



Focus On...

Creating a Culture for Professional Learning and Development

Schools recognise the importance of having professional learning and development (PLD) which aligns to the development priorities of the school and relates to performance management. This article aims to provide leaders with tools and commentary to support these plans.

Ofsted places importance on well planned PLD in their latest framework, asserting that 'leaders focus on improving staff's subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge of staff are built up and improve over time.'

[Developing Great Subject Teaching](#), published by The Wellcome Trust in 2018, looks at the impact of pedagogical versus subject specific PLD. The review describes how some schools have thrived through prioritising subject-specific PLD and highlights the enabling role senior leaders can play in this. But it also describes the challenge that many school leaders and teachers face in identifying and embedding high quality PLD.

A new challenge paper from Jim Short and Stephanie Hirsh ([Carnegie Corporation of New York, November 19, 2020](#)) argues that a curriculum for professional learning 'done right, can close the gap between the experiences we provide for teachers and those we want them to provide for students'. These recommendations are echoed in The Education Endowment Fund's [Effective Professional Development guidance](#) which provides schools with three recommendations for designing and selecting effective professional development.

1. When designing and selecting professional development, focus on the mechanisms.
2. Ensure that professional development effectively builds knowledge, motivates staff, develops teaching techniques, and embeds practice.
3. Implement professional development programmes with care, taking into consideration the context and needs of the school.

In his blog [Implementation and PLD](#) (2021), Mark Enser emphasises the importance of building sustainable PLD models in schools. To ensure that new initiatives have time to embed and the duration to make impact.

Dudley (2015) suggests that to evoke real change we need to craft opportunities to 'work collaboratively with people we trust enough to expose our professional vulnerabilities'.

So, how do we build effective and collaborative learning cultures in schools? Hannah Tyreman, Head of Learning Design at Chartered College of Teaching, discusses '[reciprocal vulnerability](#)' as a 'powerful tool in building a culture of trust, respect and honesty, which can form the foundation for productive dialogue and meaningful collaboration between colleagues.'



The culture for PLD should extend to our governance. [Governors and staff performance: Knowing your school, NGA guidance, 2015](#) can support leaders in articulating the PLD culture in schools.

If you would like further support with planning your professional learning and development in school please contact Derry Richardson, Link Adviser (Professional Learning and Development) via Derry.richardson@westsussex.gov.uk

Further Support and Guidance:

The [School Effectiveness](#) Team are here to provide support and guidance in PLD pathways.

Please visit the [Professional Learning and Development Homepage](#) for our 2022 offer.

**For the purposes of this article we have used professional learning and development (PLD) consistently, except where quoted directly. Alternative language can include continuous professional development (CPD), continued professional learning and development (CPDL) or professional development (PD).*