



Placing children's rights at the heart of all we undertake.
respect integrity humility equality care towards all



Learning at the heart, igniting possibility!

Dosthill Primary Academy

Professional Learning Policy

Reviewed by: S. Burke

Approved by: DPA Governing Body

Next review due: March 2020

Date: March 4th 2019

Date: March 26th 2019

Aims and Values

Our core moral purpose is encapsulated in the vision statement for the school: *Explore, Dream, Discover; Growing Ambitions, Building Futures*. Our focus is on learning not just within and across subject areas but also the personal development of all learners who attend our school. We strive to inspire all learners to go beyond what they consider possible for themselves, to experience and try new things and to realise all aspects of their potential. There are no glass ceilings put on any of our learners; we wish to ignite a passion for learning and for life that will remain with them as they move on to their next phase of the learning journey elsewhere.

This is achieved by Dosthill Primary Academy **fostering a positive climate for learning for all staff, providing opportunities for all to be involved in a continuous process of improvement and enrichment.**

This policy also demonstrates the school's aim for **all members of staff to develop professionally, enabling them to fulfil their role within school to the highest standard and enabling the school to be efficient and effective.**

Principles of the Professional Learning Policy

Professional Learning, previously referred to as Continuing Professional Development (CPD), is the means by which the school is able to motivate and develop its staff. It does so at a variety of levels - individual, team, whole school and through wider networks with an emphasis on collaborative learning.

At Dosthill Primary Academy we support the Government philosophy that "effective teachers should take ownership and give a high priority to professional development". We believe that a coherent and progressive opportunity to develop professionally and personally both improves standards and raises morale through personal and professional fulfilment. This also assists the school with recruitment and retention.

Effective learning and teaching (as defined in Dosthill Primary Academy Teaching and Learning Policy) is instrumental in achieving our schools aims and values. All those involved in its delivery have an entitlement to equality of access to high-quality induction and continuing support and development. Provision allows staff to develop skills and competencies progressively allowing them to build on and reinforce these and expertise, particularly across the key areas identified through monitoring, included in the Strategic Development Plan and demonstrated in appropriate Standards Frameworks. Dosthill Primary Academy uses a range of types of provision and providers – including sharing expertise of staff within our school adopting "Best Value" principles in determining the selection of these.

Dosthill also supports training that provides professional recognition or accreditation.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Appraisal Policy.

As a school we are committed to the development of all as leaders reflected in the following guiding principle:

Everyone a leader, everyone a learner.

This is elaborated further in the Terms of Reference for the Lead Learning Team (Senior Management Team).

The school obtains appropriate quality standards from organisations that demonstrate we support

effective professional learning, e.g. Investors in People. *(A review was last undertaken in Autumn 2013 where the school was deemed to be beyond meeting the standards).*

Identifying Professional Learning Needs

Professional learning focuses on the 'Focussed Priorities' which are identified on the School Development Plan. In addition, Professional Learning considers the most current Teaching and Learning needs of the school which are the result of: weekly monitoring/scrutiny of planning, books and learnings walks, assessment data and other monitoring such as internal and external lesson observations or reviews.

The Senior Leadership Monitoring and Support Strategy, that was implemented in September 2017, continues to identify weekly CPD needs for all the teaching staff. Phase Team Leaders monitor their phases weekly through a cycle of books, planning and learning walks; verbal and written feedback is provided to staff. All of the monitoring is reviewed by the Head Teacher on a weekly basis. Having read all monitoring (making links to recent data) the Head Teacher then strategically creates the CPD support for the following week taking in to account leader's availability which allow staff to be released. From this the identified CPD needs are then followed up by the Assistant Heads, Senior Assistant Head and other key teachers with expertise who are able to support. At weekly Wider Leadership Team meetings support, actions and progress are then fed back to the Head Teacher in order to monitor that the support has happened and to reflect upon next steps.

The key areas of support provided each week are: coached planning sessions, coached marking, co-teaching or staff observing teachers (Demonstrate Coach for Learning). When support is provided to staff, paper work is kept in order that teachers have clear and measurable targets each week. This information is kept in teacher's individual files so that everyone involved can access the information and track progress. It is the leader's responsibility to ensure that the receiver of support is clear about their targets but also their progress linked to the weekly target. Impact of the support is monitored each week with evidence of the target being met (along with pink/green highlighting). If the member of staff is not meeting weekly targets this should be referred to the Head Teacher in order to meet with the member of staff being supported with the leader delivering support to discuss. In this way, the impact of the support is guaranteed due to the level of accountability that is being expected by all. Phase Team Leaders review the folders termly with the teaching staff to ensure that this progress against targets set is being made.

Central to effective professional learning at Dosthill Primary Academy is the audit and identification of need and aspiration, ensuring appropriate match of provision to learning needs of the individual, reliable and explicit evaluation of the impact of provision plus effective dissemination of good and successful practice to ensure that such practice is embedded and reinforced. School, Phase and individual needs are identified through mechanisms such as Appraisal, self-evaluation, national and local priorities, internal and external monitoring, feedback evidence and through informal and formal discussions with individuals and teams.

