Department for Education

Standard for teachers' professional development

Implementation guidance for school leaders, teachers, and organisations that offer professional development for teachers

July 2016

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Introduction

> "Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better."
>
> Dylan Wiliam

As the most important profession for our nation's future, teachers need considerable knowledge and skill, which need to be developed as their careers progress. As the Teachers' Standards set out, teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. The Teachers' Standards set out a number of expectations about professional development; namely, that teachers should:

- keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and be self-critical;
- take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this has an impact on teaching;
- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas;
- reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching; and
- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas.

Effective professional development for teachers is a core part of securing effective teaching. It cannot exist in isolation, rather it requires a pervasive culture of scholarship with a shared commitment for teachers to support one another to develop so that pupils benefit from the highest quality teaching. The thousands of professional decisions that must be made every day need to be informed by the best evidence, knowledge and professional wisdom.

Not all professional development is equally effective. Helping teachers to improve their practice takes thought, planning and effort. It requires headteachers who prioritise not only the operational aspects of teacher development but also, as Ofsted put it in their September 2015 handbook, "a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff" in "a culture that enables pupils and staff to excel". While professional development can take many forms, the best available research[1] shows that the most effective professional development practices share similar characteristics. Effective professional development

[1] *Cordingley, P., Higgins, S., Greany, T., Buckler, N., Coles-Jordan, D., Crisp, B., Saunders, L., Coe, R.; Developing Great Teaching; 2015 (see bibliography at the end for full reference)*

should be seen as a key driver not only of staff development, but also of recruitment, retention, wellbeing, and school improvement.

Using this guidance

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development. The standard should be used by everyone working in, and with, schools to raise expectations for professional development, to focus on achieving the greatest improvement in pupil outcomes, and to develop our teachers as respected members of the profession. It will help anyone using the standard to understand in more detail the requirements for implementing effective professional development.

In particular, the standard should be used to support regular reflection on existing practice and discussion between teachers, headteachers and leadership teams, and those providing and supporting professional development. There are five parts to the standard, which all need to be acted upon together to ensure effective professional development.

