory with practice. We decided to focus on ‘Nine Dimensions of Reflective Practice’ (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012) because it provided a structure to support reflection and action.

“As a research-led school, we are always interested to explore the evidence base around teaching and learning to inform how we implement new approaches. So far, the CPD Challenge has been excellent!”

We set up ‘Teacher Reflection Groups’ (TRGs), which are sessions where teachers take control of their own professional learning by discussing an area of personal improvement in their own setting. Other staff share ideas about how this could be developed, and teachers then support each other to set individual actions and next steps. After implementing change in the classroom, teachers bring evidence of their activity to the next meeting of the TRG.

This initiative has been challenging and it has required scaffolding. Many of the sessions were initially led by members of the Senior Leadership Team, but in time, teachers have taken the learning where they need it to go. They have created their own email threads and shared information about what was working and resources that they found particularly useful and posted worries and concerns if something wasn’t working. Teachers have become more confident in asking for help, and begun to consider alternative perspectives and possibilities. Teachers have told us that this is a better CPD strategy than didactic delivery, and the evidence of this is seen in improved lessons.

Our approach has helped teachers take control and ownership of their CPD, and, as noted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team:

“We realise that telling teachers what to do won’t work – staff need to buy in to the process.”

The CPD Challenge has enabled us to take a decision that was outside of “The Nether Edge Way,” and challenged us to reconsider our own beliefs on what effective CPD looks like. Regular conversations and meetings with our CPD Challenge facilitator have helped us to keep on track and keep CPD high on the agenda. The CPD Challenge has even prompted us to look outside of education and consider what works well in successful businesses and other professions.

For us, the most important thing is that teachers take control of their own development. Our next step is to continue to develop the TRGs, and make sure teachers understand what the CPD process looks like for each individual. We realise that we cannot prescribe actions or maximise the learning potential of children without teacher action, which could vary from teacher to teacher. A priority at Nether Edge is for our staff to know that we value their development.

Teaching for success



Kat Rhodes Tapton School

Tapton has always recognised the impact that the right kind of CPD can have on students and staff. Whilst school funding has reduced we have continued to invest in professional development and say ‘Yes’ to every exciting opportunity.

The CPD Challenge was therefore something that we were keen to get involved in. It complemented our ethos and came with a small bursary to help us build in capacity for reflection and collaboration. This year we have worked with the other secondary schools in Tapton Schools Academy Trust to develop a Trust-wide approach to CPD for the first time.

When we reviewed the CPD Challenge criteria we were confident that we met the target of 35 hours of CPD but we were not convinced that it was ‘predominantly subject specific’. Our theory was that subject specific CPD was great if you were in a large department but that staff in smaller departments could feel isolated and creativity could be stifled.

We also wanted to go back to the core principles of pedagogy and engage our staff in deep reflection rather than give quick takeaway fads that had dominated past training. Reducing variability in CPD provision and providing ‘expert challenge’ were additional priorities.

It became clear to us that if we were going to do this right we needed to bring the whole school together and ensure our Senior Leadership Team led from the front – pedagogy needed to be everyone’s priority.

One colleague put it well:

“I hear the same voices again and again in the department - I really love liaising with others outside of our sphere. I’ve picked up great ideas from our Teaching and Learning Communities!”

This year's CPD programme has been informed by and built around '10 Mindframes for Visible Learning: Teaching for Success' (Hattie & Zierer, 2017).

Our aim was to tackle one mindframe each month, and a different member of the Senior Leadership Team took responsibility for developing each introductory session. The CPD plan involved an introduction to the mindframe to all the three Trust secondary schools together. This was followed by facilitated discussions in 'Communities of Discovery' back at each school. Each of these discussions included pairs of teachers from one subject department so that discussions could cover general principles and focus on subject specific pedagogy.

We were ambitious in rolling the programme out over the three schools and it was harder than we expected but still very worthwhile. Seeing colleagues from a range of settings meeting each other for the first time and sharing the highs and lows of teaching was very rewarding.

During the course of the year we learnt to be responsive and act on the feedback provided by staff, which was quite critical at times. Development of our programme in response to staff feedback has included:

- The Communities of Discovery having a more subject specific flavour for three of the mindframes
- Altering the layout of the seating to facilitate greater debate and collaboration
- Increasing the number of local case studies from a range of subjects to engage all staff

Next year's CPD programme across the Trust has been informed by our evaluation of this year's work. It will be entirely subject specific with a focus on doing one thing well - communication. This change is in response to two things: staff feedback and the CPD Challenge criteria. It will be interesting to evaluate the success of this different approach next year.

Participant Schools

All Saints Catholic High School

Aston Academy

Astrea Academy Sheffield

Athelstan Primary School

Bents Green School

Birkwood Primary School

Bradfield Dungworth Primary School

Bradfield School

Buxton Junior School

Dobcroft Infant School

Dobcroft Junior School

Emmaus Catholic and Church of England
Primary School

Firth Park Academy

Forge Valley School

Great Hucklow Primary and Peak Forest
Primary

Hallam Primary School

Handsworth Grange Community Sports
College

High Storrs School

Hinde House Secondary

Holgate Meadows Community School

Malin Bridge Primary School

Maltby Manor Academy

Meadow View Primary School

Meersbrook Bank Primary School

Monteney Primary

Mossbrook School

Nether Edge Primary School

Newfield Secondary School

Oasis Academy Fir Vale

Saint Pius X Catholic High School

Sheffield Springs Academy

Shirebrook Academy

St John Fisher Primary

Swinton Academy

Talbot Specialist School

Tapton School

Thorpe Hesley Primary School

UTC Sheffield

UTC Sheffield - Olympic Legacy Park

Wybourn Community Primary School

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