

# TEACHING QUALITY

POLICY PAPERS

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# PREFACE

These papers are produced as the Education Bill 2011 makes its way through Parliament. The Bill includes provisions to abolish the first professional regulatory body for teaching in England, the General Teaching Council for England. The Council was established through a long and determined campaign by teachers, politicians and many others, who sought to find a way of promoting teaching and learning in the public interest. To them and to those we have worked with since, we offer these papers as part of our legacy.

The papers sit alongside the other aspects of our legacy, including the transfer and continuation of the Teacher Learning Academy, the deposit of papers in the archive of the Institute of Education University of London, and any eventual adoption of the lessons learned from the regulatory work or provisions of the Code of Conduct and Practice by the Government as the Secretary of State prepares to assume the regulation of the profession.

The GTCE was founded without many of the specific statutory powers invested in like professional bodies serving the public interest: the power to set the standards rather than solely to maintain them, the power to frame the education and qualifications of those entering the profession and to set the parameters in which members of the profession demonstrate their continuing good standing and fitness to practice.

Despite this, the GTCE has consistently acted to meet the statutory aim of raising the standards of teaching and the quality of teaching. We have provided transparent regulation of the profession through a partnership between it and its stakeholders. We have developed research-led but accessible services for teachers to advance their individual and collective practice, and enabled teachers to engage with each others' expertise. We have maintained and improved a wide data-set on teachers such that it provides the key national resource for researchers.

And as these papers illuminate, we have exercised our statutory powers to advise Government on the basis of sound evidence, taken from both educational research and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders; this in turn has been sought from both within the Council and beyond, the latter including, critically and essentially, children, parents and carers.

Every day, teachers and school leaders face the complexities of teaching and learning and the continual call on expertise and energy required to lead in our classrooms and schools. Nevertheless, tens of thousands have, over the arc of the eleven years that the Council has worked, given freely of their time to develop the ideas in these papers. These teachers have tested the research and evidence against their classroom experience; they have taken forward the Achieve, Connect and Engage networks

and the Teacher Learning Academy; and they have sat on panels, with the public they serve, to bring their best discernment to the adjudication of disciplinary hearings. In doing so they have provided much of the inspiration for the ideas in these papers. We thank them.

Equally, we wish to acknowledge all those children and young people, parents, school governors, business leaders, leaders of faith groups, representatives of children's and education organisations and researchers who have engaged with and inspired the arguments of these papers, either as stakeholders or as part of the governing Council of the GTCE. In particular, I pay tribute to Tony Neal who, as Chair of the Policy and Research Committee, has provided clear-sighted leadership and governance and a commitment to finding practicable and reliable policy solutions to support teaching and to the benefit of pupils.

Finally, I thank the staff of the GTCE. Together, they have honed their own policy and research skills and their strong commitment to the education of children in this country, and in so doing produced the research, resources and policy analysis on which these papers are founded.

The arguments of these papers are several and nuanced but hold one simple truth – the quality of teaching is a paramount public good to be fostered. Here is the evidence that points the way as to how that can best be achieved.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PAPER 1 OVERVIEW

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The General Teaching Council for England started work in 2000 as the independent professional regulatory body for teaching. Among its statutory duties are to regulate the teaching profession, to advise the Secretary of State and others on teaching matters, and to contribute to enhancing the standards and status of teaching.

In June 2010 the Secretary of State for Education announced his intention to legislate for the abolition of the GTCE. An Education Bill that contains this measure is due to receive Royal Assent in Autumn 2011.

As the GTCE prepares for closure, it has embarked on a course of action to synthesise its policy thinking and re-evaluate the research base in order to create a suite of legacy papers which between them identify a range of factors for enhancing the quality of teaching in schools. This is because improving the quality of teaching is increasingly recognised as the single most important means of raising the level of performance of national education systems<sup>1</sup>.

The suite of ten papers with a supporting overview is designed to be useful in a new policy context, though the papers also take due account of the evidence available to the GTCE through the exercise of its regulatory and advisory responsibilities for over a decade.

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1 Pollard, A. (ed.), (2010), *Professionalism and pedagogy: A contemporary opportunity*, TLRP, London, p. 4.

# Background

Over the past eleven years there have been many changes to education policy, brought about by numerous consultations, reviews, evaluations and initiatives. During this time we have concentrated our policy advisory focus on those aspects of education policy that have had the greatest potential to contribute to the tasks the GTCE had been set: to help improve teaching standards and to meet the public interest in teaching quality.

In combining the functions of regulation and evidence-based policy advice, we have been uniquely placed to draw evidence from the whole range of existing teaching practice. All of the papers in this publication relate to one or another of the broad goals which have defined our remit.

We have therefore been interested in what and how teachers learn, how effective practice is evaluated and shared, and how professional standards are captured and assessed. We have also been interested in the relationships between teachers and their principle stakeholders – children and young people, parents and carers. We have tried to explore questions of innovation, collaboration, and co-construction. Where a traditional regulatory body might have been solely concerned with reinforcing professional borders, the GTC has been concerned with the quality of the work across those borders, between teachers and the other practitioners who help children to thrive.

Perhaps above all, we have sought that our work be evidence-informed, and where evidence was in short supply, we would identify research needs within a field of inquiry. In addition to the sorts of evidence generated by research and inspection data, we engaged teachers in our work at the developmental stage, and more often than not constructed policy processes which facilitated collaborative work between teachers, policy-makers and researchers in education.

In respecting and using teacher evidence, we sought – not least through the surveys of teachers – to understand and

segment the views of the profession by characteristics such as length of service, phase of education, and post held. Moreover, through the Teacher Learning Academy, Networks and Research for Teachers, we provided resources and opportunities for teachers to model effective professional practice. Most recently we had been strengthening our approaches to wider stakeholder engagement across the span of our work, including policy development. A paper exploring our work in policy and practice will also be published at the same time as the present publication.

There is also a strong two-way relationship between the Code of conduct and practice for registered teachers<sup>2</sup> and our policy work. They are mutually informing, and both reflect certain ethical commitments that the GTCE has captured on behalf of the profession, and to which it holds teachers to account in the public interest. For example, the Code requires that teachers respect diversity and promote equality, and this theme is reflected in our policy work to test and support teachers' understanding of equalities legislation, and to create and disseminate the work of networks of teachers engaged in promoting equality in different ways.

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<sup>2</sup> GTCE (2009), *Code of conduct and practice for registered teachers*, GTCE, London.

# Scope of the papers

As the anticipated March 2012 closure of the GTCE approaches, we have reviewed the span of our policy advisory work and the research and evidence that underpins it. We have done so to maximise the impact of its expertise and experience on current and future policy-making. Part of the organisation's legacy is to pass on what we have learnt to others with an interest in and/or responsibility for the quality of teaching, so that the Council's knowledge is not lost.

We have chosen *Teaching Quality* as an overall title, because this best describes the goal to which our policy work has contributed. We work in the public interest, and teaching quality is the central concern which the public has about the teaching profession and its work. Parents want the best support for their children's learning, and employers seek a skilled workforce.

Teaching quality is of course also a key concern for the teaching profession. The overwhelming majority of teachers are in good standing; they are committed to continuous learning and development, and they want the support, conditions and opportunities necessary for quality teaching.

## **Teaching or teachers?**

The focus of this suite of papers is, unapologetically, teaching. Why have we taken this focus, instead of teachers, learning or learners?

We define teaching as the expert work done by teachers to help all children learn, develop and achieve – which goes beyond the delivery of lessons.

Quality teaching is teaching that leads to effective learning, for pupils of every ability and disposition.

We talk about 'quality teaching' rather than 'quality teachers', in recognition of the contextual factors beyond the intrinsic capacity of the individual teacher that contribute to quality teaching. We are concerned to identify and embed the conditions and practices that drive quality teaching.

## **Teaching or learning?**

We are focused on teaching as the contribution of the professional pedagogue to learning. Ultimately, it is the outcome, learning, that matters, but we focus on teaching because that is where the evidence we have produced and our thinking around the subject can have an impact. Moreover, we suggest that much is known about how to support quality teaching which, if implemented consistently, could improve learning outcomes and, in stark economic terms, produce a greater return on the significant investment represented by teachers.

One thread that unifies these papers is that professionalism in teaching requires a commitment from teachers to improving practice as a facet of their routine work. This in turn imposes a continuing responsibility to learn about teaching, and a willingness to expose teaching to forms of accountability which foster improvement. It is through this career-long commitment by professional teachers that teaching quality can best be enhanced.

The papers span the areas of initial teacher training (ITT), induction, performance management, continuous professional development (CPD) and innovation, all informed by standards, pedagogy, and research, and moderated by accountability systems. Additionally we offer three papers with a greater focus on practice in assessment, innovation and pupil participation.

## **Who these papers are for**

These papers are intended to be of interest to the wide community of interest in teaching, whether people are interested in the work of the GTCE or in the individual subject matter of each paper. They may also be of interest to those involved in professional standards from the viewpoint of another profession, or from the perspective of regulation, or public service reform.

These papers are not intended as a direct engagement with specific contemporary developments in policy, but they try to capture evidence and thinking in support of more enduring objectives in each sphere.



# Overarching themes

As we entered conversation and dialogue over early versions of these papers, readers suggested that we extract some key themes which underpin them. These recurring themes – eight in number – are all about supporting quality teaching, or meeting the public interest in teaching quality, or both.

## Theme 1

**There needs to be a transparent, shared understanding of what constitutes effective teaching, informed by and shared amongst stakeholders in teaching, and used fairly to uphold standards.**

In paper 2 in this series, on professional standards, we argue that national teaching standards need to better articulate “*the expected practices and expertise*” of effective teaching, as defined by the profession and its stakeholders; and they need to provide public assurance of fitness to practise.

Locally, colleagues within schools or networks of schools need to moderate their judgements about teaching quality in order to be effective in performance management and continued professional development (CPD). As paper 5 (performance management) emphasises, we recommend specialist training for those who conduct performance management processes, and a robust quality assurance system to reduce variability in implementation at school level.

## Theme 2

**Teaching quality derives from skills, knowledge, understanding and ethical commitments or dispositions. Teacher education, development and deployment need to have regard to all.**

The extensive process of stakeholder engagement that informed the review of the Code of conduct and practice confirmed that parents, pupils and colleagues define teacher professionalism in terms of both technical effectiveness *and* facets such as interpersonal skills and ethical dispositions. Paper 3, on entry to teaching,

characterises the role of the Code in setting out the territory of the profession which trainees are joining “*and encapsulates the values and beliefs as well as the practices that underpin professionalism in teaching*”. The proposal for a teacher/employer mutual compact from paper 6 (professional learning and development) involves a clear articulation of professional responsibility for individual practice and development derived from the Code.

## Theme 3

**Teaching quality is central to pupil outcomes, so investment in teaching quality gives good returns.**

Our paper on pedagogy (paper 7) is a key source for this assertion, citing a series of research reports in support. These include the McKinsey & Co study of the unifying characteristic of the top-performing countries covered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as being their investment in and emphasis on the quality of teachers and teaching. In addition, our work has been fortunate to coincide with a number of research programmes including the ESRC-sponsored Teaching and Learning Research Programme that have reinforced this message.

We argue for a pedagogical model that is broader than teaching but brings *the act of teaching* together with “*a body of knowledge, argument and evidence in which it is embedded and by which particular classroom practices are justified*”.

## Theme 4

**Best evidence about enhancing teaching quality needs consistently to inform systems, processes, practice and expenditure.**

There are many unanswered questions about teaching, but there is also a substantial and growing body of robust knowledge. The professional learning and development paper, for example, commends the consistent application of what is already well established from research about effective professional learning. The performance

management paper recommends that sample evaluative data from quality assurance processes should be collected and analysed at national level in order to increase system-level understanding of implementation strengths and weaknesses. In paper 8 (research-informed practice), we commend the concerted development of a culture of research-informed practice at Government, school, higher education and individual teacher levels, to make a greater contribution to teaching quality.

### Theme 5

**The teaching profession contains seeds of its own continuous improvement and needs external stimulus, networks, and expertise.**

The professional standards framework involves all teachers throughout their careers being involved in coaching and mentoring. Part of meeting our proposed Chartered Teaching standards will involve the capability for effective coaching and mentoring of other colleagues. Meeting expert standards would also involve leading pedagogical learning in local, regional and national contexts.

Paper 9, on innovation, recommends that school leaders work in partnership with higher education to create opportunities for teachers to collaborate in school-to-school initiatives and local networks and work with experts. These proposals aim to build professional capacity in creative thinking and decision making and hence improve the effectiveness of teaching and schools.

Local communities/networks of practice are also advocated by paper 10 on pupil assessment. These are intended to build moderation capacity within the profession and to contribute to further improvement in assessment and pedagogical practice.

The professional learning and development paper draws on the evidence of successive *Evidence for Policy, Practice and Information* studies and other research, modelled in practice by the GTC's Teacher Learning Academy.

### Theme 6

**Skilled and informed dialogue about teaching is central to teaching expertise. It should be at the heart of teacher development, performance management, accountability and stakeholder relationships.**

Our pedagogy paper develops the argument for strengthening teachers' pedagogy, and their opportunity for dialogue that challenges and develops their practice. The earlier references to building professional capacity through networking and collaboration are again relevant.

Communication about one's practice is also central both to accountability and to public understanding of that practice, which in turn supports stakeholding and public esteem. The performance management paper recommends a greater 'account-giving' focus for the performance management system overall, to be part of a sustained dialogue about approaches to practice and their outcomes and the interrogation of such an account.

The requirement for this evaluative dialogue about the quality and impact of individual practice and subsequent objective setting, would be part of the proposed CPD compact which also includes an access entitlement to observation and data-based feedback, to a professional enquiry project and to structured peer coaching or mentoring. This gives further public assurance of a profession taking responsibility to develop and improve its practice.

### Theme 7

**Meaningful and responsive accountability to key stakeholders including pupils and parents should be the *quid pro quo* for reduced bureaucratic accountability to the centre.**

Our work with parents and pupils confirms their interest in teaching quality, and their sophisticated interpretations of teaching professionalism. It also confirms that the volume of institutional accountability

activity does not make parents confident that they can hold the school to account for teaching standards.

Paper 4, on accountability, therefore makes proposals for a shift in the accountability relationship between school and parents, away from the current limited consumer power. Instead, it should move to greater agency regarding the quality of provision, for a 'framing' of expectations concerning the 'account' that they will be 'given' and 'hold', and a better understanding of the respective rights and responsibilities of parents, pupils, teacher and school leaders in accountability relationships.

In paper 11, we highlight the growing body of evidence which indicates that the development of effective pupil participation can result in benefits for teaching and learning, achieved through strengthening pupil agency over their learning. Our recommendations for a professional standards framework with a greater pedagogical focus includes here proposals for the inclusion of effective approaches to pupil participation within teaching and learning developed via generic and expert standards.

## **Theme 8**

**The public interest in teaching is served by increased trust in the informed professional judgement of teachers and appropriate accountability for teaching standards and outcomes.**

The negativity surrounding central prescription and its impact on inspection has resulted in the impression that teachers want simply to close the classroom door on scrutiny. In fact, the GTCE's surveys of teachers reveal a high degree of acceptance and understanding of their accountability as public servants. Teachers want permission to make informed professional judgements in pupils' interests because of, and not instead of, their wider accountability as qualified, performance-managed, and regulated professionals. We call for a framework of agreement between the Government and the community of interest in teaching that underpins a better

understanding of accountability. Pedagogic language and dialogue would be a stronger part of accountability for teaching, as would the teacher's responsibility for ensuring that research and evidence and professional learning informs their professional judgements and subsequent outcomes, for which they are accountable.

We believe that the public interest in teaching is best served by the continuation of a code of conduct and practice as a basis for professional accountability in teaching.

# Equality and diversity

The papers as a body highlight a range of equality and diversity challenges involved in the process of further improving the quality of teaching. The proposals that we make in relation to professional standards are intended to give teachers a more equitable access to the right to practise and to ensure that standards are used more consistently and transparently to maintain and improve practice. The standards framework, with its more pedagogical focus, and the underpinning of a code with strong equality and diversity dimensions, together aim at holding teachers for account-giving in the interests of all learners.

We continue to warn against entry requirements to teaching that deter and prohibit particular groups unfairly. The effect on disabled entrants is of particular concern, as the entry paper stresses. Better needs assessment at the start of and during entry to teaching could better support retention for a more diverse group of entrants. Better data is needed in the entry phase (as defined by the paper) to ensure that certain routes and/or trainee groups are not over-represented, and to find out more about the group of new entrants who leave before they are assessed against induction standards.

Access to CPD for all teachers is also critical. The professional learning and performance management papers highlight the inequitable lack of access which supply and part-time teachers have, and propose mechanisms for assuring performance and agreeing targets and the professional learning and benefits to practice that should result.

As these papers underline, teachers need the skills, opportunities, expert support and permission to develop their pedagogical expertise, and to engage in and with research and innovative practice to support a range of learning needs. Over their careers, teachers will encounter children and young people with a wide variety of needs and circumstances, and will need timely training and development opportunity to deal with particular circumstances for the first time.

Our proposals on pupil participation could have benefits for learners – both those at risk of underachieving and those with low esteem – that include enhanced engagement, agency, motivation and behaviour.

Participation, progress, well-being and achievement of different groups of pupils should remain a key focus of accountability.

## Benefits for policy and practice

For practising teachers, the *Teaching Quality* papers provide an insight into the evidence of best practice in ITT, induction and CPD. Papers on pedagogy, performance management, innovation and accountability may provide a useful stimulus for discussions about practice in specific settings or clusters.

For policy-makers, the Teaching Quality papers can raise and explore questions wider than the subject matter of each, including:

- what constitutes the most effective approach to upholding the public interest in teaching?
- what balance should be struck between addressing poor practice and enabling great practice?
- how should teacher learning be configured, for new and for experienced practitioners?
- what is the expertise underpinning teaching and how can stakeholders in teaching understand and interrogate it?
- how can improvement and innovation in teaching help those at greatest disadvantage to learn and achieve?
- what helps teaching to thrive, and what makes it falter?

## Conclusions

Through eleven years of policy development and regulatory work, the GTCE has developed a vision of the teaching profession we need. Our understanding of teaching professionalism is captured in these papers, and derives from our code and our policy work. It has been enriched by the opportunity we have had to debate with so many teachers and stakeholders in teaching.

We hope these papers are of use to those in a position to pursue advances in teaching professionalism beyond the operational life of the General Teaching Council for England.

## PAPER 2

# STANDARDS-BASED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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Professional standards play a critical role in maintaining and improving teaching quality and can have a positive impact on learner achievement.

When effective, professional standards ensure that teaching practice is consistent from one setting to another. Critically they ensure transparency about the standard of teaching expected by the learner and provide a benchmark for the accountability of teachers. When supported by participation in effective development and performance management, professional standards provide a framework for the ongoing development and improvement of practice.

The research and evidence discussed in this paper indicates there are clear limitations to the ability of the current professional standards to raise the bar on teaching quality and learner achievement. We therefore propose revisions to the following:

- the structure of the professional standards framework;
- the point of award of professional qualification and the ongoing conferral of the right to practise;
- the relationship between the standards and the Code;
- focus, content and 'level' of the standards;
- mechanisms to ensure consistent use of standards to maintain and improve practice; and
- the locus and process for setting standards.

## Introduction to Paper 2

Raising the bar on teaching quality and learner achievement has been and remains a key policy goal for governments of the last 30 years. The role that a well-articulated set of practice standards can play in realising that goal requires policy attention.

In this paper we consider the potential of professional standards to contribute more than they have hitherto done to the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of learning.

## Professional standards, quality of practice and user outcomes

Standards articulate the expected practices and expertise of a defined set of practitioners. In doing so, they act as a benchmark against which the individual and the collective can adjudge their capability to act in the interests of the user of their service.

Every profession has its set of standards. These define acceptable thresholds of practice for the completion of training and entry to practice, and for the foundation standard of professional practice. Most often they include an appropriate suite of standards defining accomplishment or specialisation as required for the discipline.

These shared standards are then enacted in the variety of settings and specialisations in which the profession practises. The right to practise is based on these standards. The standards define the thresholds of expertise within a profession and are informed by advancing research and knowledge which lead the discipline to new levels of effectiveness for users. The standards therefore represent those practices which research suggests are likely to yield optimal outcomes for users. Standards additionally can enhance equal treatment of individuals and groups, both within the profession and by the profession, as they improve transparency and provide a fair benchmark of practice.

In summary professional or practice standards provide:

- a means by which practice is rendered consistent from one setting to another;
- transparency of the standard of service for the user;
- a development framework for the individual; and
- benchmarks for holding the individual to account.

Invariably the practice or professional standards are accompanied by a code of ethics and conduct wherein the profession, together with its stakeholders and users, defines the expected behaviours, attitudes and guiding values of that discipline. Codes too, are a representation of those behaviours which research suggests are likely to yield optimal outcomes for users.

User interest must be the core driver for standards. Empirical research within the discipline together with stakeholder, user and professional perspectives are the means by which contemporary standards can help to render professional effectiveness. The era of a profession alone guarding its standards has given way to a recognition that it is this interface between the evidence from research, user and professional perspectives which increases the potential of standards and codes to drive up the quality of practice.

Standards form a core part of the regulatory frameworks for professional practice. Regulatory frameworks ensure:

- equitable access to the right to practise;
- assurance of fitness to practise and that the minimum standard is upheld; and
- assurance of improvement and development in practice.

A range of mechanisms are typically used to assure enactment in practice and use for developmental purposes of the standards including:

- linking professional learning to their achievement;
- the institutional management of performance against them;
- the local adjudication of capability against them; and
- the initial right to practise and the continuing right to practise being adjudged in relation to them.

It is in this way that professional standards provide the baseline for practice, the basis for consistency of practice and for improvement of practice. That is to say that they form a core part of the quality assurance and public accountability of practice, as well as a core part of the developmental framework for practice for individuals and across a profession.

In education, it could be argued that greater benefit would be derived from a focus on assessing pupil achievement rather than setting and monitoring teaching standards. However, while this is important, it is difficult to draw conclusions about teaching quality directly from learner

outcomes; isolating the impact of teaching from other powerful environmental factors that shape learning outcomes is problematic.

However, there is robust evidence<sup>1</sup> on what drives the performance of educational systems and central to this is the importance of a good teacher and effective teaching. There is a good level of consensus and evidence on the characteristics of a good teacher and teaching; these characteristics can be addressed, developed and assured through the use of professional or practice standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2009), memorandum from the General Teaching Council for England on the training of teachers, TSO, London; Barber, M. and Mourshed, M. (2007), *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*, McKinsey & Co, London; Pollard, A. (ed.), (2010), *Professionalism and pedagogy: a contemporary opportunity*, TLRP, London. See also OECD (2005), *Annual report 2005*, OECD, Paris.



# The development of a framework for teaching standards in England

The shift towards the use of standards in teaching developed in the early 1990s as part of a general move towards quality assurance of teaching and schooling; the then Education Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, favoured a competency-based model for training, focused on the outcomes of training “rather than the process and content of courses”.<sup>2</sup>

The Labour Government introduced standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) in 1998, published by the then Department for Education and Skills as *Standards for Teaching*.

The standards were not without criticism from some: Revell asserted that “this was a hugely complex and bureaucratic document, with hundreds of performance indicators and competencies”.<sup>3</sup>

Others were concerned that the document created too close a focus on the assessment process, rather than allowing for a developmental approach to teacher training and education; or, that as the statements of competence were often descriptions of the preferred outcome, the skills needed were not articulated.<sup>4</sup>

This was followed, in 2002, by *Qualifying to Teach* published by the then Teacher Training Agency. These standards were viewed as an improvement on previous circulars but some concerns were expressed that the standards led to “the atomisation of professional knowledge, judgement and skill into discrete competencies” and therefore “inevitably fails to capture the essence of professional competence”.<sup>5</sup> In 2004, Politeia claimed that the competency-based model was “over-centralised and

*dirigiste and as a result standards are lowered”*<sup>6</sup> but it is not clear what evidence this claim was based on.

Subsequent iterations of the standards in England, which now cover a teacher’s career and not just their entry to teaching, endeavoured to respond to many of these criticisms by recognising the importance of “reflective practice and, overall, represent a somewhat more manageable and holistic set”.<sup>7</sup>

The current professional standards framework (PSF) came into effect in 2007, published by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) on behalf of the Secretary of State following a development process closely involving the social partnership<sup>8</sup>, teachers, head teachers and other education stakeholders. The framework seeks to “set out the professional attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills expected of a qualified teacher”<sup>9</sup> at different points in their career.

The Schools White Paper 2010 *The Importance of Teaching* signals a new review of existing measures of teacher conduct and performance, including the current professional standards for teachers and the General Teaching Council for England’s code of conduct and practice, to establish clear and unequivocal standards.

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2 Clarke, K. (1992), speech at North of England Education Conference.

3 Revell, P., (2005), *The Professionals, better teachers, better schools*, Trentham Books Limited, Stoke-on-Trent.

4 Davies, I., (1992), *Debates Within Initial Teach Education: The Meaning of Kenneth Clarke’s Reform Proposals*, Journal of Further and Higher Education, 1469-9486, Volume 16, Issue 1, pp 13-21.

5 DENI (1993), *Review of Initial Teacher Training in Northern Ireland: Reports of Three Working Groups*, DENI, Belfast.

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6 Lawlor, S. (ed.) (2004), *Comparing Standards: Teaching the Teachers. The report of the Politeia Education Commission*, Politeia, London.

7 Whitty, G., (2006), *Teacher Professionalism in a new era*, GTCNI Annual Lecture.

8 comprising the teacher unions and employer organisations

9 TDA (2007), *Professional standards for teachers in England: Why sit still in your career?* TDA, London.

# Critique of current context

The current framework determines that at the end of initial teacher training (ITT), an individual must meet the standards for QTS in order to obtain QTS accreditation. Unusually, it is the accreditation of training outcomes which confers what can be seen as the professional qualification for teaching; most other professions award the professional qualification after a period of professional practice when the right to practise is coterminous with conferral of professional qualification.

For teachers to continue to teach and hold the right to practise, in the maintained sector in England, a teacher with QTS must successfully complete induction and be assessed as meeting the core standards<sup>10</sup>. However, even if the teacher fails to complete induction successfully, either by never completing or failing to meet these standards the teacher retains QTS ie their professional qualification. Furthermore, a teacher can be prohibited from practice for conduct or competence reasons, but still retain QTS. This is anomalous and does not provide an assurance that those with QTS are fit or even permitted to practise. It also risks devaluing the professional qualification which typically would be associated with the right to practise.

Having met the core standards, there is no further specific universal requirement for teachers in England to demonstrate that they continue to meet even these baseline standards. Currently, the performance management guidance suggests the use of the PSF only as a “*backdrop to the discussions*”<sup>11</sup>, and there is no professional body requirement to proactively demonstrate that the baseline or any other standards are being upheld.

The National Centre for Social Research study of research and evidence from GTCE casework<sup>12</sup> suggests that the core or baseline standards, which could be seen as the

‘right to practise’ standards, are not applied universally or consistently when addressing issues of competence, and that in these circumstances different sets of standards are used and expected in different settings.

Following a period of practice, teachers have the option to seek assessment against the Post-Threshold Standards; success is linked to progression to the upper pay scale. Subsequently, those who wish to can seek further assessment against the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST)<sup>13</sup> standards to work as a specialist practitioner beyond the school or against the Excellent Teacher standards to work within the school.

For those post-induction and not seeking post-threshold status, or post-threshold and not seeking one of a limited number of AST or Excellent Teacher posts, there is no other agreed framework against which practice can be quality assured or developed. In aligning pay progression to standards and, thereby, making access to pay scales dependent on the acquisition of higher standards, policy has led affordability to be the determinant of how many individuals within the profession practise against the higher standards of mature or specialist practice. The primary purpose of professional standards is to quality assure and develop practice such that individual practice, and the standard of practice of the profession as a whole, advances to the optimal level of maturity, expertise and effectiveness. The current policy of pay linked to standards, not to role, appears to mitigate against this primary purpose.

In the GTCE 2010 *Survey of Teachers (SoT)*, most teachers<sup>14</sup> reported that they had a good understanding of the Professional Standards Framework overall, but had mixed views about how the framework could help them improve their practice. Nearly two-thirds<sup>15</sup> of teachers

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10 An individual can only continue to be employed as a qualified teacher in the maintained sector if they hold QTS and have not failed induction.

11 RIG (2009), *Teachers’ and head teachers’ performance management*, RIG, London.

12 Morrell, G., et al. (2010), *Factors contributing to the referral and non-referral of incompetence cases to the GTC*, GTCE, London.

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13 Note that an AST does not formally have to be post-threshold to be appointed as an AST; however, it is expected that an AST demonstrate full competence against the post-threshold standards.

14 Poet, H., et al. (2010), *Survey of Teachers*, GTCE, London. 79% strongly agreed or agreed, and 6% disagreed.

15 *ibid.* 63% agreed.

# Equality and diversity

said that the standards provided a ‘*good definition of teacher competence*’, but they were ambivalent about the influence of the professional standards on their teaching<sup>16</sup>. The survey reports that, although the standards might provide a useful conceptual benchmark for the majority of teachers, teachers are not sure about their influence on the standard of their own teaching practice, or on pupil outcomes.

Standards articulate the expected practices and expertise of a defined set of practitioners. In doing so, they enhance equal treatment for teachers by improving transparency and providing a clear benchmark for practice which benefits all learners. To be fair and equitable, the professional standards need to apply and be applied to all teachers regardless of employer.

Moderation and external quality assurance of the standards can help to ensure that standards are understood and used consistently across settings, in fairness to teachers and pupils.

Standards form a core part of the regulatory frameworks for professional practice. These frameworks ensure that there:

- is equitable access to the right to practise; and
- are mechanisms to ensure consistent use of standards to maintain and improve practice.

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.* In response to the direct statement ‘*In practice, the professional standards do not make any difference to the way I teach,*’ more teachers agreed (41%) than disagreed (24%), but importantly, a sizeable proportion (almost one in three) neither agreed nor disagreed.

# The case for change

From our understanding of the evidence and issues and in order to derive greater value from the use of professional standards in England, we propose changes in the following areas:

1. the structure of the professional standards framework;
2. the point of award of professional qualification and the ongoing conferral of the right to practise;
3. the relationship between the standards and the Code;
4. focus, content and ‘level’ of the standards;
5. mechanisms to ensure consistent use of standards to maintain and improve practice; and
6. the locus and process for setting standards.

We now examine each in turn.

## 1. The structure of the professional standards framework

The practice, or professional, standards need to provide a framework against which all teachers, regardless of role or progression, practise and seek to improve. To this end, we propose that the standards should be decoupled from pay, progression or specific roles. Instead roles, defined locally and most usually institutionally at the school level, may require, among other factors, that certain standards have been met.

A common set of standards is needed for the profession in order to secure a minimum level of competence and practice. However, a well-founded argument made by Ingvarson, amongst others, is that “*Generic standards for teaching cannot do justice to the complexity of knowledge and skill that underpins accomplished practice*” and “*All teachers are specialists, and with experience they become increasingly specialised... these differences in expertise are not trivial, and they need to be evident in the standards.*”<sup>17</sup>

It is to this end therefore that we propose that specialist

standards provide the framework for advanced practice and improvement, but to secure a minimum level of effective practice and competence across the profession, teachers will meet (and be supported to meet) generic minimum standards in the context in which they practice.

We propose the following framework.

- **Standards-based certification of initial teacher education and training**

At the end of a period of initial teacher training (ITT) and education, whichever training route, the individual demonstrates that they have achieved a set of standards in training which encompass the foundational competences, knowledge, skills and expertise of effective pedagogy, and, that they accept and are able to meet the requirements of the Code. Thus all forms of ITT would lead to certification of successful completion, whether school or higher education institution based. This first stage of professional formation is highly tutored and mentored and includes supervised practice and study; in our model, it replaces the acquisition of QTS as the point of professional formation.

- **Professional qualification standard**

The standards for professional qualification will be those for ITT and training accreditation but with sustained application to practice in a variety of contexts (for example, classes, subjects, year groups) as well as other standards which advance the individual’s pedagogical repertoire and capacity to improve.

- **Chartered Teacher Standard**

Thereafter, at a point of the individual’s determination, all members of the profession will have access to assessment for Chartered Teacher status. Once again the standards for chartering will build on those for professional qualification advancing to a more mature and deeper level of pedagogical skill, knowledge, expertise and

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<sup>17</sup> Ingvarson, L. (2009), ‘Developing and rewarding excellent teachers: the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme’ *Australian Council for Educational Research Professional Development in Education* Vol 35, no 3.

understanding demonstrated across a wide range of contexts (eg settings, classes, year groups, attainment groups, or subjects) and with an expectation that practice is overtly and consistently informed by research and other evidence, and with an expectation that all chartered teachers are capable of good mentoring and coaching of others within their setting.

The status of being a Chartered Teacher will require ongoing evidence that the teacher continues to meet the chartered teacher standards and the Code. This evidence will be provided through the performance management system. This same system will support teachers to meet the standards, including through the analysis of their development needs and access to effective professional learning and development and will assess them as Chartered Teachers.

The Chartered Teacher standard would not be directly linked to pay or a pay threshold; however, specific roles might require a teacher to have met these standards. This in turn would act as a lever for individual teachers to improve their practice. This would be for local determination.

- **Expert Standards**

Once the core and mature pedagogical practises are established by means of the preceding standards there will be a further set of expert standards, again at a pace of the teacher's determination, which Chartered Teachers can select from and work towards as appropriate. Again these will be accessible to the whole profession and not be associated with pay progression, but may be the basis for selection to certain roles, locally determined. These expert standards will allow for greater specialisation and development in specific areas relevant to the teacher's context and reflect expertise and excellence in a

specialist area of the discipline of teaching. These could be framed within the five areas suggested below. There will, however, be areas of overlap between these or teachers who seek to become "expert" in a number of areas. As such, the expert standards should be sufficiently flexible to allow teachers to select from them according to their context, role and learning needs.

**Pedagogical expertise** could include evidence-informed reflective and innovative practice and expertise, and deep understanding of the relationships between pedagogical, assessment and curricular concepts.

**Expertise in context**, through meeting and supporting others to meet local challenges and conditions, could be characterised by the particular profile of children and young people within the school or educational setting. This will include their socio-economic status, ability, language, special education needs, ethnicity and cultural background.

**Expertise through subject or specialism** could be in a particular phase such as foundation stage, key stage or age group; or by subject or other specialisation such as special education needs or equality and diversity practice.

**Expertise in leadership** could encompass leading learning within and beyond the classroom, school or other educational setting, contributing in local, regional and national contexts, or leadership of assessment, pedagogy or curriculum development.

**Expert professionalism** could include, for example, expertise and experience in working inter- and intra-professionally, with parents and other adults within the school and wider community.

How the proposed professional standards would interlink



## 2. The point of award of professional qualification and the ongoing conferral of the right to practise

We propose that, in common with other professions, the baseline standard of practice attained at the end of the first year of practice marks the award of the professional qualification for teaching and confers the initial right to practise.

This right to practise and professional qualification will be retained by continuing to demonstrate, through quality assurance mechanisms, how these standards are met. It will be forfeited if through dint of competence or conduct procedures the individual has failed to maintain this baseline standard of practice, or uphold the Code, and is deemed to be incapable or unwilling to regain that standard. If a teacher is prohibited from teaching for conduct or competence reasons, it should not be possible to retain professional qualification or title.

Demonstrating that the standards of professional qualification and the Code continue to be met deems the individual fit-to-practise with a continuing right to practise. We suggest that it is at this point that the title of qualified teacher is given.

## 3. The relationship between the standards and the Code

Teaching is never simply an instrumental activity or a question of technique alone. Research<sup>18</sup> finds that competence standards are useful, but as they do not account for the complexities of becoming a teacher they are not sufficient alone. We propose that the Professional Standards continue to be accompanied by a Code of ethics and conduct wherein the profession, together with its stakeholders and users, defines the expected behaviours, attitudes and guiding values of that discipline. The Code and the Standards will both be

based on what research findings indicate are the practices and behaviours likely to yield optimal outcomes for users. Together they form the benchmarks of fitness to practise.

## 4. The focus, content and 'level' of the standards

We propose that standards which are not able to demonstrate their provenance in the research literature on the foundational, effective and high impact practices of the discipline have no place in the framework. In any case, there is a broad consensus on what makes for good teaching, founded on a robust evidence base<sup>19</sup>.

Furthermore, we find that, if the standards are to support effective teaching, then they must place a greater focus on setting out foundation, baseline, advanced and excellent pedagogical knowledge, skills and expertise. Therefore, they must address the development and balance of curricula, planning, fit-for-purpose assessment processes, the range of appropriate teaching strategies, engaging learners, setting expectations, building on cultural understandings and social relationships, understanding cognitive needs, organisation of resources, gaining and using feedback, enabling learning disposition, progression, reflection, and diagnosis.

The place of subject knowledge within the professional standards requires proper definition. The standards for initial training, professional qualification and chartered teacher will require a robust element of core subject knowledge and expertise in subject specific pedagogy, according to phase and context need. The Expert Standards will reflect subject knowledge and expertise as appropriate.

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18 McNally, J., et al. (2007), *Enhanced competence-based learning in early professional development*, ESRC, London.

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19 Barber, M. and Mourshed, M. (2007), *op. cit.*; Pollard, A. (ed.) (2010), *op. cit.* See also OECD (2005), *op. cit.*; Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2009), *op. cit.*

To support ongoing improvement, the standards, from those to accredit training to the expert standards, will include a focus on effective continuous teacher learning and development. Much work has been done to distil, from research and evidence, the characteristics of teacher learning and development which have a positive impact on teaching quality and pupil outcome; this is discussed further in paper 6, on continuing professional development (CPD)<sup>20</sup>.

Critically, to better support the learning of all pupils, including those with complex needs, and as part of developing good pedagogy, teachers need to use evidence and research to inform and evaluate their teaching

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20 Successive systematic reviews of research conducted over several years describe the characteristics of effective approaches to CPD (see for example three of the studies produced by the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-centre), based at the Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London: Cordingley, P. *et al.* (2003), The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning; Cordingley, P. *et al.* (2005), The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning - Review: What do teacher impact data tell us about collaborative CPD? and Cordingley, P. *et al.* (2005) The impact of collaborative continuing professional development (CPD) on classroom teaching and learning - Review: How do collaborative and sustained CPD and sustained but not collaborative CPD affect teaching and learning?; all in *Research Evidence in Education Library*, EPPI-Centre, London; and also; Timperley *et al.* (2007), *Teacher professional learning and development: Best evidence synthesis iteration*, Ministry of Education, Wellington, NZ). Drawing on these we find that effective development, that which has a positive impact on teaching and learning:

- ensures time and structured opportunities for learning;
- involves access to external expertise, coaching and leadership;
- encourages professional collaboration;
- provides the opportunity for reflection on learning and practice;
- actively involves teachers in defining the learning processes and learning outcomes;
- is aimed at explicit outcomes for practice, and for learners;
- addresses what teachers do in the classroom and how teachers change what they do;
- challenges problematic beliefs and practices;
- where appropriate applies what is known about pupil learning to teacher learning; and
- draws in reliable research evidence and understands how to utilise it.

practice. We, therefore, suggest that the standards articulate the need for evidence- and research-informed practice.

Some of the current standards are not expressed in terms amenable to assessment; some are standards for which assessable evidence can be provided while others are more attitudinal. Alexander's Primary Review finds that "*They are empirically unsafe as well as too vague to be useful*". We suggest that the standards going forward need to articulate observable practices.

## 5. Using the standards to maintain and improve practice

The policy framework which guarantees the use of, and maintenance or progress against, the professional standards, both by teachers and their employers, needs strengthening and quality assuring to ensure consistency, transparency and provide public assurance.

Effective regulation of standards is highly dependent on processes such as performance management, capability and referral. We suggest that each of these needs to be clarified and strengthened in order to drive maximum value for the quality of teaching. Of further concern are those teachers whose practice is not subject to performance management. Supply teachers need to be brought within the framework of the performance management system so that the quality of their practice against the professional standards does not remain an unknown.