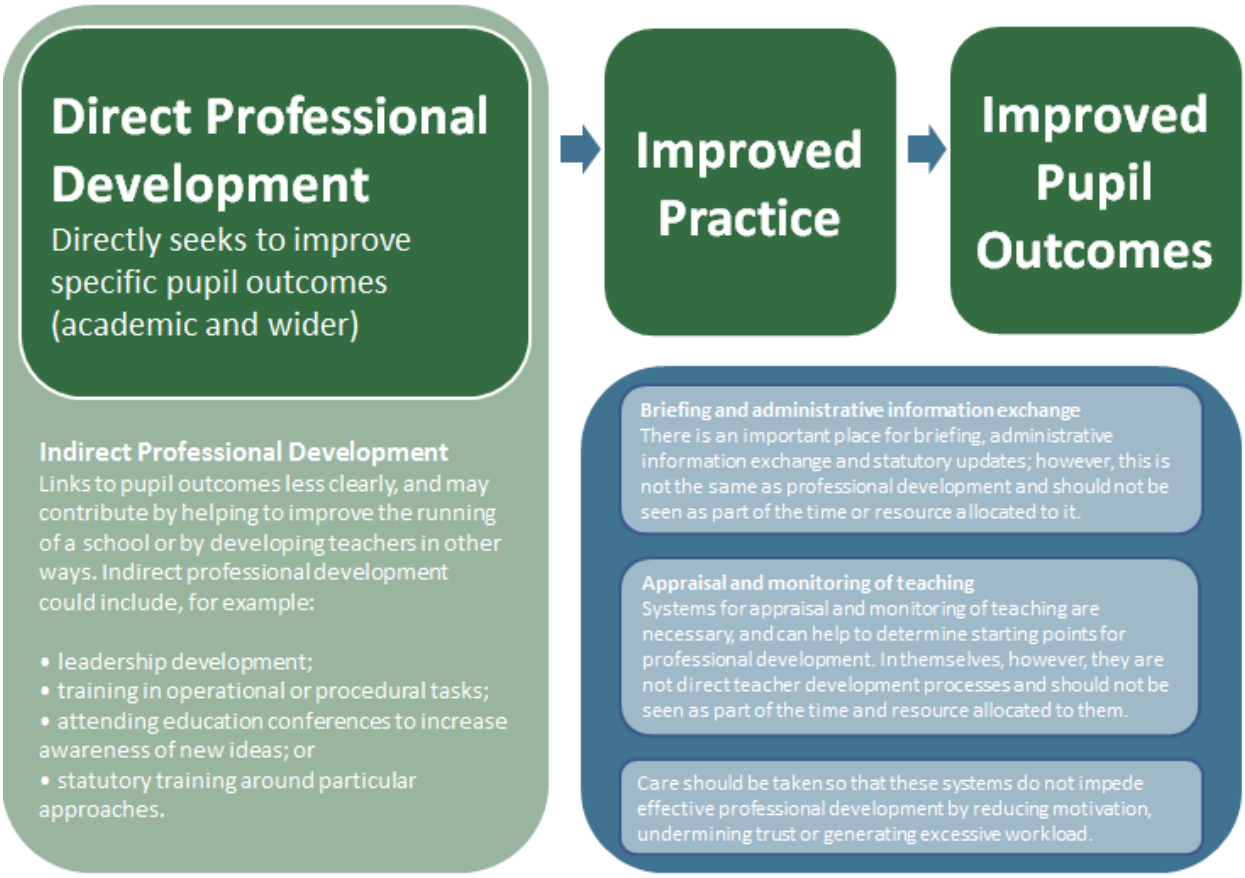
Definitions

This guidance uses:

- '**teachers'** to mean all teachers, but consideration should also be given to other staff who work to support both academic and wider educational outcomes;
- '**school leaders'** to mean headteachers, leadership teams, and heads of subjects or phases. This includes those working across more than one school or group of schools, with relevance to advisers in multi-academy trusts, local authorities or other school improvement organisations; and
- **'providers of professional development'** as a general term to include all those individuals or organisations (including schools) who directly provide expertise or facilitate professional development.

What does ‘professional development’ mean?

A number of phrases are used to describe professional development, and what these mean is not always clear. Common terms and acronyms include professional learning, continuing professional development (CPD), continuing professional development and learning (CPDL), joint practice development, and in-service training (INSET). The standard and this guidance use the term ‘professional development’ throughout.



Programmes versus activities

The standard makes a distinction between professional development activities and professional development programmes. Evidence suggests, for example, that a one-day course as a stand-alone activity without a specific focus is unlikely to have a lasting impact on pupil outcomes. That same course, however, could be used to much greater effect as part of a sustained, coherent programme which includes structured, collaborative in-school activities for teachers to refine ideas and embed approaches.

A professional development programme is likely to involve many activities designed to sustain and embed practice, including, but not limited to: individual and collaborative teacher activity; well-designed formative assessment and evaluation; whole-school leadership; and expert input.

The standard

1. Professional development should have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.

2. Professional development should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.

3. Professional development should include collaboration and expert challenge.

4. Professional development programmes should be sustained over time.

And all this is underpinned by, and requires that:

5. Professional development must be prioritised by school leadership.

Part 1 – Professional development should have a clear focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes

Professional development is most effective when activities have a clear purpose and link to pupil outcomes. In particular, effective professional development:

- has **explicit relevance** to participants. This means the activities are designed around:
  - individual teachers' existing experience, knowledge and needs;
  - the context and day-to-day experiences of teachers and their schools; and
  - the desired outcomes for pupils;
- ensures **individual activities** link logically to the **intended pupil outcomes**; and
- involves ongoing **evaluation of how changes in practice are having an impact on pupil outcomes**.

Professional development is most effective when:

School leaders:	Teachers:	Providers of professional development:
1. Make the **objectives** clear and show the links between activities and the intended outcomes.	1. Make sure they are clear about the intended **outcomes** of activities.	1. Are clear about the **expected impact** of their offer on teachers and pupils.
2. Ensure activities take account of teacher starting points, intended **progression**, and the impact on pupil outcomes.	2. Continually apply formative assessment to monitor **progression** and impact	2. Request information about their participants' prior knowledge, experience and goals and use this in the design of their activities to secure **progression**.
3. Ensure activities are designed and evaluated in terms of their **impact** on teachers, pupils and their school.	3. Choose complementary activities aligned to a clear overall **objective** for their practice, pupils and school.	3. Provide tools that help participants change their own practice and **evaluate its impact.**

Table 1: Professional development should have a clear focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes

Part 2 – Professional development should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise

Professional development is most effective when informed by robust evidence, which can be from a range of sources. In particular, effective professional development:

- **develops practice and theory together**;
- links **pedagogical knowledge** with **subject/specialist knowledge**;
- draws on the **evidence base**, including high-quality academic research, and robustly evaluated approaches and teaching resources;
- is supported by those with **expertise and knowledge** to help participants **improve their understanding of evidence**; and,
- draws out and **challenges teachers' beliefs and expectations about teaching and how children learn.**

Professional development is most effective when:

School leaders:	Teachers:	Providers of professional development:
1. Draw on expert input to ensure that activities are clear about **how and why** practices work in different contexts.	1. Seek to understand **how and why** practices work and how to implement them successfully in different contexts.	1. Are explicit about the evidence underpinning practices and **how and why** practices are intended to work.
2. Provide opportunities for **participant feedback**, linking teacher practice to pupil experiences and outcomes.	2. Actively seek **formative feedback** on practice and support the evaluation of impact on their practice, pupil outcomes and wider school improvement.	2. Provide opportunities to draw out and **constructively challenge participants' existing beliefs**.
3. Ensure teachers can adapt generic pedagogic practices for different subjects and contexts.	3. Expect to improve pedagogical knowledge AND **subject knowledge,** or specialist knowledge (e.g. for special educational needs).	3. Actively seek robust and **independent evaluations** of their programmes to demonstrate impact on intended outcomes.

