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Research and
Evidence in
Education

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Report for: XXXX School



Introduction

This is the report for XXXX of the Skein assessment carried out on XX/XX/XXXX by CUREE (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education).

Evidence for this report

The evidence for this report is based on analysis of school documentation, an interview with the SLT, a focus group including short additional interviews with colleagues and a survey. The benchmarks underpinning the assessment and recommendations are based on international evidence, research and inspection evidence in the UK. These identify five core areas which are crucial for a school's professional learning environment to be effective and efficient. This is explained in more detail in Appendix B.

The school leadership team and other colleagues were generous with their time and were helpful in providing a rich array of documentary and other evidence which together offered a picture which we believe offers a fair representation of the school as a whole. Our findings, reported below, are put forward on this basis but with the obvious caution that we can only report on the evidence we found.

Overview of the professional learning and development in the school

A key feature of the school is its very strong partnership with XXXX. The SLT of the two schools has appointed several colleagues who have roles across the two schools. Many meetings and Inset sessions are held collaboratively and colleagues also work with those occupying a similar role in the partner school when appropriate. For example they carried out joint lesson observations.

CPD is prioritised and receives the second largest budget within the school. The CPD programme is driven by identified whole school priorities with individuals also accessing more personalised opportunities (based on needs identified by leaders through monitoring processes, Performance Management and through self-identification). Internal professional development activities include weekly staff meetings, phase meetings, inset days and twilight training sessions. Colleagues also take part in a range of external opportunities provided by partner schools, the TSA and a range of other organisations, for example, SENCO courses, 'Outstanding TA' training and coaching workshops. The school actively leads and supports a wide range of schools across XXXX.

Whenever a colleague has attended a course they meet with the SLT to discuss how what they have learnt can contribute to the school priorities. They then plan a staff meeting to disseminate to other members of the staff. Colleagues are then expected to make changes to their practice.

The SLT describe the CPD environment as supportive and cohesive. Colleagues in the focus group described it as reflective, professional, collaborative with space for individuality, and purposeful.

Summary of the main findings and recommendations

Overall, the school approach to CPD has a number of **significant strengths**, including the

- ✎ priority given to CPD. Colleagues invest time and effort on professional learning
- ✎ range of personalised CPD opportunities available and the attention to individual progression provided (e.g. the school has 'grown' many of its leaders)
- ✎ multilayered opportunities for collaboration to support professional learning within school, with the partner school and within the TSA
- ✎ SLT leadership and involvement of other colleagues in extensive school to school support
- ✎ active seeking out of comprehensive range of local, national and diocesan courses and support to develop internal expertise which is then used to develop in-school practice
- ✎ use of a range of forms of evidence to support professional learning relating to specific teaching and learning priorities e.g. videos and pupil voice.

In order to build on these strengths and increase capacity and the impact of CPD on pupil learning **the school should focus on:**

- ✎ *Pursuing and building on existing plans to develop action research/enquiry skills, processes and tools (e.g. through Research Lesson Study and/or teacher-led action research) to:*
 - further strengthen connections between professional learning and pupil outcomes
 - support all staff in collecting more fine-grained evidence about the specific impact of teaching and learning developments on particular sub-groups of children's learning processes and outcomes, and link with the wider evidence base
 - support colleagues in identifying and tracking their own evolving needs in the context of pupil needs (to enable further delegation of responsibility and support succession planning at all levels)
 - build on emergent research practices to develop a more systematic approach beneficial for the whole school
- ✎ Pursuing the existing plan to develop peer coaching skills and processes to enable all colleagues (teachers and TAs) to gain the full benefits of on-going collaborative support and to help develop a language to debrief and reflect on the effectiveness of collaboration
- ✎ Examining what makes effective CPD in order to plan and evaluate CPD and succession planning particularly for middle leadership

✎ Pursuing and building on existing plans to develop TA access to internal and external specialist expertise

Ideas and links to useful resources to develop the above recommendations along with more detailed consideration of the evidence about the school's strengths and areas for development in the 5 core areas of CPD are included on page 12.