If standards are to play that higher value role in the determination of teaching quality and learning achievement, then the assurance of their use and quality assurance of assessment against them is crucial. Current assessment against the core standards at the end of induction is insufficiently quality assured and is therefore vulnerable to local variation in interpretation of whether what is intended to be a universal baseline standard has been met or not. Equally, quality assurance



# Standards-based professional standards: proposals

of the use of the professional standards in performance management needs to be introduced, since evidence shows variability<sup>21</sup> and that in many cases other sets of criteria are in use<sup>22</sup>.

Some quality assurance by an external and expert body of the award of Professional Qualification, Chartered Teacher and Expert Standards, such as that from a professional body or peer moderation, would be essential to ensure equity and consistency.

Teachers need to be supported to continue to meet the professional standards and improve their practice. Accordingly, we propose that all teachers, including those in supply roles, be given an entitlement to professional development to underpin their maintenance of, or development against, the professional standards. However, if benefits to teaching and learning quality are to be realised, the entitlement needs to be based on what is known about effective CPD. Any entitlement needs to be accompanied by a requirement to participate in and evaluate the impact of professional development in practice.

## 6. The locus and process for setting standards in teaching

As already described, the determination of the different standards and the Code needs to be informed by research as to the practices and behaviours typically associated with different levels of maturity and effectiveness. The validation of these standards needs to be an exercise conducted by expert professionals in dialogue with stakeholders and service users.

The role of government in determining the standards of a professional discipline needs re-examination if the profession is to own and drive the advancement of its standards in dialogue with stakeholders.

To advance teaching, we propose revisions in the following areas.

- Revision of the structure of the professional standards in order to provide a framework against which all teachers, regardless of role or progression, can practise and seek to improve.
- Re-focus of the content of the standards so that they address better the skills, expertise and knowledge of effective pedagogy at different 'levels' of practice, and the development of specialist and subject expertise.
- Changes to the point of award of professional qualification and the ongoing conferral of the right to practise, in order to ensure that those holding the professional qualification are fit to practise and continue to be so.
- A revised relationship between the professional standards and the Code of conduct and practice for registered Teachers, which together set out the expectations of teacher practice and behaviour.
- Revisions to the mechanisms which ensure the use, assessment and assurance of the standards, to ensure that they are consistent and transparent, and act to maintain and improve teaching practice.
- Revisions to the locus and process for setting standards in teaching, so that they are founded on the practices and behaviours which evidence and research indicates constitute effective teaching.

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21 National Centre for Social Research (2010), *op. cit.* and TNS (2009), *Survey of teachers 2009: TNS report*, GTCE, London.

22 GTCE serious professional incompetence case work.

## PAPER 3

### ENTRY TO TEACHING

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The future quality of teaching and teachers depends on the efficacy of their training, education and qualification. Only those suitable to teach and likely to become good teachers should be selected.

Those who enter teaching need, with support, to reach a minimum accepted standard of practice. This includes being able to teach effectively and respond to the learning needs of all children. They should also expect to continue with their professional development throughout their careers.

In this paper we summarise and critique the current system, noting that the separation between initial teacher training and professional induction has led to anomalies. We make the case for changes that would:

- unify the process of 'entry to the profession';
- enhance the contribution initial teacher preparation (education, training and induction) make to teaching quality; and
- create a sound basis for high-quality professional learning and development over a teacher's career.

# Introduction to Paper 3

In this paper we consider how the quality of teaching can be better supported through strengthening the initial stage of entry to the profession.

Since the inauguration of the GTCE, we have had a strong interest in entry to teaching, including both initial teacher training and education and induction, not least because of our responsibility for those entering the profession. This stems partly from our statutory role to improve standards of teaching, and in particular because we:

- regulate the standards of teaching;
- confirm and record the successful completion of induction;
- award qualified teacher status (QTS);
- are the appeal body for induction;
- register those who are qualified to teach in England.

Additionally, since 2008 we have provisionally registered students as they begin their initial teacher training and education. This ensures that all those entering training and education are deemed ‘suitable to teach’, having been assessed against and met the initial teacher training course requirements, and completed a suitability assessment<sup>1</sup>.

Because the evidence largely relates either to initial teacher training and education or to induction, this paper begins by discussing their respective relationships to the quality of teaching. We then consider how entry to teaching could be conceived and treated in such a way as to support the future quality of teaching more effectively.

## Initial teacher training or education?

Initial teacher training (ITT) and initial teacher education (ITE) are often used interchangeably, to describe the provision, processes and procedures that support beginning teachers in learning and qualifying to practise. We argue, however, that they refer to different conceptions of preparation for teaching: ITT implies a process which trains people to undertake specific tasks and duties, whilst ITE prepares individuals to exercise a professional role which, because of the complex skills and knowledge required, entails a commitment to ongoing learning and the development of reflective practice.

We therefore take the view that ITE better describes and encompasses the first stages of preparing to teach. Nonetheless, since ITT is the term currently used in legislation and statutory documentation, this is the term the paper uses in referring to those requirements and arrangements; ITE is used to describe the broader preparatory professional provision and processes.

## ITT now

Currently, to gain QTS an individual must demonstrate that they have met the Professional Standards for QTS. As a consequence ITT provision is closely tied into supporting trainees to meet these standards.

In England, the majority of entrants<sup>2</sup> to the teaching profession gain QTS through one of a diverse number of routes, including undergraduate courses which can be taken as part of a first degree and courses taken as a post-graduate qualification<sup>3</sup>. These can be full-time or

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1 The suitability assessment covers conduct which could impact on an individual’s suitability to register and includes:

- any action by the Secretary of State in relation to working with children or other misconduct;
- criminal offending, including cases pending, and including cautions, reprimands and other disposals;
- disciplinary action by any professional or regulatory body, taken or pending;
- employer disciplinary action, taken or pending; and
- any other information which might bear upon suitability to register.

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2 QTS can also be gained through: assessment-based training for already experienced teachers; assessment of qualifications by the GTCE for teachers from Northern Ireland, Scotland and the European Economic Area; or the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme (OTTP).

3 Undergraduate routes include Bachelor of Education (BEd) or Bachelor of Arts or Science with QTS (BA or BSc). Postgraduate routes are via a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (Scitt). Employment-based teacher training includes the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), the

part-time, and are managed and delivered by a variety of providers, including higher education institutions (HEIs) and schools. All combine “*theoretical learning with at least 18 weeks spent practising teaching in school*”<sup>4</sup>

At the time of writing, the requirements for ITT are published by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)<sup>5</sup>. There is no set curriculum for ITT but the regulations include specific requirements for entry, training, management and quality assurance, against which Ofsted undertakes inspections<sup>6</sup>. The TDA sets out that all ITT programmes will cover:

- a knowledge and understanding of the relevant national curriculum;
- programmes of study for the teacher’s subjects;
- planning and preparing lessons and setting learning objectives;
- managing classes, promoting good behaviour and minimising disruptions;
- using information and communication technology effectively;
- awareness of the professional values expected of teachers, in their attitudes; and
- behaviour towards pupils and colleagues<sup>7</sup>.

It is important to note that QTS is a permanent accreditation which is awarded on successful completion of an ITT course. It does not expire and cannot be revoked.

## Induction now

Statutory induction arrangements for those awarded QTS were introduced with effect from May 1999 through regulations issued under the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998. Under these arrangements, induction is intended to enable teachers who already hold QTS to meet a further set of standards (currently termed the core standards).

Induction lasts for the equivalent of three full school terms, and must be successfully completed in order to continue to be employed as a qualified teacher in any maintained school or non-maintained special school.

Our responsibilities include the confirmation of successful completion of induction and the recording of this on the Register of teachers. If the Appropriate Body<sup>8</sup> judges that a teacher has not met the core professional standards, they therefore fail their induction period. The teacher can appeal this decision to the GTCE, which will convene an appeals panel to determine the matter, and can rule in favour of either party, or allow the teacher additional time satisfactorily to complete induction.

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Registered Teacher Programme (RTP) and Teach First.

4 See the ITT requirements guidance published by the TDA and governed by the Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003.

5 The TDA is proposed for abolition by the Education Bill, with many of its functions proposed to transfer to the new Teaching Agency in April 2012.

6 Ofsted (2008), *Framework for the inspection of initial teacher education 2008-11*, Ofsted, London.

7 As note 4.

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8 For maintained schools and non-maintained special schools, the local authority (LA); for independent schools, either the LA or the Independent Schools Council Teacher Induction Panel.

# Relationship of initial teacher preparation to teaching quality

It is difficult to find evidence that points to a direct relationship between initial teacher training and/or induction arrangements and the quality of a teacher's teaching later in their career, for there are many other intervening variables. Even summarising the evidence on the effectiveness of ITT in preparing teachers for teaching is challenging, not least because the system has changed several times over the past couple of decades and now comprises a number of different routes to QTS. Ofsted has claimed that “*today's teachers are the best trained ever*” and a study by McNamara<sup>9</sup> found that the current model has improved standards in ITE and the quality of NQTs<sup>10</sup>. Properly speaking, however, a rigorous comparison can only be made between the successive cohorts trained since 1998, when Ofsted began inspection of ITT. Moreover, as Alexander notes<sup>11</sup>, the claim is founded on the assumption that compliance with the TDA's requirements for ITT is the most valid and reliable indicator of effectiveness and potential impact on teaching.

The *Becoming a Teacher* study<sup>12</sup> is one of the most comprehensive studies on this topic in England. The study followed several waves of student/trainee teachers through different ITT routes, induction and their subsequent three years of teaching. There is much useful evidence from the respondents' perspective on what they found helpful in their preparation for teaching, both at the time and in retrospect; but there is no additional data to assess the validity of their judgements, such as lesson observations by the researchers.

In terms of isolating the influence of induction on the quality of teaching, the main source of evidence here is a

systematic review carried out by Totterdell *et al.*<sup>13</sup> of studies conducted mainly in the USA.

It has to be said that much of the evidence about ITE in England tends to be:

- procedurally-focused (arising from evaluations of the effectiveness of statutory arrangements);
- perceptual (arising from the reported views and experiences of NQTs, induction tutors, head teachers and to a lesser extent local authority officers/advisers); or
- based on principles rather than on empirical data.

Nonetheless this literature provides helpful indications both of what constitutes a positive experience of initial training/education and induction, and of the weaknesses in current arrangements. Some of this material is discussed below.

Overall, McNamara's study concluded that the current model and standards fail to capitalise on the significant contribution ITE could make to teacher development and school improvement. The GTCE argues that if the system for preparing teachers for entry into the profession were changed in line with our proposals (given at the end of this paper), this would remove some anomalies, unify the procedural processes and the professional experience, and create a sounder basis for high-quality professional learning and development over a teacher's career. This in turn would enhance the contribution initial teacher preparation (education, training and induction) makes to teaching quality.

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9 McNamara, O. (2009) in: Alexander, R., *et al.* (2009), *Children, their world, their education: Final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review*, University of Cambridge, Cambridge and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, London.

10 As assessed by the Ofsted inspection framework.

11 Alexander, R. *et al.* (2009), *op.cit.*

12 Hobson, A., *et al.* (2009), *Becoming a teacher: teachers' experiences of initial teacher training, induction and early professional development*, DCSF Research Report DCSF-RR115, University of Nottingham, Nottingham. See Appendix 1 to this paper for a note on the study.

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13 Totterdell, M., *et al.* (2004), *The impact of newly qualified teachers (NQT) induction programmes on the enhancement of teacher expertise, professional development, job satisfaction or retention rates: a systematic review of research literature on induction*, EPPI-Centre, London.

# Critique of current context

This section discusses the evidence about ITE and induction, and its implications, under a series of topic headings.

## 1. Focus and content of ITT

The curriculum for ITT is not specified as such. As was noted above, one of the principal functions of ITT is to enable a trainee to demonstrate that they have met the professional standards for QTS. However, this is the sole requirement on trainees, and the standards are couched in terms of discrete competences. Competence-based standards, according to some research<sup>14</sup>, are useful in clarifying requirements, but they are inadequate by themselves to encompass the complex skills, knowledge and ethical qualities needed to become a teacher.

One way of going beyond competences is through the articulation of a professional code: the Code of Conduct and Practice for teaching<sup>15</sup> sets out the ‘territory’ of the profession which trainees are joining, and encapsulates the values and beliefs as well as the practices that underpin professionalism in teaching.

There have been changes in how schools exercise their responsibilities for children’s learning and well-being, as well as the societal factors that impinge on classrooms. This has led to a great deal of discussion about what should ideally be included in the curriculum for the initial education of teachers, so that they are prepared for the conditions and circumstances they will encounter. We have argued that the knowledge and skills now required by teachers are both greater in quantity and different in quality from those previously required. For example, trainees entering the workforce need to be able to work with other professionals to meet the often complex

learning needs of individual children, including those with special educational needs<sup>16</sup>.

Given the large and competing claims on the curriculum, it is unsurprising that researchers conducting a comparative study of ITE in different countries<sup>17</sup> concluded that teacher education needs to extend well beyond the initial professional education phase, and that the focus of initial training and education should be on providing teachers with a set of high-level beginning competences rather than preparing fully-formed teachers.

## 2. Routes to QTS

There is now a body of evidence which considers and compares the different ITT routes to QTS. The final report of the *Becoming a Teacher* study<sup>18</sup> found some interesting variations in student/trainee teachers’ views and experiences, depending on which ITT route they were following – for example, HEI-based provision and peer support were particularly valued, and those on employment-based routes said they would like more of these aspects. The study then invited teachers in the first year of their appointment to give a retrospective evaluation of their ITT, and these data showed a rather contrasting pattern.

The majority of beginner teachers continued to evaluate their ITT positively in terms of whether it had prepared them to be an effective teacher, though the proportion who did so showed a small but statistically significant decline over the period.

Respondents from SCITT programmes generally agreed most strongly with the statement ‘My ITT programme prepared me to be an effective teacher’ over the three-year

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14 McNally, J., et al. (2007), *Enhanced competence-based learning in early professional development*, ESRC, Swindon.

15 The Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 and subsequent additional functions provided for in the Education Act 2002 (schedule 12) required the GTCE to produce and enforce the Code of Practice. For the text of the Code, see GTCE (2009), *Code of conduct and practice for registered teachers*, GTCE, London.

16 Cited in Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2010), *Training of Teachers: fourth report of session 2009-10*, (volume II, oral and written evidence), TSO, London.

17 Conway, P. et al. (2009), *Learning to teach and its implications for the continuum of teacher education: a nine-country cross national study*. University College Cork, Cork.

18 Hobson, A. et al. (2009), *op.cit.*

survey period, whilst respondents from university-based PGCE programmes agreed less strongly.

Such differences need to be treated with caution, however. *“While there were a large number of statistically significant variations in beginner teachers’ experiences of ITT ... relating to the ITT route they had followed ... such variation was largely ‘washed out’ over time by teachers’ subsequent experiences of teaching.”*<sup>19</sup> This shows the importance of tracking entrants to the profession over time, at least into the second or third year of employment, so as to avoid reaching premature conclusions.

In terms of inspection reports, Ofsted found in 2006<sup>20</sup> that around one-third of employment-based providers<sup>21</sup> inspected had significant weaknesses in subject-specific training for secondary trainees; by contrast, PGCE provision was found to provide trainees with a good grounding in teaching their specialist subject. The inspection report also found that although trainees in the employment-based Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) were generally more confident in their use of class and behaviour management strategies than PGCE trainees, they demonstrated a narrower repertoire of teaching strategies that often did not extend beyond the models that predominated in their main school. While this has almost certainly changed over the past few years, HMCI’s most recent annual report found that far more HEI-led provision was rated as ‘outstanding’ than school-centred or employment-based ITT<sup>22</sup>.

What seems to be clear is that different routes suit the needs of different groups of teachers – which, given the demographic diversity of entrants to the profession, will continue to be an important consideration.

### 3. The balance between ‘theoretical’ knowledge and ‘practical’ teaching experience

One of the issues that has continued to dominate the discourse around initial teacher education is the appropriate balance between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ in curriculum provision: a paper by Policy Exchange claimed that *“the evidence that trainees find it hard to translate theory learnt in the university lecture hall into practical techniques for the classroom is now irrefutable”*.<sup>23</sup>

In some ways this is a debate about the nature of teaching itself. Another paper in this publication<sup>24</sup> says that the core expertise of teaching is ‘pedagogy’ – defined as the creation of collective professional knowledge that is grounded in testable concepts, strong ethical values and empirical evidence, and open to public scrutiny. Teaching is not so much the application of techniques as the ability to make informed pedagogical choices between competing claims and possibilities. If teaching comprises this kind of specialised expertise, then clearly teachers must start to engage with theoretical knowledge about teaching and learning at the very beginning of their careers, so as to complement – not supplant – practical experience. Those who construe teaching as a mainly technical activity, on the other hand, will tend to judge preparation for teaching in terms of its capacity directly to support practical classroom-based activities.

On the whole, however, educationists agree that a strong dichotomy between theory and practice is largely fictitious – most commentators and providers want to see a judicious combination of both. For example, when the Children Schools and Families Select Committee recommended an increase in school-based training places (in its report on the training of teachers), it also found a need to improve employment-based trainees’ understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of

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19 *ibid.*

20 Ofsted (2006), *An employment-based route into teaching 2004/05*, Ofsted, London.

21 Designated Recognising Bodies.

22 47% of HEI-led ITT courses are outstanding compared to 26%. HCMI (2010), *Annual Report 2010*, HMCI, London.

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23 Freedman, S. *et al.* (2008), *More good teachers*, Policy Exchange, London.

24 See paper 7, *Pedagogy*, p. 87.

teaching practice<sup>25</sup>. Similarly, the *Becoming a Teacher* report<sup>26</sup> found that teacher trainers on the employment-based routes voiced concerns about the ability to gain theoretical knowledge about teaching and learning; whilst Donaldson's recent review<sup>27</sup> of teacher education for the Scottish Government concluded that “a more integrated relationship [is required] between theory and practice, between the academic and the practitioner, between the provider of teacher education and the school.”

One way of making the relationship more integrated had already suggested by McIntyre in his 1995 paper<sup>28</sup>, in which he argued that the “widely experienced problem of the ‘theory-practice gap’” can be circumvented by a “practical theorising approach” to ITE. Not only would this approach help student teachers ask, and answer, questions about the ‘why’ as well as the ‘how’ of good teaching, it would also lead them to “think critically and productively about how to teach and, more generally, about how to engage in the practice of schooling”. Furthermore, others have argued<sup>29</sup> that, if teachers are to continue to develop their teaching and respond to change once the supporting framework of their initial preparation is removed, they must be in a position to understand and appraise the ideas, values and evidence that underpin the various conceptualisations of ‘effective’ teaching and learning.

## 4. Entry issues

The requirements of the selection process for entry to ITT have a strong influence on the overall quality of teaching, since they initially determine the characteristics, skills, aptitudes and expertise of the teaching profession. Since they also define who may and may not become a teacher, they potentially limit the pool of applicants. We have proposed that the quality and characteristics of entrants to the profession must align to the challenges that they face now and in the future<sup>30</sup>. Key to this is recruiting those who are most likely to be effective teachers, whilst dissuading, deterring or deselecting those without the necessary skills and attributes.

Conversely, it is crucial not to deter some groups of applicants, such as people with disabilities. We have repeatedly voiced strong concerns that the Fitness to Teach (FtT) standard, and how it is applied, may deter disabled applicants. We support the Disability Rights Commission's 2007 report<sup>31</sup> which found that fitness standards “lead to discrimination; and they deter and exclude disabled people from entry and being retained. We therefore recommend that they are revoked.” We believe that an individual's suitability to teach (assuming appropriate background checks have also been made) should be determined by their ability to meet the conduct and competence standards, and to support children and young people's learning and achievement, rather than by physical criteria<sup>32</sup>.

An expanded model of entry requirements and selection process is operated by Teach First: in comparison with other routes, Teach First has an elaborate selection mechanism, including an in-depth application form, competence-based assessment, and a subject knowledge audit<sup>33</sup>. In addition,

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25 Children, Schools and Families Committee (2010), *op cit*.

26 Hobson, A. *et al.* (2009), *op.cit*.

27 Donaldson, G. (2011), *Teaching Scotland's Future*, The Scottish Government, Edinburgh.

28 McIntyre, D., (1995), ‘Initial teacher education as practical theorising: A response to Paul Hirst’, *British Journal of Educational Studies* Volume 43, Issue 4, 1995, pp. 365–83.

29 Hagger, H., *et al.* (2008), ‘Practice makes perfect? Learning to learn as a teacher’, *Oxford Review of Education*. Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 159–78.

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30 GTCE (2009), *op. cit*.

31 Disability Rights Commission (2007), *Maintaining standards, promoting equality: Professional regulation within nursing, teaching and social work and disabled people's access to these professions*: DRC, Manchester.

32 GTCE (2007), *Fitness to teach guidance for employers and initial teacher training providers: consultation response*, GTCE, London.

33 Teach First's selection procedures are described on their website at



unlike other ITT providers, Teach First is not penalised for under-recruitment. Ofsted found that the “*programme recruited highly motivated graduates with outstanding personal qualities and strong subject expertise ... Around half achieved the Standards for QTS to an outstanding level, a third to a good level and the others to a satisfactory level*”.<sup>34</sup> It is also worth noting that Teach First has a low drop-out rate compared to other routes<sup>35</sup> – although, with recruits numbering between 500 and 600 annually, the programme represents only one per cent of provisional registrants<sup>36</sup>. While the Teach First selection model might be difficult to replicate across all of ITT, lessons can be learnt from how Teach First selects those who are likely to become good teachers.

The preparation and support of student/trainee teachers is presumably intended to build on the particular skills, experiences and expertise new entrants bring with them and, by identifying and responding to their individual needs, help to develop these into a coherent set of professional practices. The existing standards for ITT go some way towards this<sup>37</sup> but it is likely that a more structured form of needs analysis, at the start of and during ITE, could develop entrants’ strengths and target areas of weakness more effectively.

As a general point, altruistic or intrinsic motives for entering teaching may be important factors in ensuring long-term retention, according to some research<sup>38</sup>. The Chief Executive of Teach First has also commented that if the participants were “*not the right sort of people ... the whole thing would fall apart*.”<sup>39</sup>

## 5. Retention in ITT

At the time of writing, it appears that complete figures covering all ITT routes of those who begin ITT and go on to gain QTS – or not – do not exist<sup>40</sup>. During the Children Schools and Families Select Committee enquiry into the training of teachers, one estimate was that “*across university, school and employment-based ITT 15 percent of trainees dropped out*”.<sup>41</sup> PGCE figures for 2008-09 showed that of 30,670 trainees starting a course, 26,794 were awarded QTS, more than 87 per cent: a wastage rate of over 12 per cent<sup>42</sup>.

These figures suggest there are some questions to ask about the effectiveness of selection criteria and processes and/or ITT provision, including whether forms of support are adequate. As a priority, there need to be better numerical data collection and analysis systems covering all ITT routes. This would enable detection of any issues or patterns, particularly with regard to registrants’ gender, ethnicity, age and disability.

In the *Becoming a Teacher*<sup>43</sup> study, student/trainee teachers were invited to say whether they thought they would be entering teaching on completion of their ITT; these data showed that across all ITT routes, 87 per cent of trainees stated that they were ‘very likely’ and 12 per cent that they were ‘fairly likely’ to enter teaching after completing their ITT, with only one per cent stating they were (fairly or very) unlikely to enter teaching. These are not actual completion figures, of course, and the difference between intentions and decisions is another area for investigation.

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<http://graduates.teachfirst.org.uk/recruitment>

34 Ofsted (2008), *Rising to the challenge: a review of the Teach First initial teacher training programme*, Ofsted, London.

35 Cited in Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2010), *op. cit.*

36 GTCE (2010), *Annual digest of statistics 2009-10*, GTCE, London

37 The ITT standards state “*taking account of any prior achievement that might justify exemption from some programme requirements, and of any specific training needs identified during selection or afterwards*”.

38 Nieto, S. (2003), *What keeps teachers going?* Teachers College Press, New York, cited in the literature review of Hobson, A. *et al* (2009), *op.cit.*

39 Hutchings, M., *et al.* (2006), *An evaluation of innovative approaches*

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*to teacher training on the Teach First programme, Final report to the TDA, IPSE, London.*

40 Had the GTCE continued to exist, these data would have been available as a result of provisional registration of trainee teachers.

41 Verbal evidence of 15 June 2009 (q. 210) to the House of Commons, Children, Schools and Families Committee inquiry into the training of teachers.

42 Smithers A. and Robinson P., *The Good Teacher Training Guide 2010*, University of Buckingham, Buckingham.

43 Hobson *et al.* (2009), *op.cit.*

## 6. Impact of induction

Analysis of data in the GTCE Register of teachers<sup>44</sup> shows that only a very small percentage, approximately 0.1%, fail induction by not meeting the core professional standards. Often, a teacher does not appeal against an adverse decision; since the inception of the GTCE, we have heard only 82 appeals. The low rate of failure does not necessarily mean that induction is not as effective as it should be in assuring standards of teaching, but it does raise some issues, which are explored below.

In any case, failure rates may not give the whole picture. Register data also show that between 10 and 15 per cent of registrants are unlikely to complete their induction. Approximately two-thirds of registrants complete induction within 18 months of qualifying<sup>45</sup>, rising to 84 per cent after six years post-qualification; subsequently, the percentage completing induction barely increases. It therefore seems plausible to assume (though clearly further research is needed) that a proportion of the people who continue to hold the award of QTS never complete their professional induction.

Evaluations of induction give a view of the support arrangements and processes involved, together with reported judgements on the effectiveness of induction. In an evaluation of statutory induction in England in 2002<sup>46</sup>, nearly 50 per cent of head teachers surveyed believed that the implementation of NQT induction arrangements had substantially improved the effectiveness of NQTs. Newly-qualified teachers themselves reported the following aspects as the most helpful:

- observation of colleagues' lessons;
- being observed by other teachers; and
- meeting with and receiving feedback from their induction tutor.

The evaluation was carried out at a time when funding for NQT induction could be used by schools only to support NQTs in post. This restriction no longer applies, and there must be questions about equity in times of financial constraint for schools.

Additional aspects of effective induction identified through this and other studies include:

- allocation of sufficient non-contact time;
- a school ethos which encourages professional growth;
- conditions for induction tutors to pursue their own professional development for the role as well as carry out the role<sup>47</sup>; and
- a collaborative learning environment in which the NQT was supported by colleagues across the school, in addition to a strong relationship with the induction tutor<sup>48</sup>.

The systematic review by Totterdell *et al.* of research literature on induction<sup>49</sup> (mainly from the USA) found that there is strong support for claims that induction improves teaching effectiveness and promotes new teachers' sense of well-being.

Claims that induction improves short-term retention have moderate support from the literature but the evidence base for this is becoming stronger. The summary of key findings includes the following.

- Induction delivery systems are complex and need to combine measures that focus on new teachers, experienced teachers who provide them with support, and structures that provide appropriate circumstances

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44 The GTCE retains records of all those teachers who have successfully completed induction and handles the appeal procedure for those NQTs judged not to have successfully completed induction.

45 66% of those awarded QTS in 2007 went on to successfully complete induction within 18 months, ie by 31 March 2009. GTCE (2009), *Annual digest of statistics 2008-09*, GTCE, London.

46 Totterdell, M. *et al.* (2002), *Evaluation of the effectiveness of the statutory arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers: Research Report RR338*, DfES, London.

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47 Hobson, A. *et al.* (2006), *Becoming a teacher: Student teachers' experiences of initial teacher training in England*, DfES, London.

48 Williams, E. (2001), *The induction of newly qualified teachers: How policy is mediated by context*, ESRC, Swindon.

49 Totterdell, M., *et al.* (2004), *op.cit.*

for successfully moving from novice to expert teacher status.

- Induction programmes work best when an effective training and professional development component is provided to support all role groups – new teachers, their mentors and principals.
- Good induction programmes, when combined with an attractive pay and conditions package, can make a measurable difference in improving the short-term retention of teachers.

However, the purpose of statutory induction arrangements in England currently conflates two functions, that of assuring teaching standards and that of supporting new teachers in an employment context. From their reading of the best evidence on induction, Totterdell *et al.* are clear in their recommendation that “*clarity about the purposes of induction programmes for policy and for supporting effective teaching practice is crucial: both are required for achieving their successful implementation and establishing appropriate accountability*”.

Whether the two functions of the current induction system in England can successfully operate simultaneously is open to question.

## 7. Mentoring

Mentoring is a highly valued part of the induction process for NQTs: respondents in the Becoming a Teacher study<sup>50</sup> were almost unanimous in reporting positively on this aspect of their induction, with 94 per cent reporting a good or very good experience with their mentor/ induction tutor. The report highlights the importance of the relationship between mentor and mentee, though it also raises concerns about whether and how the skills, knowledge and understanding required by mentors are fully understood and valued, and about the lack of recognition and status afforded to this important role in schools.

The authors of the DfES evaluation of induction<sup>51</sup> found that, whilst a majority of induction tutors received support and training for their role from the local authority, a significant minority did not.

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50 Hobson, A. *et al.* (2009), *op.cit.*

51 Totterdell, M. *et al.* (2002), *op.cit.*

# The case for change

This section argues that there are two broad reasons for advocating change in the public interest: the need to address and resolve anomalies in existing frameworks and arrangements; and the need to strengthen the foundations for the professional practice of teaching.

## Anomalies in existing arrangements

### The ambiguous significance of qualified teacher status

If a new teacher with QTS fails their induction, they will not be employable as a teacher in the maintained sector or in a non-maintained special school. However, as noted earlier, they will continue legally to hold QTS. This situation is unhelpful to the public understanding of the significance of being ‘a qualified teacher’, and arguably militates against the public interest.

### Quality assurance of induction assessments

Head teachers are required to make termly reports on an NQT’s performance against the standards; their final reports will recommend either successful completion or failure of induction. This is therefore a ‘high stakes’ process both for NQTs and for the upholding of professional standards. Technically, quality assurance of head teachers’ assessments rests with the relevant local authority, but the written reviews are insufficient by themselves to confirm or challenge the recommendations. The process is open to variable interpretation across local authorities and schools/settings and even to possible bias. This raises concerns about the accuracy, robustness and fairness of the process.

### The dual function of induction

As argued above, induction is intended to serve the public interest in assuring standards of teaching and at the same time to support the individual teacher in reaching those standards. The relatively low failure rate calls into question whether the first of these functions is being adequately fulfilled; the proportion of QTS-holders who

never complete induction raises questions about the second.

Induction represents a crucial and formative period in the development of a teacher and can be influential in shaping their professional values, qualities and aspirations. It seems likely that the potential for the induction process to inspire professional growth and motivation – through the provision of support, professional development and a personalised programme to take account of a new teacher’s strengths and interests – has yet to be realised.

An examination of induction arrangements in other economically-developed countries<sup>52</sup> shows that, compared with England, induction tends to be spread over a longer period of time, and is designed as an extended programme to support new teachers’ transition to full qualification and registration. In their systematic review of induction<sup>53</sup>, Totterdell *et al.* found that there were discernible trends in teacher induction internationally: “*the most clear of these is towards extending support for new teachers and their assessment beyond the first year of teaching*” [with] “*early professional development that includes the first three years of teaching (or the first five years inclusive of initial training) with certification and accreditation for registered and/or chartered status being part of this process*”.

### Lack of connection and coherence in professional preparation and entry

ITT, induction and early professional development are governed by different frameworks and accountabilities, and there is little evidence either of conceptual continuity and progression or that new teachers experience the process of entry to the profession as an integrated one. The Career Entry and Development Profile (CEDP)<sup>54</sup>,

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52 See Appendix 2, page 42 for a table of comparisons.

53 Totterdell, M. *et al.* (2002), *op.cit.*

54 The Career Entry and Development Profile (CEDP) is issued to trainees in their final year. It aims to support trainees to identify, review and plan their professional development needs as they move into and through induction.

which is intended to support the transition, has attracted predominantly negative feedback. Criticisms have been levelled, for example, at its bureaucratic and generalised nature, as well as its narrow focus on the professional standards at the expense of wider and deeper professional development<sup>55</sup>. There is also little evidence of a clear connection between the first year of teaching and ongoing professional development<sup>56</sup>.

By contrast, the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) sets out how professional competences are to be developed across ITE, induction, early professional development (EPD) and continuing professional development (CPD) with the aim of developing a reflective profession. As the GTCNI notes, professional competences need to be treated in a holistic sense because *“the achievement of competence is a developmental process which, of necessity, transcends early teacher education and continues throughout a teacher’s career”*.<sup>57</sup>

Resolving the above anomalies would enhance the capacity of ITE to prepare teachers appropriately for their professional roles and responsibilities. Accordingly, we believe that the award of the professional qualification should be moved to the end of the induction period. Our detailed proposals appear at the end of this paper.

## **Strengthening the foundations of the professional practice of teaching**

Additional changes to the initial education and preparation of teachers – in the areas of professional standards, values and ethical practice, and pedagogical expertise – would, in the GTCE’s view, further strengthen the foundations of the professional practice of teaching.

## **Strengthening the professional standards for teaching**

We believe that becoming a fully qualified teacher should be dependent on an individual gaining and demonstrating the requisite professional skills, expertise and knowledge and applying them for a sustained period of practice in an appropriate setting. Another paper in this publication<sup>58</sup> sets out proposals for a more coherent standards framework, founded on the research literature about effective and high-impact teaching practices. Within this would sit, as distinct standards, a standards-based certification of initial teacher education and training, and a professional qualification which includes sustained application to practice in a variety of contexts.

## **Articulating the values, ethical practice and the moral purpose of teaching**

Teaching is more than the application of methods and techniques; it entails making complex decisions in both the short-term and the long-term interests of pupils, and using professional judgement to resolve difficult dilemmas. One such example is given in the resources created by the Office for Public Management for the GTCE<sup>59</sup>:

*“You’ve arranged extra tuition for a group of pupils who have had difficulties and poor attendance levels. It’s worked – they are getting good results now. But in a nightmare scenario, parents accuse you of meting out special treatment, and some of the pupils become victims of bullying.”*

A wholly competence-based model of professionalism risks sidelining the ethical dimensions of teaching. A recent paper<sup>60</sup> argues that professional ethics is a neglected topic in teacher education, and that there are ethical issues specific to teaching that need to be integrated into ITE

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55 Hobson, A. *et al.* (2009), *op.cit.*

56 Totterdell, M. *et al.* (2002), *op. cit.*

57 GTCNI (2007), *Teaching: the reflective profession*, GTCNI, Belfast.

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58 See Paper 2, Standards-based professional practice, p. 13.

59 Summary given on GTCE website of scenario 4 in GTCE (2010), *Professional and ethical challenges in teaching: a resource for trainee teachers and educators*, GTCE, London.

60 Warnick, B.R and Silverman, S.K. (2011). ‘A framework for professional ethics courses in teacher education’, *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62, 3, 273–85.

provision. The GTCE has attempted to capture the core ethical dimensions in the Code of Conduct and Practice for teachers<sup>61</sup>: as noted above, this sets out a shared vision of teacher professionalism, grounded in the values teachers themselves hold as well as in the expectations of the wider public. The role of the Code in ITE and in the professional standards for ITT should be placed more strongly in the foreground.

### **Enhancing the pedagogical content of teaching**

In another paper in this publication<sup>62</sup> we argue in favour of a more expanded version of the skills, knowledge, expertise, values and practices of teaching than is often embedded in standards and competences, the word for which is pedagogy. In ITE a greater focus on pedagogy would include supporting student/trainee teachers to:

- engage in and with research concepts and evidence;
- evaluate the beliefs and ideas underlying their teaching behaviours;
- know why as well as how effective teaching happens, and understand the role of educational theory in supporting practice; and
- be able to give a strong account of the professional judgements they make in the interests of their pupils.

In addition, we have noted that there are certain areas of specialist pedagogy, such as teaching for equality and diversity<sup>63</sup> and supporting special educational needs<sup>64</sup>, which all student/trainee teachers should understand and begin to practise.

In summary, then, we believe that efforts to improve initial teacher education and preparation should resist

over-determining the different training routes and over-prescribing teaching methods. A far greater impact could be made on teaching quality by:

- introducing coherence and continuity into the core elements of tutored provision, study, supervised school-based practice, induction and the early years of employment; and
- strengthening the foundations of the professional practice of teaching.

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61 GTCE (2009), *op. cit.*

62 See Paper 7, Pedagogy, p. 87.

63 GTCE (2008a), *Better support for schools to implement the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in schools: Advice from the General Teaching Council for England*, GTCE, London.

64 GTCE (2008b), *Effective professional education and development for teachers of children and young people with special education needs: Advice to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families*, GTCE, London.

# Equality and diversity

## For registrants preparing to enter the profession

1. As noted above, the GTCE argues that an individual's suitability to teach should be determined by their ability to meet the relevant entry requirements and professional standards, rather than by physical criteria. There is a risk that Fitness to Teach and the application of related health regulations will deter disabled applicants.
2. The *Becoming A Teacher* study<sup>65</sup> found that:  
*“Variation relating to beginner teachers’ ethnicity and (particularly) age tended to be more persistent ... In general, minority ethnic and older entrants to the profession tended to report less positive experiences of ITT, induction and EPD. Both groups, for example, tended to give lower ratings of their relationships with teaching colleagues, of the support they received and of their enjoyment of teaching.”*

Given the increasingly diverse population of registered teachers, it is crucial that such issues are addressed as a matter of priority by ITT providers, schools and local authorities. Head teachers should ensure consistency in support for beginning teachers, including fairness in the treatment of inductees who are part-time or who take career breaks, for example.

There also needs to be a national database that can record and analyse completion rates for all ITT routes and for induction, not least in order to identify any differences related to registrants' gender, ethnicity, age or disability. This should be complemented by qualitative exploration of the reasons for non-completion, dissatisfaction and so forth.

3. The induction period needs to be carefully designed to ensure that registrants can make progress against the equality and diversity elements of the core standards, since not all student/trainee teachers will have had

access to a multi-cultural setting, pupils with English as an additional language or with specific types of SEN, etc, during their placements.

4. A fourth issue with potential to lead to inequalities is that funding for NQT induction – which previously was able to be used only for this purpose – is no longer ring-fenced. In times of financial constraint for schools there must be concerns about equality of access for all NQTs to the full range of support to which they are entitled.

## For pupils

Successive NQT surveys have shown that new teachers are less confident about the preparation afforded by ITT for some of the equality- and diversity-related aspects of their practice; concern has also been expressed about the lack of content covering some of the most prevalent forms of special educational need. Whilst ITT/ITE can only provide an initial grounding in these areas, it is important in the interests of pupils that more attention is paid to these issues.

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<sup>65</sup> Hobson, A. *et al.* (2009), *op.cit.*, p xii.

# Entry to teaching: proposals

Drawing on a wide range of evidence, we find that there are serious limitations on the capacity of the current model to support and enhance the quality of teaching. Accordingly, we propose that government should consider making the following changes to the system.