Opportunities are also identified by the Professional Learning Leader (PLL) and offered to staff to aid the development of their roles within school.

The Senior Assistant Head Teacher quality assures support provided for staff to ensure equal opportunities are consistent across the school

Requests for accessing professional learning are made to the Professional Learning Leader who decides on the most effective means.

The PLL provides and updates details of the range of appropriate opportunities available to the school community including:

- Newly Qualified Teachers;
- Other staff new to the school or role;
- Teachers in their early years (EPD);
- Teachers with 5 years+ experience (including those beyond the threshold and those in the later stages of their career);
- Teachers specialising in teaching particular subject areas or groups of pupils;
- Lead Teachers and Specialist Leaders of Education;
- Middle leaders/Subject or Area of Learning Leaders (Emergent Leaders);
- Senior leaders in their early years;
- More experienced senior leaders;
- Governors;
- Premises staff;
- Teaching assistants and nursery nurses, bilingual support, language assistants and learning mentors;
- Secretarial and administrative staff;
- Parents and carers;
- Regular supply staff.

Professional Learning Provision

The opportunities available will fully reflect the Code of Practice produced by the government in that they will:

- Meet identified individual, school or national development priorities;
- Be based on good practice - in development activity and in teaching and learning;
- Help raise standards of pupils' achievements;
- Respect cultural diversity;
- Be provided by those with the necessary experience, expertise and skills;
- Be planned systematically and follow the agreed programme except when dealing with emerging issues;
- Be based, where appropriate, on relevant standards;
- Be based on current research and inspection evidence;
- Make effective use of resources, particularly ICT;
- Be provided in accommodation which is fit for purpose with appropriate equipment;
- Provide value for money;
- Be monitored and evaluated.

Dosthill Primary Academy supports a wide portfolio of professional learning approaches, these include:

- In-school training using the expertise available within the school and collaborative activity (e.g. collaborative teaching, planning and assessment, work with a member of the Senior Learning Team/Phase Team Leader/Specialist Leader of Education/Subject Leader/HLTA, classroom observation, existing expertise, peer evaluation, collaborative enquiry and problem-solving, modelling). This also includes weekly professional learning (Inset) sessions and five professional learning days per year;
- Coaching, mentoring and engaging in learning conversations;
- Producing documentation or resources such as: curriculum development, teaching materials, case studies or an assessment package;
- Accessing an external consultant/adviser or relevant expert;
- Role play simulations;

- Collecting, collating and analysing pupil feedback collected through conferencing, data and outcomes;
- Attendance at a lecture, course or conference;
- School visits to observe/participate in good and successful practice;
- Secondments, exchanges and placements (e.g. within a regional or national organisation, an exchange or placement with another teacher, school, higher education, industry, international exchange, involvement with the Governing Body);
- Postgraduate professional development and other qualifications from higher educational institutions and other forms of professional recognition and qualifications such as NVQs, Higher Level Teaching Assistants, NCSL programmes;
- Research opportunities;
- Distance learning (e.g. relevant resources such as educational journals and publications, web sites, training videos, reflection, simulations);
- Practical experience (e.g. national test or exam marking experience, opportunities to present a paper, contribute to a conference or training programme, co-ordinating or supporting a learning forum or network, involvement in local and national networks, involvement with a subject or specialist association);
- Internal and external partnerships (e.g. with a colleague, group, subject, phase, activity or school-based team meetings and activities such as joint planning, observation or standardisation, special project working group, involvement in a formal or informal partnership such as a collaborative learning community);
- Exploring and exploiting opportunities available through membership of the Fierté Trust.
- National Professional Qualifications for Middle Leadership opportunities are provided.

Funding and Resources to support Professional Learning

Funding is allocated by the Governing Body annually in line with the priorities of the Strategic Development Plan. This includes funding for course fees and for supply cover where appropriate. This is identified on the Budget Plan as Training.

The role of the Professional Learning Leader in the context of this policy is to:

- Fulfil a leadership and management responsibility in relation to this post;
- Undergo training and support as appropriate in order to fulfil this role effectively and attend useful providers' sessions;
- Ensure that providers are of sufficient quality;
- Jointly – with the Lead Learning Team and/or with individual members of staff – identify school/individual professional learning needs;
- Supported by the Office Support Manager and Bursar, responsible for ensuring the efficient organising of opportunities, e.g. booking, confirmation, cover and provide appropriate support as required;
- Keep the Governors informed of professional learning provision, impact and any issues arising.

The role of all staff and the extended school community in the context of this policy is to:

- Engage with professional learning opportunities provided/supported by school;
- Reflect on and plan their personal development – seeking advice from senior colleagues/their Appraisal Team Leader;
- Maintain a portfolio of support/actions and training opportunities engaged in;

- Seek professional recognition, including accreditation for the work undertaken where appropriate;
- Evaluate training opportunities attended in terms of key learning points to adopt into personal practice;
- Take a proactive role in sharing key skills, knowledge and understanding gained from training with colleagues.