School's practice in the 5 core areas of CPDL

School practice	Strengths	Development areas	Recommendations
<p>Needs analysis</p> <p>The school's practice is <i>Embedding with aspects of transforming</i></p>			
<p>Colleagues' needs are identified formally through a multilayered process of senior and middle leadership analysis of pupil data and work, lesson observations, pupil and teacher questionnaires/interviews and discussions with colleagues as part of performance management. In addition colleagues identify their own needs as and when they arise.</p> <p>Colleagues' professional development needs are linked with pupil needs by senior and middle leaders analysing evidence about pupil needs to identify school priority areas along with the CPD required to tackle the priorities. The SLT quality assure the monitoring process.</p> <p>Individual and school needs are aligned through providing a range of opportunities for colleagues to personalise their CPD within the whole-school programme and involving some colleagues in shaping whole school CPD.</p>	<p>Examples of specific strengths in carrying out and using needs analysis in CPD include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of personalised CPD opportunities available and the attention to individual progression provided through e.g. intensive support to tackle underachievement in teaching, access to external courses and support, and opportunities to use what has been learnt to develop leadership capacity. The consideration of needs in the context of pupil progress in school priority areas through phase and pupil progress meetings. The involvement of middle leaders in identifying needs and using this to plan CPD. E.g. For example some leaders identified the needs within local schools and used this to plan their own support programme. 	<p>In this school there is a need to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A greater consistency in the extent to which colleagues take responsibility for identifying and refining their CPD needs and starting points in the context of pupil needs. When colleagues were asked to rate how in control of their personal development on a scale of 1-4 (with 1 being not at all and 4 being completely) two rated their control as 4, nine as 3 but seven as 2. Colleagues in the focus group highlighted that they wanted to strengthen the extent to which CPD is planned with pupil needs as a starting point. 	<p>The strengths in the school's approach to needs assessment could be further enhanced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing greater pro-activity amongst colleagues about identifying and tracking their own evolving needs in the context of pupil needs. This should enable further delegation of responsibility and support succession planning at all levels.


<p>Collaboration The school's practice is <i>Embedding with elements of transforming</i>.</p>			
<p>Formal CPD activities involve colleagues in collaborative learning through for example staff meetings where teachers work in groups (often to discuss relevant pupil progress data). Leaders model collaboration in their own learning through working with others and recognise that collaboration is an essential part of colleagues' professional development. Some CPD such as the internal coaching training includes planned collaborative activities.</p> <p>Teachers use professional dialogue in staff meetings and informal discussions to consider teaching strategies and explore evidence about pupil learning.</p> <p>Colleagues in the focus group highlighted that one of the key aspects of the professional learning environment was its collaborative nature. This collaboration is integrated into school development and CPD through peer observation, phase meetings and pupil progress meetings.</p>	<p>Examples of specific strengths in collaboration in CPD include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of phase meetings to involve colleagues in working collaboratively to follow up learning from CPD sessions. • The multilayered opportunities for collaboration within school, with the partner school and within the TSA. For example middle and senior leaders link with colleagues in a similar role at XXXX's as well as attending specific meetings within the network, and all teachers carried out peer observation at the partner school. • The existing use of coaching. Of the 18 colleagues that completed the survey 8 were involved in coaching conversations weekly to monthly and 6 on a termly basis. 4 colleagues highlighted that they found coaching one of the most useful types of professional development. 	<p>In this school there is a need to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools to structure the planned co-coaching and evaluate it using evidence about pupils' responses to teaching and learning. • Tools, skills and processes to enable colleagues to debrief collaborative working arrangements to identify their contribution to professional learning. 	<p>The strengths in the school's approach to collaboration could be further enhanced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Pursuing the existing plan to develop peer coaching skills and processes to enable all colleagues (teachers and TAs) to gain the full benefits of on-going collaborative support and to help develop a language to debrief and reflect on the effectiveness of collaboration.

School practice	Strengths	Development areas	Recommendations
<p>Use of Specialist Expertise</p> <p><i>The school's practice is embedded</i></p> <p>School leaders and colleagues recognise the need for specialist expertise and identify it through considering as an SLT whether there is specialist expertise within the Collegiate, TSA and partner schools to support the development of identified priorities or whether it needs to be accessed externally. Performance management discussions are used to enable staff to identify where they can access specialist expertise.</p> <p>Specialist expertise is used in a range of ways. Sometimes this involves attending one-off courses but on many occasions extended support is given.</p> <p>Colleagues apply specialist expertise by considering how it relates to school priorities, disseminating to other staff and then experimenting with practice. Phase meetings are used to discuss the impact on pupil learning.</p>	<p>Examples of specific strengths in use of expertise in CPD include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regular inclusion of discussion of a research paper at literacy leader and SENCO meetings. • The active seeking out of comprehensive range of local, national and diocesan courses and support to develop internal expertise which is highly valued by colleagues. This expertise is then recognised e.g. through developing a local version of SLE and used to support other schools. For example colleagues have collaborated to develop their own training following their involvement in an outstanding TA course. • The on-going specialist support provided to colleagues when needed. For example, the 3 week programme to move teaching to good. This includes opportunities to observe, receive observation feedback and discuss practice in depth. 	<p>In this school there is a need to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA access to the full range of specialist expertise available internally and externally. Some TAs highlighted that whilst they could attend staff meetings (and that a representative always attended) opportunities to engage in specialist learning with teacher colleagues on a regular basis could be strengthened. Similarly whilst there was much support for accessing external courses TAs were not always aware of all the opportunities available. • Building on emergent research practices to develop a more systematic approach beneficial for the whole school. 	<p>The strengths in the school's approach to use of specialist expertise could be further enhanced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Developing TA access to internal and external specialist expertise. The school has recognised the need for further strengthening this area and has invested in developing internal capacity to run 'Outstanding TA' programmes. ✎ Building on emergent research practices and developing a more systematic approach to examining the wider evidence base about 'what works' and evidence gained from 'best practice' and its implications for professional learning across the school and its partners