- There should be **greater clarity about the purpose of this professional stage**. Entry to the profession of teaching should be conceived and treated as a staged process, and the relationship between initial training, education, induction and early professional development should be organised on the principles of continuity and progression. The focus throughout should be on developing the requisite pedagogical expertise, through in-depth practical experience of teaching alongside and underpinned by relevant theoretical knowledge, empirical research evidence and ethical values. The process should take account of beginner teachers' holistic professional development needs as well as assisting them to meet a set of appropriate professional standards.
- At the end of ITT or ITE, whether school or HEI-based, the individual should be able to demonstrate that they have met the standards which encompass the foundation competences, knowledge, skills and expertise of effective teaching, and that they accept and are able to meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct and Practice for teachers. Meeting these standards and requirements would lead to **certification of successful completion**.
- The point of award of the **professional qualification** of qualified teacher status should be at the end of induction, to ensure that those holding the professional qualification are fully competent to practise and have demonstrated this over a period of sustained practice. The standards for professional qualification would be those for ITT/ITE accreditation but with sustained application to practice in a variety of contexts (for example, classes, subjects, year groups) during induction, as well as other standards which advance the individual's pedagogical repertoire and capacity to improve.
- Moving the award of the professional qualification to the end of induction would support public understanding of what it means to be – and what can be expected of – a qualified teacher. But if the award of professional qualification at the end of induction is to be trustworthy there need to be **significant improvements in the quality assurance processes**; there is a case in favour of the ITT/ITE provider playing a role in the assessment.
- Based on the procedures used in Teach First, further consideration should be given to improving the **entry requirements and selection mechanisms** for entry to ITE, and how these might better reflect the qualifications, characteristics, experience and aptitudes of individuals most likely to become good teachers, whilst also ensuring fair access to the profession. The individual needs analysis conducted at the start of initial teacher training/education and during entry to teaching should be strengthened so that provision during this entire phase is effectively building on student/trainee teachers' previous experiences, skills and knowledge, and addressing their individual learning needs.
- All student teachers, regardless of their route to qualification and the setting in which they train or work, should acquire **relevant professional knowledge, including through engagement in and with research**. The purpose of this is to give meaning, purpose and contextual depth to their classroom experiences, so that they are able to give an informed account of the professional decisions they make and to continue to improve and adapt their teaching.
- Greater consideration should be given to the place of **subject and specialist knowledge** in initial teacher education, including a greater focus on the development of subject-specific pedagogies and phase-



# Appendix 1

## The Becoming a Teacher Study

appropriate subject knowledge during the school-based stage. Specific content to meet pupils' special educational needs and to support teaching for equality and diversity should also be given greater attention.

The Becoming a Teacher (BaT) study<sup>66</sup> was a six-year longitudinal research project (2003-09) undertaken for the DfES, GTCE and TDA by the universities of Nottingham and Leeds and the Ipsos Mori Social Research Institute. The study explored beginner teachers' experiences of initial teacher training, induction and early professional development in England, including:

- the reasons that some did not complete their ITT, others completed ITT but did not take up a teaching post, and others took up a teaching post but subsequently left the profession; and
- the extent to which beginner teachers' experiences of ITT, induction and early career progression, and their retention or attrition, were subject to variation relating to the ITT route that they followed (university-administered undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, employment-based or school-based programmes).

The final report discussed findings under the following topics:

- student teachers' motives for undertaking ITT and their preconceptions, expectations and concerns about ITT and teaching;
- student teachers' experiences and evaluations of their ITT;
- newly-qualified teachers' experiences of their first year of teaching and induction;
- teachers' second, third and fourth years in post;
- change in beginner teachers' experiences;
- retention and attrition amongst beginner teachers;
- key common influences on the experiences of beginner teachers;
- variation in the experiences of beginner teachers; and
- the implications of the findings for policy-makers, teacher educators, mentors of beginner teachers, head teachers and other school leaders.

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<sup>66</sup> Hobson, A., *et al.* (2009), *op. cit.*

## The report's findings

### **ITT providers should:**

- try to ensure that applicants who are accepted onto their programmes possess genuine, intrinsic motivations for wanting to become teachers;
- try to ensure that they are sufficiently sensitive and responsive to the unique characteristics (eg relating to age, ethnicity, motivations, prior experience and conceptions) and needs (with respect to emotional states as well as learning) of individual trainees;
- prepare trainees as fully as possible to be able to deal effectively with pupil behaviour and to manage a heavy teacher workload; and
- continue work to strengthen partnerships between schools and HEIs.

### **School-based mentors and other supporters of beginner teachers should:**

- ensure that they pay particular attention to beginner teachers' individual characteristics and needs;
- ensure that they take sufficient account of beginner teachers' emotional states and welfare; and
- support beginner teachers' development of strategies for managing their workloads and pupil behaviour.

### **Head teachers and others who facilitate beginner teachers' access to formal opportunities or CPD should:**

- attempt to foster and maintain a collegial whole school ethos in which beginner teachers feel supported and part of a team;
- have clear and effective school procedures to support beginner teachers in dealing with problematic pupil behaviour; and
- ensure that there is provision to address the development needs not only of beginner teachers but also of those who support them, through access to appropriate programmes of mentor preparation and training.

### **Policy-makers should:**

- investigate further the reasons for the comparative early difficulties experienced by beginner teachers following or having followed certain ITT routes – most notably the Flexible PGCE;
- investigate further and address the underlying causes of the apparent non-provision, in some cases, of newly and recently qualified teachers' entitlements to reductions in their teaching workloads;
- continue to consider the content, format and use of the CEDP, and possible alternatives to this, as one means of facilitating continuity and complementarity between and across ITT, induction and early professional development;
- ensure that provision is in place for appropriate forms of individually tailored support and CPD for beginner teachers beyond the first year of teaching; and
- ensure that there also exists appropriate CPD provision for those who support the early development of teachers, with particular emphasis on mentor (and school-based coach) development and, more generally, on the implications for responsive teacher education of the range of characteristics of beginner teachers (relating, for example, to issues of age and ethnicity).

## Appendix 2

# Induction arrangements for new teachers in different countries

Country	Induction model
<b>New Zealand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two to five years of advice and guidance</li> <li>• Structured programme of mentoring, professional development, observation, targeted feedback on teaching</li> <li>• Regular assessments based on the standards for full registration until fully registered status is achieved<sup>67</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Germany</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two year programme</li> <li>• Year 1: two or three days of teaching and two days of seminars per week</li> <li>• Year 2: four days of teaching; one day of seminar for reflection and collaboration</li> <li>• Assessment in the final two months includes a portfolio; a practical and oral exam, and can include a thesis as well<sup>68</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Scotland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One year probation period with guaranteed placement in school</li> <li>• Reduced teaching timetable, equal to 70 per cent of that of a full-time teacher</li> <li>• Access to an experienced teacher who will provide support and act as a mentor</li> <li>• 0.1 FTE funding per NQT to local authorities for the provision of a mentor</li> <li>• Full registration conferred on meeting the requirements<sup>69</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Sweden</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers are employed on an initial 12-month probationary basis before they can be permanently employed</li> <li>• Under the supervision of an experienced teacher<sup>70</sup></li> <li>• Highly de-regulated with local authorities (municipalities) responsible for planning the induction period<sup>71</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>67</sup> Howe E.R. (2006), *Exemplary teacher induction: An international review*, Utsunomiya University, Utsunomiya.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> HM Inspectorate of Education (Scotland) (2008), *Mentoring in Teacher Education*, HM Inspectorate of Education, Edinburgh.

<sup>70</sup> International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive.

<sup>71</sup> Morberg, A. (2006), *Working together at eye-to-eye level and on equal terms: NQTs – from teacher education to teaching position in schools: responsibilities for academics and practitioners*, paper presented to the 31st annual conference of the Association of Teacher Education in Europe.

## **PAPER 4**

# **ACCOUNTABILITY IN TEACHING**

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**The current system of school accountability fails key stakeholders in teaching and schools. This is detrimental to the needs of parents, pupils, teachers, and the state on behalf of the citizen.**

**In particular, the education system (despite many notable exceptions among individual schools) has not benefitted from innovations which have characterised other sectors and services. In these, the expertise of producers and consumers is a valued resource for service improvement (eg co-operatives and patient budget-holding). Such innovations can fundamentally alter accountability relationships for the better.**

**New forms of accountability have been layered upon existing mechanisms. This is both costly and burdensome, and renders real accountability for teaching quality and learning outcomes more elusive than ever.**

**Discourse on accountability is overly focused on accountability structures and gives insufficient attention to the quality and outcomes of accountability relationships.**

# Introduction to Paper 4

“We believe that public services will improve most when professionals feel free to do what they believe is right and are accountable for the results.”<sup>1</sup>

## Why does accountability matter?

Education and wider children’s services provided by the state are taxpayer-funded; they are complex and require the exercise of both expertise and ethics; what they do is sensitive and can touch on issues of confidentiality and safeguarding. They are political in that they raise questions of entitlement, equity, justice and ideology, about the distribution of resources and the respective roles of the family and the state in influencing children’s outcomes.

For all these reasons accountability is appropriate, necessary, and highly political.

Since the establishment of the General Teaching Council for England in 2000, we have frequently contributed to debates about accountability in education. We have approached the subject from a number of standpoints. As we were established to uphold the public interest in teaching, our duty has therefore been to consider what constitutes the public interest, and whether this is served by the many forms of accountability that apply to education.

Second, our statutory remit has required us to contribute to improving standards of professional practice in teaching. As such it is important to assess what contribution accountability makes, or could make, to improving teaching quality, and whether indeed accountability acts as an inhibitor to practice improvement. This imperative explains the importance of including a paper on accountability in a series of papers on teaching quality.

Third, our statutory remit has also required us to raise the standing of teaching as a profession. As such, we

have been interested in the relationship between societal expectations of teachers as professionals, and the permissions, opportunities, and conditions of work in which they meet those expectations<sup>2</sup>.

The balance between these standpoints is important. The standing of teachers should not be pursued at the expense of the first two – the public interest and improving teaching – but nor can it be ignored. Evidence shows that how professionals feel about their work affects how they carry it out, especially among those motivated by public service<sup>3</sup>.

A starting premise for this paper is that the public interest in teaching *is* served by accountability, and furthermore, that the acceptance of accountability is a defining characteristic of an occupation claiming the status of a profession. We have helped to define and promote expectations about teaching accountability, not least through the Code of Conduct and Practice<sup>4</sup>. The Code holds teachers responsible for the quality of their teaching, for raising concerns about poor practice on the part of others, and more generally for upholding public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

## What do we mean by accountability?

This paper uses the following working definition of accountability.

*Accountability may be defined as the methods by which the actor may render an account (ie justify their actions and decisions) to the stakeholders and by which the stakeholders may hold the actor to account (ie impose sanctions or grant permissions)*<sup>5</sup>.

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2 OPM (2007), *Professionalism in the public interest*, GTCE, London.

3 Steele, J. (1999), *Wasted values*, Public Management Foundation, London.

4 GTCE (2009), *Code of conduct and practice for registered teachers*, GTCE, London.

5 Bovens, M. (2005) ‘Public Accountability’ in Ferlie, E. *et al.*, *The Oxford handbook of public management*, OUP, Oxford.

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1 DfE (2010), White Paper *The importance of teaching*, DfE, London.

The strength of this definition is that it captures the relational nature of accountability, involving action on the part of, or power in the hands of, both the account-holder and the account-giver. The immediate questions raised by this definition have been at the heart of our work on accountability. In any instance of accountability – for example an inspection – how productive is the relationship between account-givers and account-holders? What actions can the account-holder take in response to the account given?

This paper takes as its scope the main structures and processes that reveal the impact of schools, teachers and teaching on the pupils they serve. These include school inspection, performance tables, performance management and capability, governance, and professional registration and regulation. There are many other related processes and events which involve account-giving, including school self-evaluation, work with a school improvement partner, monitoring and support from a local authority, and applying for a specific status.

Taken in the round, these elements add up to an ‘accountability system’, which is not to say they were designed as such. The accountability system embodies elements of institutional and individual professional accountability; it includes top-down accountability to central government and some local accountability to some stakeholders. All of these elements are legitimate but the GTCE contends that the current arrangements do not add up to a coherent accountability system, which would have the desired focus on empowering stakeholders to pursue improvement and professionals to drive improvement in the public interest. Fixing accountability requires being clear about what we want accountability to achieve, and then consciously identifying which accountability tools, in what combination, are most likely to achieve those ends.

Many of the elements of the accountability system are under review, or subject to change, regrettably not in the holistic way suggested above. This paper does not attempt to capture or address all contemporary developments in accountability; rather it is concerned with setting out

our work on how teachers and their stakeholders might relate to each other in the interests of children and young people, and how accountability activity can support or undermine effective accountability relationships in education.

## Accountability for what?

Whilst factors such as progress and attainment, the quality of teaching and learning, and leadership and management are predictable – and consistent – themes of school and teacher accountability, other foci have shifted to reflect contemporary preoccupations and priorities. A good recent example is the impact of *Every Child Matters*<sup>6</sup> on school inspection. Few demur from the view that schools can and should contribute to the health of children in their care; most teachers would agree that unhealthy children are less likely to enjoy and achieve. However, to hold schools to account for children’s health is to ignore more powerful influences beyond the school, not least poverty.

In the interests of effectiveness and justice this implies an appropriate relationship between spheres and tiers of accountability. Account-holders can achieve this by attending to the level at which the account they seek can reasonably and meaningfully be given.

Where the relationship between spheres and tiers is not right, rifts can occur between account-holders and givers over legitimacy. Teachers tend to agree that schools have a role to play in outcomes such as health or safeguarding, but some display anxiety over how schools might be held to account for outcomes that relate to the inputs of a wide range of services<sup>7</sup>. These are instances where

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6 DfE (2003), Green Paper *Every Child Matters*, DfE, London. *Every Child Matters* preceded the 2004 Children Act. It focused on the structures and practice required for services to collaborate more effectively to ensure all children are healthy, safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and experiencing economic well-being.

7 GTCE (2007), *Talking to teachers about Every Child Matters*, internal report on a series of national meetings with teachers.

locality-based or collective accountability may be more appropriate.

Teaching and learning are more obviously legitimate foci for school accountability, but some in the profession maintain that teachers can be responsible for the quality of their teaching but not necessarily for learning outcomes. These teachers would argue that too many other factors hold a powerful sway over whether children learn, whether measured by progress or attainment. They contend that outcomes-based accountability based on attainment measures reveals more about the inputs (or intakes) than outcomes.

Others would question whether good teaching could be said to be taking place if it was not demonstrably resulting in good learning. They would assert that accountability can focus on learning outcomes and take account of context, as progress measures and contextual value-added data attempt to do. They may also point to other established professions such as medicine where doctors are accountable for patient outcomes notwithstanding the inequalities of health and wealth that differentiate the users of their surgeries.

It is clear that the focus of accountability is a rock on which accountability relationships can flounder.

Accountability needs to:

- reflect the legitimate public interest in the impact of teaching on learning outcomes;
- reflect the legitimate parental and pupil concern for children's well-being in the round, while recognising that schools are far from being the only influence on wider well-being; and
- avoid taking account in ways which reward schools for their intakes and not for the value they add.

The GTCE itself is an account holder in teaching.

As the independent professional regulatory body for teaching, we are more than an interested commentator on these matters. At the time of writing we are<sup>8</sup> an account-

holder for teaching. Without a system of revalidation or re-licensing we have only been able to hold to account those teachers alleged to be failing to meet standards of conduct or practice. It might be argued that the GTCE provides the only formal stake that parents have in accountability for teaching quality<sup>9</sup>.

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contains proposals for the abolition of the GTCE in which it does not appear that there will be a public register of those qualified to teach and in good standing. A more rudimentary form of regulation will be carried out by the Secretary of State focused on conduct and not competence. Teaching qualifications will be reformed but it is not yet clear to what extent they will be a requirement for employment as a teacher.

<sup>9</sup> Parents may check that a teacher is in good professional standing and qualified to teach: they may also refer to the GTCE if they believe that a teacher is failing to uphold standards of conduct.

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<sup>8</sup> The Education Bill currently (July 2011) before Parliament

# The case for change

We contend that there are three principal shortcomings of the *status quo* in accountability:

- there is too much of it;
- it does not focus enough on improving teaching quality; and
- it is inadequate to ensure the quality of teaching.

In this section, we will examine each of these in turn.

## There is too much accountability

- Excessive accountability can obscure what matters most.
- Too much ‘top-down’ accountability can inhibit personal responsibility and professional initiative.
- An element of proportionality has been introduced, but not enough.
- The cost of accountability appears to outweigh the benefits, and this is not sustainable in the current economic climate.

‘High stakes’ institutional inspection may have been a justifiable model at a time when the state lacked comprehensive data on each school and thereby a picture of the performance and range of ‘the system’. Although elements of proportionality have been introduced to inspections, there are few substantial changes, in the shape of additional freedoms or opportunities for those schools routinely deemed good or outstanding, or a varied menu of support and challenge for those schools struggling to improve. The economic climate suggests a more nuanced approach is needed, targeting accountability resources carefully in the public interest. The Coalition government has already taken steps in this direction.

The Government is encouraging greater diversity among schools, and the Secretary of State acknowledges that the *quid pro quo* is improved accountability. He also asserts that there will be greater autonomy and more opportunity for the exercise of professional judgement by teachers. If the profession is to respond creatively to these

circumstances it needs to feel entrusted and empowered. But teaching has been caught in what Onora O’Neill termed ‘the accountability paradox’<sup>10</sup>: the more we want professionalism, the more requirements and systems we pile on a service to ‘ensure’ standards of practice, the less likely are practitioners to feel and take professional responsibility, as they do not believe they are trusted to deliver appropriately without surveillance and micro-management. This is but one of the perverse consequences of overlaying new accountability requirements upon old.

The accountability to which schools are subject takes many forms and focuses on a very wide range of activities. Typically, new themes are added (community cohesion, healthy lifestyles, partnership working etc) without consolidating them with existing themes. The practice of layering new expectations upon old makes it harder for account-holders (inspectors, School Improvement Partners, line managers) to focus their attention squarely on teaching quality.

## Accountability does not focus enough on improving teaching quality

- It does not encourage improvement-focused behaviour – eg collaboration.
- It does not contribute as much as it might to the generation of improvement-focused knowledge.

Collaborative work between schools is increasingly important (eg delivering a comprehensive 14-19 offer within a locality), as is schools’ work with other children’s services (eg safeguarding, team around the child work). Other developments, including academies and the new teaching schools, depend on partnership in different ways. Collaboration is predicated on transparency: on a willingness to open the doors on one’s own practice and be receptive to learning from the practice of others. Institutional accountability is at odds with these developments.

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10 O’Neill, O. (2002), Reith Lectures *A question of trust*, BBC, London.



# Stakeholder imperatives for change

Research into school improvement and effective teacher development emphasises the importance of knowledge transfer between schools, and of learning across schools, as well as within them. Without external links and benchmarks, a school's perspectives on matters such as standards and methods can become parochial and limited. And teachers need to engage with evidence about effective practice that is generated beyond as well as within their schools. For these reasons accountability mechanisms need to support knowledge transfer and system improvement, as well as assuring acceptable standards of teaching, learning and leadership.

## Accountability is inadequate to ensure the quality of teaching

- Teachers are not sufficiently required or supported to account for the quality of teaching.
- Accountability is too heavily focused on institutional accountability as distinct from teaching accountability, despite what is known about the extent of in-school variation in teaching standards.
- Successive administrations have tinkered with the scope, frequency and manner of inspection and performance management, suggesting dissatisfaction with the resulting insights into teaching quality.
- Parents and pupils have an insufficient stake in teaching quality.

This set of concerns is at the heart of the GTCE's public interest remit and concern for teaching quality. We therefore now explore more fully stakeholder perceptions of accountability.<sup>11</sup>

## Teachers

*“Accountability without adequate support and development opportunities serves to undermine teacher confidence and professionalism”<sup>12</sup>*

Teachers as professionals accept the legitimacy of and necessity for being accountable for the results of their teaching. In 2009 the GTCE sought to explore teachers' attitudes to and experiences of accountability through its annual survey of teachers.<sup>13</sup> We found that there was a high degree of support for accountability from teachers, with the levels of support for different purposes of accountability shown on the opposite page.

These responses demonstrate that teachers understand and accept accountability for their work and its outcomes. But school accountability discussions in the media over the last couple of decades, involving teachers, their representatives, successive governments, and at times HMCI, suggest otherwise. Moreover, our research suggests that teachers' first associations with the term 'accountability' tend to be mainly negative: they associate it with sanctions, burdens, centralisation, and mistrust<sup>14</sup>.

It is important to distinguish between the principle of accountability and the practice of specific accountability mechanisms. Doing so provides a more constructive starting point for the negotiation of a new 'contract' between the teaching profession and its stakeholders about accountability. Teachers accept the need for accountability. The question is, what forms of accountability are most likely to realise stakeholders' legitimate aspirations – assurance of standards and conduct, support for improvement, information on pupil outcomes, or guaranteeing proper use of public funds?

<sup>11</sup> The GTCE commissioned research with teachers and parents and intended to commission a further study with pupils, but in the event of the Secretary of State's proposal to abolish the GTCE, regrettably this last study was not carried out.

<sup>12</sup> Head teacher comment in OPM (2009), *Accountability and active registration within teaching*, GTCE, London.

<sup>13</sup> TNS (2009), *Survey of teachers 2009: TNS report*, GTCE, London.

<sup>14</sup> OPM (2009), *op. cit.*

Purpose of accountability	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not important at all	Very or fairly important
To maintain public confidence in teaching standards	45 per cent	47 per cent	6 per cent		<b>92 per cent</b>
To encourage continuing improvement	49 per cent	42 per cent	6 per cent	1 per cent	<b>91 per cent</b>
To provide information about pupil outcomes to parents	44 per cent	47 per cent	7 per cent		<b>91 per cent</b>
To maintain standards of teachers' professional behaviour	48 per cent	41 per cent	7 per cent	2 per cent	<b>89 per cent</b>
To demonstrate appropriate use of public expenditure on schooling	15 per cent	51 per cent	24 per cent	7 per cent	<b>65 per cent</b>
To show that government education policies are being followed	7 per cent	36 per cent	38 per cent	18 per cent	<b>42 per cent</b>

Discrepancies in totals due to rounding

## Performance management

As performance management (PM) is the principal means by which individual teachers are held to account for their teaching and their pupils' learning in the employment setting, the 2010 GTCE survey asked how teachers experienced performance management. 49 per cent agreed that performance management was an effective way of holding teachers to account for the quality of their teaching, and 32 per cent disagreed. 18 per cent said they neither agreed nor disagreed. School leaders are much more likely than other teachers to believe that PM is effective for teaching accountability (71 per cent of head teachers, and 60 per cent of deputy/assistant head teachers and Advanced Skills Teachers).

We contend that improving performance management is a priority for ensuring teaching quality and upholding the public interest in teaching. Proposals for the improvement of performance management are the subject of paper 5 in this series.

## School self-evaluation

The survey revealed more support for school self-evaluation (SSE). 77 per cent of teachers agreed that SSE was useful, and only nine per cent disagreed that SSE was a useful tool for improvement as well as accountability. Agreement was particularly high among heads (91 per cent) and deputy/assistant heads (89 per cent), who have

most involvement with SSE. The Coalition government has announced an end to the use of a standardised self evaluation format as part of the inspection process.

### **External observation of teaching**

Research in 2008 suggested that only 25 per cent of teachers were regularly observed<sup>15</sup> – the current picture is not known. The GTCE survey found only 24 per cent of teachers agreed that external observation of teaching should be part of public accountability via inspection. 51 per cent disagreed and 22 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed. Younger and newer teachers were less likely to disagree with this proposition.

### **Providing an account to parents**

26 per cent of teachers agree that teachers do not have sufficient opportunity to give parents a full and rounded account of their children's learning. Agreement rises to 31 per cent among secondary school teachers, and to 32 per cent among teachers at schools working with socio-economic or linguistic challenges. Younger teachers (40 per cent) and those newest to teaching (33 per cent) are also more likely to agree.

### **Exercising professional judgement**

86 per cent of teachers agreed that they needed more opportunities to exercise their professional judgement.

### **Accountability for professional development**

The GTCE's 2010 Survey was conducted at a time when the previous government was considering the introduction of a licence to practise for teachers. The licence was intended to ensure that teachers upheld and enhanced their teaching standards throughout their careers in order to remain registered professionals.

The survey gauged teachers' responses to the proposition that teachers should be accountable for their continuing professional development (CPD) in order to be permitted to practise. 57 per cent agreed and 25 per cent disagreed. Agreement among heads and assistant/deputy heads was stronger (80 per cent and 69 per cent respectively). These responses to the *principle* of revalidation or licensing were more positive than the reception that teachers' organisations gave the specific proposals advanced by the then Government.

The survey found a strong correlation between support for this proposition and environmental factors such as strong opportunities for or engagement with CPD, and good evaluation of CPD impact. This suggests that teachers' views about a licence to practise are likely to be more positive if their access to high quality, good impact CPD is improved. Schools' engagement with CPD – effective or otherwise – is known to be variable<sup>16</sup>.

### **Teacher perspectives on possible future scenarios for accountability**

Our research probed teachers' further concerns about current forms of accountability and other possible scenarios. How positive or negative teachers felt about accountability was influenced by dynamics in their setting, particularly the culture set by the school leadership. The notion of lighter touch, less 'high stakes' but more frequent external accountability was attractive to them, and teachers tended to be positive about a greater role for something like a School Improvement Partner combining judgement with support and sustained engagement<sup>17</sup>. In principle teachers were attracted to the notion that they should be accountable to school leaders for their teaching quality and outcomes, while school leaders bore responsibility for the interface with external

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15 Margo, J. et al (2008), *Those who can*, IPPR, London. Subsequent changes to performance management mean that this figure is likely to have risen since.

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16 In evidence to the Education Select Committee, TDA Chief Executive Graham Holley suggested the average school expenditure on CPD may be two to three per cent of budgets, but this masked variations between 0.25 per cent and 15 per cent.

17 The Coalition government has withdrawn the requirement for schools to have a School Improvement Partner (SIP).

accountability, including being held to account for their work to assure and improve teaching standards. However, teachers were concerned about whether parents would hold an appropriately robust stake in this scenario.

There was widespread support for the principle of proportionality in accountability. At the moment the only freedom associated with consistent strong performance is the freedom from such frequent and intensive inspection. Teachers supported the idea of developing a more sophisticated framework of permissions or ‘earned autonomy’ associated with good accountability outcomes, so that teachers and stakeholders could see the relationship between good practice, trust and permissions/freedoms.

Teachers’ antipathy towards accountability systems that they perceive to be based on compliance, and/or fail to add value to their work, obscures a strong principled commitment to accountability as a profession. This distinction was explored in qualitative work in which teachers were observed using ‘Ofsted’ as a proxy for a wider set of expectations that schools are required to meet by government, and which go beyond inspection. Many teachers take ‘accountability’ to include a range of centrally-derived targets, prescriptive initiatives, reporting requirements, strategies, regulations and schemes relating to curriculum, assessment or pedagogy, many of which are not in fact compulsory but all of which – they fear – may result in a damaging verdict of ‘non-compliance’ by Ofsted.

This goes some way to explain the divided response of teachers to the proposition that one purpose of accountability is to show compliance with government policy. This is not the same as giving an account about approaches to practice and their outcomes, nor the interrogation of such an account. Assuring compliance requires a yes/no response and does not invite dialogue. It might be possible to ‘decontaminate the brand’ of accountability if it were dissociated from notions of central prescription and compliance.

## Parents and carers

*“Dialogue with parents and pupils was thought to be key in developing the trust and legitimacy that teachers require in order to operate successfully.”<sup>18</sup>*

Parents’ interests are used to legitimise much of what is done with and to schools under the banner of accountability, but GTCE research suggests they do not feel empowered or informed by their stake in accountability, particularly in relation to their main concern, for teaching quality. Performance tables and inspection reports are intended to provide assurance to the state about educational standards. They are also depicted as a key source for parents seeking to differentiate schools, perhaps conferring additional legitimacy on such mechanisms.

In the absence of a strong tradition of treating children as account-holders, parents are cast as the ‘service user’, as the customers of education, a proxy for their children who are the direct stakeholders in schools, particularly through the act of choosing the schools they wish to use.

Ofsted has commissioned a series of surveys about parents’ satisfaction with schools, with inspection, and with specific aspects of the accountability infrastructure such as the HMI letter to pupils following an inspection<sup>19</sup>. Broadly speaking, these surveys indicate a high degree of parental satisfaction with schools, and a high level of support for school inspection<sup>20</sup>.

No politician or educationalist would gainsay parents’ right to hold views about schools and act on those views,

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18 OPM (2007), *op. cit.*

19 See for example the following Ofsted reports: *Parents’ satisfaction with schools* (2006); *School inspectors’ letters to pupils* (2006); *Parents, carers and schools* (2007): Ofsted, London.

20 For example, Ipsos Mori for Ofsted (2006), *School inspections - a research study for Ipsos Mori*, Ofsted, London. In this they reported that 92 per cent of parents surveyed were in favour of inspection and 81 per cent were in favour of decreasing the notice period for inspection.

but it does not necessarily follow that parents' views will always be the right basis for making judgements about services. For example, parental satisfaction with schools as measured through Ofsted parental questionnaires does not correlate with the success or otherwise of schools as measured by inspections.

The GTCE commissioned its own research into parents' views of accountability, asking about their understanding of, and satisfaction with, the *status quo* and their thoughts on possible accountability arrangements in future. Contrary to the more pessimistic expectations of some teachers, most parents understood and sympathised with the complexity of school accountability, and were concerned that the business of compliance and reporting got in the way of what teachers wanted to do: to focus their energies on the children in their care.

Parents thought schools' accountability to government was too dominant, and ought to be rebalanced in the direction of professional accountability (teachers' accountability to teaching, holding each other to account as professionals), and accountability to parents and pupils.

*"There's now such huge accountability for teachers from so many angles that they can't possibly keep up with it all. Something has to give, and it shouldn't be accountability to the children themselves, or to the parents."*

To rebalance accountability, parents favoured a stronger focus on local or school-based accountability – more emphasis on teaching quality through observation, feedback etc – and on professional accountability – a requirement on teachers to demonstrate their continuing competence in teaching. In common with teachers, parents were receptive to the need for schools to be in accountability relationships that are sustained and improvement-focused, and recognised that a national inspectorate was not likely to be the right infrastructure for this.

When pressed parents were anxious about losing a

national system of inspection and reporting, the benefits of which were perceived to be impartiality and the generation of comparative data. They did see merit in focusing national inspection on the leadership of the school and its capacity to improve, as a way to ensure that effective internal accountability for teaching was in place.

The question of whether service users in education would be prepared to trade the perceived benefits of national external accountability through inspection for the potential benefits of sustained local and professional accountability might usefully be explored<sup>21</sup>. Conditions for this change might include reassurances about the checks and balances within other aspects of accountability, particularly the head teacher's performance review and any SIP-type sustained engagement with the school. Sampling by a national inspectorate might also reassure service users about the health of the system, if not the individual institution.

This comment was characteristic of parents' considered views: *"At the end of the day most parents just want teachers and the school to get on with it, and they only feel they need more stake in accountability when accountability seems to be going wrong."*<sup>22</sup>

The findings suggested that by and large, parents were more interested in teachers' and schools' *responsiveness* than formal accountability – unless there were significant concerns. They valued good communication, accessibility, and receptiveness. However, there was strong agreement that this model was tested when concerns arose about teaching quality – and many participants had had experience of this sort. Parents recognise the importance of teaching quality and do not feel enabled to hold schools to account for perceived poor teaching, which is where they seek improvements in their stake in accountability.

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21 For a similar study in health, see Furness, D. and Gough, B.(2009), *Local control and local variation in the NHS: What do the public think?* Social Market Foundation, London.

22 OPM (2010), *The future accountability of teachers: Engaging parents and carers in the debate*, GTCE, London, p.39.

There are mechanisms in place for parents to escalate concerns, though these are little known or understood. They include a requirement on schools to have a complaints procedure<sup>23</sup>, parents' rights to raise a concern with Ofsted which can trigger an inspection, and the right of members of the public – including parents – to make allegations of misconduct (but not incompetence) directly to the GTCE. Parents may be deterred from using what they see as fairly extreme measures, and concerned about the repercussions for their children of doing so.

Parents and carers of children subject to some sort of plan, such as children with special needs or looked-after children, were more positive about accountability relationships with teachers. The accountability relationships work better because they are supported by a plan setting out roles and expectations. This makes clear to parents what they are allowed to ask about, what they can expect to be told about, and some of the detail around frequency of contact, criteria for assessing progress and so on. It also helps teachers to be clear about what parents need from them, and to think about the content and language of the account they will give of a child's progress.

Schools might usefully consider setting out in a non-bureaucratic way the 'terms of engagement' for the benefit of all parents and carers. Manageability would be an important consideration, but there are economies of scale in taking a planned and universal approach to accountability to all their school's parents, rather than interacting in an episodic, reactive fashion. Fairness would benefit too. Schools pride themselves on responsiveness and parents value it, but it carries a risk that some parents hold a more active and productive stake in school affairs than others. Responsiveness is a welcome by-product of equitable accountability, but cannot be a substitute for it.

## Children and young people

*“At the moment this line of accountability [to pupils] is not as strong as it should be, and there needs to be thought about ways to strengthen it. It would be more empowering for pupils themselves”.*<sup>24</sup>

Children and young people are the most important stakeholders in schools, yet they have a very marginal role in accountability. Teaching quality is more important for them than any other stakeholder group, and they are uniquely well-placed to comment on it.

There has been some growth in the involvement of young people in the democratic life of schools, particularly through the encouragement of, and latterly a requirement for, schools councils. Pupils can contribute to important school decisions such as recruitment to key posts and planning for new school sites. These practices are in keeping with wider public policy initiatives that seek to ensure children and young people are consulted as a distinct user group for local public services and plans, inspired in part by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>25</sup> and in part by more general measures to engage service users in service improvement<sup>26</sup>.

'Pupil voice' initiatives – involving pupils in shaping their own learning to different degrees – are motivating for pupils and teachers, and evaluation suggests holding an active stake in the learning process correlates with good learning outcomes<sup>27</sup>. It also supports the development of essential skills for life: stakeholding, influencing, negotiating, compromising, self-scrutiny. The Coalition government's first education White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* contains few if any references to pupil voice.

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24 Parent participant quoted in OPM (2010), *op. cit.*

25 Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that 'parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in matters affecting the child.'

26 Griffiths, S. *et al.* (2009), *Assertive citizens: New relationships in public services*, Social Market Foundation, London.

27 See paper 11, Pupil participation, p. 137.

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23 Section 29 of the Education Act 2002.

Pupils' involvement in accountability is much more marginal. After a school inspection, lead inspectors write to pupils setting out their schools' strengths and areas for improvement. To this degree, pupils might be described as passive recipients of an account of their school. There is no requirement that pupils are represented on, or even structurally involved in, governing bodies, although it is recognised as good practice for governors to secure evidence from pupils in the course of scrutinising the school's provision. The GTCE acknowledges and understands the legitimate concerns on the part of some teachers' organisations over the manner in which pupils are given a stake in school decision-making. It would not serve the public interest for pupils to be given roles or powers that undermined the authority that teachers need in order to support learning and manage behaviour. However, we believe it is in the public interest to develop a more active role in accountability for pupils. Handled sensitively, and using evidence of effective practice<sup>28</sup>, pupils might do more to improve their education and develop their own skills as citizens in a democracy.

This is an area where education might usefully consider best practice in other sectors. There are well-developed models for co-construction and co-production in fields such as social care. The seriousness attached to children as stakeholders in their own healthcare by, for example, the GMC's clinical guidelines for doctors, may be a useful source of reference.

## The state

“... a more autonomous school system led by professionals”<sup>29</sup>

The stake in education held by the state is derived from its role in representing the public interest, interpreting the aspirations of civil society (on the part of citizens) and its role in stewardship of public funds (on behalf of taxpayers)<sup>30</sup>. The Coalition government identifies

teaching quality as its central education concern and appears dissatisfied with current arrangements. Proposals for reforms to teacher training, teaching standards and performance management are all prominent in the DfE business plan<sup>31</sup>. It is concerned to address teaching quality through such interventions as central government might usefully make, and through requiring teachers and particularly school leaders to take more responsibility for teaching quality<sup>32</sup>.

The government's intention to reduce regulation is informed by both an economic imperative and an ideological preference for a small state, but also resonates with its rhetoric about freeing professionals to run services. In this context, the Secretary of State has expressed the desire to refocus the role of Ofsted, and considers the wide-ranging nature of school inspection to be a distraction from schools' core business. He has identified four themes for school inspection:

- the quality of teaching;
- the effectiveness of leadership;
- pupils' behaviour and safety; and
- pupils' achievement.<sup>33</sup>

We concur that inspection should be simplified and refocused on what matters most, and suggest that extending this third theme to include 'well-being' would ensure a better fit with the priorities of parents and pupils.

Furthermore, schools are also required to uphold the law on equality. It is not enough for overall pupils' achievement to be buoyant if the data reveal significant gaps between the achievement of different pupil groups. For this reason the White Paper's formulation of

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state', although the integrity in accountability sometimes requires independence from the government of the day, as is the case with Ofsted and the GTCE, both of which are answerable to Parliament, not ministers.

31 DfE (2010), *Business plan 2011-15*, DfE, London.

32 For an example of the latter, it is proposed that head teachers will be expected but not required to refer teachers sacked on the grounds of misconduct; competence cases will not be referred at all.

33 Letter from Michael Gove to Christine Gilbert, 22 September 2010

28 See for example OPM (2010), *op. cit.*

29 Michael Gove, Westminster Hall speech, 6 September 2010

30 The government of the day features here generally as 'the

# Propositions for the future of accountability

‘accountability to parents and communities’ will not always suffice. The theme ‘pupils’ achievement’ should explain that inspection will look at the achievement of *all* pupils in order that schools continue to monitor the difference they are making for different pupil groups.

The Coalition government intends that schools will make a variety of data public, including the qualifications of teachers, employment status, teachers’ pay, and teacher absence, by school<sup>34</sup>. But it situates this policy within an accountability context, although research suggests that parental use of school data is highly stratified by socio-economic status. Simply making more data available may help those parents already inclined to discriminate. Publishing data does not guarantee that useful inferences can be drawn from comparisons between schools. What should parents infer from, for example, teachers’ pay? Our research into parental attitudes to performance tables<sup>35</sup> suggested that parents wanted fewer data and more narrative accounts of schools, and that they believed accounts of schools’ performance to be more meaningful if they are communicated to them (ie with opportunities for dialogue) rather than merely published.

Finally, accountability measures have been least credible to teachers and least useful to parents when they have been used as a short cut to practice-change, perhaps avoiding the complexities of consultation and negotiation. Including English Baccalaureate scores in this year’s performance tables, thereby applying it retrospectively, would be a recent example of this practice.

Here we offer some propositions for the reform of accountability for schools in general and for teaching in particular. Movement is needed – not only on the part of the government but also on the part of the profession and its stakeholders – in order to arrive at a system *and a culture* of intelligent accountability. School accountability should be a process that provides an authoritative and credible account of teaching quality, and it should result in improvements in children’s educational and wider outcomes. What is needed to get there? We make three core propositions, and examine each below.

## 1. A new ‘contract’

A new contract needs to be negotiated between the state (or government) representing the community of interest in teaching and the teaching profession. This would not be a contract in the employment sense, but a published memorandum of understanding, governing what stakeholders can expect of teachers and what teachers can expect from their stakeholders.

The contract needs to underpin a more productive, respectful and creative relationship, and an understanding about accountability needs to be at its heart. As we have argued, if the relationship between the state and the profession is not right – for example, if it is overly concerned with compliance, even with regard to demonstrably healthy institutions – accountability is contaminated and ineffective. Reform of accountability means also addressing wider issues of understanding and respect. Teachers have a responsibility to accept accountability, and the state has a responsibility to devise an accountability system that meets the needs of all stakeholders, including teachers.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> DfE (2010), *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> BMRB (2007), *Engaging with parents: Pupil assessment*, GTCE, London.

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<sup>36</sup> In the early months of the Coalition government, much of the discourse on education policy was cast in terms of a new ‘contract’ – Michael Gove has used the phrase ‘new deal’: more autonomy, sharper accountability. It may improve mutual understanding to make the character of the government’s ‘offer’ more explicit to teachers and stakeholders in teaching, always bearing in mind that contracts are ideally negotiated rather than imposed.



## 2. Teachers should have better opportunities to give an account of their teaching practice

Teachers should have better opportunities to give an account of their teaching practice, and account-giving should be seen as a right and a responsibility of a professional teacher.

Although many teachers say they experience accountability as a significant burden, many are seldom asked to give an account of their practice – to explain why they opted for one intervention over another, or to describe the thinking behind a particular goal or the steps taken to reach it. We have argued elsewhere for improving the status and quality of pedagogy, or the discipline of teaching<sup>37</sup>. Pedagogic language and dialogue should be a stronger part of teaching accountability. Fine judgements about teaching quality need to be made and should inform improvements in teaching practice.