The role of leaders and managers in the context of this policy is to:

- Identify training requirements and prioritise professional learning in order that all staff have regular training so as to gain even greater knowledge, understanding and confidence in effective learning and teaching strategies;
- Use monitoring exercises and the outcome of evaluations to identify successes in relation to learning and teaching and identify areas of practice requiring further development;
- Ensure all staff that are receiving support have clear weekly actions/targets and impact of this is reviewed weekly and recorded on the appropriate proformas which are kept in teacher folders so that this process can be regularly checked upon by Phase leaders/the Head Teacher.
- Provide time for staff to discuss and cascade effective learning and teaching experiences and developments;
- Use peer coaching for staff to share and explore learning and teaching strategies from each other;
- Provide opportunity for staff to learn from those who possess expertise in the above areas.

The role of Governors in the context of this policy is to:

- Agree and review the Professional Learning Policy on a regular basis (annually);
- Question the Head Teacher and others to ensure that the policy is implemented and impacts positively on:
 - learning and teaching within school;
 - the ability of all staff within school to fulfil their roles;
- Identify their own training needs and to engage in opportunities provided for them centrally and locally.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of Professional Learning is monitored and evaluated by its impact, through:

- Classroom observation;
- The standards achieved and progress of pupils;
- Formal discussion with Team Leaders as part of the appraisal process;
- Informal discussion;
- Staff consultation through the annual Staff Questionnaire;
- Personal reflection and evaluation;
- The mid- and end of year review of the Strategic Development Plan;
- Ongoing monitoring of the budget by the PLL;
- The use of the Investors in People accreditation criteria.
- Fortnightly Fierté Trust Head Teacher monitoring
- Fierté Trust Review Days

Details of Professional Learning activities are included in the Headteacher's Report to Governors. Impact is included in relevant sections of the Report and also in the ongoing reviews of the Strategic Development Plan. This is also reflected in the Ofsted Self Evaluation Form.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for staff with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The former Training and Development Agency (TDA) informed by widespread consensus, backed up by research, previously described **the key features of good professional learning as:**

Each activity is part of a coherent long-term plan that gives the participants opportunities to apply what they have learned, evaluate the effect on their practice, and develop their practice. Research shows that professional learning is most effective when it is sustained, as part of a deliberately planned process.

It is planned with a clear vision of the effective or improved practice being sought. This vision is shared by those undertaking the development and by the people leading or supporting it. The plan needs to show precisely what expertise, understanding or technique the professional learning is intended to deliver. Sharply defined outcomes are also the starting point for evaluating the impact of the professional learning.

It enables the participants to develop skills, knowledge and understanding which will be practical, relevant and applicable to their current role or career aspiration – for example, in curriculum or subject content, teaching and learning strategies and the uses of technology. Professional learning is only effective when it is directly relevant to each participant. Where professional learning is provided for large groups, or for the whole staff, it may be useful to separate the participants into smaller groups so the professional learning can be customised to suit each type of participant.

It is provided by people with the necessary experience, expertise and skills. These providers may sometimes be colleagues and peers. At other times they may be specialists from inside or outside the school.

It is based on the best available evidence about teaching and learning. The evidence needs to include current research and inspection evidence. Research shows that pupils learn best when staff are motivated, developed and updated. Research also indicates positive links between pupils' learning and sustained professional learning.

It takes account of the participant's previous knowledge and experience. Professional learning needs to be tailored to the individual so that it provides experience and insights which build on their existing level of expertise. Professional learning journals and various forms of accreditation can be useful in ensuring a person's existing expertise is properly taken into account.

It is supported by coaching or mentoring from experienced colleagues, either from within the school or from outside. Coaching is most effective when a staff member with a clearly identified need is paired with a colleague who has acknowledged expertise in that area.

It uses lesson observation as a basis for discussion about the focus of professional learning and its impact. Conducted in a collaborative and supportive manner, observations of teaching can be particularly useful for identifying areas for development.

It models effective learning and teaching strategies, e.g. active learning. To be effective, professional learning needs to go beyond theory and exposition. Ideally, it demonstrates techniques and strategies and gives the participant opportunities to try them out in a supportive setting.

It promotes continuous enquiry and problem-solving embedded in the daily life of schools. A hallmark of effective professional learning is an ethos in the school of lifelong learning and development. If the staff exemplify learning as an instinctive and continual activity, they will also act as role models for the pupils.

Its impact on teaching and learning is evaluated, and this evaluation guides subsequent professional development activities.

The ultimate purpose of all professional learning in a school is to maintain the highest possible standards of education and care for children and young people. Professional learning needs to be vigorously evaluated to ensure it is making the maximum contribution to this objective. The most effective evaluations are planned from the outset as an integral part of the professional learning.

Appendices:

Teacher Standards and Career Stage Expectations

Headteacher Standards

Dissemination and Review

The latest copy of the Policy is stored on RUnify for staff to access. It is shared with parents and carers via the school website.

The Policy will be reviewed annually (*Spring Term*) in line with the Governing Body Annual Planner.