Table 2: Professional development should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise

Part 3 – Professional development should include collaboration and expert challenge

Professional development that aims to change teachers' practice is most effective when it includes collaborative activities with a focus on the intended pupil outcomes. In particular, effective professional development:

- builds-in **peer support** for problem solving;
- includes focussed **discussion about practice** and supporting groups of pupils with similar needs;
- **challenges existing practice**, by raising expectations and bringing in new perspectives; and,
- includes support from someone in a coaching and/or mentoring role to provide modelling and challenge.

Professional development is most effective when:

School leaders:	Teachers:	Providers of professional development:
1. Structure sustained collaboration to enable participants to draw on evidence and expertise and to **refine and adapt practice**.	1. Seek expert support and **challenge.**	1. Work with the school so that there are **multiple** opportunities for teachers to practise.
2. Ensure that professional development activities include **external challenge** to thinking.	2. Seek activities that allow **adaptation** of approaches for the classroom through practice.	2. Support **structured** collaboration and discussion about the impact on pupils.
3. Encourage participants to analyse **evidence** from classroom implementation.	3. Implement practices with peers and focus discussion on the impact on pupils.	3. Use their **external perspective** to challenge current orthodoxies, raise expectations and introduce evidence-informed practices.

Table 3: Professional development should include collaboration and expert challenge

Part 4 – Professional development programmes should be sustained over time

Professional development is most effective when activities form part of a sustained programme, typically for more than two terms. **In particular, effective professional development**:

- is **iterative**, with activities creating a rhythm of ongoing support and follow-up activities;
- may include complementary one-off activities as part of a wider coherent package; and,
- includes **opportunities for experimentation, reflection, feedback and evaluation**.

Professional development is most effective when:

School leaders:	Teachers:	Providers of professional development:
1. Design programmes with a regular **rhythm** of opportunities, to form a coherent **programme**	1. Seek programmes that typically last at least two terms and which provide a **sustained rhythm** of ongoing support.	1. Are explicit about the **commitment** required by teachers and school leaders to make sustained changes in practice.
2. Ensure that activities of **shorter** duration (e.g. one day) are either focussed on a narrow goal or form part of coherent sequences to achieve broader goals.	2. Translate ideas into relevant practice and knowledge for specific classes and pupils, making time for **ongoing practice** and review.	2. Support participants and their schools to sustain and embed change and link shorter activities with **sustained programmes**.
3. Ensure that other work pressures do not detract from the achievement of professional development objectives.		3. Ensure that the supporting components (e.g. venues, rooms, refreshments) do not detract from the achievement of professional development objectives.

Table 4: Professional development programmes should be sustained over time

Part 5 – Professional development must be prioritised by school leadership

Professional development is most effective when it is led well as part of a wider culture of evidence-informed reflection and discussion of teaching practice. **In particular, effective leadership of professional development**:

- is clear about how it improves pupil outcomes;
- **complements a clear, ambitious curriculum and vision for pupil success**;
- involves **leaders modelling & championing effective professional development** as an expectation for all;
- **ensures that sufficient time and resource is available**;
- **balances** school, subject and individual teachers' **priorities**; and,
- develops **genuine professional trust**

Professional development is most effective when:

School leaders:	Teachers:	Providers of professional development:
1. Make evidence-informed development a major **leadership** priority.	**1. Take responsibility** for their own professional development.	1. Help schools and participants to develop effective **school leadership** systems and processes.
2. Build a culture of **trust** professional engagement and challenge with evidence and knowledge.	**2.** Engage openly in discussion about the impact of teaching practice with peers and leaders supporting a culture of **trust**, respect and scholarship.	2. **Challenge** school leaders and participants to be clear about their requirements, and offer tools and resources to support this.
3. Ensure that **school, subject, phase and individual development plans** are coherent and supported.	3. Fully **commit** to effective professional development practices and **challenge** poor or ineffective ones.	3. Are explicit about the **role of teachers and school leaders** before and after the programme.

Table 5: Professional development must be prioritised by school leadership

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