Performance management and any future system of professional revalidation need to be recast as opportunities for account-giving using pedagogic dialogue. Schools might also want to think about how the routine conversations that occur around progress-checking and target-setting could be recast as opportunities for pedagogic account-giving. In some schools performance management is described as an annual encounter, and something borne by teachers. It needs to be more like supervision at its best in other disciplines. If accountability exposes poor teaching quality, the steps to remedial support and, where necessary, capability procedures need to be fair but swift. Teacher training needs to develop new entrants with these skills. Conversations between school leaders and SIPs, or between inspectors and teachers, should also have this character.

In terms of the relational nature of accountability, teachers are currently held accountable by proxy through mechanisms that purport to uphold their interests. It

is arguable that teachers should be engaged in account-giving directly with their primary stakeholders. This notion can raise concerns, conjuring fears of teachers having to justify their practice to those who are insufficiently skilled to make much of the experience, or too partisan to evaluate the account fairly. On balance we believe there is more to be gained than risked by improving face-to-face account giving in appropriate circumstances between teachers and parents or pupils, though the processes and conditions for this would require sensitive design. This implies that the language of pedagogy needs to be accessible to service users (and other children's practitioners), otherwise it risks reinforcing traditional hierarchies and impeding public accountability.

## 3. Recasting the stake held by parents and pupils

The stake held in education by parents and pupils needs to be recast, to improve their opportunities for hearing an account, and their capacity to be productive stakeholders.

There are rights and responsibilities associated with being a stakeholder, and sometimes the responsibilities are overlooked. While it is not possible to guarantee that parents and pupils will always use their stake responsibly, it should be possible to devise accountability processes that encourage and support responsible account-holding. The bottom line is that parents' and pupils' stake in teaching is a right, whether or not they hold that stake responsibly. This is the fundamental difference between accountability and responsiveness, the latter being the mode in which many schools conduct their everyday relationships with parents. Responsiveness might be described as meeting the needs of those parents who press for more or different information or engagement. Accountability is what all parents are due regardless of their receptiveness, skill or inclination.

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<sup>37</sup> See paper 7, Pedagogy, p. 87.

# Equality and diversity

There is a school of thought in stakeholder engagement that suggests that the best public services do not simply respond to their stakeholders, they actively grow capacity for stakeholding in order that they can be effectively held to account for their service by those that matter most<sup>38</sup>. This is especially important in education where parental engagement reaps dividends not only for the quality of the education 'service' they receive from schools but also for parents' capacity to support their children's education through at-home learning<sup>39</sup>. Many schools already contribute to community capacity-building, and most are to some degree developing pupils' capacity as stakeholders through pupil voice initiatives and structures such as school councils in particular. We suggest it is in the public interest to make this a more central aspect of the accountability relationships in education.

The accountability which we advocate implies skills and opportunities for account-giving on the part of all staff. It is also predicated on opportunities for all pupils and parents to receive accounts of teaching, and if necessary, to be encouraged and supported to be effective stakeholders in the work of the school.

Participation, progress, well-being and achievement of different groups of pupils should remain a key focus of accountability.

Frameworks within which teachers practise and can be held to account, such as those set by codes and professional standards, might usefully set out expectations of their practice relating to equality and diversity.

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38 Eg Griffiths, S. *et al.* (2009), *op. cit.*

39 Desforges, C. (2003), *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment*, DFES, London.

# Accountability in teaching: proposals

## Institutional accountability

Proportionate external accountability via inspection should be focused on institutional health and capacity – an external check on the effectiveness of ongoing accountability.

Inspection reports might usefully be recast as a resource for sustained, improvement-focused account-giving via SIPs or equivalent school-sourced critical friends, focus clearly on improvement, and place greater emphasis on the range of ways in which stakeholders can be assured about teaching quality.

## Individual teacher accountability in the employment context

School-level teacher accountability via performance management needs to be focused on teaching quality through pedagogic account-giving.

Performance management needs to reflect current best practice, being part of a sustained dialogue in which teachers' approaches to specific children and groups of children are explored, and in which teachers can evaluate their own and each others' performance in aspects of their professional role.

Within resource constraints, teachers should be able to request variations to their performance management – eg more frequent engagement, a particular focus for attention or specific types of support.

Observation and feedback need to be seen as professional entitlements and entered into by both parties as the basis for recognition, support, and improvement.

## Individual teacher accountability in the professional context

Professional accountability beyond the place of employment upholds the public interest. It can protect professionals from pressure to practice in an unethical way, seeking to serve the narrow interest of the setting rather than the public good. It is also a recognition that a teacher may fail in one position without being unfit to practice.

Qualification on the basis of recognised professional entry standards, and subsequent reaffirmation of practice against enhanced standards, can be effective tools for professional accountability. Used effectively, professional standards can also protect the public interest by helping to standardise norms of good practice across settings.

There should continue to be a code of conduct and practice as a basis for professional accountability in teaching. A code ensures teachers and their stakeholders share fundamental expectations about teaching professionalism. It is also a way of making statutory expectations of institutions binding on individual practitioners – for example, equalities legislation.

Teacher training programmes might further emphasise teachers' responsibility for their own professional standards and those of their colleagues. Programmes for head teachers might usefully do more to prepare participants to exercise ownership of teaching standards in their schools.

The taking and giving of accounts in teaching should be recognised as a key component of teachers' repertoire – and fitness to practise should assess teachers as account-givers (a skill set and a disposition).

Teachers' duty to 'whistle blow' where necessary might usefully be promoted – health professions, for example, do more in this regard.

## **Improving accountability between teachers and their principal stakeholders**

Better accountability to principal stakeholders such as parents and children is needed but if more accountability activity is layered on top of existing mechanisms, it is likely that their priorities will be diluted or downgraded.

The focus of the accountability relationship between schools and parents needs to shift from an offer of limited consumer power over choice of institution to real agency regarding the quality and nature of provision.

There should be scope for accountability activity to focus to some degree on critical features of provision from the perspective of parents and children.

Parental involvement in school governance is an important recognition of parents' stake in schools and should be maintained. However, it is not as presently constituted an effective conduit for formal accountability to parents.

Pupils should also be directly and appropriately involved in school governance.

Parents and children can struggle as account-holders without a 'frame' for account-taking from teachers. For some parents and carers, individual plans (eg personal development plans) provide a 'frame' within which both sides have clarity about what is up for discussion, and as a consequence, they are more positive about accountability. All parents and pupils should be this clear about what they can expect to be told about, what they can expect to have explained to them, and what it is fine to ask about.

Accountability relationships confer rights and responsibilities on both parties, and parents and pupils need to understand that stakeholding in common with any relationship involves the reconciliation of multiple interests. Parents and pupils are understandably and legitimate focused on their own needs, while teachers and

school leaders are accountable for meeting the needs of many, and sometimes, for upholding a public benefit that reaches beyond the needs of their immediate stakeholders.

# Conclusions

School accountability in its present form does not foster good accountability relationships between teachers and their stakeholders, characterised by trust given, responsibility taken, and respectful dialogue. Where these things occur they do so in spite of the messages they receive about each other from current accountability arrangements.

Educational accountability is not meeting the needs of its main stakeholders. It is insufficiently focused on teaching quality. Where weaknesses are revealed, the link between a poor account given and steps taken in response is not always adequate, particularly from the perspective of parents and, it might be inferred, pupils.

Significant changes are occurring to the schools system. The proposed expansion of academies and the introduction of free schools may result in less direct influence and control over schools – for good or ill. Accountability needs to be aligned with these developments, to ensure that pupils receive good quality education, to pursue fairness of access to schools and opportunities, and to ensure appropriate and effective use of public funds. Accountability arrangements can help schools to remain connected and collaborative, or they can encourage schools to pursue their narrow self-interest, even at the expense of other schools and pupils. They can help teachers to understand and improve their practice, or they can result in teachers being subject to unreasonable and unproductive levels of scrutiny.

The history of established professions is fundamentally concerned with the balance between authority, integrity, expertise, and trust on the one hand, and legitimacy, accountability, and permission or licence on the other. It hardly needs saying that the professions have not always acquitted themselves well in upholding the public interest in this terrain. The unwritten ‘contract’ of yesteryear between professionals and the state is no longer fit for purpose. Some of the reasons for this are regrettable – for example, the loss of trust through instances where professions have failed to uphold the public good, or put

self-interest first. Some of the reasons are more positive – such as heightened expectations of public service on the part of better informed and more discerning clients.

Society asks a great deal of its teachers and it needs to consider what it offers in return – not just in pay and conditions, important though they are, but in terms of their opportunity to influence the environment in which they deploy their expertise: education policy, target and priority setting, knowledge creation and transfer, shaping curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, engaging with evidence. The proposition is that teachers’ anxiety about accountability stems from a lack of ownership or involvement in setting the terms of engagement.

Professionals empowered, equipped and entrusted to hold their stake in education and its outcomes have no excuse for not engaging constructively, and this includes accepting responsibility for improvements in and outcomes of their practice. It also means being respectful of and responsive to other legitimate stakeholders in their work, including children, parents and government.

# Appendix

## Towards strong accountability relationships

A starting premise for the GTCE’s work is the relational nature of accountability, and so we have considered what sorts of relationships underpin effective accountability before making proposals about the structures that might support them. The goal is constructive engagement in accountability processes, where all stakeholders are assured that accountability will address their particular interest in the business of teaching and learning. The tables below and overleaf are an attempt to sketch out what the desired landscape might look like.

Stakeholder	Belief, behaviour, etc	Examples of evidence
<b>State</b>	Informed trust in the teaching profession – most teachers and schools have good standards and can be trusted to continue to pursue improvement	Demonstrably sound teachers have more discretion over curriculum, assessment, etc
		Teachers shape professional standards and accountability in conjunction with other stakeholders in teaching
		Accountability effort focused principally on sites of concern
		Rebalancing of resources between measuring school performance and enhancing teaching quality
	Teachers’ professionalism is a valued resource that needs to be nurtured	Create the conditions that both require and support professionalism on the part of teachers
Recognition of the interdependence of schools, in service delivery and improvement	More opportunity for account-taking across institutions or services	
<b>Teachers</b>	Legitimacy of accountability in teaching	Positive engagement with accountability mechanisms
	Legitimacy of pupils and parents as accountability stakeholders	Creating opportunities for and responding to feedback
		Clarity and positivity about information sharing and consultation
		Building capacity of all parents and pupils as account-takers where needed
	Professional responsibility for/ ownership of own teaching quality and its impact	Quality of engagement with performance management, CPD etc
		Perception of PM, observation etc as professional entitlements
		Willingness to evaluate practice
	Professional responsibility for the quality of others’ practice	Quality of support for CPD of others, willingness to share practice
Changes in the culture and practice of whistle blowing		

Stakeholder	Belief, behaviour, etc	Examples of evidence
<b>School leaders (head teachers and governors)</b>	As for teachers, plus...	
	Responsibility for quality of teaching and learning in their school (including staff learning)	Effective PM and use of data CPD well resourced and evaluated
	A duty to nurture and not to inhibit teaching professionalism (which is wider than their school)	Encouragement of their teachers' engagement in wider professional networks and activities
	Some responsibility for sustaining the profession	Involvement in initial teacher training
	Some responsibility for system leadership	Local/national leader of education Effective engagement with other services and in wider educational networks
<b>Parents</b>	Parents are legitimate stakeholders in school accountability and a source of expertise about how well the school is doing	Parents involved in self-evaluation, governance
		Parents clear about what they should be consulted and informed about
	Parents understand the rights and responsibilities of stakeholding	Parents meeting their responsibilities for their children's learning as well as upholding their rights Parents' discerning engagement with schools is not restricted to the point of admissions
<b>Pupils</b>	Pupils are legitimate stakeholders in school accountability and a source of expertise about how well the school is doing	Pupils appropriately involved in self-evaluation, governance
		Pupils clear about what they should be consulted and informed about
	Pupils understand the rights and responsibilities of stakeholding	Pupils clear about their rights and responsibilities as regards their own learning

## PAPER 5

# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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The effective performance management of teachers should enable and support teachers to develop their practice and thereby make a significant contribution to profession-wide teaching quality. Performance management can support continuous improvement of practice and facilitate universal access to professional development, as well as provide the assurance that all teachers practise to a minimum standard of competence.

In this paper we explore the relationship between performance management and teaching quality by providing an overview of the current arrangements and an analysis of the current perceptions of its effectiveness. We follow this with a more detailed discussion of how the management of performance could be improved. Hence in this paper we:

- analyse the variability in the management of performance in teaching;
- highlight areas where there are insufficient data on the quality of delivery of performance management; and
- consider perceptions of the impact and effectiveness of the current arrangements.

Based on this analysis, we put forward a series of policy proposals to increase the impact of performance management on teaching quality. Concerns over variability relate especially to the use of professional standards, the relationship of performance management to capability and the extent of continuing professional development (CPD) underpinning performance management. Variability of this kind is a risk issue. It prevents the assurance of a minimum standard of practice, to which learners are entitled. It means that not all teachers are working to the same development framework of professional standards. In addition, it results in potentially inequitable outcomes for students, owing to the uneven access to required continuing professional development (CPD), which can positively impact the quality of practice and student outcomes.

Differentiated perceptions of impact and effectiveness, as reported here, need to be followed up with systematic data collection and analysis, so as to confirm or refute these perceptions, and to address the issues of weak impact and ineffective arrangements as they exist.



## Introduction to Paper 5

Raising the bar on teaching quality and learner achievement has been and remains a key policy goal for governments of the last 30 years. The role that performance management can play in realising that goal is receiving current policy attention.

This paper considers the potential of performance management to contribute more to the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of learning. It explores the role of performance management in improving teaching quality, and offers an overview of the current systems in place to manage the performance of teachers in England. This is followed by a discussion of the necessary elements for the effective management of performance, leading to a series of policy recommendations for Government.

## Performance management and teaching quality

When effective, performance management is a key part of any system designed to maintain, improve and assure the quality of practice and outcomes for service users.

It does so through its formative and summative aspects: formatively, by precisely identifying – through dialogue, data analysis and observation – performance development needs and improvement targets and enabling access to the required learning and development; summatively, by providing an account and assurance of the standard of practice of the individual. In this way the effective management of performance is related to teaching quality through providing a framework for continuous improvement in practice for all professionals, as well as through maintaining a minimum standard of practice to which learners are entitled.

The existing empirical evidence base for a direct relationship between performance management and improved practice in teaching is relatively sparse. However, recent work by Barber and Mourshed<sup>1</sup> examined high-performing education systems in order to draw out common themes linked to their success. As demonstrated elsewhere in this series, the importance of the quality of teaching is crucial in raising student outcomes. Barber and Mourshed found that teacher awareness of weaknesses in their practice, access to best practice and motivation to change things are key components of creating change in instruction<sup>2</sup>.

A survey for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) gathered international data on the working conditions of teachers and learning environments inside schools enabling comparison across countries. Although England did not take part in this first Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS<sup>3</sup>), the

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1 Barber, M. and Mourshed, M. (2007), *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*, McKinsey & Company, London.

2 *ibid*, p. 27.

3 See: [www.oecd.org/edu/talis](http://www.oecd.org/edu/talis). TALIS looks at the areas of school leadership, teacher appraisal and feedback, professional development and teachers' attitudes and beliefs. England did not take part in the initial survey but the government has stated its commitment to be

# Critique of current context

survey provided interesting evidence relating to performance management and its role in improving practice. The survey found evidence of causal impacts of appraisal and feedback<sup>4</sup> on teachers' professional development and on aspects of teaching practice. A significant minority of teachers reported that appraisal and feedback led to moderate or large changes in their practice in a range of areas such as 'knowledge or understanding of instructional practices' (38 per cent) and 'student discipline and behaviour problems' (37 per cent)<sup>5</sup>.

Contrary to common opinion, teachers reported that they felt positive feelings toward appraisal and feedback, with just over 50 per cent reporting a positive change in their job satisfaction following appraisal (only seven per cent reported a decrease). Nearly 80 per cent reported that the process was helpful in the development of their work<sup>6</sup>. Further, a recent review of research on teacher effectiveness<sup>7</sup> found that teachers' self-efficacy appeared to be related to pupil attainment. A strong performance management process – embedded in a culture of continuous development – could be an effective way of developing self-efficacy and motivation in teachers.

We have amassed considerable evidence about the conditions that facilitate sustained and effective professional development shown to improve pupil outcomes including reflection on practice, teacher-defined learning objectives and personalised needs analysis<sup>8</sup> – all key elements of performance management. The paper will argue that it is, in part, the role of performance management arrangements to create these conditions in order to both ensure a minimal level of practice and improve the quality of teaching of all practitioners

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involved in the next round in 2012-13 (DfE (2010), *The importance of teaching: The schools white paper 2010*, Cm 7980, TSO, London).

4 Here 'appraisal and feedback' describes when a teacher's work is reviewed (formally or informally) by a colleague or an external assessor (see OECD (2009), *Creating effective teaching and learning environments: First results from Talis*, OECD, Paris, p. 141).

5 *ibid*, p. 187.

6 *ibid*.

7 Scheerens, J. (ed) (2010), *Teachers' professional development: Europe in international comparison*, European Commission, Luxembourg.

8 See paper 6, Professional learning and development, p. 75.

The current system for managing the performance of teachers is based on two separate, but related, processes which operate at school level.

Firstly, there is the performance management process. This is designed to ensure that teachers practise to a minimum standard, as well as providing a framework for the continual improvement of practice that should enable access to relevant training. At a national level, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) provides guidance and regulations around the performance management process and standards to be used.

Secondly, there is the capability procedure, which exists for those deemed not to be meeting the minimum standard; it is designed to be a supportive process (although often viewed as a disciplinary one by practitioners<sup>9</sup>) to enable teachers to improve their practice and raise standards back to the minimum core standard. Failure to improve could result in dismissal for incompetence. The GTCE regulates the competence of individual professionals after referral from the employer where the teacher has been dismissed (or has resigned ahead of dismissal) after following the capability procedure in school.

The impact and perceptions of both of these processes will now be considered in turn.

## Performance management

Performance management is the process by which teacher and head teacher performance is reviewed and assured, and planning takes place for an individual's development in the context of the School Improvement Plan. The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and an individual's job description provide the context for assessing performance in this way. The Professional Standards Framework (PSF), developed by the TDA in 2007, provides the backdrop to discussions about performance and refers to the professional attributes,

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9 Morrell, G., et al. (2010), *Factors contributing to the referral and non-referral of incompetence cases to the GTC*, GTCE, London.

knowledge and skills required of a teacher at different stages in their career<sup>10</sup>.

The current performance management regulations came into force in September 2007 as part of new professionalism for teachers and head teachers developed by the Rewards and Incentives Group (RIG)<sup>11</sup>. These regulations replaced the previous appraisal system. Schools have flexibility in how they identify performance issues and develop support, but regulations require them to:

- ensure consistency and fairness;
- set reasonable and measurable objectives;
- provide feedback on progress;
- develop a protocol of classroom observation; assess training and development needs; and
- outline actions to address these.

In this way performance management involves the related aims of identifying areas for improvement in practice, supporting this improvement and maintaining a minimum standard of practice. Current guidance requests that performance management in teaching should fulfil these aims through, “*assessing the overall performance of a teacher or headteacher ... and making plans for the individual’s future development*”.<sup>12</sup> Performance management is still relatively new, and evidence suggests that it is not yet fully and consistently embedded across all schools. Due to the relatively nascent nature of the current regulations, there has been limited systematic evaluation of their effectiveness. Research commissioned by the TDA does find, however, that: “*Schools vary in their practice in terms of linking performance management processes, the professional standards and CPD opportunities. In some cases these links appear symbiotic, in other cases, dislocated*”.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore,

supply teachers, who constitute approximately 10 per cent of teachers<sup>14</sup>, are not routinely subject as to performance management requirements.

The GTCE’s annual *Survey of Teachers* (SoT) found that teachers’ opinion varies as to the impact that performance management has on improving practice. In relation to the statement “*performance management is a key factor in helping me to improve my teaching*”, just 28 per cent agreed and 37 per cent disagreed. A quarter of teachers were ambiguous in their response suggesting a degree of uncertainty regarding its impact<sup>15</sup>. Views are also mixed as to the effectiveness of performance management in identifying development needs; just over half of teachers who took part in the 2010 survey reported that performance management helps them to identify areas in their practice where they need support. However one-in-five teachers said this was not the case, suggesting variability in teachers’ experiences<sup>16</sup>.

Most teachers however, said that working towards identified objectives is useful<sup>17</sup>. Follow-up qualitative research with teachers confirmed the value of objective setting and self-reflection on improving practice. Teachers saw the review meetings as a useful prompt to reflect on their practice but reported variable experiences of the effectiveness of performance management processes as a whole<sup>18</sup>.

This evidence on the current experiences and perceptions of performance management suggests there is variability in the implementation of performance management regulations and guidance. There is potential for an improved performance management system that is

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*professional development (CPD) in England – State of the Nation research project*, TDA, London, p. 9

14 See for example: GTCE (2010), *Annual digest of statistics 2009-10*, GTC, London.

15 Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *How teachers approach practice improvement*, GTCE, London.

16 *ibid.*

17 *ibid.*

18 *ibid.*, p. 31.

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10 RIG (2006), *Performance management for teachers and head teachers: Guidance*, DfES, London.

11 RIG was established following the Agreement on Rewards and Incentives for Post-Threshold Teachers and Members of the School Leadership Group.

12 RIG (2009), *Teachers’ and head teachers’ performance management: Guidance*, DfES, London.

13 Pedder, D., *et al.* (2008), *Synthesis report: schools and continuing*

based upon a combination of formative and summative assessment through needs analysis, improvement targets, access to development opportunities and providing an account of practice to benefit teaching quality.

We believe that the current system is not delivering the suite of potential benefits that is possible through performance management. In previous advice to the government, we raised concerns about performance management and the extent to which it functions to deliver a well-informed needs analysis, a development plan and access to effective CPD, and, not solely as a form of teacher accountability<sup>19</sup>.

Paper 4 in this publication explores the case for rebalancing current accountability arrangements in a way that better supports and enables teachers, including performance management processes.

## Managing performance below competence

Guidance states that where there are serious weaknesses identified about an individual through performance management, this individual should cease being performance managed and enter capability procedures. The school makes the decision about when this process starts. School governing bodies have their own capability procedures, based on national guidelines. These start with informal counselling, then, if the necessary improvement is not made, move to formal capability. This should last no more than 20 weeks, by which point it is hoped that the teacher is meeting the core standard. If the teacher has still not met the core standard they are given a final four-week notice-to-improve and then dismissed if improvement is not made.

Recent research commissioned by the GTCE and the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)<sup>20</sup>

highlighted a range of issues with the current capability procedure that prevent the process from adequately assuring minimum competence. It revealed the failure of performance management to identify performance issues, highlighting a range of reasons “including unreliable evidence, difficult or close working relationships between teachers, senior managers and head teachers, and uncertainty about what constitutes a performance issue”<sup>21</sup>.

The sure and consistent identification of when a teacher is below the threshold of competence is reliant on a sound understanding of the standard of practice, currently the core standard of the Professional Standards Framework. However, as referred to earlier, the use of the professional standards in the performance management system is variable and not quality assured. Equally the production of good data and their sound analysis has been highlighted in this report as an area where the extent of capability of managers and the robustness of processes is not systematically known nationally.

A significant problem highlighted in the same report is the variability in interpretation and implementation of capability procedures and in their relationship to performance management. This is manifest in:

- varying perceptions of the purpose of the capability procedure (disciplinary or supportive?);
- varying perceptions of when the capability procedure best takes over from performance management processes;
- what the distinction is between the support offered through capability procedures and through performance management;
- a reluctance to ‘end support’ and start the disciplinary process;
- a perception that the capability procedure is complicated and a significant administrative burden; and
- a concern as to the negative consequences for well-being – health and self-esteem – and consequent further detriment to performance.

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19 Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2009), *Memorandum from the General Teaching Council for England on the training of teachers*, TSO, London.

20 Morrell, G., et al. (2010), *op. cit.*

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21 *ibid*, p. 4.

# The case for change

These issues act as barriers to head teachers moving staff from performance management to capability.

However, the report also highlighted that capability procedures are likely to have a positive impact on those occasions when the individual teacher acknowledges the performance issue and engages with the support provided. In this way it is important to align the process with a performance management system that is based upon needs analysis, timely intervention and the provision of support. Consequently the teacher can exercise some professional agency in addressing the issue, and any potential issues can be identified and managed earlier.

This section of the paper will consider the key components of the effective ongoing management of performance. This is based upon evidence of the application and perceived effectiveness of current processes, and wider evidence of how to best assess and improve teaching practice.

We propose changes in the following areas.

1. Using standards to improve and benchmark performance
2. Identifying and accessing development needs
3. Ensuring consistency within and across settings
4. Skills and relationships in performance management
5. Account-giving through performance management
6. Holding to account through performance management

We now examine each in turn.

## 1. Using standards to improve and benchmark performance

Unless the professional standards are more fully integrated into the performance management process, it is unlikely that a common minimum standard can be maintained across different settings, and it is unlikely that each teacher will have access to a standard that can act as a framework for the improvement of practice.

We believe that a revised set of professional standards could be actively used by teachers to identify opportunities for improvement and progression by providing a framework for the maintenance and improvement of practice. These standards should be grounded in effective pedagogy and provide an agreed statement of what constitutes effective practice<sup>22</sup>. Findings from the latest *GTCE Survey of Teachers* suggest that the current standards are not fulfilling this role effectively; just a third of teachers said they use the standards to help them identify where they need to improve<sup>23</sup>. This revised framework should form the backbone of performance management.

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22 See paper 2, Standards-based professional practice, p. 13.

23 Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Related to a more formal link between performance management and professional standards are the issues of incentives and sanctions. Currently the performance management system lacks traction, and links between the appraisal process and the rewards and recognition framework lack clarity.

If a performance management system is to be effective, incentivisation through recognising and rewarding effective practice and sanctioning underperformance is important. Across the countries taking part in TALIS, there was evidence that there is a systemic lack of link between appraisal and feedback and rewards and recognition (monetary or non-monetary). As a consequence of this, nearly three-quarters of teachers felt that their school *'did not reward (in either monetary or non-monetary terms) the most effective teachers'*<sup>24</sup>. Dismissal for sustained poor performance was also rare, with less than 30 per cent of teachers reporting that this would happen in their schools.

Embedding the revised standards into the performance management framework would also integrate the performance management process with qualifying, induction and threshold assessments. This may help establish the performance management process better in schools as it provides a framework through which the link between working to improve practice (and other performance targets) and future roles could be made.

## 2. Identifying and accessing development needs

As GTCE research has shown, teachers value working towards identified objectives<sup>25</sup>. This is one of the principal ways in which performance can be improved through continued management; it enables teachers to identify objectives and access support to work towards them. Whilst these goals are related to the development goals of the teacher, they should focus on supporting positive outcomes and enhanced learning for pupils. The form

objectives take and how they are established are crucial in defining the system and the outcomes it encourages.

In order to achieve professional development goals (appropriately defined as described in the previous paragraph and determined through the performance management process), teachers must have access to and participate in effective, relevant and sustained continuing professional development. Without this, performance management will not impact on, nor will it contribute to, maintaining and raising the quality of teaching and learning for all children and young people<sup>26</sup>. However under the current performance management model it is important to maintain a 'buffer' between the performance management process and CPD. Evidence suggests<sup>27</sup> that a looser relationship enables more risk-taking and innovation.

The GTCE has expressed concerns about teachers' access to effective CPD<sup>28</sup>, and performance management should have a vital role in facilitating access to effective CPD. Analysis of the GTCE *Survey of Teachers* has found that there appears to be a significant amount of unmet need in terms of professional development as compared to many other European Union (EU) countries, despite improvements in recent years<sup>29</sup>.

Those teachers who felt they had engaged in effective CPD in the last 12 months had a significantly more positive perception of performance management<sup>30</sup>. For performance management to effectively improve practice it needs to guarantee access to relevant CPD that can target the areas of support that are identified through self-reflection and needs analysis.

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26 GTCE (2006), *Response to DfES consultation on performance management for teachers and head teachers*, GTCE, London

27 See work undertaken by Curee and the University of Wolverhampton for the QCDA on building the evidence base for the curriculum. Search [www.curee-paccts.com](http://www.curee-paccts.com) for 'qcda building evidence base'.

28 See paper 6, Professional learning and development, p. 75.

29 Scheerens, J. (ed) (2010), *op. cit.*

30 Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 21

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24 OECD (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 161.

25 Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*

The OECD notes that “An essential aspect of any form of appraisal or feedback is the identification of strengths and weaknesses and taking steps to build on the former and correct the latter”.<sup>31</sup> If the aim of performance management is to improve standards and drive continuous improvement, follow up after the appraisal process on both strengths and weaknesses is central. Part of this is about providing access to support through formal professional development, but another part is about sharing good practice through working collaboratively and using tools such as mentoring.

In addition to the supervision and management of practice, mentoring could perform a valuable function within performance management. We argue elsewhere in favour of its continuation beyond induction in acknowledgement of the value that high-quality mentoring offers as a form of professional learning<sup>32</sup>. Dymoke and Harrison have argued that mentoring can be an effective tool to help beginner teachers develop professional autonomy<sup>33</sup>. Professional autonomy and self-reflection are key attributes that enable individuals to develop their practice through performance management, and techniques that develop these attributes should be explored.

### 3. Ensuring consistency within and across settings

If performance management is to have an impact on an individual teacher’s practice through providing a framework for improvement and defining the minimum acceptable standard, it is vital that a robust quality assurance system is in place to ensure consistency of application across settings. An additional benefit of an effective quality assurance process is that it would provide opportunities for system learning through increased knowledge of what constitutes effective performance

management. At the moment there is not enough research-based knowledge about the principles of effective performance management in teaching.

The current position sees the school improvement partner (SIP) enabling the performance management of the head teacher by the governing body<sup>34</sup>. There is though no clearly-articulated role for them or any other agent, including Ofsted, in the quality assurance or inspection of the performance management arrangements as a whole within or across settings. Quality assurance does not have to be costly or resource-intensive and could be based upon sampling and peer moderation. Linking the process to a revised set of common standards as outlined in point 1 would also support a consistent coverage.

### 4. Skills and relationships in performance management

Teachers taking part in GTCE research<sup>35</sup> identified the relationship between teachers and line managers as a key factor in whether or not performance management contributed to improving practice. Effective performance management is reliant upon effective professional relationships which facilitate the critical review of performance and the support of observation and mentoring. Ensuring the effectiveness of this process may in part depend on greater assessment and support of the skills of line managers and those responsible for performance management within schools. This will also be improved by quality assurance processes such as moderation.

The GTCE’s annual *Survey of Teachers* revealed that senior teachers (those at the level of the school’s SMT – senior management team – including heads and deputies) were more likely to have a positive view about how performance

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31 OECD (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 156

32 See paper 3, Entry to teaching, p. 27.

33 Walker, M., *et al.* (2011), *Making the links between teachers’ professional standards, induction, performance management and continuing professional development*, Research Report DFE-RR075, Department for Education, London.

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34 With the demise of the SIP, there is a concern with regard to who will be able to fulfil this role in relation to either supporting the governing body to carry out the performance assessment of the head teacher or undertake this role themselves.

35 Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*,

management could support improving teaching practice<sup>36</sup>. This could be because, as senior teachers, they have more control and ownership over the process as they may have responsibility for delivering it. The success of any performance management is reliant upon active engagement in the process, which is in turn facilitated by teacher's feeling they can exercise professional agency in objective-setting through self-reflection, rather than feeling it is something that is 'done to' them.

Professional agency on both parts is a critical factor in the efficacy of performance management, and key to this is a sense of ownership on the part of the individual taking forward the change. Successive studies undertaken by the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI Centre) in the series *Systematic Reviews of the Impact of CPD* have demonstrated that sense of ownership is a CPD impact variable for practice improvement and student outcomes.

GTCE-commissioned research has revealed that participants express particular concerns about the opportunities for bias in the performance management system, where teachers were assessed by middle management<sup>37</sup>. Research by Dymoke and Harrison emphasises the potential problems involved in middle management conducting performance management. There is a tension between the identification of development needs and the capacity of performance managers at this level of seniority to ensure access to training<sup>38</sup>. This supports concerns raised by the GTCE that teachers do not have guaranteed access to relevant professional development through performance management.

Any performance management system relies upon the active and respectful engagement of the manager and the

individual being managed in the process. Professional relationships facilitate the assessment of an individual's performance, and the identification of objectives for improvement or remediation and associated development requirements. Sensitive data, such as qualitative data from observations, student outcomes or attainment data, are being considered to discern the objectives and targets. The whole process of performance management requires a range of skills – from observation, to analysis, to pedagogical leadership, coaching and identification of desirable and feasible objectives and targets on the part of both parties as well as expert 'clinical supervision' by the manager<sup>39</sup>.

The performance management of the school system (school-level evaluation) impacts on teacher-level performance management. Current performance management guidance describes how the process is concerned with 'making plans for the individual's future development in the context of the school's improvement plan'<sup>40</sup>. Performance management systems are effective when an individual's objectives are aligned with those of the organisation<sup>41</sup>. The link between performance management and the school improvement plan is, therefore, important. Relationships can be crucial in avoiding any tensions arising between individual and organisational aims and objectives.

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36 *ibid*, p. 21.

37 GTCE (2009), *Accountability in teaching – Key messages from two research studies*, GTCE, London, p. 5.

38 Dymoke, S. and Harrison J. K. (2006), 'Professional development and the beginning teacher: issues of teacher autonomy and institutional conformity in the performance review process', *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 32(1), pp. 71-92, cited in Walker, M., *et al.* (2011), *op. cit.*

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39 Clinical supervision is a conscious practice used in medical and health disciplines as well as many other professions engaged in working with people. It consists of the practitioner meeting regularly with another professional, not necessarily more senior, but normally with training in the skills of supervision, to discuss casework and other professional issues in a structured way.

40 RIG (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 3.

41 Lazear, E. (2000), 'The Future of Personnel Economics', *The Economic Journal*, 110, F611-F639.



## 5. Account-giving through performance management

Performance management provides a means for the individual professional to render an account of their practice; that account – the dialogue of the review and the range of data to be analysed in review – combines with benchmarking against professional standards to provide a structured opportunity for close consideration of practice and of outcomes on a periodic basis. There is little evidence in teaching of the extent of the capabilities and robustness of the processes that underlie this account-giving; these will be the critical factors in yielding a high return from the performance management system.

## 6. Holding to account through performance management

In essence, “*operational performance management systems are essential for ensuring that the public services do deliver what the citizen is entitled to receive*”<sup>42</sup>

In this way performance management and capability procedures can provide a means of holding to account for the quality of practice at a local level. Recent research commissioned by the GTCE suggests that teachers do not feel that it serves this purpose effectively. In the 2010 *Survey of Teachers*, fewer than half of respondents (41 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, ‘performance management is an effective way of holding me to account for the quality of my teaching’<sup>43</sup>.

This finding is consistent with the 2009 *Survey of Teachers* which reported a slightly higher percentage of agreement, but also a slightly higher percentage of disagreement with the statement that ‘performance management is an effective way of holding teachers to account for the quality of their teaching’. It is interesting to note however that, in the 2009 survey, heads and deputy

heads rated performance management more highly as an accountability process than other teachers<sup>44</sup>. This could indicate that those involved in the delivery of performance management understand it more in terms of accountability than those being performance managed, who may see it more as a supportive and developmental exercise.

There is evidence that teachers do believe there is an important accountability relationship between them and their head teacher or SMT. A qualitative study commissioned by the GTCE revealed that heads and SMT were, along with pupils, the main stakeholders to whom teachers felt accountable<sup>45</sup>. Therefore, teachers perceive there to be a legitimate role at a local level to hold teachers to account for the quality of their teaching, but at the moment most teachers do not perceive performance management to be fulfilling this role.

It is especially salient to report that the 2009 survey reported a positive correlation between those who felt performance management was an effective way of holding teachers to account and those that felt they had had access to adequate CPD opportunities<sup>46</sup>. It appears that, if the formative aspect of performance management is well implemented, teachers are more likely to appreciate the summative accountability aspect of performance management. It is vital that this relationship between the two is communicated in a clear and transparent way.

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44 TNS (2009), *GTCE Survey of Teachers 2009: TNS Report*, GTCE, London, p. 3.

45 OPM (2009), *Accountability and ‘active registration’ within teaching: A research study*, GTCE, London, p. 2.

46 GTCE (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

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42 Levitt, R., *et al.* (2008), *Accountability of teachers: Literature review*, GTCE, London, p. 14.

43 Poet, H., *et al. op. cit.*, p. 12

## Principles

This paper has highlighted the current variation in the management of teacher performance as well the potential gains of an effective system. The current variation prevents the assurance of a common minimum standard of practice to which learners are entitled. In addition, it results in teachers' access to support to improve their practice varying considerably across settings. This variation needs to be reduced if performance management is to make a more significant contribution to teaching quality.

The direct and ongoing management of performance could play an important role in assuring the competence of individual practice and supporting improvements in the quality of teaching. Despite the variability in application it remains the most logical policy lever to assure individual practice, and it is therefore vital that processes are strengthened in order to improve the consistent delivery of effective teaching across settings.

There is robust evidence about what constitutes effective CPD, and how this can contribute to improved teaching quality and pupil outcomes. (This is discussed more fully in paper 6, Professional learning and development.) There is also evidence that teachers do not experience universal access to effective CPD, and therefore opportunities to develop their practice are not consistent across different settings. Performance management is the most logical process through which access to effective CPD can be facilitated, and therefore guarantee practice improvement across the school system. To do this effectively the management of performance should be based upon what is proven to improve individual practice: needs analysis, setting personalised objectives, reflective practice and access to effective CPD.

Differentiated perceptions of impact and effectiveness, as reported here, need to be followed up with systematic data collection and analysis so as to confirm or refute these perceptions and to address the issues of weak impact and ineffective arrangements as they exist.

## Equality and diversity

Consistent application of performance management arrangements is required to assure a minimum standard of practice, to which all learners are entitled.

Currently, variable use of the framework of professional standards to support performance management arrangements prevents the assurance of a minimum standard of practice to which learners are entitled. It can also potentially result in inequitable outcomes for students, since access to required development, CPD, which can positively impact the quality of practice and student outcomes, is uneven.

For performance management to effectively improve practice it needs to guarantee access for all teachers to relevant CPD that can target the areas of support that are identified through self-reflection and needs analysis.

Presently, supply teachers (who make up a significant proportion of the workforce – approximately 10 per cent) fall outside of existing performance management arrangements. Provision should be extended so that supply teachers have access to quality-assured performance management and effective CPD.

# Performance management: proposals

We propose the following policy interventions to reduce variability in application and improve the impact of performance management upon teaching quality.

A robust but lean quality assurance system for performance management needs to be introduced. This will reduce variability in implementation and increase system learning. It could be introduced through an external agent such as Ofsted, SIP, school cluster or local authority. It is our view that there is significant collateral benefit of professional learning and development, likely to offset the time cost, if this is based on sampling and peer moderation against a national framework and data collection and analysis exercises.

Sample evaluative data from the quality assurance of performance management should be collected and analysed at a national level. This will inform system-level understanding of implementation strengths and weaknesses and variability as well as the nature of highly effective processes.

Existing regulations regarding the application of the professional standards framework should be strengthened. This will ensure a common standard is applied across all settings. This standard should be reviewed in line with our advice on standards-based practice, and should reflect a greater emphasis upon pedagogical expertise.

A clearer definition of the relationship between performance management and capability is needed<sup>47</sup>, with clearer guidance on what constitutes a performance issue and when capability proceedings are appropriate. There needs to be a common understanding of what events should trigger capability procedures, and a common understanding of what practice constitutes a competent teacher. There should be one step between performance management and capability procedures, not two as currently, with defined support and time for remediation of practice and re-entry to performance management.

There should be access to specialised training for those required to conduct performance management, in recognition

of the complex (summative and formative) nature of performance management. This needs to cover 'clinical supervision', qualitative data collection and analysis (including through observation), quantitative data analysis (including attainment data), needs analysis, and knowledge of effective CPD<sup>48</sup>.

To be effective, performance management processes must lead to teacher participation in CPD. Moreover, it is essential that teachers have adequate time and the resources to pursue the objectives set through access to relevant, appropriate and sustained CPD activities. It is through CPD that continual improvement is achieved<sup>49</sup>. (This area is explored in more detail in the CPD paper in this suite.)

CPD provision should be extended so that supply teachers have access to quality-assured performance management and effective CPD. Currently, the performance management process does not appear to work effectively for supply teachers and those on temporary contracts<sup>50</sup>.

The performance management process must be aligned to initial teacher training and induction, to ensure continuity in the early years of a teacher's career. When teachers complete induction, the move into performance management against the core standards should represent a continuation of personalised professional objectives that are identified through needs analysis and reflective practice and delivered through a collaborative professional culture. It should not represent a cultural disconnect.

There should be more effective communication of the purpose and role of performance management. This will increase awareness within the profession that performance management improves and maintains practice through account-giving, identifying support and supervising practice.

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<sup>47</sup> The recent Government White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010) highlights the need to simplify the capability process and clarify the link between performance management and capability.

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<sup>48</sup> The GTCE advised on principles on what skills are necessary to successfully performance manage support staff in GTCE(2003), *Development for teachers working with support staff and HLTAs: Advice to the Secretary of State for Education and others*, GTCE, London.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

## PAPER 6

# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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A convincing body of evidence demonstrates why and how investing in effective learning and professional development for teachers improves the quality of teaching and raises the level of learning outcomes for pupils. This evidence also identifies those features and factors that make some forms of professional learning and development more effective than others. Effective professional learning and development play a key role in supporting teachers, both to develop their standard of practice after their initial qualification and to continue to deepen their professional knowledge.

In the light of this evidence, limitations to the current system of continuing professional development (CPD) can be identified in terms of provision, capacity, quality and access and therefore of impact. We therefore propose a compact between teachers and their employers.

Through the compact, teachers would have access to professional learning and development of a kind and standard which sustains and develops practice and has high impact on the quality of teaching and learning. It would be based on the principles of entitlement and responsibility, and underpinned by:

- access to performance management, including observation of practice, for all teachers;
- development of capacity for coaching and mentoring in schools to support the ongoing development of teachers;
- a greater focus on knowledge of what constitutes effective professional learning and development in schools; and
- stronger quality assurance and evaluation of the impact of professional learning and development.

# Introduction to Paper 6

In this paper we consider how the quality of teaching can be improved through strengthening the system of continuing professional learning and development for teachers.

## How teacher professional learning and development are related to teaching quality

Since our inception we have argued that investment in effective learning and professional development for teachers is critical to improving the quality of teaching. We have commissioned original research, as well as drawing on existing studies, to contribute to the evidence in the field<sup>1</sup>. The research base is now extensive, and comprises qualitative as well as quantitative studies, as well as systematic reviews of a large number of disparate studies in different countries.<sup>2</sup>

It is very important that this knowledge is understood and used. In their synthesis of research on continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers in England, Bolam and Weindling found evidence that good CPD:

- improves teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills;
- improves pupils' learning, confidence, attitude and achievements;

- enhances teachers' motivation and morale; and
- is central to school improvement<sup>3</sup>.

The GTCE has played a significant role in distilling and promoting what is known about effective CPD. In general, the evidence shows that collaborative CPD which is personalised, relevant, sustained and supported is most likely to be effective. There are particular approaches to CPD that are more likely to result in changes to teaching strategies that then positively impact on the learning, behaviour and achievement of all children and young people. A set of systematic reviews<sup>4</sup> of research make it clear CPD needs to:

- actively involve teachers in defining the learning processes and learning outcomes;
- be based on an enquiry model of learning;
- provide the opportunity for reflection on learning and practice;
- be aimed at explicit outcomes for practice and for learners;
- ensure time and structured opportunities for learning;
- involve access to external expertise, coaching and leadership;
- encourage professional collaboration;
- address what teachers do in the classroom and how teachers change what they do;
- challenge problematic beliefs and practices;
- apply what is known about pupil learning to teacher learning appropriately; and
- draw on reliable research evidence and show how to utilise it.

We used the evidence from research to design the Teacher Learning Academy (TLA), which launched in 2003. The TLA was based on a framework for classroom- and school-based enquiry, through which teachers, with the support of a coach, developed and disseminated their knowledge, skills and practices, evaluated the impact on learners, and gained national professional recognition, through a process of verification by trained peers in

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1 See, for example, Cordingley, P. *et al.* (2005a), *The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning. Review: How do collaborative and sustained CPD and sustained but not collaborative CPD affect teaching and learning?*; Cordingley, P., *et al.* (2005b), *The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning. Review: What do teacher impact data tell us about collaborative CPD?*; Cordingley, P., *et al.* (2007), *What do specialists do in CPD programmes for which there is evidence of positive outcomes for pupils and teachers?* All in: Research Evidence in Education Library, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, London; access at <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk>

2 The studies of individually-oriented CPD offer only weak evidence of its capacity to influence teacher or pupil change. Bolam, R. and Weindling, D. (2006), *Synthesis of research and evaluation projects concerned with capacity-building through teachers' professional development*, GTCE, London; Timperley, H., *et al.* (2008), *Teacher professional learning and development: Best evidence synthesis iteration*. New Zealand Ministry of Education, Wellington.

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3 Bolam, R. and Weindling, D. (2006), *op.cit*

4 See the systematic reviews of CPD cited above.

# Critique of current context

other schools. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) found strong evidence of the TLA's positive impact on teaching quality including directly on children's learning<sup>5</sup>.

In June 2011, the Cathedrals Group of universities and university colleges established a national TLA consortium of 11 higher education institutions to purchase the TLA intellectual property assets. The launch of a reinvigorated TLA is anticipated in autumn 2011.

The evidence also suggests that there are limitations and shortcomings within the current system in terms of access, provision, capacity, quality, and impact. We examine each of these in turn.

## 1. Access

We have consistently raised the issue of access by some teachers to effective CPD<sup>6</sup>. For example, although our recent annual surveys of teachers have found a high level of participation in some form of CPD<sup>7</sup>, the degree of participation has been highly variable between different groups of teachers. In particular, part-time and supply teachers have reported much lower levels of engagement; in the 2009 survey, 40 per cent of supply teachers had not taken part in any CPD in the previous year, and in 2010 the percentage had risen only to 45 per cent.

McNamara's review of research<sup>8</sup> shows that access may be constrained by:

- time, workload, cost and distance from training opportunities;
- over-emphasis on meeting system needs to the detriment of needs of individual teacher; and
- inadequate evaluation, particularly in relation to value for money, of school CPD policies, effects on pupils and teachers' practice and morale.

Following the findings about supply teachers' access to CPD, we commissioned research<sup>9</sup> to investigate whether

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5 Lord, P., *et al.* (2009), *Evaluation of the Teacher Learning Academy: Impacts on teachers, schools and pupils*, NFER, Slough. In detail, the report found that:

- enquiry- and practice-based CPD is powerful and produces positive effects at many different levels including those which directly impact on children's learning, achievement, motivation and enjoyment as well as the learning and teaching of the teacher, their effectiveness, motivation and confidence;
- the use of the Teacher Learning Academy (TLA) positively changes schools' approaches to CPD, the focus on learning and sharing learning between teachers, the extent and quality of available coaching and external networking between schools and teachers;
- the TLA provides a means to evaluate the impact of CPD as an authentic part of the classroom process which is not added-on and can generate a manageable whole school approach; and
- the TLA encourages teachers to participate in professional learning and provides them with the confidence for, and a pathway into, more in-depth learning.

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6 Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2009), memorandum from the General Teaching Council for England on the training of teachers, TSO, London.

7 TNS (2009), *Survey of teachers 2009: TNS report*, GTCE, London; Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *Survey of Teachers*, GTCE, London, 94 percent and 92 percent respectively engaged in some form of CPD

8 McNamara, O., *et al.* (2008), *Primary teachers: initial teacher education, continuing professional development and school leadership development. Research Survey 6/3. Cambridge Primary Review*, University of Cambridge, Cambridge and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, London.

9 Hutchings, M. *et al.* (2009), *Scoping manageable and strategic approaches to CPD for supply teachers*, Institute for Policy Studies in Education, London Metropolitan University, London.

and how CPD could be managed more successfully for supply teachers. The report found that, because of the distinctive nature of their work, supply teachers were faced with a set of barriers, including:

- plural employers and locations;
- limited access to or knowledge of CPD opportunities in school;
- lack of performance management to identify CPD needs; and
- material barriers such as time, funding and potential loss of earnings.

Unsurprisingly, supply teachers reported low motivation to engage with CPD, and the report proposed some practical strategies to deal with this. These included mentoring, and the use of ‘base schools’ for supply teachers – these schools would institute performance management for supply teachers as a means of identifying their needs and securing access to professional development and learning.

## 2. Continuity, coherence and relevance of provision

We believe there is a serious lack of continuity and coherence between initial teacher training (ITT), induction and early professional and career development (EPD). The paper on entry to teaching<sup>10</sup> explores how changes to ITT and induction could better support teaching quality: key to this is their contribution to creating a foundation for teachers’ ongoing development and learning.

Structured early professional development for teachers in their second and third years of teaching has been shown<sup>11</sup> to have a direct and beneficial influence on their teaching and on their pupils’ learning. It also strengthened their career plans and their intentions to undertake CPD in

future, and heightened the professional contributions they made to their schools. The features that appeared to bring about these benefits were the needs assessment process, structured access to appropriate provision, mentor support and support from the school and the local authority. There was also the symbolic value that the scheme embodied: “*teachers would frequently praise the funding and the thought for their professional development that the EPD pilot represented. This made them feel valued and empowered.*”

For teachers already established in their careers, participation rates do not by themselves give an indication of the effectiveness or relevance of CPD. In the GTCE’s 2007 annual survey of teachers, a significant number of teachers reported that their needs were not being met<sup>12</sup>, and fewer than half the teachers responding to the survey in 2010 reported that they had been able to access CPD activities to help meet performance management objectives<sup>13</sup>.

An understanding of what constitutes effective CPD provision is sometimes lacking in schools. A database that catalogues CPD provision without giving some indication of quality or effectiveness is not sufficient to support the quality of teaching; and, whilst accreditation of provision and/or providers may be a useful way for schools to identify appropriate CPD provision, an over-emphasis on only those CPD offers that are accredited could mean that schools do not access some forms of CPD that are proven to be most effective.

Employed teachers are currently entitled to five in-service education and training days (Inset) via their schools. However, these may be used by schools for a variety of whole-school purposes and they are not always well used to support individual professional needs.

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10 See paper 3, Entry to teaching, p. 27.

11 In Moor, H., *et al.* (2005), *Professional development for teachers early in their careers: an evaluation of the early professional development pilot scheme*, Research Report RR613, DfES, London.

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12 GTCE (2007), *Survey of teachers 2007*, GTCE, London. Just under one-third of teachers felt that their professional development needs had been fully met, just over half felt that their needs had been met to some extent, and 17 percent felt their needs had not been met over the past twelve months.

13 Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*

Moreover, leaders of CPD in schools responding to the GTCE through our then Connect network reported that Inset is often dominated by the dissemination of national priorities to the exclusion of either institutional or individual needs. More than one-quarter of teachers surveyed by Bubb and colleagues<sup>14</sup> said that Inset days in the previous 12 months had been of little use or even a waste of time. There needs to be a re-assessment of whether these days alone can realistically deliver the kind and scale of professional development needed to enhance teaching in future.

### 3. The use of performance management and the professional standards framework

As noted above, fewer than half the teachers responding to the survey in 2010 reported that they had been able to access CPD activities to help meet performance management objectives<sup>15</sup>. We have previously raised concerns about performance management, suggesting that its use solely as a form of teacher accountability can overshadow its ability to deliver a well-informed needs analysis, a development plan and access to appropriate and relevant CPD for individual teachers<sup>16</sup>.

This is borne out by Ofsted evidence. This reveals that, although performance management is used well to address whole-school issues, it is often not used effectively to target individual learning needs<sup>17</sup>. When respondents to the 2010 annual survey of teachers were asked about performance management as a key factor in improving teaching, over one-third of teachers did not perceive it in this way and one-quarter were ambivalent. Of further concern are supply teachers whose practice is not subject to performance management and who, as was mentioned earlier, have limited access to developmental opportunities.

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14 38% secondary, 19% primary and 26% special school teachers. Bubb, S., et al. (2008), *Staff development outcomes study: Final report to TDA*, Institute of Education, London

15 Poet, H., et al. (2010), *op. cit.*

16 Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2009), *op. cit.*

17 Ofsted (2006), *The logical chain: continuing professional development in effective schools*, Ofsted, London.

We also have concerns about the usefulness of the professional standards to act as benchmarks of practice. It seems that the professional standards are not always used, or are used only as background, and that in many cases quite different sets of criteria or objectives are in use<sup>18</sup>.

The large research study *Variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness* (known as VITAE)<sup>19</sup> showed that CPD had a consistently positive influence on teachers in all professional life and career phases. However, the study also showed that these needs are not uniform across phases and depend on a range of particular institutional and personal circumstances: performance management needs to function more effectively to identify and meet individual teachers' learning needs.

### 4. Enquiry-based learning in professional learning communities

The research shows that enquiry-led CPD undertaken in conjunction with colleagues is a highly-effective form of professional learning<sup>20, 21</sup>. Cordingley<sup>22</sup> found that schools with successful CPD “provide opportunities for staff to collaborate and to be proactive about their own learning.”

A logical consequence of collaborative professional development is the self-sustaining professional learning community. Another large-scale research study, funded by GTCE, DfES and the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and highlighting the importance of developing communities of professional learning, showed how these networks played a positive role in supporting

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18 Observations from the GTCE's regulatory work, and see Morrell, G., et al. (2010), *Factors contributing to the referral and non-referral of incompetence cases to the GTCE*, GTCE, London.

19 Day, C., et al., (2006), *Variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness*, Research report RR743, DfES, London.

20 Cordingley, P. et al. (2003), ‘The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning’ in *Research Evidence in Education Library*, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

21 Timperley, H. et al. (2008), *op. cit.*

22 Cordingley, P., (2011), *Qualitative study of school-level strategies for teachers' CPD*, Curee, Coventry.



teachers' learning and developing practice<sup>23</sup>. The study suggested that professional learning communities help establish and sustain a culture of ongoing professional learning and improvement through peer-to-peer professional accountability and collegial support. It showed too how effective professional learning communities engender a sense of collective responsibility for pupil learning. There is also much research evidence on the efficacy of professional learning that is undertaken in conjunction with colleagues in higher education and expert facilitators as well as with teaching colleagues within and across schools<sup>24</sup>.

Coaching and mentoring are a highly productive way of working with and learning from peers<sup>25</sup>, though Ofsted found in 2006<sup>26</sup> and 2010 that schools were making insufficient or ineffective use of coaching and mentoring as a form of CPD. In a report for the GTCE, Cordingley<sup>27</sup> found that “*successive research and evaluation studies testify to the power of well-informed and structured coaching.*” The Children Schools and Families Select Committee<sup>28</sup> report on the training of teachers recommended provision for the training of mentors and specific requirements for those who mentor.

As schools increasingly become the main sites of decision-making in the education system, the role of networks and communities to provide connecting structures across the system will become central.

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23 Bolam, R., et al. (2005), *Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities*, DfES research report no. RR637, DfES, London. See also: Stoll, L., et al. (2006), *Professional learning communities: Source materials for school leaders and other leaders of professional learning*. Innovation Unit and others, London.

24 See, for example, Louis, K., et al. (2010), *Investigating the links to improved student learning: Final report of research findings*, commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, New York.

25 See Bell, M. and Cordingley, P. (2005), *National framework for mentoring and coaching*, Curee, Coventry.

26 Ofsted (2006), *op. cit.*

27 Cordingley, P. (2011), *op. cit.*

28 The Children, Schools and Families Select Committee report on the training of teachers (2010) recommended requiring mentors to have three years teaching experience, specific mentor training and involvement in mentoring should be a criterion for progression.

Professional learning communities can provide useful vehicles for trying new approaches, through ‘informed experimentation’. Collaboration across schools is an enabler for development and innovation in terms of wider school learning, and encourages teachers actively to seek new ideas and practices in other settings and to reflect on how they might work in their own<sup>29</sup>.

## 5. Teacher responsibility for improving practice

Teachers have a responsibility to keep their practice informed and up-to-date through undertaking professional learning and development, and to contribute to the development of others. These obligations are enshrined in the *Code of Conduct and Practice for Teaching*. Our 2009 survey of teachers showed<sup>30</sup> that nearly all teachers agreed that they have a responsibility to maintain and improve their practice, but that meeting this responsibility can be problematic for many of them.

Despite general agreement that teachers hold this responsibility, however, they do not currently have a formal entitlement to professional development and learning opportunities; this is no doubt one of the reasons why levels of access to and engagement in CPD are so variable. Cordingley<sup>31</sup> argues that, whilst adult learning is not the same as pupil learning, both are dependent on a deep understanding of content and goals, and she makes the case in favour of a learning entitlement for teachers underpinned by the development of a pedagogy for CPD.

Furthermore, unlike the conditions and regulations in many other professions, there is currently no requirement for teachers to participate in CPD in order to remain registered and continue to practise.

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29 OPM (2008), *Teachers as innovative professionals: Report for GTC and the Innovation Unit*, Office for Public Management, London.

30 TNS (2009), *op. cit.*

31 Cordingley, P., (2009), *Sauce for the goose: Learning strategies that work for teachers as well as their pupils*, Curee, Coventry.

## 6. Responsibility for evaluating professional development and learning

On the one hand, there have been, as this paper shows, many evaluations undertaken by researchers of CPD programmes and initiatives which have helped to build the evidence base.

On the other hand, there has been little or no evaluative activity at school level beyond immediate one-off feedback on a particular CPD course or event. In our 2010 survey of teachers<sup>32</sup>, 20 per cent of respondents said that CPD was not evaluated in their school and over a quarter were unsure whether it was. Ofsted inspections have more than once found that the “*weakest aspect of CPD was the extent to which schools evaluated its impact and value for money*”.<sup>33</sup> Evaluation of CPD on teachers’ learning should include reflection on its impact on teachers’ practice and pupils’ learning over time, in order that the impact and cost-effectiveness of development activities can be properly identified and assessed. The TDA has developed an impact evaluation model<sup>34</sup> for use by local authorities and schools but whether and how far it is being used is unclear.

One issue is that evaluation of CPD requires an elaborate research design to tease out the impact of a teacher’s CPD on pupils’ learning, given that there are so many other intervening variables. Guskey’s work on evaluating CPD<sup>35</sup> is helpful here, in that it sets out five levels to consider when evaluating professional learning and development. The levels progress through participant reactions, participant learning, organisational support and learning, participant use of new knowledge and skills, and finally student learning outcomes. The model

can also be used to engage teachers in planning their own learning and development, through working backwards from the desired learner outcome that should be achieved through to the set of experiences needed by each participant to gain the knowledge and skills needed.

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32 Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*

33 Ofsted (2010), *Good professional development in schools*, Ofsted, London.

34 TDA (2007), *Impact evaluation of CPD*, TDA, London.

35 Guskey, T. (2000), *Evaluating professional development*, Corwin, Thousand Oaks CA.

# The case for change

When effectively designed and delivered, professional development and learning support and deepen teachers' professional practice, which in turn enhances pupils' learning and whole-school improvement. Drawing on the evidence discussed above, we believe that changes are needed to the current system in order to secure greater benefits for teachers' practice and pupils' learning.

The evidence about the kinds of change needed seems to point unequivocally in these directions:

- access to effective professional development for all teachers;
- CPD provision founded upon what is known about effective learning and development experiences, quality assurance and evaluation of the impact of CPD;
- the effective use of whole-school professional learning, the development of professional learning communities and the encouragement of a culture of collaborative, enquiry-led professional learning;
- performance management, using the professional standards framework, as way of identifying and meeting teachers' CPD needs;
- coherence and cohesion in teacher learning and development through ITT, induction and EPD;
- capacity for and take-up of coaching and mentoring in schools; and
- clarifying teachers' responsibility for, and entitlement to, CPD.

It may be useful to give a little more background to this final point.

## Entitlement, responsibility and requirement

Since our inception, we have argued that teachers' access to CPD needs to be secured and strengthened, and that this should be linked to a professional responsibility – possibly a requirement – to develop and deepen practice.

Giving all teachers an entitlement to professional development could also:

- act as a driver for CPD quality and value for money through supporting better evaluation of CPD and the generation of more effective CPD;
- benefit teacher morale and motivation and, importantly, support the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers; and
- make a contribution to equality, access and consistency across the system through ensuring that all teachers, including part-time and supply teachers, have access to effective development.

Ultimately an entitlement to CPD could contribute considerably to improving standards of teaching and learning nationally. Nonetheless, an entitlement will realise these benefits only if it is founded on what is known about effective CPD and is linked to some form of needs analysis (for example, through performance management) to ensure access to targeted, relevant and high quality provision.

An entitlement should also be expressed in terms which are quantifiable – such as an hours-based allocation – so that teachers and employers can feel confident about its implementation. Although there are some shortcomings associated with specifying quantities, the risks could be mitigated by, for example, building in supplementary criteria that relate to the quality or required characteristics of the CPD.

Many of the benefits of a CPD entitlement could be further strengthened by instituting a responsibility or requirement on teachers. As with entitlement, a requirement would need to be founded on what is

# Equality and diversity

known about effective CPD: it should not suggest that undertaking CPD is an end in itself or that any and every form of CPD is necessarily good. For this reason, although the entitlement could be hours-based, we do not believe that the requirement placed on teachers should be specified in this way: the criteria would need to be more detailed and nuanced. In particular, the criteria need to:

- be expressed in clear and specific terms against which teachers can provide evidence, and to which those who are managing their performance can attest through a clear assessment procedure;
- limit variation in interpretation, and be easily communicated and understood; and
- be achievable within the resources available to teachers, which should be specified through a statement of entitlement.

If benefits are to be realised for teaching and learning, both the entitlement and the requirement should emphasise the necessity of putting learning into practice and of reflecting on, sharing and evaluating the impact of learning on pupils' learning. They should also apply to all teachers. This means in turn that all groups of teachers, including supply teachers, must have access to performance management and other prerequisites for engaging effectively in CPD.

Entitlement to CPD has been proposed but not yet reached implementation; the idea has floundered on the large number of members of the profession and the associated implementation costs of a time-based model. It is the GTCE's view, however, that a practicable model of entitlement could build on what good employers already offer without imposing additional costs on the system.

Equal access for all teachers to effective CPD is essential if teachers are to meet their responsibility to develop and improve, and if the level of performance of pupils nationally is to reflect the potential benefits. This is particularly important if CPD is to be seen as a requirement as well as an entitlement. Particular attention should be given to the engagement of and access for part-time and supply staff. Further consideration needs to be given to the sites and timings of CPD opportunities as well.

Over their careers, teachers are likely to encounter a range of children with different needs and circumstances; they need timely training and development to handle new contexts and circumstances, such as working effectively with traveller children and their families, or addressing speech, language and communication needs for the first time. Sustaining good quality CPD provision to address all pupils' needs for sensitive expert teaching is likely to be a challenge as schools become increasingly diverse and/or as sites of previous expertise (for example in English as a second language) are broken up.

# Professional learning and development: proposals

Based on the discussion in this paper, we here make a series of recommendations designed to raise standards of teaching through securing effective learning and development opportunities for all teachers – including by instituting specific entitlements and requirements for teachers. We believe this can be done largely through the more extended or effective deployment of elements already in the system.

## Making a compact

First and foremost, we propose a **mutual CPD compact** between each individual teacher and their employer. The compact would bring together entitlement, responsibility and requirement, and so comprise:

- a well-framed entitlement to CPD;
- a clear articulation of professional responsibility; and
- a simply-expressed requirement to participate, founded in evidence of effective CPD.

There is evidence to suggest that this compact would produce a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and bring significant benefit to children and young peoples' learning and achievement.

Every teacher should have, over each one-year period, access to, and a requirement to participate in, the following.

1. Dialogue about the quality and impact of their practice, what their next steps are in relation to the professional standards and school improvement, and how they might get there. This summative evaluation of practice, needs analysis and objective setting would take place through performance management.
2. Access to structured peer coaching or a form of supervision or mentoring through the year. This may be the line manager in performance management, or a peer secured by the line manager through performance management.

3. Access to observation and data-based (qualitative and quantitative) feedback.
4. Access to an individual or collaborative enquiry project focused on improving an aspect of practice and on achieving specific outcomes as defined in the needs analysis. Additionally, access in the context of this enquiry to reliable and relevant research and to observation/discussion of other professionals' practice.
5. An evaluative evidence-based conversation about the impact of their professional learning on their teaching and pupil learning and/or school.

The suite of actions captured in this proposed mutual compact is based on the systematic research findings of what makes for high-impact CPD and thus designed to maintain and develop the currency of practice. It is expressed in concrete terms against which teachers can provide evidence and to which those who are managing their performance can attest. It allows and requires the provision of evidence of the impact (both intended and actual) of professional learning on practice and pupils' experience and/or outcomes.

If such a compact is to provide assurances as to the standard of practice and good standing, it needs to apply equally to all teachers across settings and regardless of employment status, including supply teachers. If the compact is fully to realise its potential benefits then both the employer and teacher must be accountable for their part. When the entitlement is fully in place, further consideration should be given to whether a teacher should be allowed to continue to teach and retain their professional qualification if they fail to meet any requirements of the compact including the professional standards<sup>36</sup>.

Such a compact would frame the responsibilities and requirements for employers and teachers, and we believe

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36 GTCE (2010), *Parliamentary briefing: Children, Schools and Families Bill: Licence to Practise*, GTCE, London.

that the government should have little difficulty in supporting the principle.

We believe there are four activities the government should undertake or support before, during and after the establishment of a national system of CPD compacts, in conjunction with school leaders and employers.

1. They should shift further away from the provider role and instead take a greater role in the quality assurance and evaluation of impact of provision. The current use of the five Inset days should be thoroughly evaluated for its effectiveness in supporting teaching quality. Ofsted should continue to play a strong role in evaluating the provision and quality of CPD in schools.
2. They should increase system-wide knowledge of what constitutes effective CPD and ensure robust evaluation of the impact of professional learning and development undertaken. This is crucial if schools are to use funds in cost-effective ways which have positive benefits for learners.
3. They should develop capacity for coaching and mentoring in schools in order to secure sustainable cost-effective development and support for all teachers beyond their induction year – and particularly in their second and third years of teaching. We suggest that there should be requirements for and a greater professional recognition of individuals who mentor or provide specialist coaching and that these roles should become part of formal career progression (to Chartered Teacher Status).
4. They should ensure that all teachers, regardless of setting or employment status, have access to, and are required to participate in, some form of performance management against the (revised) professional standards.



## PAPER 7 PEDAGOGY

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The quality of teaching is a crucial factor in improving the experience of pupils' learning and raising levels of achievement. However, teaching is often misconstrued as a mainly technical or else pastoral activity. This disregards the ethical considerations, the engagement in and with research and evidence, and the nuanced professional judgments that together comprise the depth and range of a highly specialised expertise.

This expertise is best understood and described as pedagogy. 'Pedagogy' encompasses the art (responsive, creative and intuitive behaviours), the craft (acquired skills and disciplined practice within professional norms) and the science (research-informed decision-making and theoretical underpinnings) of teaching. Pedagogy is based on the creation of collective professional knowledge, grounded in testable theories, strong ethical values and empirical evidence, and open to public scrutiny.

In this paper we argue that a focus on pedagogy at policy and school levels will enhance the quality of teaching. Quality in teaching depends on many other factors, of course, not least effective initial and continuing professional learning. But if teachers have the confidence to lay claim to pedagogical expertise they will be better able to justify the epithet of 'professional': they will know why, as well as how, they are in the best position to make judgements which secure the best educational outcomes for their pupils.



# Introduction to Paper 7

In this paper we consider how good teaching can be supported and sustained by strengthening the concept and practice of ‘pedagogy’.

Compared with some other countries, England has on the whole lacked a discussion – a ‘discourse’ – on pedagogy; we have tended to prefer the straightforward word ‘teaching’ or, more recently, the phrase ‘teaching and learning’. This was a matter of great concern to the educationist Brian Simon, which he explored in his 1981 paper *Why no pedagogy in England?*<sup>1</sup> The question was picked up and further elaborated by Robin Alexander in 2004 in his scholarly response, *Still no pedagogy?*, to the then Government’s Primary Strategy.

But why does ‘pedagogy’ matter? What does the word signify that is not already encapsulated and comprehended in ‘teaching’? The concise definition of pedagogy which we have adopted is:

“the act of teaching together with its attendant theory and discourse, which are collective, generalisable and open to public scrutiny. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decision of which teaching is constituted.” (adapted from Alexander, R. (2004)<sup>2</sup>).

In other words, pedagogy entails acquiring and exercising rather more expertise – intellectual and ethical – than is often understood by ‘teaching’. It “*brings together ... the act of teaching and the body of knowledge, argument and evidence in which it is embedded and by which particular classroom practices are justified*”<sup>3</sup>. It is these additional

aspects which, when they are made explicit, can be said to justify treating teaching as a profession. They are essentially what is involved in making professional judgements – “*the reflective judgement of mature expertise ... principled, informed and subtle*”<sup>4</sup>.

But because these aspects are often left implicit, they may be not fully understood, and can even be ignored or sidelined. Too often, as Simon argues, ‘teaching’ is perceived, even by teachers, as ‘a combination of pragmatism and ideology’.

At the heart of the concept of pedagogy is the notion of ‘expert professional knowledge’. This knowledge draws upon but is not limited to academic scholarship, and is “*grounded in different kinds of evidence, together with principles which have been distilled from collective understanding and experience.*”<sup>5</sup> Crucially, pedagogy in this sense is not only about the values and practices of individual teachers, but also encompasses the domains of curriculum and assessment, together with the social, cultural and policy context of young people’s learning. It means that teachers are not just technicians – or, to put it even more strongly, teachers are not just ‘teachers’, they are educators.

This is why we believed it important to begin leading the profession towards a national dialogue about what pedagogy is, and why and how it is crucial to the future of teaching. In 2007 we began a major piece of work, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and the British Educational Research Association to review the relationship between pedagogy and professional practice in England. The work was subsequently completed in partnership with the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council)<sup>6</sup>, and culminated in a project to define,

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group, aspects relating to the subjects to be taught, or *didaktika* and – linking all the elements – *metodika*, or ways of teaching them’.

4 Alexander, *op. cit.* p 8.

5 Alexander, *ibid.*

6 The GTCE began collaborating with Donald McIntyre, then Professor of Education at the University of Cambridge, on a

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1 Simon, B. (1981), ‘Why no pedagogy in England?’ in: Simon, B. and Taylor, W. (Eds) *Education in the eighties: the central issues*. Batsford, London.

2 Alexander, R. (2004), ‘Still no pedagogy? Principle, pragmatism and compliance in primary education’, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 34, 1, 7–33.

3 Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 10. Alexander goes on to say: ‘[In other countries] pedagogy encompasses: ‘general culture’ comprising philosophy, ethics, history, economics, literature, art and politics; together with elements relating to children and their learning – psychology, physiology, child development, child law; and as a third

# Pedagogy and the quality of teaching

disseminate and discuss with the profession the concepts and values underpinning ‘pedagogy’.

A key output from the project was the joint publication in June 2010 by the GTCE and TLRP of *Professionalism and pedagogy: A contemporary opportunity*<sup>7</sup>. The framework and commentary it contains aims to enhance the professional status and confidence of the profession by offering a means by which the pedagogical expertise of teaching can be surfaced, debated and enhanced. The issues, ideas and evidence outlined in this paper are discussed at length in the commentary itself.

Interestingly, in an Education White Paper *Your child, your schools, our future* around the same time, the then Government signalled an intention to lead a debate on ‘world class pedagogy’ (para 6.34). The National Strategies also outlined core principles of pedagogy in the recommended guidance document 2007, *Pedagogy and Personalisation*<sup>8</sup>. However, these conceptions of pedagogy are somewhat narrower than those put forward by Alexander and by the GTCE and TLRP.

At this point, it is necessary to acknowledge that a number of factors have been identified as having a strong influence on pupils’ learning outcomes; some commentators would reject a focus on the quality of teaching to the exclusion of other possible inputs, ranging from socio-economic factors (of both schools and pupils) and class size to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) or the deployment of support staff. Certainly, international comparisons – for example, the PISA study<sup>9</sup> results – suggest that England is particularly susceptible to the effects of socio-economic differences on pupils’ performance compared with the highest-performing countries.

However, evidence based on syntheses of numerous research and evaluation studies suggests that generally it is the quality of teaching that has the greatest impact on pupils’ learning experiences and outcomes. For example, Hattie’s meta-analysis of over 500,000 studies<sup>10</sup> identifies teaching quality as the strongest factor in pupils’ learning, apart from pupils themselves – over which policy can have little influence. The teaching factors Hattie identifies as most influential are ‘feedback’, ‘instructional quality’, ‘direct instruction’ and ‘remediation’.

It is therefore reasonable to continue to believe that the quality of teaching is central to the learning experiences and outcomes of young people. The McKinsey international review<sup>11</sup> of school systems identifies the unifying characteristic of the top-performing countries covered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as being their investment in and emphasis on the quality of teachers and teaching. This is achieved, according to the report, by the recruitment of top-flight graduates and the continuous

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British Educational Research Association review of pedagogy and professional practice. Sadly, Professor McIntyre died before completing the work. However, a paper he wrote entitled ‘Pedagogy for the UK: A useful project?’ guided the initial thinking of the project. Led by Lesley Saunders, then GTCE’s senior policy adviser for research, the task was subsequently taken to completion by Professor Andrew Pollard, Director of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme.

7 Pollard, A. (ed.) (2010), *op. cit.*

8 This publication presented pedagogy as having four domains: subject and curriculum knowledge; teaching repertoire of skills and techniques; conditions for learning and teaching; and learning models. It also contained a range of strategy materials and resources.

9 OECD (2010), *Pisa 2009 results: What students know and can do*, OECD, Paris.

10 Hattie, J.A.C. (2003), *Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence?* New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington.

11 Barber, M. and Mourshed, M. (2007), *How the world’s best-performing school systems come out on top*, McKinsey & Company, London.

## Critique of current context

development of those teachers. The report reiterates that there is a demonstrable positive relationship between teaching quality and pupils' learning outcomes, and that effective professional learning is the surest determinant of high quality teaching.

In 2009 the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) argued – in an impact assessment for a proposed Licence to Practise framework – that teaching quality is the single greatest determinant of pupil outcomes and that a focus on improving quality would lead to a reduction of in-school and inter-school variation. It provided a quantifiable financial justification for investing in teacher development, citing the studies by Sanders and Rivers<sup>12</sup> and Slater *et al.*<sup>13</sup>.

This focus on the quality of teacher supply and the importance of continuous professional learning for teachers is welcome as a way of ensuring the quality of teaching. However, these reports all do less justice to the issues of how expert professional knowledge or pedagogy, as outlined in the previous section, is defined, acquired, enacted, sustained and valued. The GTCE would argue that it is only through an expanded notion of pedagogy, accompanied by investment in the range of professional support and development activities it implies, that the 'quality of teaching' can accomplish the step-change improvement in pupils' learning experiences and outcomes that governments require and young people deserve.

Although the recent emergence of 'pedagogy' in policy discourse suggests that the quality of teaching is perceived as of overriding significance in the national education effort, this does not mean that everyone understands the same thing by it, nor that they recognise what is in reality involved in effective teaching. For example, Day writes: "A focus on pedagogy as distinct from mere technique helps promote a learning school – one in which teachers, pupils and others systematically commit to collaborative self-improvement on teaching and learning. Pupil learning is significantly enhanced by such teacher learning."<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, policy documents that have addressed pedagogical matters have tended to be characterised by the language of interventions and targets, and to appeal to common-sense rather than accrued findings from scholarly research.

It is worth quoting at length from Alexander<sup>15</sup> to indicate how much more nuanced our understanding of the professional practice of teaching needs to be:

*"... if an intelligent pedagogy dictates attention to domains of ideas and values ... it also requires that we are aware that such ideas can be, and are, engaged with in different ways. Simon ... commends the continental view of a science of teaching grounded in explicit principles relating to what children have in common. Eisner prefers the idea of teaching as an art in the sense that it is partly improvisatory, is 'influenced by qualities and contingencies that are unpredicted ... [and] the ends it achieves are often created in process' ... Argyris and Schön ... show how in understanding professional practice it is essential to distinguish the 'espoused theory ... to which one gives allegiance' (as in the science of teaching) from the 'theory-in-use' which actually, regardless of what one claims to others, informs one's practice. Taking this further, Sally Brown and Donald McIntyre reveal how the work of experienced teachers is, as a matter of day-to-day reality, grounded to a considerable extent in a craft knowledge of ideas, routines*

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12 Sanders, W. and Rivers, J. (1996), *Cumulative and Residual Effects on Future Student Academic Achievement*, University of Tennessee, Tennessee.

13 Slater, H. *et al.* (2009), *Do teachers matter? Measuring the variation in teacher effectiveness in England*, Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol, Bristol.

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14 Day C., (2007), *Teachers matter: Connecting work, lives and effectiveness*, Open University Press, Maidenhead.

15 Alexander, *op. cit.* p 13.

# The case for change

*and conditions, which they map empirically in respect of pupils, time, content, the material environment and teachers themselves ... Combining paradigms, Nate Gage ... and Maurice Galton commend the **science of the art** of teaching in which scientific pedagogic principles are applied 'in a flexible manner, according to the characteristics of a particular group of pupils, taking into account the context in which they are working ...'*

*"Clearly, pedagogy is a somewhat more complex enterprise than may be recognised by those who reduce effective teaching to 'what works', or 'best practice' lessons downloaded from ... websites."*

How then can we approach the issue of 'the quality of teaching?' The following section sets out some possibilities for approaching issues of quality in a holistic way – by thinking about *pedagogy*, rather than looking at only part of the picture by focusing on the narrow techniques and technologies of teaching.

There is now a need to develop an expanded conception of pedagogy – for the profession, policy-makers and the public – that encompasses and articulates the complex skills, specialist knowledge and shared ethical values that lie behind the professional judgements that every teacher makes. We believe that this will contribute to improving the quality of teaching and in turn will improve the learning experiences and outcomes for pupils.

## 1. Pedagogy and professionalism

Pedagogy is the core expertise of teaching and it is by virtue of progressively acquiring pedagogic skills and knowledge and mastering the expertise – through initial training, continuing development, reflection and classroom inquiry and regulated practice – that teachers are entitled to be treated as professionals.

The acquisition of this expertise is implicit in the existing professional standards for teaching, although we argue for revised standards with a much more explicit pedagogical focus<sup>16</sup>. Our vision for the teaching profession in England is reflected in the eight principles of the Code<sup>17</sup> and throughout the *Professionalism and Pedagogy* commentary<sup>18</sup>.

The core professional expertise of teachers also includes the capacity and responsibility to:

- develop suitable curriculum provision and deploy appropriate assessment methodologies for their pupils;
- deepen their practice through engagement in and with research ideas and evidence;
- contribute to the shared and structured body of knowledge about teaching; and
- be held accountable in the public interest for their professional behaviour, practice and decision-making.

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16 See paper 2, Standards-based professional practice, p. 13.

17 GTCE (2009), *Code of conduct and practice for registered teachers in England*, GTCE, London.

18 Pollard, A. (ed.) (2010), *op. cit.*

The first of these points is worth elaborating. The approach to assessment known as assessment for learning (AfL) has had significant success in improving pupils' learning; it has been recognised as a common feature of schools where pupils make good progress and where attainment gaps between different groups of pupils are narrowed. Furthermore, there is evidence<sup>19</sup> to show that AfL tends to develop successfully in teaching contexts where:

- pedagogical content and curriculum knowledge is strongest;
- teachers are engaged in collaborative professional development;
- classroom enquiry is supported by school leaders; and
- there are professional networking opportunities within and across schools.

However, if AfL is approached as a series of techniques to be applied in a standardised and routine way, then its capacity to lead to sustained improvement is not fulfilled. Teachers need an understanding of the concepts, values and evidence behind the approach so that they can use it in a contextually sensitive way, using professional judgement to create the optimum learning conditions<sup>20</sup>.

## 2. Accessing and analysing pedagogic expertise

It is one of the paradoxes of teaching that the more expert a teacher becomes the more their pedagogical expertise is shown in being able to make appropriate in-the-moment judgments, as if these were instinctive. In reality, they are sourced from deeply embedded and internalised professional knowledge. Such expert behaviours need to be made explicit, so they can be analysed, discussed and modelled. A focus on pedagogy in schools would enable the profession to become more confident about the nature

and characteristics of its expert practice.

We believe that teaching ought to be grounded in a pedagogic discourse that arises from teachers sharing and scrutinising the specific practices and kinds of knowledge which they acquire, together with the values in which these are rooted. This process would develop and strengthen a shared and authoritative professional language about teaching, learning and children, with the result that the decisions that teachers must make on a day-to-day basis can stand up to public and political scrutiny in terms of argument, evidence and espoused values.<sup>21</sup>

## 3. Creating professional knowledge

As a general point, we can say that professional knowledge is developed through a combination of acquiring core concepts, practising skills, reflecting on experience, gathering and appraising empirical evidence and espousing ethical principles. More specifically, the kinds of knowledge that teachers need to acquire have been defined by Schulman<sup>22</sup> like this:

*“Content knowledge’ is fundamental. Teachers who are in full command of the raw material of their subject are, without doubt, better able in principle to guide and support pupils. Such knowledge enables responsiveness so that extension, depth and quality can be pursued. However, teachers must also understand how to use such knowledge in their teaching. This ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ is what expert teachers draw on to connect the subject to the learner. The teacher understands the best way of explaining key points, of framing particular tasks, of using examples for their subject ... The third and final form of subject expertise is ‘curricular knowledge’. This concerns understanding of the way subject material is ordered, structured and assessed by national requirements, institutional policies or other circumstances.”*

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19 Webb, M. and Jones, J. (2009), ‘Exploring tensions in developing AfL’ in *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, vol. 16, issue 2.

20 Wiliam, D. (2007), *Content then process: Teacher learning communities in the service of formative assessment*, Solution Tree, Bloomington.

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21 See the introduction to Pollard, A. (ed.) (2010), *op. cit.* The publication contains a conceptual framework to be used as a tool for teachers to develop their own pedagogical discourse.

22 Cited at Pollard, A. (ed.) (2010), *op. cit.*, p 27.

One of the most valuable ways in which professional knowledge, and the language in which it is couched, can be collectively developed is through teacher-led research and inquiry – which is the theme of another of these papers<sup>23</sup>. A crucial part of pedagogic expertise comes from engaging in and with research ideas and evidence, which can stimulate reflective analysis of issues and deepen the professional judgments a teacher makes. The GTCE's Teacher Learning Academy (TLA)<sup>24</sup> was a prime example of structured reflection on practice leading to shared knowledge creation.

*Professionalism and pedagogy* proposes that teachers should be the main creators of professional knowledge-in-practice, and evidence suggests that such professional learning and knowledge creation is most effective in communities<sup>25</sup>. In these ways, professional knowledge can be developed without generating formulaic prescriptions for practice which may be come superseded or fail to convince theoretically, ethically or evidentially.

#### 4. Pedagogy and professional trust

Teachers are increasingly active in shaping and defining their own professionalism. This sense of collective responsibility to pupils, parents and the public should be seen as an important element in system change<sup>26</sup>. Creating a credible and authoritative account of pedagogy through collective knowledge creation and scrutiny is important for individual teachers, the profession and the public interest.

Public trust in the profession is strengthened when teachers are able to give a convincing account of their professional expertise and of the pedagogical substance

behind their judgements. In so doing, teachers will articulate a valid educational rationale grounded in educational principles and tested through empirical evidence; they will provide clear explanations of pedagogical strategies, and they will be able to point to evaluations of their teaching approaches as evidence of their commitment to continuing improvement. This will be a contribution from the profession towards an enlightened accountability regime – for further discussion, see the paper in this publication on accountability in teaching<sup>27</sup>.

In our efforts to help to secure and sustain this collective sense of professionalism, we have emphasised the value of peer mentoring and coaching and of partnerships, particularly those which:

- encourage knowledge and practice transfer between schools;
- develop communities of practice that are reflexive, collaborative, research-informed; and
- hold each other to account for their professional judgements<sup>28</sup>.

Such 'warranted communities', of which the GTCE's TLA was an example, can significantly enhance the public trust in teachers and teaching.

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23 See paper 8, Research-informed practice, p. 97.

24 In June 2011, the Cathedrals Group of universities and university colleges established a national TLA consortium of 11 higher education institutions to purchase the TLA intellectual property assets. The launch of a reinvigorated TLA is anticipated in autumn 2011.

25 Bolam, R. et al. (2005), *Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities*. DfES, London.

26 Demos (2008), *DIY Professionalism*, Demos, London.

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27 See paper 4, Accountability, p. 45.

28 GTCE (2009), *Your child, your schools, our future: A response to the White Paper*, GTCE, London, paras 31-37.

## Equality and diversity

We believe that all teachers need the skills, opportunities, expert support and permission to develop their pedagogical expertise in the interests of learners. Questions this raises are:

- with increasing diversity among schools, will these opportunities be equitably distributed and resourced? and
- how and by whom will the situation be monitored and addressed?

Public interest demands that learning environments be of the same high quality for all pupils, and that pedagogical expertise be seen to be of greatest importance in areas of greatest need and challenge.

## Pedagogy: proposals

### Government should:

- make clear that government responsibility is to set the direction of policy and strategy, whilst allowing teachers to take appropriate professional responsibility for the domains of pedagogy, assessment and curriculum;
- review the professional standards to ensure they articulate a nuanced account of pedagogical expertise and its development as teachers progress and, where appropriate, as they move into specialist pedagogical leadership roles;
- encourage the systematic use of a tool such as the GTCE/TLRP framework to develop pedagogical discourse in schools nationally;
- support the development of teacher-led local networks and specialist practice groups for building capacity; and
- promote research-informed practice through the professional standards.

### School leadership should:

- be trained to give prominence to pedagogical development and meet standards of pedagogical leadership in the role that they perform;
- support the development of pedagogy by creating robust performance management processes which facilitate dialogue about pedagogical issues as well as about the practicalities of teaching and learning;
- make use of tools such as the GTCE/TLRP framework to enhance professional dialogue and development opportunities within and across schools;
- actively encourage inter-school collaboration and peer accountability; and
- actively encourage communities of practice within and across schools which utilise research ideas and evidence to support professional learning.

### **Providers of teacher education (initial and continuing) should:**

- further develop the capacity and appetite to engage in and with scholarly ideas and research evidence amongst beginning teachers and their mentors;
- engage teachers with such tools as the GTCE/TLRP framework in order to develop a more articulated pedagogical discourse; and
- make explicit the link between the professional standards and pedagogical development.

### **Academics in university departments of education should:**

- ensure as far as possible that their scholarly thinking on pedagogy and related issues is made accessible by various means to teacher trainers and educators; and
- take opportunities to act as research intermediaries and work with teachers to broaden and deepen their professional knowledge.

### **Teachers should be both entitled and required to:**

- take responsibility for their professional learning, with input from experts as and when appropriate;
- be willing to work with mentors/coaches and peers to create and scrutinise professional knowledge-in-practice;
- give accounts of the conceptual and ethical thinking behind their professional decisions; and
- be open to peer and public scrutiny as a means of articulating and justifying their professional expertise.





## PAPER 8

# RESEARCH-INFORMED PRACTICE

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In this paper we examine the many benefits that can accrue from ‘research-informed’ practice, in which teachers engage with existing research ideas and evidence, or participate in new research.

We also examine the strong evidence for these benefits. A recent systematic review of practitioners’ use of research found evidence of a connection between research engagement and reported improvements in teaching skills and knowledge. Other benefits of engaging in or with research included increased confidence, motivation and professional growth.

Also, our own 2010 Survey of Teachers found that approximately two-thirds of teachers who had undertaken their own research, or had recently used existing research, reported that they had found this professionally useful.

While evidence for the benefits is growing, engagement with research is not consistently embedded across all schools and in all classrooms. Our 2010 Survey found that teachers wanted more opportunities to undertake research but did not always feel supported to do so by their schools. Only one-quarter of teachers reported that their school encouraged them to undertake their own enquiry projects or to use research to inform their practice.

We believe that teacher engagement with or in research is a powerful form of professional development and therefore we have worked to develop the research literacy of teachers. This paper proposes that research-informed practice should be regarded as a cornerstone of pedagogy, enabling a deeper understanding of teaching and learning, and underpinning professional dialogue on teaching.

Considerable barriers remain to achieving a system where research-informed practice is accepted, understood and embedded, both at classroom/school level and at system level. Barriers faced by teachers include lack of confidence in skills and lack of time. Other challenges exist in the system, around how researchers engage practitioners in their research, the accessibility of existing research knowledge, and how knowledge from teacher-led research is generated and captured. This paper considers these challenges and puts forward proposals which could begin to address them.

Quality of teaching is increasingly recognised as a crucial factor in raising the level of performance of national education systems<sup>1</sup>. It has been argued<sup>2</sup> that achieving a step change in learning outcomes in England – including examination results – will require improvements both to the way in which entrants to teaching are selected, trained and inducted in future<sup>3</sup> and to the quality of teaching in schools currently.

The focus of this paper is the role that research can and should have in enhancing teaching quality. Research-informed practice draws on scholarly theories and empirical evidence to challenge and deepen the day-to-day routines of teaching and to improve the experience and outcomes of learning for pupils. Government, school leadership teams, providers of teacher education and departments of education in universities all have an opportunity and a responsibility to create the conditions in which teachers can become more research-literate – able to draw on the ideas and evidence from research to inform their own practice.

In this paper we therefore:

- offer a definition and brief description of ‘research-informed practice’;
- outline the potential relationship between research and the quality of teaching;
- critique the recent context for producing educational research for teaching;
- explore different models of research engagement by teachers and examine the barriers to research-informed practice;
- outline the GTCE’s contribution to research-informed practice;
- make the case for change on both the ‘supply’ side and the ‘demand’ side; and
- put forward policy proposals for the future.

### What is research-informed practice?

‘Research-informed practice’ comprises a wide range of activity by teachers, from using a piece of research to stimulate reflection on practice to undertaking a substantive research project as part of a Masters or Doctoral programme. In broad terms, we can think of teachers engaging *with* existing research through, for example, discussing particular research findings at a continuing professional development (CPD) event; and of teachers engaging *in* research, either as part of a researcher-led team or in designing and undertaking a school-based research project. Engaging *in* research necessitates engaging *with* research in order to inform the research project and situate it in existing knowledge.

Practitioners can be involved with or in research in both formal and informal ways. Saunders<sup>4</sup> expands the range of activities constituting engagement with and in research. She writes that teachers are:

- directly accessing research intelligence, for example through websites, reading groups, researcher-in-school schemes, as well as journals and other print media;
- participating as active subjects in externally-generated studies;
- making a contribution to externally-generated studies, for example by helping to collect and analyse data;
- undertaking research as part of their accredited professional studies;
- undertaking specific teacher-research activities outside accredited study;
- actively experimenting in their own classroom using a reflective-evaluative enquiry approach; and
- working in pairs or groups to read, analyse and discuss research relevant to professional and school development, and to design collaborative studies within or even across schools.

There has been a long and venerable tradition of teacher involvement *in* research and enquiry in the UK since the

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1 See paper 7, Pedagogy, p. 87.

2 William, D. (2010), *Teacher quality: how to get more of it*, paper presented to Spectator ‘Schools Revolution’ conference, 15 March 2011, London.

3 See paper 3, Entry to teaching, p. 27.

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4 See also Saunders, L. (2007), *Supporting Teachers’ Engagement in and with Research*, BERA/TLRP, London.

1970s, with Stenhouse's work leading the way in arguing that 'systematic inquiry made public' was at the core of teaching<sup>5</sup>.

In the government-sponsored agenda of the late-1990s (see below), the talk was about 'evidence-based' teaching, on an analogy with the 1980s model of evidence-based medicine. Over time, the term 'research-informed' teaching has come to be used as the more appropriate term, partly because knowledge from research is conceptual as well as evidential, and partly because research can provide only some of the resource for teachers' decision-making<sup>6</sup>.

## The potential relationship between research-informed practice and the quality of teaching

Research-informed practice plays a central role in what the GTCE understands by good teaching. This is because good teaching is not just a matter of delivering the curriculum or motivating pupils, crucial though these are. Good teaching consists in acquiring detailed knowledge and understanding (of subjects, skills, concepts, values, etc), and in exercising nuanced professional judgement in deciding between courses of action.

As the growing evidence-base indicates, research-informed practice strengthens teachers' professional identities and capacities. A recent systematic review of the field<sup>7</sup> found that "*there is extensive evidence on links between engagement with and in research, and benefits*

*for teachers*". The review found that the majority of the reported practitioner outcomes related to improvements in pedagogical skill and knowledge; several of the reviewed studies also reported that there were benefits to content knowledge. Other outcomes included confidence, motivation and professional growth (10 out of 25 studies<sup>8</sup>). Similarly, the influential ESRC-funded Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) has drawn together the findings of its large-scale ten-year research activity in the form of ten principles for effective teaching and learning, among which is highlighted the centrality of teacher engagement with research – "*effective pedagogy engages with valued forms of knowledge*"<sup>9</sup>.

An alternative perspective would be to consider the risks in not using scholarly research to inform practice, especially when there is a powerful market in educational 'solutions'. It is crucial that teachers have the confidence and, as Hagger notes, the humility to "*question, interrogate, research and above all be wary of the snake-oil merchants who will, for example, sell you learning styles instead of encouraging you to engage with the research on learning strategies*"<sup>10</sup>. An understanding of the state of research in various areas of teaching and learning – including the extent of current attested knowledge, together with any counter-evidence – would allow teachers critically to examine the merits of educational interventions and solutions, and to draw their own conclusions regarding whether and how to implement them. This would equip teachers with the skills and knowledge to treat unevidenced interventions with due caution; and, perhaps even more importantly, it would enable teachers to interrogate and understand the theories and evidence behind interventions that *are* supported by research – and this is likely to facilitate their implementation.

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5 Stenhouse, L. (1979), *Research as a Basis for Teaching: Inaugural lecture at the University of East Anglia*, UEA, Norwich. Subsequently published in Stenhouse, L. (1983), *Authority, education and emancipation*, Heinemann, London.

6 See, for example, the arguments put forward in Hammersley, M. (2001), *Some questions about evidence-based practice in education*, paper presented at the symposium on 'Evidenced-based practice in education' at the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association, University of Leeds, September 2001.

7 Bell, M., et al. (2010), *Report of professional practitioner use of research review: Practitioner engagement in and/or with research*, Curee, Coventry.

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8 Saunders, L. (2007), *op. cit.*

9 James, M. and Pollard, A. (eds) (2006), *Improving teaching and learning in schools: A Commentary by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme*, TLRP, London.

10 Hagger, H. (2009), Keynote speech to GTCE event, 'Professionalism, research-informed practice and pedagogy', November 2009 (unpublished).

But we must remember that the practice of education is complex, and depends upon teachers' personal professional values and their intuitive judgements arising from experience, as well as on explicit collective knowledge and formally-acquired skills. Research does not, and never could, provide teachers with ready-made or complete answers to pedagogical problems nor with comprehensive evidence of 'what works' – as is argued below. However, research can and should guide and support teachers in developing, scrutinising and deepening their professional practice. Research can offer teachers a systematic approach to thinking about a problem, or evaluations of interventions that have been shown to be effective in similar contexts, or the tools for effective reflective practice. As Saunders summarises:

*“The GTCE has long argued that research activity – theory building, hypothesis testing, critical analysis and appraisal, evaluation, synthesis, as well as the gathering of empirical evidence within an explicit ethical framework – is, and must be seen to be, relevant to the teaching profession, and more generally, to a society which takes education seriously. For although the relationship between research and practice is neither simple, nor direct, research is not an optional extra”*<sup>11</sup>

## Challenges in the production of educational research for teaching

Considerable – sometimes heated – debate about the relationship between research and practice in education has taken place over the last 15 or so years. The main aspects of the debate have focused on whether and how the interface and interaction between educational research and education practice can or should be strengthened. Large questions have been raised about the proper role of academic research – by its nature often inconclusive, theoretical and/or highly complex, and published in specialised journals – in attempting to influence what happens in the classroom; and also about how teacher-led research is conducted, supported, disseminated and valued.

The relationship between the two domains of research and practice is not straightforward, and there is no simple direct way in which academic researchers produce research evidence, which teachers can then apply to their practice. This arises for a variety of reasons, including systemic differences between schools and universities in their organisation, funding arrangements, timescales for decision-making and institutional cultures; differences between teachers and academics in their professional career structures and incentives; and differences in the quality assurance and accountability regimes. Such systemic differences have sometimes manifested themselves as stereotypes: a typical example might be, “researchers are lost in thought; practitioners are missing in action”<sup>12</sup>.

In the mid- to late-1990s, criticisms of the ‘demand-and-supply’ in educational research came to a head with the publication of a number of high-profile reports<sup>13</sup>.

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12 Desforges, C. (2009), ‘Foreword’, in Morris, A. (2009), *Evidence matters: towards informed professionalism for educators*, CfBT Education Trust, Reading, p. 4.

13 The most influential were Hargreaves, D. (1996), ‘Teaching as a research-based profession: possibilities and prospects’, *The Teacher Training Agency Lecture*, April 1996; Hillage, J., et al. (1998), *Excellence in research on schools*, Research Report RR74, Department for Education and Employment, London; and Tooley, J. and Darby, D. (1998), *Educational research: A critique*, Ofsted, London.

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11 Saunders, L. (2007), *op. cit.*

These included the alleged failure of researchers to involve teachers in the design of studies, the irrelevance of research to the concerns of schools and teaching, and a lack of accessibility, both linguistic and material, of the results of research; whilst criticisms of teachers and policy-makers were levelled at their supposed lack of interest in evidence, their unwillingness to read widely and deeply, and their reliance on personal experience, hearsay and individual preference or prejudice.

Government bodies and agencies took these challenges seriously and the critiques were followed by a sustained effort to reform both educational research and the use of research findings by policy-makers and practitioners in the UK.

The then Teacher Training Agency (TTA) took practical steps to promote teaching as a research-based profession<sup>14</sup>; in 1999 it set up the National Teacher Research Panel (NTRP)<sup>15</sup>, to provide an expert teacher view on research priorities and projects to researchers and policymakers, to ensure that the teacher perspective has been taken into account in all education research, and to increase the number of teachers engaged with research activity.

In 2000, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) made its largest investment in education research, specifically aimed at supporting research-informed teaching and policy-making. Over the ten years of its life, the TLRP<sup>16</sup> has involved over 700 researchers in 70 projects in all sectors in education. A central commitment of the programme was to ‘user engagement for relevance and quality’; project teams were encouraged and supported to work with practitioners across the duration of the research process.

And for the four years 2002 to 2006 the Department for

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14 In his 1996 TTA lecture, Prof David Hargreaves had called for the establishment of a National Education Research Forum and for a national educational research strategy (in Hargreaves, D. (1996), *op. cit.*).

15 See the NTRP website at [www.ntrp.org.uk](http://www.ntrp.org.uk)

16 See the TLRP website at [www.tlrp.org](http://www.tlrp.org)

Education and Skills itself set up and funded the Best Practice Research Scholarships scheme, which was very well thought of by the teachers who took part.

Not surprisingly, the earlier tradition of teacher research informed many of the local activities that sprang up in the wake of the TTA, TLRP and other central initiatives, including those instigated by local authorities, like the Forum for Learning and Research in Education (Flare) established by Essex local authority<sup>17</sup>.

A powerful driver for these initiatives was the hope that research would provide unambiguous evidence on ‘what works’ in education. One problem with this notion is that teachers and policy-makers need to know not only what works, but what works for whom, how, why and under what circumstances, how cost-effective it is, and what the unintended consequences are – a somewhat less straightforward formulation. Secondly, the idea that research can prove what works is an oversimplification of what happens in the border territory between research, policy and practice, and it led to much counter-criticism by academics<sup>18</sup>.

A more useful way of conceptualising the relationship can be found in the social care sector, which has a strong tradition of using research. Walter *et al.*<sup>19</sup> offer three different models of research use:

1. the **embedded research** model, in which evaluation evidence about the effectiveness of different interventions in social care is embedded in policies,

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17 Bell, M. *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.* or Handscomb, G. and MacBeath, J. (2003), *The research engaged school*, Essex County Council, Chelmsford.

18 See, for example, Biesta, G.J.J. (2007), ‘Why ‘what works’ won’t work. Evidence-based practice and the democratic deficit of educational research’, *Educational Theory*, 57 (1), pp. 1-22; Myhill, D.A. and Jones, S.M. (2007), ‘What works? Engaging in research to shape policy: The case of grammar’, *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 6 (7), pp. 61-75; Whitty, G. (2006), ‘Education(al) research and education policy making’, *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(2), pp. 159-176.

19 Walter, I., *et al.* (2004), ‘Improving the use of research in social care practice’, *SCIE Knowledge Review 7*, SCIE/Policy Press, Bristol.

guidelines and tools for practice – practitioners may not even realise that research underlies the policies or resources;

2. the **organisational excellence** model, in which social care delivery organisations make efforts to institute a culture of inquiry-based development through appropriate leadership, organisation and incentives; and
3. the **research-based practitioner** model, in which individual practitioners are responsible for keeping up with research and using findings in their everyday practice. When practitioners confront a practice problem, they engage with (and possibly in) research, appraise what they find, and then take a decision on how to integrate the research/evidence with their own practice based on their own and other knowledge.

In education, the interaction between research and practice continues to be contested and challenging, but the longer-term benefits for teachers' professional practice are becoming clearer. Ways of addressing the challenges are continually being sought and often found.

## How teachers do and can use research and evidence in teaching and learning

The typology developed for a systematic review of the impact of teachers' use of research<sup>20</sup> (commissioned by GTCE amongst others) reiterates a basic way of distinguishing between two types of research engagement.

- **'Researcher-led'** studies are planned, analysed and reported by researchers with practitioners involved to some limited extent in data collection, literature review and/or the development end of the research and development spectrum. The reviewers describe this use of research as engagement with, rather than in, research. Teachers may derive benefit for their own practice by being introduced to educational theories, research techniques and the rationales underpinning them.
- Engagement in research happens when teachers are

undertaking **'practitioner-led'** studies, which are wholly and directly designed, planned, implemented, analysed and reported by teachers themselves. Often this activity takes place as part of Masters or Doctoral level study. One of the enduring issues this kind of research raises is how the outcomes can be shared with other teachers and contribute to the body of academic knowledge in the field.

This review found strong evidence of a connection between research engagement and reported improvements in teaching skills and knowledge, and other benefits included increased confidence, motivation and professional growth.

Yet, generally speaking, although interest in teachers' use of research is growing<sup>21</sup>, evidence about the actual extent to which teachers are engaged in or with research is not plentiful. Two datasets that have shed some light on the issue are the GTCE annual *Survey of Teachers*<sup>22</sup> and research carried out by Mori in 2004 amongst 3,000 primary and secondary teachers in England and Wales. Mori found that 42 per cent of teachers reported frequently using research and evidence to inform professional development or classroom practice<sup>23</sup>. These data offer only basic insights, however, without revealing exactly what practitioners mean by 'using research'.

In the 2010 GTCE survey, teachers reported that engaging in or with research was a useful way to improve their practice. One-third of survey respondents said that they had undertaken their own research or enquiry to improve their practice in the last 12 months<sup>24</sup>. Of the respondents who had had some engagement either in or with research

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21 see, for example, Rickinson, M. (2005), *Practitioners' use of research: A research review for the National Evidence for Education Portal (NEEP) Development Group*, NERF Working Paper 7.5, NERF, London, p. 9.

22 This was an annual representative survey of registered teachers in England commissioned and managed by the GTCE.

23 Rickinson, M. (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 12.

24 Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *Survey of Teachers 2010: Support to improve teaching practice*, GTCE, London, p. 9.

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20 Bell, M. *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*

# Barriers to research

in the previous two years the vast majority had found it useful: 86 per cent said that undertaking their own research had been useful and 76 per cent said that using other's research findings had been useful<sup>25</sup>.

Taken together, these figures would suggest that some level of engagement is taking place, but the question of what respondents define as research remains. Indeed, more in-depth research looking at just this issue suggests that engagement has been 'superficial or limited'<sup>26</sup>.

It is worth remarking that 29 per cent of teachers in the GTCE survey reported that they had not undertaken any research themselves, and 24 per cent had not used the research of others in the previous two years. The survey also found that six out of ten respondents said they would like more opportunity to do their own research<sup>27</sup>. 'Opportunity' does not mean only time set aside for research: engagement in research involves intellectual challenge, as teachers grapple with different ways of constructing new knowledge.

So it appears that significant barriers remain to developing research engagement in the teaching profession. They include:

- inaccessibility of academic research as a resource for teachers;
- time, opportunity and priorities;
- activating research in the classroom;
- skills and knowledge;
- management and other support; and
- status of teacher-led research.

We examine each of these below.

## Inaccessibility of academic research as a resource for teachers

Academic research is written in a form that complies with the conventions of scholarship, and published in specialised journals whose subscriptions are often expensive. An unintended consequence of this is that research that could be of great relevance to practice has been inaccessible to the vast majority of teachers. The final report of the Strategic Forum for Research in Education (SFRE) found that this is a major barrier to use of research in schools and classrooms:

*“And yet it was apparent that the exchange and use of knowledge is constrained by the bonds of sectors, disciplines, roles and national jurisdictions. In short, too much knowledge about education in the UK is locked away. Often, this is caused by the boundaries of professional activity, with researchers, practitioners and policy-makers working in relative isolation from each other – but it is also about the accessibility of information which should be in the public domain.”<sup>28</sup>*

## Time, opportunity and priorities

A common complaint by teachers is that there is insufficient time within an ordinary school day, week or term to devote to activities that are not directly concerned with the immediate necessities of lesson planning, marking and assessment and so on. Insufficient time to plan, construct, analyse or engage with other processes of research is reported by practitioners as a barrier to further engagement<sup>29</sup>. In the GTCE's 2010 survey of teachers, 45 per cent of early career and 50 per cent of long-service teachers<sup>30</sup> reported that they did not feel that their school

25 *ibid.*

26 Rickinson, M. (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 13.

27 Poet, H., *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*

28 Pollard, A. and Oancea, A. (2010), *Unlocking learning? Towards evidence-informed policy and practice in education. Report of the UK Strategic Forum for Research in Education, 2008-2010*, SFRE, London, p. 4.

29 Bell, M. *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*

30 Early careers teachers are those with less than five years experience, long service teachers have more than ten years.



encouraged them to undertake their own enquiry<sup>31</sup>. Around six in 10 early career and long service teachers felt they did not have frequent opportunities to discuss research findings.

## Activating research in the classroom

Sometimes, knowledge is not enough: an example that demonstrates the need to go ‘beyond dissemination’ (see below) arose in a study of teachers’ understanding of assessment for learning (AfL). The majority of teachers had heard about AfL and were able to recount at least some of the characteristics of the approach, but only 20 per cent demonstrated the approach authentically in their practice<sup>32</sup>.

## Skills and knowledge

Practitioners report lack of skills and/or lack of confidence in skills as a barrier to engaging in and undertaking research. This includes having the skills to make judgements on the quality of a piece of research in order to attach weight to its importance and skills to activate it. In undertaking research, teachers often feel they lack specific methodological skills<sup>33</sup>. Lack of skills needed to conduct successful research can also present a barrier. This includes knowledge and understanding of research methods and processes themselves – for example analysis, recording and observation, reporting and presenting findings<sup>34</sup>.

As the curriculum for initial teacher training has become increasingly crowded, pre-training for teachers in inquiry-led development and research skills has been difficult to include. There is a lack of expectation in some initial

teacher education routes that research engagement is part of becoming a teaching professional. Coate *et al.* have, for example, suggested that the literature in higher education is not as focused on the empirical relationship between teaching and learning as it could be<sup>35</sup>. Pendry and Husbands state that not much is known about what research is accessed by beginning teachers, nor how they use it<sup>36</sup>.

Additionally, in a time of ongoing government-led educational reform, CPD for serving teachers has often been designed to support the implementation of new initiatives and requirements.

## Management and other support

Evidence from the systematic review on the impact of research engagement on teachers’ practice highlighted the ways in which relationships can be less than effective, such as inappropriate facilitation or lack of management support<sup>37</sup>.

## Status of teacher-led research

In the hierarchy of knowledge production, academic research undertaken in universities is assumed – partly because of the apparatus of doctoral training, peer review, etc. – to be superior in originality and rigour to practitioner research undertaken in schools. It has been hard for teacher-research to become visible as a resource for other teachers, let alone for academics and policy-makers:

*“Because teachers’ engagement in/with research involves a dynamic mixture of empirical enquiry, experimenting with new approaches and is often supplemented by peer observation and support, the work is not usually undertaken or reported in forms that are traditional for research”*<sup>38</sup>

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31 Poet, H., *et al.* (2011), *Survey of Teachers 2010: Support to improve teaching practice: Analysis by teacher role and experience*, GTCE, London.

32 Marshall, B. and Drummond, M. J. (2006), ‘How teachers engage with Assessment for Learning: Lessons from the classroom’, *Research Papers in Education*, 21(2), pp. 133-149, in P. Cordingley (2009), *Using research and evidence as a lever for change at classroom level*, Curee, Coventry.

33 Hargreaves, D. (1996), *op. cit.*

34 Bell, M. *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

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35 Coate, K. *et al.* (2001), p. 159, in Rickinson, M. (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 9

36 Pendry, A. and Husbands C. (2000), ‘Research and practice in history teacher education’, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 30, pp. 321-334.

37 Bell, M. *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 34.

38 GTCE (2003), *Research for teachers: Teachers and school-based research*, GTCE, London.

# The GTCE'S role in promoting research-informed practice

From our inception we have promoted the concept of research-informed practice as part of our policy advice on how to strengthen teachers' professional development. We subsequently commissioned, often jointly with other agencies, several projects and ongoing resources to support teachers' engagement in and with research. These ranged from improving teachers' practical access to research ideas and evidence to the establishment in 2003 of a major new professional learning initiative founded on systematic inquiry, the Teacher Learning Academy (TLA)<sup>39</sup>.

Below, we expand on these four aspects of our role in promoting research-informed practice:

- access to research studies;
- research-informed practice as a core principle of teaching;
- new opportunities for inquiry-led professional development; and
- research as a basis for decision-making at the GTCE.

## Access to research studies

Research outputs designed for teachers need to:

- be on topics relevant to teaching and be focused on, or clearly connected to, classroom situations;
- be brief (so teachers can quickly decide if the topic is likely to be useful to them);
- be well laid out and clearly signposted, and written in crisp and clear language; and
- contain case studies as illustrations of key principles and factors<sup>40</sup>.

Our online research summaries *Research for Teachers*<sup>41</sup> –

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39 In June 2011, the Cathedrals Group of universities and university colleges established a national TLA consortium of 11 higher education institutions to purchase the TLA intellectual property assets. The launch of a reinvigorated TLA is anticipated in autumn 2011.

40 See Saunders, D. *et al.* (2005), Cordingley, P. (2000), Olivero, F. *et al.* (2004), Rickinson, M. and Reid, A. (2003), in Rickinson, M. (2005) *op. cit.*, p. 25.

41 Over 60 summaries were finally published in the series, which was previously called *Research of the Month*. The summaries will continue to be available, as part of the purchase of the TLA intellectual

built up over nine years – exemplified these principles by offering teachers and other key audiences access to over 60 summaries, thematic syntheses and CPD tools, grounded in research content and theory, and on topics directly relevant to classroom teaching.

## Research-informed practice as a core principle of teaching

In revising the *Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers* (effective from October 2009), we took due account of the weight of evidence about the positive impact on teaching of using research. The Code accordingly set the expectation that registered teachers – as part of maintaining the quality of their practice – base their practice on knowledge of their subject area(s) and specialisms, and *make use of research about teaching and learning*<sup>42</sup>.

## New opportunities for inquiry-led professional development

Our position has continued to be that teacher engagement with or in research is a powerful form of professional learning and development. In offering structured opportunities for inquiry-led professional development, the Teacher Learning Academy enjoined teachers to engage in or with research and evidence at each stage of participation. A subsequent evaluation showed that participation in TLA was valued not least because it offers teachers an inquiry-led process, rather than a specific programme<sup>43</sup>.

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property (see note 39 above).

42 GTCE (2009), *The code of conduct and practice for registered teachers*, GTCE, London.

43 Lord, P., *et al.* (2009), *Evaluation of the GTCE's Teacher Learning Academy (TLA): Impacts on teachers, pupils and schools*, GTCE, London.

# The case for change

## Research as a basis for decision-making at the GTCE

We have ourselves had a commitment to research-informed decision-making: for example, the design of and planning for the TLA was based on evidence from several systematic reviews on those forms of professional development that have high impact on practice.

## The case for change on the ‘demand-side’ and the ‘supply-side’

The above discussion indicates that, although there have been many developments in research-informed practice over the last few years, there remain some important changes to be made or followed through, some of which are on the ‘demand-side’ (teachers and schools) and others on the ‘supply-side’ (researchers and universities).

## Making research-informed practice a cornerstone of pedagogy

The systematic review cited earlier<sup>44</sup> provides convincing evidence about the positive impact of the use of research on specific pedagogic skills and knowledge. Another important contribution made to teaching by the processes and values of research is, in Hagger’s words, “*a thoughtful exploration of complexity ...*”<sup>45</sup>. Engaging in and with research helps teachers, and those who support them, to understand the complex nature of teaching expertise or pedagogy.

Our own commitment to research-informed practice is supported by the argument developed in collaboration with the ESRC-funded TLRP on the importance of pedagogic discourse. The GTCE believes that engagement in and with research helps teachers to:

- make their beliefs and tacit knowledge explicit, and reflect collectively on pedagogy, assessment, the curriculum and school leadership;
- scrutinise, compare and appraise theories underpinning their own and others’ practice;
- unpick simplistic notions of cause and effect;
- develop new ideas and concepts from a foundation of existing good practice and theory;
- create, interpret, share and rigorously evaluate practical evidence about teaching and learning in different contexts;
- be engaged individually and collectively in the spectrum of research/enquiry from individual classroom-based action research to large-scale ‘academic’ studies; and
- develop the knowledge and understanding to make robust assessments of the evidence associated with particular interventions to establish their credibility.

As argued elsewhere in this publication<sup>46</sup>, the profession needs to continue to develop its capacity to engage in

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44 Bell, M. *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*

45 Hagger, H. (2009), *op. cit.*

46 See paper 7, Pedagogy, p. 87.

pedagogical discourse. Research-informed practice is the means by which teachers can create a sound professional knowledge base that commands credibility as specialist pedagogical expertise, as well as providing a strong rationale for the decisions they make<sup>47</sup>.

### Developing future pedagogical strategies in response to pedagogical problems

As Saunders notes, research-informed practice becomes even more pressing when considering how little is known about the pedagogies and curricula necessary to address some of the newly-diagnosed problems and serious psycho-social needs that children are bringing into the classroom<sup>48</sup>. These include the challenges for teaching and learning brought about by autistic spectrum disorders, very premature birth, foetal alcohol syndrome, or, on the social side, childhood trauma, refugee status, and so forth.

Saunders suggests that a culture of practitioner-led research engagement in schools might be well-placed to respond to these challenges, whilst arguing that the requisite research knowledge and support will need to come from all relevant higher education disciplines – education itself through pedagogical research, but also for example neuroscience, clinical psychology, and social care. Cross-institution and inter-disciplinary collaboration; ease of access to appropriate expertise; a whole-school culture of engagement in and with research (with leadership-level commitment to it): all of these will all be necessary.

It follows that practitioners need to be more involved in the setting of research priorities and in undertaking integrated research-and-development work in education: it is the “*integration of research with development on pedagogic problems that is so under-represented in*

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47 Saunders, L. (2009), ‘An island waiting to be discovered’: *research-informed professional practice*, GTCE Networks site [www.gtce.org.uk/networks/personal\\_cpd/research\\_practice/discovery/](http://www.gtce.org.uk/networks/personal_cpd/research_practice/discovery/)

48 Saunders, L. (2007), *op. cit.*

*education*”<sup>49</sup>. In reality it often seems, in Desforges’ words, that the Government “*drives the main research agenda: often, it seems, by fixing research priorities from headline panics*”<sup>50</sup>.

### Providing a starting point for development and improving practice

Evidence suggests that teachers’ motivation to access and use research is primarily triggered by practical challenges they face in the classroom to which they wish to find an effective solution<sup>51</sup>. Whilst research cannot provide generic straightforward answers to these highly context-specific problems – indeed, research often raises new or more questions<sup>52</sup> – it can provide teachers with concepts, methods, techniques and tools for investigating the problems, for reflecting on their current practice and for evaluating possible solutions. Ninety-seven per cent of teachers responding to the GTCE survey reporting that reflecting on their own practice was ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ useful in improving their teaching<sup>53</sup>; developing teachers’ understanding of research would equip them with the skills to better structure, consider and act on their reflections. But evidence<sup>54</sup> also suggests that for reflection to have an impact on pupil outcomes it must lead to teachers *changing* their practice – by taking risks and trying new strategies.

### Developing the necessary skills base

Research-informed practice involves practitioners actively accessing research to support their practice

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49 Morris, A. (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 14.

50 Desforges, C. (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

51 DETYA (2000), *The impact of educational research*, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra; note in particular ch. 3, ‘Backtracking practice and policies to research’; cited in Rickinson, M. (2005) *op. cit.*, p. 16.

52 Sharp, C., *et al.* (2005), *Postcards from research-engaged schools*, NFER, Slough, pp. 74-75.

53 GTCE (2010), *Drivers of improvement in teaching quality: An analysis of research findings from the Survey of Teachers 2010 and a qualitative study with teachers*, GTCE, London.

54 Bell, M. *et al.* (2010), *op. cit.*

and development, and having skills and time to engage critically with the research base. Recent survey evidence and follow-up qualitative work suggest that practitioners are more comfortable using informal approaches to identifying areas for improvement in their practice such as self-reflection, discussions with colleagues and observations<sup>55</sup>. Moreover, it is likely that ‘information gathering’ is sometimes confused with ‘research’. In part this may be related to confidence and ability in grappling with the complexities of research and assessing its relevance and quality.

Master and Doctoral programmes are the most common route for teachers to develop research-based skills and knowledge, though many departments of education in universities are working with teachers outside of such programmes, and this provision will continue to be needed. The Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL), introduced by the previous Government, appeared to be another step in the right direction, as this qualification provided teachers with the support, time and space to develop their research knowledge and skills. While the current Secretary of State for Education has said he is committed to teaching becoming a ‘masters-level profession’, funding for the MTL ceased in December 2010.

The skills of – and incentives for – academic researchers with regard to research dissemination and involving practitioners in research also need addressing. This is discussed below.

## Embedding a research culture in schools

The conditions and environment of the school have a considerable impact on a teacher’s capacity and willingness to engage with research. The responsibility for developing a research culture lies with the school leadership, and a study conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research<sup>56</sup> showed how

such a culture can be made to take root and flourish. The concept of the research-engaged school was further developed by Graham Handscomb of Essex County Council and Professor John MacBeath of Cambridge University. They proposed that schools can become research-engaged by placing research activity ‘at the heart of the school, its outlook, systems and activity’<sup>57</sup>. They suggested that a research-engaged school has four main features:

- it has a research orientation;
- it has a research-rich pedagogy;
- it promotes research communities; and
- it puts research at the heart of school policy and practice.

Another relevant study explored effective professional learning communities<sup>58</sup> within and between schools; amongst other things, it showed why and how networks and collaborations should be fostered. The benefits of such communities in terms of supporting practitioner engagement in research include:

- creating a focus on improvement;
- providing external challenge and opening up teaching from individualised activity;
- providing space to reflect; and
- offering access to research.

## Articulating research-informed practice in professional standards

We believe that the expectation on teachers to engage in and with research should be explicit in the standards by which trainee teachers are assessed, as well as in the Professional Standards which guide practitioners throughout their careers. Linking the standards over phases of a teacher’s career, as recommended elsewhere in this publication<sup>59</sup>, would support this expectation.

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57 Handscomb, G. and MacBeath, J. (2003), *op. cit.*

58 Bolam, R., *et al.* with Greenwood, A., *et al.* (2005), *Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities*, DfES Research Report No. RR637, DfES, London.

59 See paper 2, Standards-based professional practice, p. 13.

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55 GTCE (2010), *op. cit.*

56 Sharp, C., *et al.* (2005), *op. cit.*

## Strengthening the relationships between teachers and researchers

An approach to developing the research skills of teachers that has been shown to work is for professional researchers and teachers to undertake jointly-designed or jointly-managed projects. An example of such a project is ‘The Use of Talk to Scaffold Learning in Whole Class Teaching’ funded by the ESRC on the use of talk in primary classrooms – this was undertaken by three head teachers working collaboratively with academics at the University of Exeter<sup>60</sup>.

More broadly, there have been calls for the research community to be more effective at reaching out to the professional practice community. As demonstrated by work undertaken as part of the TLRP, “*user engagement is more than careful dissemination*”.<sup>61</sup> The table below (from TLRP<sup>62</sup>) suggests how practitioners can be meaningfully engaged in research.

### Ways of engaging with users in the process of research

Types of research partnership	University-led studies	Action research or design-experiment research partnerships	Co-construction of understandings of new practices in research partnerships
<b>Primary approaches to using research knowledge</b>	The application of research findings	Improving education while studying it	Developing ideas and mediating them
<b>Forms of user engagement</b>	Users commenting on research instruments and assisting with data collection and dissemination	Iterative research designs where ideas are tested and developed in classrooms by practitioners	Long-term partnerships aimed at generating fresh ways of explaining what is going on in existing and emerging practices

A particular criticism of academic educational research

was that it had often failed to include adequately funded or sufficiently sophisticated strategies for using findings to influence policy and practice. This has now changed to the extent that ensuring/assessing ‘impact’ is a requirement for most applied research projects. Yet user engagement – as the table shows – involves more than ‘impact’: the intended benefits of embedding user engagement throughout the course of the project focus on the enhanced quality of the research design as well as on the potential impact on teaching and learning.

Another area worth exploring – given that many university-based educational researchers are ex-school teachers – is whether and how researchers can be encouraged to sustain an involvement in practice. In some branches of healthcare, for example, researchers are required to commit a certain amount of time to professional practice alongside their research.

60 Myhill, D. et al. (eds) (2005), *Talking, listening, learning: Effective talk in the primary classroom*, Open University Press, Maidenhead.

61 Teaching and Learning Research Programme (2009), ‘Making a difference: Collaborating with users to develop educational research’, *Research Briefing Number 76*, TLRP, London, p. 1.

62 *ibid*, p. 3.

## Access to knowledge and the role of intermediaries

In terms of dissemination of knowledge, there is a clear argument in favour of the full breadth of research being made available to users beyond the academy, be they policy-makers, practitioners, governors, pupils or parents. As noted, much academic research is currently accessible only through expensive journal subscriptions. But there are moves in universities to develop electronic repositories of all existing research projects undertaken by staff and to create online access to freely-available outputs, including versions of published papers where publishing contracts allow<sup>63</sup>. The Educational Evidence Portal<sup>64</sup> provides a portal and a framework that research organisations can use to upload or link to research study findings.

Another aspect of accessibility is the language and length of academic articles. These are designed to be read by other specialists and the incentives for researchers to write for practitioner audiences (for example, through the research excellence framework exercise in higher education) are weak. Furthermore, the activity of assessing and synthesising research on topics of most relevance to users is an important one not often rewarded in academia, where grant-funding incentivises originality and the creation of ‘new’ findings. This is why a distinct genre of research-writing for practice has arisen, led by the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (Curee)<sup>65</sup> and supported by the GTCE and other education agencies concerned to promote research-informed practice.

There is also an important role for ‘bridging’ or intermediary activities for communicating research findings to research users. Morris describes this

activity as “*beyond dissemination*”<sup>66</sup> and it takes a range of forms, including providing opportunities for teachers to discuss and interrogate a particular research study<sup>67</sup>, or developing CPD sessions where teachers and researchers work together to link research findings into contextualised practice.

## Using teacher-led research to build a professional knowledge base

Practice-oriented syntheses of academic research in a particular area or on a specific topic, such as the systematic reviews undertaken by the EPPI-Centre, are important in developing the knowledge base for research users, and the resource that has been provided for these, by government as well as academia, has been very welcome.

However, the nature, scope and scale of teacher-led research make even greater demands on a knowledge management system. Collating, quality-assuring and synthesising teacher-led research for system-wide improvement requires considerable effort, organisation and resource. (Some of the challenges in scaling up practitioner innovation are discussed elsewhere in this series<sup>68</sup>.) Research is undertaken by practitioners for a variety of reasons but often the motivation is improving their own teaching practice. Criticisms levelled at practitioner research are that it lacks rigour and criticality and that it is too small-scale and contextualised to contribute effectively to the knowledge base and to provide generalisable and reliable findings that would be useful elsewhere. Meta-synthesis of existing practitioner research might offer potential for building cumulative knowledge<sup>69</sup>, but there is a prior problem of identifying

63 This has been initiated by plans from the Funding Council to assess research (the judgement on which funding levels depend) in terms of impact or use. Current plans are unclear as the assessment arrangements are being revised but some level of impact assessment is likely.

64 The Educational Evidence Portal website is at: [www.eep.ac.uk](http://www.eep.ac.uk)

65 The Curee website is at [www.curee-paccts.com](http://www.curee-paccts.com)

66 Morris, A., *et al.* (2007), *Practitioners and evidence*, CFBT, Reading, p. 8.

67 Rickinson, M. with Aspinall, C., *et al.* (2003), *Connecting research and practice: Education for sustainable development*, BERA, Warwick.

68 See paper 9, Innovation, p. 115.

69 Saunders, L. (2009), *Practitioner research and enquiry and its contribution in particular sectors*, Group discussion note for SFRE II, SFRE, London.

# Equality and diversity

and retrieving the research. A useful example of such a repository was created by the GTCE Teacher Learning Academy, although little synthesis on a thematic basis has so far been attempted.

We believe that:

- all teachers need to have the skills, opportunities, expert support and permission to engage in and with research in the interests of learners; as schools become more diverse, how will this be assured and monitored?
- the public interest demands that significant innovations in education, whether at national or school level, need to be evaluated; and
- strategic educational research efforts should be focused on areas of greatest need, that is, improving teaching and learning for the most disadvantaged learners.



# Research-informed practice: proposals

The evidence we now have suggests that engaging in and with research is potentially very beneficial to the quality of teaching and learning. However, there are cultural, organisational and individual barriers to overcome. As we testified at the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (CSFSC) inquiry into teacher training, “*there is a significant task ahead to create a research-engaged profession which can draw upon validated and warranted approaches [to practice] and understand not just how but why to apply or adapt them*”<sup>70</sup>.

In particular, support for the use of research and evidence to improve teaching must align with the requirements and incentives that already exist for teachers to improve their practice. Where appropriate support has been put in place by school leaders, university researchers, local authorities and/or government, individual examples of effective research-informed practice can be found in abundance. The challenge now is to create a system-wide approach to research-informed practice as a core professional entitlement and responsibility. We believe that the following proposals at different levels in the system would help to do that.

## Government should:

- articulate and publish appropriate professional norms to include a more developed concept of research-informed practice;
- consider establishing new leadership roles in schools with a particular role and remit for creating a research culture and promoting research-informed practice; part of this role would entail knowledge exchange of teacher-led research within and between schools;
- continue to support and resource key initiatives for enhancing research accessibility and improving research literacy among research users (practitioners and policy-makers); and

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<sup>70</sup> Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2010), *Memorandum from the GTCE to the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee on the Training of Teachers: fourth report of session 2009-10*, TSO, London.

- work across different education sectors to ensure that incentives for research-informed practice in both universities and schools are better aligned.

## School leaders should work in partnership with higher education institutions to:

- embed a culture of research-informed practice and inquiry-led professional development in schools;
- provide challenge and support for individual teachers to engage in and with research, through professional learning opportunities, mentoring and coaching arrangements and incentive schemes;
- increase the incentives for research-informed practice through the creation of posts of responsibility for promoting and coordinating research in school, and through performance management processes focused on teaching and learning;
- promote local networks and school-to-school collaboration with the specific aim of encouraging knowledge exchange; and
- seek evaluative input from research experts on particular pedagogic initiatives.

## Providers of teacher education (initial and continuing) should:

- ensure that initial teacher training and continuing professional development programmes contain a range of structured opportunities for engagement in and with research as an integral part of teacher development;
- offer programmes for developing teachers’ research literacy;
- develop individual teachers’ capacity and appetite to identify, scrutinise, appraise and draw on existing research to inform their practice;
- make explicit the links between standards-based professionalism, pedagogy and research-informed practice; and
- support research-active schools and teachers so that they have policy influence.

### **Researchers in higher education departments of education should:**

- ensure as far as possible that their research is made accessible by various means to relevant audiences;
- contribute to initiatives for developing teachers' research literacy;
- involve teachers in the design and implementation of research studies within the constraints of time and funding (using the TLRP as a model); and
- take opportunities to act as research intermediaries and 'knowledge brokers'.

### **Teachers should be both entitled and required to:**

- take responsibility for sustained professional development, with input from a mentor or coach as and when appropriate;
- collaborate with other practitioners on designing school-based research projects as a way of refreshing professional expertise as well as of improving learning for pupils;
- give articulate and research-informed accounts of their work and its outcomes for pupils; and
- collaborate with experts for the purpose of professional knowledge exchange.



## PAPER 9

### INNOVATION

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In this paper we discuss the role of ‘innovation’ in developing and sustaining good teaching. In doing so, we consider the policy context for trying new approaches to both old and new problems in education. Prime amongst these is how to release capacity amongst professional teams and individuals, so that they can undertake more creative thinking and decision-making, and hence improve the effectiveness of teaching and schools.

Drivers for educational innovation include:

- the scale and nature of under-achievement associated with social class, gender and ethnicity, and with inter-school and intra-school variability;
- new knowledge, such as the evidence emerging from cognitive neuroscience about the human brain and its development;
- changes in social values, such as an emphasis on equalities and inclusion, and young people’s rights; and
- demographic shifts, such as growing ethnic/cultural diversity and geographic mobility.

Innovation can include new models of management processes, school organisation, curricular provision and so on; however, we are specifically interested in drawing together what is known about teacher-led innovation in the classroom. In a recent research study, teachers talked about innovation as the process of trying something new as part of a systemic approach to continuously improving teaching and learning.

The main risks associated with teacher-led innovation – a lack of ‘hard’ evidence of effectiveness and not being part of official education policy – can be mitigated by a combination of good project design, sound professional knowledge, awareness of context, and sensitivity to the reactions of parents, pupils and governors. The limits to experimentation are contained in the GTCE’s Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers, which makes it clear that teachers’ freedom to innovate is circumscribed by the priority that must be given to the best interests of children and young people.

After summarising the key features of school environments where innovation is managed well, the paper concludes with proposals for government, school leadership teams, providers of teacher education and teachers themselves which would support teacher-led innovation whilst sustaining high standards of teaching quality.

In this paper, we consider how good teaching can be supported and sustained through ‘innovation’. We begin by outlining the policy context for innovation in education and setting out what is understood by, and about, innovation in teaching. We then discuss the current role and potential contribution of innovation to the quality of teaching in England. Finally, we suggest some key features of a school system that enables and encourages greater innovation whilst maintaining and developing public trust in professionals and assuring high standards in service provision.

### ‘Innovation’ as a policy idea

The rationale for encouraging ‘innovation’ in the public sector is that new approaches are needed to enhance service provision and delivery without vastly increasing the investment of public monies. The idea is derived from the private sector where there is a continuous need to create new products and services, and/or increase productivity. An underlying belief is that professional teams and individuals are capable of more creative thinking and decision-making than the *status quo* usually allows, and that this capacity needs to be released in order to improve the system’s effectiveness.

The effectiveness of the education system in England is the subject of ongoing debate and discussion. Particular foci include the scale and nature of under-achievement associated with social class, gender and ethnic differences between pupils, and with inter-school and intra-school variability. Innovation – trying approaches that have not been tried before, on the grounds that “*if we do what we have always done, we will get what we have always got*”<sup>1</sup> – is one of the ways in which the diagnosed under-achievement is intended to be addressed.

So innovation as an idea in public education provision is often stimulated by a perceived problem that is persistent and deep-seated. Other drivers include:

- new knowledge, such as the evidence emerging from cognitive neuroscience about the human brain and its development;
- changes in social values, such as an emphasis on equalities and inclusion, and young people’s rights; and
- demographic shifts, such as growing ethnic/cultural diversity and geographic mobility.

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1 saying attributed to Henry Ford.

## What do we mean by ‘innovation’ in education?

‘Innovation’ can occur or be stimulated at different levels within the education system: at national government level, innovation is more often construed as ‘reform’, because it is concerned with making large-scale and far-reaching changes to policies, frameworks and structures, underpinned where necessary by legislation. The last two decades of educational policy-making in England could be characterised as reform-led – resulting, some educationists would say, in ‘innovation overload’.

At the other end of the scale, the literature is full of references to the fact that teachers are forever ‘tinkering’: meaning that, without introducing radical and potentially destabilising novelty, individual teachers very rarely teach the same lesson twice. Not only does their teaching behaviour respond in the moment and intuitively to the needs and circumstances of their pupils, but teachers also often report they enjoy trying out new teaching tactics and actively seek out different ideas. However, this is a routine part of teaching and not the kind of ‘innovation’ with which public policy normally concerns itself. A good description of innovation also needs to avoid the paradox of early career teachers appearing by definition to be more innovative than their more experienced colleagues, just because for newly-qualified teachers (NQTs) much is new or novel in their practice that will later become embedded and familiar.

So what educationists tend to mean when they talk about ‘innovation’ are new models of, for example, management and governance processes, school organisation (timetabling, staffing, allocation of resources), curricular provision, assessment practices, teaching ‘technologies’ (including ICT) and/or approaches to student participation and learner agency, at local, institutional and/or classroom level. A ‘new model’ is an approach which:

- is deliberately different from what has been done before: Mulgan argues that ‘the ideas have to be at least

in part new (rather than improvements)<sup>2</sup>; spontaneous improvisation may play a part here, but is not the whole story;

- can be incremental or radical, depending on the scale of educational need and available resource;
- assesses the potential risks – what might be lost as well as gained from doing things differently; and
- can be described or captured in such a way – including a detailed description of constituent components and an analysis of outcomes – as to enable uptake by educators in other schools and classrooms, and to have an influence on policy: in short, what the Innovation Unit has referred to as ‘harvesting’.

## Principles of successful innovation

In its report, ‘Networks of Innovation’<sup>3</sup> based on a cross-country project exploring ‘schooling for tomorrow’, the OECD distinguishes between ‘piecemeal initiatives’ and ‘a genuine process of experimentation’ – which entails, among other things, accepting that “*just because a new educational idea is intuitively attractive this does not mean that it will work or be appropriate in all circumstances*”<sup>4</sup>.

Indeed, one of the most well-known writers on educational change, Michael Fullan, has cautioned that many innovations are not demonstrably successful in terms of their stated aim of measurably improving student achievement. He notes<sup>5</sup> that, of 24 models reviewed by the American Institutes of Research, three demonstrated strong evidence, five showed ‘promising’ effects, another six indicated marginal effects, while the other 10 provided weak or no evidence of positive impact.

2 Mulgan, G. (2007), *Ready or not? Taking innovation in the public sector seriously*, NESTA, London.

3 OECD/CERI (2003), *Networks of innovation: towards new models for managing schools and systems*, OECD, Paris.

4 *ibid.*, p171.

5 Fullan, M. (2001), *The new meaning of educational change*, Routledge, London, p 55.

Fullan goes on<sup>6</sup> to identify four factors related to successful educational innovation, namely:

- responsiveness to a real need;
- clarity about goals and means;
- acknowledgement of complexity, particularly in implementation; and
- quality and practicality of the innovation.

As he says, however, these factors are hard to get right at the outset of an innovation, not least because their meanings and implications are subtle. For example, it is often not clear *exactly* what it is that teachers need to do, or are doing, differently; moreover, the scale of change needed in people's values and attitudes as well as in their knowledge and skills may be under-estimated.

From the literature, it appears that successful innovation depends on various prerequisites, including:

- a degree of local/institutional autonomy, a 'licence to experiment' within certain limits;
- strategic leadership at local/institutional level for innovation;
- alignment of the innovation with the broader education policy agenda (otherwise the countervailing forces could prove too strong);
- connectivity, in the form of networks of professionals within and across institutions who want to learn from each other;
- a sound knowledge base (in order both to avoid reinventing the wheel and to bypass what has already been shown not to work); and
- structured opportunities, through protected professional learning time, to design, develop and evaluate innovative ways of working.

## Recent policy initiatives to encourage innovation in England

As noted earlier, the last two decades have seen a great deal of government activity to change the education system, with an emphasis on innovation. For example,

the Labour government's 2001 White Paper *Schools Achieving Success* proposed that the 'best' (that is, highest-performing) schools should be 'freed to innovate'. This freedom to innovate was intended to give schools greater autonomy and flexibility, particularly in making decisions about aspects of the National Curriculum, teachers' pay and conditions, and the working day/year. These proposals included the creation of Academy schools, whose diverse partners were expected to 'benefit pupils by bringing fresh ideas and perspectives and particular skills and expertise to schools'<sup>7</sup>. Individual schools' 'freedom to innovate' was to be supported and facilitated through the establishment of a corresponding Power to Innovate<sup>8</sup>, and a Schools Innovation Unit<sup>9</sup> designed to operate 'as a powerhouse and an 'incubator' for new approaches'<sup>10</sup>.

The 2005 White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* proposed an expansion of Academies and Specialist Schools, prioritising schools that could show they were offering innovative approaches to overcoming educational disadvantage. Federations and clusters of schools were encouraged as a means of developing and sharing innovative practice. In 2010, under the new coalition government, the Academies Bill was the strongest assertion yet of the continuing belief in the innovative capacity of Academies and the need to encourage professional autonomy in '[yielding] results for all pupils'<sup>11</sup>. Emphasis was placed on the role of school leaders, particularly head teachers, in leading innovation in their schools.

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7 DfES (2001), *Schools achieving success*, Cm 5230, HMSO, London.

8 The power to innovate, established by the Education Act 2002, is the power of the Secretary of State for Education to temporarily suspend or modify education legislation that is thought to be holding back innovative approaches to raising standards. Applicants must provide evidence for why they believe their proposal could raise standards; consider the likely effect on pupils; consult those likely to be affected; and plan how they will monitor and evaluate the effects of the changes.

9 The Schools Innovation Unit, now called the Innovation Unit, was established by the Education Act 2002 and set up with the remit of initiating, supporting and evaluating innovation in schools. It is now a fully independent body that supports innovation more generally in the public services and the third sector.

10 DfES (2001), *op.cit.*, p. 43.

11 Second reading of the Academies Bill, 19 July 2010.

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6 *ibid.*, pp 75-9.

## The relationship between teaching quality and innovation: responsibilities, limits and possibilities

It is understandable that the policy trend, no less than the research literature (including the OECD/CERI studies and much of Fullan's writing), is concerned with understanding innovation across the whole schooling system, from large-scale reform efforts to within-school initiatives.

Nonetheless, we are interested in using this paper to pull together what is known about teacher-led innovation 'in the classroom' – whilst not denying that teachers' willingness and capacity to innovate is deeply affected by what is happening 'outside' the classroom.

In its response to the then DfES on e-learning in 2004, we proposed that innovation "*must be undertaken in a disciplined and supported way which draws on existing knowledge and on what is known about which forms of professional learning most positively impact on practice and teachers' confidence*"<sup>12</sup>. The submission went on to argue that:

- first, the need or desire for innovation is generated by teaching and learning dilemmas which cannot be resolved via known good or best practice, and which therefore require the development and testing of creative solutions;
- second, these creative solutions are developed from a thorough knowledge and understanding of research and evidence about practice;
- third, innovation in teaching requires confidence, which necessarily includes the confidence to fail;
- fourth, innovation is both a reflexive and a collaborative process, whereby knowledge is generated, captured and shared in wider teaching and learning networks. It is therefore also an iterative process which both draws from, and contributes to, wider pedagogic discourse.

12 GTCE (2004), *Department for Education & Skills: Towards a unified e-learning strategy*. GTCE, London, p. 6.

In 2007–08 the GTCE and the Innovation Unit jointly commissioned research on teachers as innovators<sup>13</sup>. It found that teachers themselves understood innovation in two distinct ways.

First, teachers often talked about the act of responding in the moment to events and needs of particular children in the classroom in a way that enabled/enhanced learning. Responding to the needs of their pupils was cited by teachers<sup>14</sup> as one of their principal reasons for innovating, which they associated with a perceived strengthening of teacher-pupil relationships and enhanced job satisfaction. Interestingly, this notion of innovation is almost identical with the characteristic teacher activity of 'tinkering' noted above.

But the second common way in which teachers talked to the researchers about innovation was as the process of trying something new and taking risks in the execution and planning of lessons. They undertook this *as part of* a systemic approach to continuously improving teaching and learning. This way is much closer to the attested sense of innovation explicated by the GTCE in 2004.

Given that many teachers believe they are working in a risk-averse climate and therefore do not feel they have the right, let alone the confidence, to 'fail', it is worth teasing out what might be implied by the risk-taking aspects of innovation. Hannon<sup>15</sup> characterises innovative practice as being:

- in advance of hard evidence of effectiveness;
- risky, not yet officially sanctioned;
- explicitly designed with an awareness of the strengths and limitations of accepted best practice;
- generated by able, informed practitioners who are aware of the existing knowledge base;
- informed by critical scanning of the wider environment;

13 OPM (2008), *Teachers as innovative professionals: Report for GTC and the Innovation Unit*, Office for Public Management, London.

14 *ibid.*

15 Hannon, V. (2007), *'Next practice' in education: A disciplined approach to innovation*, The Innovation Unit, London, p. 5.



- directed at serious, contemporary problems; and
- user-focused.

This list in effect gives an indication of how the main risks – lack of ‘hard’ evidence of effectiveness and not being part of official policy – can be mitigated by a combination of:

- good project design;
- sound professional knowledge;
- awareness of context; and
- sensitivity to the reactions of ‘stakeholders’ and users – presumably parents, pupils, governors.

The concept of ‘study lessons’, where specific lessons are treated as sites for deliberate pedagogical exploration with feedback from a peer-observer and students, could easily be introduced into the design of innovations<sup>16</sup>.

The *limits* to experimentation are contained in principle in the GTCE’s *Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers*. The Code explicitly expects of registered teachers that they ‘use their professional expertise and judgement to do the best for the children and young people in their care’ and ‘plan activities and employ a range of teaching methodologies and technologies to meet individual and group learning needs’.

In other words, the Code makes it clear that teachers’ freedom to innovate is circumscribed by the priority that must be given to the best interests of children and young people.

The Code goes on to explain that those interests are in turn served by teachers’ professional responsibility for maintaining the quality of their teaching. This involves the ability to:

- recognise the limitations of existing good practice within their particular contexts; and
- draw on their knowledge of what has been tried and tested in other settings, in ways that develop their own responses to intrinsic teaching and learning dilemmas.

Teacher-led innovation could thus be said to represent the professional determination to persist in trying to create solutions to old and new educational challenges.

As discussed in the paper on research-informed practice in this publication, teachers have led the way in developing, investigating and evaluating some of the approaches that may turn out to be most effective in addressing the complex intellectual, emotional and social learning needs that many children bring to the classroom<sup>17</sup>. Fullan puts the task facing teachers like this:<sup>18</sup> “... *we must combine the ideas of cognitive scientists, who are working on the problem of how to engage all learners, with the insights of sociologists, who show how power relations in the school must be altered if we are to make substantial progress ...*”

Importantly, as the OPM report noted, teacher-led innovation can help teachers sustain their professional vocation: “... *the morale boost that stems from successful innovation ... lead[s] to growing confidence and commitment to teaching as an ongoing career*”.<sup>19</sup> Head teachers also valued the potential of teacher-led innovation to contribute to improving the school’s academic results, to help pupils to experience education more positively, and to assist the school in responding to a changing world and to the expectations of pupils, parents and governors.

## The challenges of innovation: dilemmas and inhibitors

Despite these positive findings, there are evident tensions in the innovation agenda. Hannon notes that, whilst innovation in the private sector is linked to company profit and individual reward, in the public sector innovation tends to be treated as a high-risk activity with rather more sanctions than incentives<sup>20</sup>. This is particularly true for education, where ‘taking risks with’ pupils’ education and life chances is not perceived as

17 See paper 8, Research-informed practice, p. 97.

18 Fullan (2001), *op.cit.*, p 153.

19 OPM (2008), *op.cit.*

20 Hannon, V. (2007), *op.cit.*, p. 1.

16 See, for example, Dudley, P. (2008), ‘Improving practice and progression through Lesson Study’, DCSF, London.

a legitimate undertaking<sup>21</sup>; teachers themselves have expressed the concern that encouraging innovation in schools could 'endanger equal access to education for pupils'<sup>22</sup>. An even more commonly-held view is expressed with economy by Leadbeater who says that schools that want to innovate 'cannot afford to let results dip'<sup>23</sup>.

The dilemma facing teachers and schools can be summarised as the need to balance potentially productive experimentation – which entails non-uniformity of approaches and variability and unpredictability in results, and no guarantees of success – with the necessity of maintaining high and consistent standards in teaching. As 'standards' are an important way of articulating children's entitlement to the same good quality of education wherever they may be at school, they enshrine a fundamental ethical principle.

Conversely, of course, it could be argued that with something as important as a child's education there is an ethical imperative to innovate and strive for continual improvement, and to ensure that the best possible teaching and learning is taking place. Thus the very qualities which make innovative practice appealing are the prime source of the risks associated with it, and the challenges facing innovators are neither superficial nor easily resolved:

- how can the ethical risks of experimentation be mitigated without detriment to their innovative potential?
- how can educators working in the public sector be offered better incentives for innovative practice?
- how can successful innovations at the level of the classroom be 'harvested' and spread across the system to other classrooms and schools?

A report by Ofsted<sup>24</sup> on curriculum innovation found that the key barriers to innovation were rooted in professional reluctance. Several examples present themselves:

- teachers' concern that a focus on innovation would detract from examination and national test results;
- uncertainty about the reaction of inspectors to innovation;
- concerns relating to sustainability in terms of funding and resources;
- concerns about teachers' unwillingness or inability to implement change; and
- possible resistance to change among governors, parents and the local community.

Sometimes this reluctance is quite explicitly said to be an effect of the downward pressure felt by teachers of the 'standards agenda' and what is called 'performativity' in education. Teachers in the OPM study on innovation identified similar inhibitors: pressure on teachers, a culture of risk aversion, the difficulty of recruiting leaders to run challenging schools, existing school structures such as national curricula and external examinations, and a lack of funding were all cited as contributors to stifling innovation in education.

So perceptions of the policy environment play a key role in how innovation is understood and valued. It is also possible that the typical organisation of schools and teaching rooms into subject and class units leads to an endemic professional isolation and a lack of protected time and space for collaborative practice and reflection – both of which are inhibitors of dynamic creativity and the professional confidence that underpins it.

We have sought to promote and develop the concept and enactment of teachers' professionalism as collaborative learning and innovative practice, both through our policy advice and through policy-oriented initiatives.

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21 OPM (2008), *op.cit.*, p. 8.

22 Verbatim comments during the consultation on the DfES white paper in 2001

23 Leadbeater, C. (2008), *What's next? 21 ideas for 21st century learning*. The Innovation Unit, London, p. 50.

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24 Ofsted (2008), *Curriculum innovation in schools*, Ofsted, London, p. 5.

# The GTCE'S contributions to teacher-led innovation

The GTCE's Teacher Learning Academy (TLA) offered professional recognition for teacher-led innovations and teacher learning that had an impact in the classroom and beyond. It offered a framework for quality-assuring professional practice that is premised on six core dimensions, all of which overlap considerably with the conditions that support innovation:

- engaging with a knowledge base;
- coaching and mentoring;
- planning your learning;
- carrying out your plan;
- sharing your learning and influencing practice; and
- evaluating your learning and its impact.

Participation in the TLA was shown<sup>25</sup>, in an independent evaluation of its impact in 2009, to contribute directly to improvements in teachers' practice, and to the learning experience for pupils.

In addition to the work done by OECD/CERI and Fullan, cited earlier, the OPM report commissioned by the GTCE and the Innovation Unit in 2007–08 identified a series of features common to school environments where innovation is sustained and encouraged:

- strong 'pupil voice', ie a commitment to active consultation with and participation by pupils;
- time and space to innovate;
- a focus on the acquisition and development of relevant skills and competences;
- structures (including allocated time) for professional sharing and reflection;
- a well-run organisation;
- a strategic commitment to teachers' continuing professional development; and
- trust in teachers' professionalism and a climate where it is 'OK to fail'.

'Teachers' professionalism' is a well-rehearsed phrase, but means different things to different people. So it is worth saying something here about the link between teacher-led innovation and the core professional domain of teaching – pedagogy. The notion of 'warranted practice' informs the GTCE's understanding of pedagogy. We define warranted practice as 'teachers' ability to demonstrate and explain the nature of their professionalism by drawing on a shared and structured body of knowledge and empirical evidence that is used to inform their decision-making and practice – and, crucially, to justify it to others'.

Innovative practice is accordingly linked to pedagogy in a number of ways:

- it stems from the kind of teaching and learning dilemmas identified in a joint TLRP/GTCE Commentary<sup>26</sup>;
- it draws on warranted practice from other settings; and
- through teachers reflecting, evaluating and sharing their learning, it informs the wider pedagogic discourse, thus contributing to the generation of shared knowledge.

Furthermore, the local contextualised arena in which innovation occurs is also the arena where pedagogic expertise is most ably demonstrated: "... *the more expert a teacher becomes, the more his/her expertise is manifested in sensitivity to contexts and situations ...*"<sup>27</sup> According to our notion of warranted practice, innovative practice is based on professional pedagogical knowledge and informed discipline; at the same time, teachers' reflections on innovation and their shared learning from it contribute to the development of a collective body of knowledge and a common professional language to explain and justify practice, which is a core dimension of pedagogy.

At the time of writing, the evidence about structural and system innovations, such as the establishment of Academies, has not so far been unequivocally encouraging in terms of improving teaching and learning standards as a whole. This could mean that the concept of teacher-

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25 Lord, P. et al. (2009), *Evaluation of the GTC's Teacher Learning Academy (TLA): Impacts on teachers, pupils and schools*. NFER, Slough. In June 2011, the Cathedrals Group of universities and university colleges established a national TLA consortium of 11 higher education institutions to purchase the TLA intellectual property assets. The launch of a reinvigorated TLA is anticipated in autumn 2011.

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26 Pollard, A. (ed.) (2010), *op.cit.*

27 *ibid.*, p. 5

# Strengthening teacher-led innovation

led (rather than structure-led) innovation as a means of improving teaching and learning is probably far from exhausted in policy terms.

There are various ways in which teacher-led innovation can and should be strengthened if it is to become a source of renewed dynamism and creativity in education and an effective lever for systemic change.

## Mitigating risks and guarding against failure

There are structures and processes which are likely to increase the chances of a positive impact from trying something different and to minimise the risks involved.

For example, innovation should be treated as a collaborative, rather than an isolated, activity. There is plenty of research evidence on the efficacy of professional learning that is undertaken in conjunction with colleagues in higher education and expert facilitators (as well as with teaching colleagues within and across schools); this kind of activity, particularly if it can be nurtured by the establishment of a recognised professional learning community, can provide a means of peer-to-peer professional accountability as well as collegial support. As effective professional learning communities have collective responsibility for pupil learning and are open and inclusive<sup>28</sup>, they can provide useful vehicles for trying new approaches, through ‘informed experimentation’.

Equally, engaging with the knowledge and research base related to the topic, discussing an intervention in depth and detail with colleagues and taking their feedback, or piloting (and crucially evaluating) a small-scale approach, are likely to increase the chances of success. Proportionality is a useful concept here: the more radical a potential innovation is, the more consideration, planning, research and discussion there should be and the greater the number of people consulted and involved.

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<sup>28</sup> Bolam, R. *et al.* (2005), *Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities*, DfES Research Report No. RR637, DfES, London.

## Assuring standards of teaching

We argue elsewhere<sup>29</sup> that a common framework for standards-based practice can contribute to teaching quality through enabling teachers to improve their practice and outcomes for learners. For such a framework to assure teaching quality and provide consistency in practice, we believe that the standards for teaching should:

- provide a generic minimum baseline that all teachers must meet, and continue to meet throughout their career; performance management should be strengthened in relation to the standards and applicable to all teachers;
- be decoupled from pay progression and scales; and
- be premised upon core competences for effective pedagogy, which in turn act as a framework for continuous improvement.

In England, the discussion of professional standards in teaching is inextricably linked to discussions about the operation of the performance management system and arrangements for continuing professional development. As another paper in this publication argues, performance management can play a key role in assuring teaching quality; and, specifically in relation to innovation, it is the formal process through which teachers are held to account for, and can explain, the professional pedagogical decisions they have made<sup>30</sup>. For this process to be liberating rather than inhibiting, however, the current disincentives would need to be lessened or removed. Furthermore, the current performance management system is highly individualised and works against the type of collaborative working that supports disciplined innovation.

We have also previously argued for greater consistency across the performance management system, which, to be effective in assuring quality in innovation, would need to operate with appropriately robust and transparent

arrangements – including, for example, portfolios of students' work as well as test scores. We further recognise that all teachers must have guaranteed access to appropriate, effective and sustained CPD not only in order to meet their professional development goals and to be able to demonstrate these through performance management arrangements<sup>31</sup>, but also to give teachers the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge and skills for developing innovative practice.

What is needed is a means of framing the conditions for innovation whilst maintaining standards and processes to ensure teaching quality. Such a move would also contribute to increasing trust in teachers' legitimacy to innovate, by reassuring parents, the public, and pupils that innovative practice – even when it is not part of an officially-approved system – does not imply any lowering of the quality of teaching or outcomes for learners. Furthermore, teachers' own confidence to innovate would be underpinned by the knowledge that their practice was formally assured via a combination of a standards framework and a performance management process.

On the question of standards and teacher roles, there is surely space for a role in schools specifically to support innovation and pedagogical leadership. The role could involve facilitating continuous improvement in practice and developing pedagogy within and beyond the school – part of which would be related to supporting and enabling others in trialling new approaches. Specialist standards related to this role would be concerned with keeping up-to-date with educational research, bringing teachers together to facilitate collaborative working, and spreading innovations across networks of practitioners.

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29 See paper 2, Standards-based professional practice, p. 13.

30 See paper 5, Performance management, p. 65.

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31 See paper 6, Professional learning and development, p. 75.

## Removing real and perceived barriers to innovation

As noted earlier, public sector organisations are perceived to inhibit innovation, and Mulgan<sup>32</sup> has even concluded that innovations in the public sector ‘usually succeed despite, not because of, dominant structures and systems’. In education, the established accountability framework for schools focuses largely, though not exclusively, on the performance of students in public tests and external examinations. This increases the pressure on schools and teachers to try to improve their results year-on-year (despite the body of research evidence that indicates that ‘continuous improvement’ exists more in rhetoric than in reality) and to conform to authorised approaches to teaching; this has the effect of discouraging risk-taking – even if this is a matter of perception as much as of reality.

The paper on accountability in this publication claims that current accountability arrangements in public education need updating. Many commentators are arguing that the capacity of the system of targets and audit to generate improvements in student achievement has reached its limit and that a ‘light-touch process of assurance’<sup>33</sup> is what is now needed – particularly if the professional creative energy assumed to be latent in schools is to be liberated. We have accordingly argued for fundamental changes in the assessment and monitoring system in England<sup>34</sup>.

## Increasing support for innovation at school level

It is clear that leaders in the education system and schools have roles to play in encouraging innovation and in setting the conditions where teachers have the confidence or warrant to do so. Mulgan identifies leadership and institutional culture as one of the crucial elements

affecting public sector innovation<sup>35</sup>. Leadership is seen as key in creating a culture which encourages innovation: the OPM research study commissioned by the GTCE and Innovation Unit<sup>36</sup> identified strong reflective leadership, a clear communicable vision, and buy-in from key stakeholders as essential to the successful implementation of innovation. Reasons given by teachers themselves for innovating included meeting the expectations of head teachers and other stakeholders, peer encouragement and a sense of inevitability in terms of the momentum of change – which can be directed by strong leadership.

Mulgan notes that, across the public sector, ‘it is easier to take risks when there’s a consensus that things aren’t working (a ‘burning platform’ makes the status quo seem even more risky than trying something new)’<sup>37</sup>. It is not clear whether this is true in the case of individual so-called ‘failing’ schools, where confidence and competence may have been sapped; nor is it unusual for the media to create the impression that ‘things aren’t working’. The challenge for school leaders is to sustain an environment in which innovation is encouraged as an integral dimension of professional practice, rather than as a reaction to external events.

## ‘Capturing’ innovation and taking it to scale

One of the challenges in enabling and incentivising teacher-led innovation is the duplicated effort that results when teachers are attempting to solve similar problems in isolation from each other and with little, superficial or no knowledge exchange. In other words, the system lacks efficiency. This is not just a case of better technologies for dissemination – the kind of knowledge that teachers create through their pedagogical practice is context-bound, dynamic and often incomplete from the perspective of generalisability.

In its report to the Secretary of State for Education in

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32 Mulgan, G. (2007), *op.cit.*

33 Bunt, L., *et al.* (2010), *Schumpeter comes to Whitehall: cuts and innovation in public services*, NESTA, London, p. 7.

34 See paper 10, Pupil assessment, p. 129.

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35 Mulgan, G. (2007), *op.cit.*, p. 18.

36 OPM (2008), *op.cit.*

37 Mulgan, G. (2007), *op.cit.*, p. 24.

2007, the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review Group called for a system-wide, strategic approach to innovation supported by rigorous evaluation and effective methods of knowledge capture and transfer. The report called for a system of innovation along the lines of the GTCE's Teacher Learning Academy, where the focus was on improving teaching and learning, and where knowledge is effectively captured (including by non-traditional means) and quality-assured to make it fit for purpose in the context of peer learning and exchange.

As schools increasingly become the main sites of decision-making in the education system, the role of networks and communities to provide connecting structures across the system becomes vital. Collaboration across schools is an enabler for innovation in terms of wider school learning, where head teachers and teachers actively seek new ideas and practices in other settings and reflect on how they might work in their own<sup>38</sup>.

Even with appropriate frameworks and processes in place, there remain considerable challenges in effectively spreading and embedding new ideas and practices across the education system. As Mulgan notes, 'the relevant metaphor being 'graft and grow' rather than 'copy and paste'<sup>39</sup> – this 'adoption *versus* adaptation' debate is hardly a new one, which simply shows how intractable the problem is.

A government innovation, or reform, that was evaluated as having been successfully institutionalised across the system was the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies<sup>40</sup>. Part of the key here, according to the evaluators, was the professional development resource that accompanied the implementation plan. The programme of engagement and development meant that teachers began to 'walk the walk' not just 'talk the talk'.

A report for the Innovation Unit by Curee<sup>41</sup> – one of the Innovation Unit's 'think pieces' – was specifically commissioned to explore the complexities of taking a teaching and learning innovation to scale. It also highlights the importance of teachers learning about a new approach and then 'making it their own'. The authors present and discuss the most common approaches – coaching and co-construction, specialist instruction and training, dissemination and reading, networking and collaboration, regulation (accreditation, inspection and monitoring) and competition – to the take-up, transfer and scale-up of innovative practices in education. They point out that the key dimension is depth: deep change "*goes beyond surface structures or procedures [such as the introduction of a lesson plan] to alter teachers' beliefs, norms of social interaction and pedagogical principles.*"<sup>42</sup>

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38 OPM (2008), *op.cit.*, p. 25.

39 Mulgan, G. (2007), *op.cit.*, p. 32.

40 Earl, L. et al. (2003), *Watching and learning 3: Final report of the external evaluation of England's National Literacy and Numeracy strategies*, DfES, London.

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41 Cordingley, P. and Bell, M. (2007), *Transferring learning and taking innovation to scale*, The Innovation Unit and Curee, London, p. 5.

42 *ibid.*

## Equality and diversity

We believe that all teachers need the skills, opportunities, expert support and permission to be innovative in the interests of learners. A question this raises is: with increasing diversity among schools, will this become less likely than now? How and by whom will the situation be monitored and addressed?

Public interest demands that the desire for teaching to be innovative must be balanced with the need to ensure learning environments for all pupils are based on sound evidence; this requires that significant innovations be independently evaluated.

As a matter of principle, innovation initiatives might usefully be focused on finding new ways to address the greatest need, for example, improving teaching and learning among the most disadvantaged learners.

## Innovation: proposals

Based on the foregoing discussion, we believe that the following proposals would support teacher-led innovation whilst sustaining high standards of teaching quality.

### **Government should work with national professional associations to:**

- articulate and publish appropriate professional norms for innovative pedagogical practice;
- consider establishing new leadership roles in schools with a particular role and remit for promoting informed and disciplined innovation; part of this role would entail knowledge exchange of effective ideas and practices within and between schools; and
- create structured occasions and processes for gathering and re-presenting intelligence about educational innovations nationwide that have been subjected to credible evaluation.

### **School leaders should work in partnership with higher education institutions and other local partners to:**

- encourage departmental or year group teams to develop innovation initiatives within and across subject areas;
- provide challenge and support for individual teachers through professional learning opportunities, mentoring and coaching arrangements and incentive schemes;
- increase the rigour of innovative practice through performance management processes focused on teaching and learning;
- promote local networks and school-to-school collaboration with the specific aim of encouraging joint innovations; and
- seek feedback from parents and pupils on particular pedagogic initiatives.



### **Providers of teacher education (initial and continuing) should:**

- ensure that initial teacher training and continuing professional development programmes contain structured opportunities for collaborative innovation and knowledge exchange between teachers;
- develop individual teachers' capacity and appetite to draw on existing research to inform innovation in practice;
- make explicit the links between standards-based professionalism, pedagogy and innovative practice; and
- support innovative schools and teachers to have policy influence.

### **Teachers should be both entitled and required to:**

- take responsibility for sustained professional development, with input from a mentor or coach as and when appropriate;
- collaborate with other practitioners on developing creative classroom practice – perhaps in the form of 'study lessons' – as a way of refreshing professional expertise as well as of improving learning for pupils;
- at the same time, understand the limits to innovation and the notion of proportionate risk; and identify and limit risks when designing experiments in teaching;
- give articulate and research-informed accounts of their work and its outcomes for pupils; and be open to peer scrutiny and enlightened performance management as a means of assuring professional expertise; and
- collaborate with experts for the purpose of professional knowledge exchange and for independent evaluation input.

## PAPER 10

# PUPIL ASSESSMENT

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**In this paper we focus on the contribution that effective pupil assessment makes to teaching quality. We make the case for placing more emphasis on the role of the teacher in the assessment system, rather than external tests, to improve the quality of teaching.**

**We argue that such a system can actually improve the quality of assessment, through increased validity (including reliability). The data derived from this assessment, unlike those from external tests, can be used by the teacher, pupil and parents to inform future teaching and learning.**

**We also show how the main weaknesses associated with this form of assessment can be sufficiently mitigated at system level to ensure quality, accuracy and robustness, and therefore public trust and confidence.**

**We do however acknowledge that further work is needed to improve the capacity and capability of the teacher workforce in relation to assessment practice.**

# Introduction to Paper 10

In this paper we consider the potential of pupil assessment to contribute to the effectiveness of teaching.

We have consistently argued for clarity about the purposes of assessment and of the need to separate them, improving the validity (including reliability) of the assessment<sup>1</sup>. We continue to argue that the primary purpose of assessment is to provide information for pupil improvement.

The then Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA) identified 22 purposes for which assessment data can be used<sup>2</sup>. In broad terms, these can be categorised into three main purposes:

- information for individual pupil improvement
- information for school improvement and accountability and
- information for system improvement.

The end of KS2 tests have been used to serve all of these three purposes. Research studies suggest that they have led to unintended consequences, which include:

- a decrease in pupils' motivation;
- increase in anxiety;
- insufficient information for parents;
- insufficient information for pupils to inform their own learning;
- narrowing of the curriculum;
- encouragement to 'teach to the test'; and
- the diminution of teachers' professional judgements, for summative outcomes reached by the teacher carry less public weight<sup>3</sup>.

Assessment data provide useful information which can be used to hold schools to account. They should though be only one aspect of the rich and varied school-wide picture

of reported information that can be used for this purpose. For the purpose of measuring system improvement, we argue that cohort sampling can provide the necessary quality assurance of an assessment system, through which national standards can be monitored over time and comparisons made with other international education systems. Cohort sampling also enables the role of the teacher to be enhanced.

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1 Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2007), GTCE submission to the inquiry on testing and assessment, TSO, London.

2 Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2008), QCA submission to the review of the purposes of assessment and the system's fitness for purpose, TSO, London.

3 Harlen, W. and Deakin Crick, R., (2003), 'Testing and motivation for learning assessment' in *Education Principles, Policy and Practice*, 10:2, pp. 169-207.

# Relationship of pupil assessment to teaching quality

There has been much debate over the different types of assessment; specifically, formative assessment, which is also referred to as assessment for learning (AfL), and summative assessment.

This is an unhelpful dichotomy. The difference relates to the purposes to which the assessment is put rather than the assessment type itself. Formative assessment is designed and practised to promote pupils' learning where teaching is adapted to meet learning needs<sup>4</sup>. Summative assessment is concerned with a report on learning achieved at a certain point in time<sup>5</sup>.

Much of the public discourse on pupil assessment is couched in the terms of either formative assessment and AfL or summative assessment, which serves to highlight them as two separate, sometimes conflicting processes. However, we prefer to consider pupil assessment in its entirety and find merit in an approach which identifies three stages of assessment. These are:

- **day to day assessment**; this is used to inform teaching and learning on a daily basis within the classroom context;
- **periodic assessment**; this is underpinned by national standards to provide a broader view of progress for teacher, learner and parents, and to help inform curriculum planning; and
- **transitional assessment**, which formally recognises achievement<sup>6</sup>.

The benefits of assessment for learning are well-evidenced. Research demonstrates that formative assessment typically produces 'effect sizes'<sup>7</sup> of between 0.4 and 0.7: such effect

sizes are larger than most of those found for educational interventions. A gain of effect size 0.4 would improve performances of pupils in GCSE by between one and two grades. Those pupils regarded as 'low attainers' stand to benefit more than the rest, helping to narrow gaps in attainment as well as raise the overall attainment level<sup>8</sup>.

The former QCA explained that AfL involves using assessment in the classroom to raise pupils' achievement. It is underpinned by the proposition that pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim or reduce the gap. Effective AfL is already used in classrooms by some teachers. The key characteristics of AfL are:

- teachers using effective questioning techniques;
- teachers using marking and feedback strategies;
- teachers and pupils sharing learning goals; and
- peer and self-assessment by pupils.

These characteristics of AfL are embodied in a number of processes:

- sharing learning goals with pupils;
- helping pupils know and recognise the standards to aim for;
- providing feedback that helps pupils to identify how to improve;
- believing that every pupil can improve in comparison with previous achievements;
- both the teacher and pupils reviewing and reflecting on pupils' performance and progress;
- pupils learning self-assessment techniques to discover areas they need to improve; and
- recognising that both motivation and self-esteem, crucial for effective learning and progress, can be increased by effective assessment techniques.

The QCA stated that research showed that participation in the review process raises standards and empowers pupils to take action to improve their performance<sup>9</sup>.

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4 Black, P. et al. (2002), *Working inside the black box: Assessment for learning in the classroom*, King's College London School of Education, London.

5 ARG (2004), *Working Paper 2: Summative assessment by teachers: evidence from research and its implications for policy and practice*, Assessment Reform Group, London.

6 Horner, S., QCA (2009).

7 Learning gains of this type are measured by comparing (a) the average improvements in pupils' scores on tests with (b) the range of scores that are found for typical groups of pupils on these same tests. The ratio of (a) divided by (b) is known as the effect size.

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8 Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998), *Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment*, King's College London School of Education, London.

9 Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2008), *Testing*

## Critique of current context

We argue that AfL also serves parents' interests by providing a broad and rich source of information about their children's learning and progress which is not available from a single measure such as the outcome of an end of Key Stage test. Additionally, it supports the strengthening of schools' outcomes-based accountability to parents and the local community<sup>10</sup>.

However, beyond the use of assessment for learning in everyday classroom practice, the TLRP commentary *Assessment in Schools: Fit for Purpose*<sup>11</sup> argues that where assessment data is being used at school level (periodic assessment) consistency of judgement and therefore reliability is important. There needs to be provision made to minimise both the variations applied by different teachers and the possibility of biased judgements.

The commentary continues to argue that this takes on even more significance where the results of the assessment are being used for external purposes (transitional assessment), for example where teacher judgements contribute to an external qualification. Here, teacher judgements need be demonstrably consistent and unbiased with the system operating in comparable ways to an agreed set of standards and criteria. This is critical for the purposes of recording, reporting and public accountability for pupils, parents and teachers. Therefore, robust processes for both comparability within schools and moderation between schools are required<sup>12</sup>. Evidence from other countries suggests that the most common forms of moderation are group moderation and the use of special tests or tasks that have been tried out and calibrated to enable teachers to check their judgements<sup>13</sup>.

It is important, before considering the current context in which assessment contributes to teaching quality, to acknowledge that the definition and interpretation of assessment for learning is not universally understood. In particular, there is a sense that the previous Government interpreted AfL differently to how it was originally intended. In so doing, it placed a significant emphasis on teachers' record keeping of pupils' progress.

However, having underlined the importance of effective assessment as a contribution to teaching and learning, evidence suggests that further improvement in assessment practice is needed. Ofsted reports that despite the significant national focus on assessment for learning, evidence from inspection and survey work suggests that it is still not consistently embedded in teaching across phases and subjects and it remains a comparative weakness in provision<sup>14</sup>.

Ofsted's evaluation of the impact of the National Strategies support on assessment for learning reveals a mixed picture of success. 27 of the 43 schools visited were judged to be either inadequate (seven schools) or satisfactory (20 schools) in relation to the impact of assessment for learning<sup>15</sup>.

There is some qualitative research which suggests that there is a set of factors common to teaching contexts where AfL tends to develop successfully. These are where:

- pedagogical content and curriculum knowledge is strongest;
- teachers are engaged in professional, collaborative development and classroom-focused inquiry supported by school leaders; and
- there are networking opportunities within school and across other schools<sup>16</sup>.

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and assessment: *Third report of session 2007-08*, TSO, London.

10 Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2007), *GTCE submission to the inquiry on testing*, TSO, London; and GTCE (2007) *Assessment in the Future: Building the Case for Change*, GTCE, London.

11 TLRP (ARG) (2009), *Assessment in schools: Fit for purpose – a commentary*, TLRP, London.

12 *ibid.*

13 Harlen, W. (2009), *The quality of learning: Assessment alternatives for primary education*, Cambridge Primary Review, Cambridge.

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14 The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2008-09.

15 Ofsted (2008), *Assessment for learning: the impact of National Strategy support*, Ofsted, London.

16 Webb M. and Jones J. (2009), 'Exploring tensions in developing assessment for learning' in *Assessment in Education*, 16, 2.

Although evidence suggests that the quality of teachers' assessment practice is shown to be variable, feedback from the GTCE's 2009 seminar with teachers and national stakeholders *Strengthening the role of the teacher in assessment* identified a number of areas in which an enhanced role for the teacher in assessment at school level can benefit teaching quality. These include:

- better communication about professional 'assessment dialogues' within the school and between teachers;
- more opportunities to share effective assessment practice;
- more time for teachers to undertake their role in assessment;
- use of tests to inform teachers' judgements; and
- recognition that external moderation contributes to teachers' own professional development, quality assures judgements and improves the understanding of the assessment process – though this was seen as daunting by some<sup>17</sup>.

Evidence also suggests that teacher involvement in the moderation of other teachers' assessment judgements and standard setting makes an important contribution to the effectiveness of the teacher's own assessment practice, since it helps teachers to assign performance levels to national standards. Therefore, professional collaboration on moderation is of benefit to teaching and learning as well as to assessment<sup>18</sup>.

The introduction of the Government's Assessing Pupils Progress (APP) framework was an attempt to support teachers to make judgements on pupils' progress. However, analysis from the former QCA's evaluation of the APP pilot project (2006-08) and feedback from a GTCE research panel of teachers indicates the variable impact of APP and a lack of confidence and trust in teachers' own assessment judgements, as well as those

of other teachers<sup>19</sup>. This can result in teachers taking a micro-summative, tick-box approach to assessing pupils against the APP framework, exacerbated by the emphasis local authorities and Ofsted place on the framework.

In particular, head teachers, teachers and local authorities report that:

- the framework has had a positive impact in identifying gaps in pupils' learning and linking assessment outcomes to next steps planning for both teaching and learning;
- work is needed to improve accuracy and reliability of the external moderation of teacher judgements;
- increase in workload on teachers from using the framework; and
- there is a need to further develop training, and engagement with parents<sup>20</sup>.

The GTCE has consistently argued for flexible use of assessment frameworks, such as APP, to support rather than drive teachers' judgements, and we caution against the over reliance on such frameworks as a substitute for teachers' own assessment judgements.

The role of the teacher in assessment which is used for transition is less well understood. Much of the concern relates to assessment which is high stakes, that is, assessment which has serious consequences for schools or pupils, such as that leading to an award or a qualification. It rests on the view that in these circumstances an external test or assessment is required in order to ensure consistent standards of marking and better validity through reducing bias.

However, there is some evidence which suggests that teacher-based assessment can improve the validity (including reliability) and the quality of assessment in comparison with end of Key Stage tests and public

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17 GTCE seminar with teachers and national stakeholders: *Strengthening the role of the teacher in assessment*, December 2009.

18 Stanley, G. et al (2009), *Review of Teacher Assessment: Evidence of what works best and issues for development*, Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment, Oxford.

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19 GTCE Teacher Research Panel on Teacher Assessment, May 2010.

20 QCA (2008), *Evaluation of the assessing pupils' progress pilot project 2006-08*, QCA, London.

examinations<sup>21</sup>. This can be achieved through the sampling of a wider range of pupils' work over a longer period of time on which to base a judgement.

Equally important is the response to criticisms that the main weaknesses associated with teacher-based assessment can be sufficiently mitigated to ensure public confidence and trust in the system. The Assessment Reform Group (ARG) under the auspices of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) identifies these weaknesses as:

- unfair or biased marking;
- variations in standards applied by different teachers; and
- questions over the quality of assessment instruments in reflecting important aspects of understanding or skill.

The GTCE finds favour with proposals from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) that argue for a combination of approaches to mitigate these weaknesses, as well as to ensure robustness and public trust in a teacher assessment system. These include:

- raising the competency of teachers' assessment practice through (possibly accredited) continuing professional development on assessment design and standards;
- a level of moderation at school level through teachers coming together in their schools to discuss the pupil work and agree assessments; and
- some form of external social moderation<sup>22</sup> to ensure public confidence<sup>23</sup>.

Such external social moderation could take the form of sampling a range of pupils' work and over time could be

carried out in a light-touch way as expertise in assessment leadership within the teacher workforce grows.

Feedback from teachers drawn from the GTCE's research panel considered the subject of moderation. On the whole, teachers felt that there was a role for externally devised tests to be used at the discretion of teachers to support their assessment judgements. It is crucial, however, that tests are not used to override these judgements.

Teachers were also positive about group moderation in the form of cross-school and cross-phase moderation, describing it as essential, with schools working in clusters to moderate their judgements.

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21 Children, Schools and Families Select Committee (2007), *op. cit.*, and GTCE (2007), *op. cit.*

22 A number of different approaches to moderation, for example an independent external panel, use professional or expert judgement to check, and if necessary make adjustments to, teacher assessments.

23 NFER (2010), *Improving the acceptability of teacher assessment for accountability purposes: Some proposals within an English system*, NFER, Slough.

## The case for change

The assessment system has been characterised by the use of assessment data from end of Key Stage tests and public examinations to meet a wide range of purposes. We have consistently argued that the primary purpose of assessment is to inform future teaching and learning with the ultimate aim of improving pupil performance.

The importance of effective assessment cannot be underestimated. Its impact on raising achievement, particularly for those regarded as ‘low attainers’, is well-evidenced. However, further investment in teacher training and development is needed to improve the quality of assessment practice.

The case for change rests on the argument that an enhanced role for the teacher in the assessment system can actually improve the quality of assessment, as compared to a model driven by external tests. Furthermore, the weaknesses commonly associated with teacher involvement can be sufficiently mitigated to ensure it is robust and secures public trust and confidence.

However, it is equally important that the appropriate support and infrastructure is in place to realise the benefits of a revised assessment system. The characteristics and proposals set out below identify the key features of such a system.

## Equality and diversity

A benefit of effective assessment, as already alluded to, is that it supports the personalisation of learning for children and young people. Evidence suggests that assessment for learning has a particular benefit for ‘low attainers’ and can help narrow gaps between high-achieving groups of pupils and those at risk of underachieving, for example pupils with special educational needs.

An assessment system which is teacher-based is likely to be more inclusive, since some groups of pupils can be disadvantaged by external testing and public examination arrangements, particularly pupils with disabilities.

From a public interest standpoint, quality assurance through moderation needs to be built into the system to ensure that weaknesses related to teacher bias and inconsistent judgements are mitigated.

Teachers need equal access to professional learning opportunities to develop their own assessment practice.



# Principles

The characteristics of an assessment system which will enhance the role of the teacher and so, in our view, provide better quality of learning for the pupil are:

- clear emphasis on the primary purpose of assessment to inform individual pupil improvement;
- better and richer information for teachers, pupils and parents to inform future teaching and learning;
- robust quality assurance of assessment outcomes to uphold public trust and confidence;
- improvement in the capacity and expertise of the teacher workforce to develop and learn from itself in relation to their own assessment practice; and
- greater flexibility to enable teachers to use frameworks to support assessment in a way which responds to their own context and pupils' needs.

# Pupil assessment: proposals

Our proposals for a revised assessment system are oriented around the three stages of assessment.

## Day-to-day

- Increased investment in teacher assessment practice through initial teacher education and continuing professional development.
- Assessment frameworks to support teachers in making assessment judgments rather than be an end in themselves.
- Greater recognition of assessment as an essential component of pedagogy, to be reflected in the professional standards framework for class teachers and school leaders.

## Periodic

- Facilitation of communities of practice or school clusters so they can support cross-school and cross-phase moderation and contribute to the improvement in assessment expertise.
- Development of a bank of externally-devised tests which can be used flexibly and at the discretion of teachers to support their assessment judgements.

## Transitional

- Some form of light-touch moderation of teacher assessment judgements by an external agency on a sample basis, to ensure public trust.
- Cohort sampling to provide national quality assurance of the system, to enable improvement to be monitored over time and comparisons to be made with other education systems.

## PAPER 11

### PUPIL PARTICIPATION

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Pupil participation within education can assume a range of meanings within different contexts, from children and young people attending school to being actively involved in decisions which affect their learning and beyond into their communities.

Our interest has focused on the role that pupil participation can play to inform teaching and learning, as distinct from influencing the administrative and management arrangements of schools.

The background to pupil participation can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s. However, the key driver has been the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1991. Other national policy agendas in relation to public service reform have served to reinforce its legitimacy – in particular, increasing the stake that service users hold in those public services they access.

There is a strong ethical argument for listening to the views of children and young people and involving them in decisions which directly affect their teaching and learning. Although a clear link between pupil participation and its impact on teaching quality has yet to be established conclusively, there is a growing body of evidence which associates pupil participation with benefits in teaching quality and learning outcomes.

There are a number of ways in which pupil participation can contribute to the quality of teaching. However, barriers exist in the current system which act to limit its full potential.

The main proposals seek to address these issues and support the development of pupil participation as a greater contribution to teaching and learning.

## Introduction to Paper 11

In this paper we consider the potential of pupil participation to contribute to the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of learning.

We first consider the background, including the ethical argument, for the involvement of children and young people in decisions which affect their teaching and learning, as well as the benefits that it can provide in terms of pupil outcomes.

We then examine the evidence on the link between effective pupil participation and benefits to teaching and learning, which reveals an inconclusive picture requiring further investigation.

After identifying the barriers in the current system which militate against the effective use of pupil participation to support teaching and learning, we offer some proposals to address these issues and support its development.

## Relationship of pupil participation to teaching quality

### Defining pupil participation

The term ‘pupil participation’ has different meanings and is understood differently within particular contexts.

Indeed, there are many variants of terminology in use to describe the processes or methods through which children and young people participate in learning, schooling, and society. Common terms are pupil voice, pupil consultation, pupil involvement, and pupil research<sup>1</sup>. In this paper though we will only use the term ‘pupil participation.’

As Johnson (2004)<sup>2</sup> and Thompson and Holdsworth (2003)<sup>3</sup> indicate, a school’s definition of pupil ‘voice’ (sic) could range from pupils simply attending school or pupil representation on school councils, to a more active involvement in making decisions about learning, schooling and involvement in the wider community<sup>4</sup>.

Rudduck, in her article *The potential of listening to pupils*<sup>5</sup>, makes the distinction between participation and consultation. She argues that consultation is about talking with pupils about things that matter in school. It may involve pupils in:

- offering advice about policy and other initiatives;
- commenting on their experiences of teaching and learning, and offering suggestions for improvement;
- or
- reviewing recent major initiatives at school or year-group level or of changes in classroom practice.

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1 For a discussion of the differences, see, for example, OPM (2010) *Engaging children and young people in research and consultation*, OPM, London, or internal briefing paper for participants in the 2009 GTCE conference on pupil participation.

2 Johnson, K. (2004), *Children’s Voices: pupil leadership in primary schools*, National College for School Leadership, Nottingham.

3 Thompson, P. and Holdsworth, R. (2003), ‘Theorising change in the educational ‘field’: re-readings of ‘pupil participation’ projects’, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 6 (4), pp. 371-391.

4 Hudson, A. (2008), *Voice, role and participation of children and young people: summary of existing research and policy developments*, internal GTCE paper.

5 Rudduck, J. (2006), ‘The potential of listening to pupils’ *Educational Review*, 58(2).

Ideally, consultations are conversations that build a habit of easy discussion between teachers and pupils, and among pupils, about learning in school.

Participation is about involving pupils in the school's work and development through:

- a wider range of roles and responsibilities;
- membership of committees and working parties, and focusing on real issues, events, problems and opportunities;
- opportunities for decision-making at classroom level; and
- the pupil's understanding and management of their own learning priorities<sup>6</sup>.

## Purposes of pupil participation

There are a number of different purposes for involving children and young people in making decisions, and a number of different contexts in which they could be involved.

Participation can include making decisions about schooling, about the community or beyond into public services. This sometimes happens in youth forums or youth parliaments. It equips children and young people with life skills and provides early understandings and expectations for what it means to be a citizen in a democracy<sup>7</sup>.

Much of the research in this area has examined pupil participation through the role of school councils. It is acknowledged that these can and do inform teaching and learning. However, our own interest and the scope of this paper is primarily concerned with the contribution that pupil participation can make to the quality of teaching and learning within the classroom, rather than to the management and administration of a school.

## Background to pupil participation

Concepts of pupil participation can be traced back to many progressive educational experiments and thinking in the 1960s and 1970s or even earlier.<sup>8</sup> For example, Summerhill School was founded in 1921 by Alexander Sutherland Neill and was run as a democratic community.

However, the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified in 1991, is widely acknowledged as the key driver in bringing about greater emphasis on the need to involve and engage children in decisions about their lives. As well as setting out a child's entitlement to food, shelter, education and other basic rights, it expected that children would be able to "*express their opinions freely, where capable of forming their own views, and to participate in matters affecting them, including their social, cultural and educational lives.*"<sup>9</sup>

It is arguable that this acknowledgement of children's rights was strengthened by the previous Government's reforms to public services, which emphasised the engagement of service users to shape and influence those services they access, including education. This was not only to improve democracy, but also to bring about improvement in the quality of provision and strengthen accountability between those who provide and those who use public services<sup>10</sup>.

In 2003, the *Every Child Matters* (ECM) agenda signalled another shift in government policy. This sought to advance the wellbeing of children through the expectation that local and national services work together to support children and young people to:

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8 Public Administration Select Committee (2007), *GTCE memorandum to the inquiry Public service: Putting people first?*, TSO, London.

9 Alexander, R. (ed) (2009), *Children, their world, their education*, Routledge, London, p72.

10 See, for example, the 'duty to involve' set out in *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities*, from April 2009.

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6 Rudduck, J. (2006), *op. cit.*

7 OPM (2010), *op. cit.*

- stay safe;
- be healthy;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution; and
- achieve economic well-being.

Furthermore, the ECM agenda identified that the design and delivery of such services should reflect the needs of children and young people. A good level of participation was therefore expected. In 2004, this passed into law through the Children Act.

Specifically, in relation to education, the principal vehicle for pupil participation was through the then Government's focus on personalised learning. This noted that the quality of learning is shaped by learners' experiences, characteristics, interests and aspirations. It identified that high quality teaching explicitly builds on learner needs, as well as on high expectations and good subject knowledge. It involved pupil participation as a key mechanism for implementation.

## The Code of Conduct and Practice for registered teachers

We have consistently maintained that pupil participation, appropriately defined, is a public good and strengthens teaching and learning. Pupil participation is firmly embedded within the *Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers*<sup>11</sup>. This states, *inter alia*, that registered teachers should:

- listen to children and young people, consider their views and preferences, and involve them in decisions that affect them, including those relating to their own learning; and
- uphold children and young people's rights, and help them understand their responsibilities.

As part of the research and evidence gathering that informed the revision of the Code in 2009, the views of

a wide range of stakeholders – including children and young people, teachers, parents and children's services professionals – identified the importance of teachers in demonstrating behaviours, values and responsibilities which supported these principles in the Code<sup>12</sup>.

OPM's literature review also acknowledges that children and young people offer a unique perspective on, and have a direct stake in, teaching and learning, and are its ultimate beneficiaries<sup>13</sup>.

## Benefits to teaching and learning

Much of that which is articulated in relation to pupil participation in the Code of Conduct and Practice is viewed from a rights and entitlement perspective and is in tacit acknowledgement of the UNCRC.

Aside from this ethical dimension, there is a growing, if not yet compelling, body of evidence which argues that consulting pupils, and leading their participation in teaching and learning approaches – as well as the wider issues affecting their schooling – improves pupil engagement and attainment. This view is grounded in the work of many research studies within the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP). The TLRP identifies a number of benefits to teaching and learning arising from effective use of pupil participation which include:

- pupil confidence and self-esteem;
- social, personal and emotional intelligence;
- sense of responsibility, efficacy and skills;
- new knowledge and skills;
- communication and collaborative skills;
- civic and political competence;
- attendance;
- achievement; and
- behaviour.

11 GTCE (2009), *Code of conduct and practice for registered teachers*, GTCE, London.

12 OPM (2008), *Expectations of teachers: the views of key Stakeholders*, OPM, London.

13 OPM (2010), *op. cit.*

Our own commissioned research into the influence and participation of children and young people in their learning, undertaken by Cambridge University, identified a number of principles which create and affirm the nature and value of participation. It found that learning is enhanced when:

- school structures are designed to encourage and support participation;
- pupil participation and influence are embodied in the culture;
- the relationship between teachers and pupils is seen as a partnership for learning;
- the experience and expertise of pupils are drawn upon as resources for learning and school improvement;
- teaching is responsive to the needs and interests of pupils and creates space for learning and school improvement;
- pupils are able to exercise choice and agency in all aspects of their learning;
- pupils have opportunities to participate in school-wide decision-making;
- everyone, including pupils, is encouraged to engage in systematic inquiry and reflection focusing on the nature of learning and the experience of schooling; and
- pupils are key players in school self-evaluation, an ongoing process embedded at classroom, school and community levels<sup>14</sup>.

Further, Hargreaves demonstrates that enhancing the voice, role and participation of pupils, alongside complementary approaches such as assessment for learning, can improve areas such as pupil engagement, responsibility, meta-cognitive skills, relationships with staff, and social skills<sup>15</sup>.

14 GTCE (2008), *The influence and participation of children and young people in their learning project*, GTCE, London.

15 Hargreaves, D. (2004), *Personalising learning – 2: student voice and assessment for learning*, Specialist Schools Trust, London.

It is important to understand that the evidential relationship between pupil participation and impact on pupil outcomes or teaching quality remains unclear. Indeed, as Whitty and Wisby argue:

*“the link [between pupil voice and improved attainment] has not been established robustly – in part because of the relatively short time span under analysis in some of these studies (Sammons et al 2002) and also because such improvements as have been identified could be accounted for by other factors, such as changes in school composition (Cummings et al 2006)”*<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, the National Healthy Schools Standard report examined the links between pupil participation and school improvement, and found that *“no strong evidence emerged to suggest that greater pupil participation was linked with increased school attainment scores”*<sup>17</sup>.

There are, nevertheless, studies which purport to make the link between pupil participation and improved outcomes. One such study is Hannam’s research on behalf of Community Service Volunteers, which reviewed 12 secondary schools that were already implementing the ‘participation’ aspects of citizenship education in 2001. The study noted favourable differentials in engagement in teaching and learning, numbers of exclusions, attendance rates and attainment against similar schools that had not established the same level of pupil participation.

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation sponsored research, including a literature review of studies in this area, which noted that the impact of pupil participation on achievement seems to be indirect, but there was clear consensus that:

- students in more democratic schools were happier and felt more in control of their learning;

16 Whitty, G. and Wisby, E. (2007), *Real decision making? School Councils in action*, Institute of Education, University of London, London.

17 Health Development Agency (2002), *National healthy school standard report*, NHS, London.

- if students gave feedback on teaching, this had the twin effect of teachers' practice improving and students gaining in awareness of the learning process;
- participation enhanced skills of communication; and
- competence as a learner and skills in specific curriculum areas such as citizenship improved, as well as in other curriculum areas<sup>18</sup>.

## How pupil participation contributes to teaching quality

Having considered the benefits to teaching and learning, the conditions for its success and the evidence in relation to its impact, it is important to understand how pupil participation can contribute to teaching quality.

Research evidence cited in our own anthology *Improving pupil learning by enhancing participation* shows that pupil participation is effective where a classroom environment is created where both teachers and pupils are learning together<sup>19</sup>. Teaching is seen as a collaborative exercise where traditional teacher-pupil relationships and roles within the classroom are reframed.

Pupil participation then offers opportunities to improve teaching since it provides a mechanism for children and young people to give feedback on the teaching they experience – including, for example, lesson organisation and teaching techniques – so that lessons can be planned in partnership<sup>20</sup>.

Furthermore, it supports teachers to have individual conversations with pupils about teaching and learning, as well as group conversations<sup>21</sup>. Pupils can receive positive feedback and encouragement from their teachers – including the more confident learners who also need

reassurance that they are making good progress on a regular basis<sup>22</sup>.

Effective pupil participation also supports children and young people to take more responsibility and control over the direction of their learning. In particular, it supports pupils to design and lead their own research studies, enabling them to work with teachers to bring about change, with teachers supporting and facilitating the process. Pupils shape the form and direction of the research<sup>23</sup>.

Such projects can enable pupils to work with teachers to bring about change. Pupils can get involved in researching a wide range of issues covering teaching and learning, curriculum and policy, school organisation and environment. Projects include:

- **teaching and learning:** what makes a good teacher and a good lesson;
- **school and curriculum policy:** making GCSE and post-16 choices, target-setting, anti-bullying policies and truanting; and
- **school organisation and environment:** playground layout and design<sup>24</sup>.

Critical to the contribution that pupil participation can make to teaching and learning is its role in developing effective assessment practice and specifically, assessment for learning<sup>25</sup>. The role of pupils in assessing their own work is a powerful form of participation in learning. Peer and self assessment gives pupils greater autonomy in using assessment criteria to judge their own and each other's work. Asking them to come up with the criteria by which to judge what makes good work gives pupils a greater sense of ownership as well as evaluative skills<sup>26</sup>.

18 Davies, L. et al. (2006), *Inspiring schools: Impact and outcomes: Taking up the challenge of pupil participation*, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, London.

19 GTCE (2010), *Improving pupil learning by enhancing participation*, GTCE, London.

20 Hargreaves, D. (2004), *op. cit.*

21 *ibid.*

22 GTCE (2010), *op. cit.*

23 Fielding, M. and Bragg, S. (2003), *Students as researchers: Making a difference*, Pearson, Cambridge.

24 GTCE (2010), *op. cit.*

25 For a definition of AfL see paper 10, Pupil assessment, p. 131.

26 GTCE (2010), *op. cit.*

# Critique of current context

The research summaries in *Improving pupil learning by enhancing participation* show that peer and self assessment can be a means of helping pupils understand what their learning goals are and the approach they need to take to meet them. In particular, peer assessment is a means of helping pupils to develop the detachment they need for self-assessment. Evidence suggests that:

- peer assessment improves the pupils' motivation to work more carefully;
- peers use the same language and can provide models of achievement;
- pupils can accept criticisms more readily from their peers than from their teachers;
- peer assessment helps improve communication between pupils and their teacher about their learning;
- peer assessment helps the pupils to identify learning goals and what had to be done to achieve them, skills they can then transfer into self-assessment; and
- pupils learn by taking the roles of teachers and examiners of others<sup>27</sup>.

Finally, effective pupil participation can also help to ensure that pedagogies are established which address the needs of all learners in the classroom – in particular, by raising the low self-esteem of some pupils belonging to specific groups, such as:

- low-attaining pupils;
- gifted and talented pupils who are underachieving;
- dyslexic pupils;
- pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties; and
- bilingual pupils.

It can help improve children and young people's learning by recognising their strengths and areas of competence as well as their weaknesses.

As previously noted, there is inconclusive evidence which links effective pupil participation with improvement in teaching quality or pupil outcomes. However, this is not the same as suggesting that there is no link. An ever-growing evidence base seems to indicate that some form of relationship does exist.

Some teachers may find this change in relationships with pupils threatening. They may fear that it potentially undermines their authority. Assessment of the quality of teaching and learning by pupils risks being viewed by teachers as part of the current accountability system, or as personal or professional criticism. It is essential therefore that, if pupil participation is to enhance teaching and learning, it is managed in a sensitive way which both mitigates these risks and reassures teachers. Pupils' agency and participation will not be realised without teachers seeing themselves as architects of school and classroom policy and practice<sup>28</sup>.

The current assessment system, in combination with the prescriptive nature of the National Curriculum, presents barriers to the development of effective pupil participation within teaching and learning.

The benefits of assessment for learning are now well-evidenced. Both the Government and Ofsted acknowledge that rigorous assessment and tracking of pupil performance in order to inform classroom practice is the most common feature of schools where pupils make good progress and attainment gaps are closed<sup>29</sup>.

However, we have consistently argued that the current system is dominated by the use of assessment data for the purposes of a specific aspect of accountability. This relegates assessment for the purpose of developing learning – the kind of assessment in which pupil voice is a critical element – to second place<sup>30</sup>.

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28 GTCE (2008), *op. cit.*

29 Government and Ofsted (2008), response to the Children, Schools and Families Committee's third report of session 2007-08 into testing and assessment, TSO, London.

30 GTCE (2007), *op. cit.*

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27 *ibid.*



## The case for change

Furthermore, the current assessment system confers value on those skills, knowledge and understanding which are capable of being measured. The GTCE-funded *Developing Pedagogies for E-learning Resources* project, based at Manchester Metropolitan University, demonstrates that the skills associated with pupil participation are not currently capable of being assessed within the constraints of the assessment system. There is therefore a danger of undervaluing a key teaching and learning strategy simply because it does not fit easily into a system which is designed to measure performance.

Equally, the prescriptive nature of the primary national curriculum combined with the end of Key Stage 2 tests has distorted and narrowed the curriculum; it encourages teachers to “teach to the test” and reduces the opportunities that the curriculum can provide to involve pupils in curriculum planning and incorporating ‘learning to learn’ as a dimension of the curriculum.

We argue that the current framework of professional standards for teachers does not sufficiently support the development of pedagogical skills, knowledge and understanding – of which the effective use of pupil participation in teaching and learning is a key component – within initial teacher training and in the formative stage of a teacher’s career.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the ethical rationale for developing children and young peoples’ right to have their views considered and participate in decisions which affect their own teaching and learning.

However, there is a growing body of evidence which would seem to indicate that the development of effective pupil participation yields benefits for teaching and learning which include better engagement, improved behaviour, motivation and attainment. These benefits are achieved through strengthening agency, responsibility, and the sense of control and direction over pupils’ own learning.

Much of this research or evidence identifies relationships, common characteristics or correlations between schools that are participatory and benefits in learning. However, there is, as we have seen, inconclusive evidence to suggest that a causal relationship exists between effective pupil participation and the quality of teaching or improved pupils’ outcomes.

We therefore argue that further research work should be undertaken (possibly in the form of a randomised control trial) to unpick the link between pupil participation, teaching quality and better pupil outcomes (eg increased attainment).

In turn, this should be supported by a teaching profession that engages in and with research in the area of pupil participation so as to inform their practice, since the context within which teachers relate to their pupils is unique and all important.

The current assessment system should be reviewed in recognition of the primary purpose of assessment, which is to inform future teaching and learning. A shift away from high-stakes testing and the unintended consequences which accompany these arrangements would open up the space in which pupil participation can play a greater role within assessment for learning and the development and delivery of the curriculum.

# Equality and diversity

There should also be greater recognition of the role that pupil participation has to play within the development of effective pedagogical skills, understanding and knowledge through the professional standards for teachers. This in turn should be supported by an increased focus within initial teacher training and ongoing professional learning for teachers.

Opportunities for having pupils' views heard, as well as their involvement in decisions which affect their own learning, is a right for all children.

Furthermore, pupil participation has benefits for learners who are at risk of underachieving, for it can improve engagement, agency, motivation and behaviour. It can also raise the self-esteem of particular groups of pupils, such as:

- low-attaining pupils;
- gifted and talented pupils who are underachieving;
- dyslexic pupils;
- pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties; and
- bilingual pupils.

Finally, teachers can use pupil participation to personalise teaching and learning and meet the needs of pupils through involvement in the design, planning and adaptation of curriculum as well as through assessment for learning.

# Pupil participation: proposals

The following proposals outline the necessary changes to support the development of pupil participation as a contribution to teaching quality.

## **Government should:**

- revise the professional standards framework for teachers to focus on the development of effective pedagogy, including effective approaches to pupil participation within teaching and learning;
- create expert standards to support the development of high quality pedagogical practice which includes a strong focus on pupil participation;
- support schools and local-level communities of practice to develop teaching practice in the effective use of pupil participation, so as to improve learning as a part of research-informed practice;
- support in-depth research to strengthen the evidence base on the contribution that pupil participation can make to improving the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes;
- revise the assessment system to support the primary purpose of assessment, which is to provide information to support teaching and learning; and
- enable greater flexibility for teachers and schools to design, plan and adapt their curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils within their own local context.

## **Teacher trainers should:**

- increase their emphasis on the effective use of pupil participation as part of the development of teachers' pedagogy through their initial teacher training, especially in relation to assessment for learning and curriculum development.





## TEACHING QUALITY PAPERS

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