School practice	Strengths	Development areas	Recommendations
Evidence for Professional Learning - The school's practice is embedded			
<p>A wide range of evidence such as pupil assessment data, pupil work and chance to learn from looking via videos is used to plan and evaluate CPD. Evidence is used to support colleagues' learning. It is used to identify CPD needs as part of the performance management process. It is also used to inform the evaluation of teaching and learning developments as pupil data is incorporated into phase and pupil progress meetings.</p> <p>Senior and middle leaders analyse a range of evidence (e.g. observations, pupil questionnaires and interviews, and work trawls) to identify CPD priorities.</p>	<p>Examples of specific strengths in the use of evidence for professional learning include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of a range of forms of evidence to support professional learning relating to specific teaching and learning priorities e.g. 11 out of the 18 survey respondents highlighted the use of videos of their own practice and 9 respondents highlighted their use of pupil voice. The use of evidence to monitor performance and to support learning. 12 colleagues highlighted that feedback from leaders was used to monitor performance and 9 also said that it supported professional learning. 11 colleagues highlighted that pupil work was used for monitoring and 10 colleagues highlighted that pupil work was also used for professional learning. Colleagues involvement in considering evidence about pupil learning. For example TAs highlighted that having completed an external literacy training programme they did assessments before and after implementation to check that the intervention worked. Phase meetings are used to evaluate the impact of particular teaching and learning developments. The SLT involve other colleagues in learning walks to develop expertise in gaining evidence about pupil learning. 	<p>In this school there is a need to further develop...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleagues collection and use of more fine grained forms of evidence e.g. focusing on the impact of particular aspects of teaching and learning priorities on the learning processes and outcome for specific sub-groups of pupils. Colleagues thought it would be useful to include more discussion of research papers in school meetings. 	<p>The strengths in the school's approach to evidence for professional learning could be further enhanced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing tools and processes to support all staff in collecting more fine-grained evidence about the specific impact of teaching and learning developments on particular groups of children and linking these with the wider evidence base (e.g. through Research Lesson Study and/or teacher-led action research.) The school has identified the need to further strengthen connections

			between practice and research and has set up links with XXXX University.
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School practice	Strengths	Development areas	Recommendations
<p>Leadership The school's practice is <i>embedded with elements of transforming</i></p> <p>Leaders model professional learning by taking an active role in developing their own practice through attending courses, seeking out support and making changes to practice. The SLT lead and involve other colleagues (e.g. middle leaders) in extensive school to school support. The SLT has actively supported the 'growth' of leaders.</p> <p>CPD is prioritised through investing resource (it has the second largest budget in the school). School processes ensure that CPD is aligned with school priorities and individual colleagues' needs.</p> <p>CPD is evaluated through a process of discussion with the SLT which focuses on exploring how the CPD aligns with school priorities and how what has been learnt can be disseminated through staff meetings.</p> <p>Tools are used to support and integrate CPD into schools meetings and processes. For example a performance management pro forma asks colleagues to consider the CPD needs related to the targets and a lesson observation sheet was used to focus peer lesson observations. The school has used coaching and mentoring and is planning to further developing peer coaching as a tool to support learning.</p>	<p>Examples of specific strengths in the leadership of CPD include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefings and CPD facilitated by leaders when they have participated in CPD. Investment in high leverage strategies such as observation and on-going coaching support. The XXXX project which involved gaining evidence about the views of staff, pupils and parents before 	<p>In this school there is a need to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More systematic evaluation of CPD to enable the school to synthesise across all its evidence to monitor progress and refine future plans. Some colleagues highlighted that they felt more formal evaluation of CPD would enable the school to gain a picture of the impact of CPD on all involved. More direct involvement of leaders in action-research to support the enquiry skills of all staff. Whilst there are opportunities for colleagues to participate in a Masters level Reflective Practice course and involvement at whole school level in a PE research project it would be valuable to consider 	<p>The strengths in the school's approach to leadership could be further enhanced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Leading through more direct involvement in action research to connect professional learning and pupil outcomes (e.g. through RLS/ teacher-led action research).The links already established with XXXX University provide a valuable springboard for this.

	<p>and after.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in school to school support and international research through external opportunities 	<p>modelling more embedded, day to day participation in enquiry/ action research and using this to develop individual colleagues' skills in collecting fine-grained evidence.</p>	<p> Examining what makes effective CPD in order to plan and evaluate CPD and succession planning particularly for middle leadership.</p>
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Links to useful resources and details of possible CUREE support are included on the following page.

Your recommendations	Possible solutions
<p> <i>Developing action research/ enquiry skills, processes and tools (e.g. through Research Lesson Study and/or teacher-led action research) to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ further strengthen connections between professional learning and pupil outcomes ○ support all staff in collecting more fine-grained evidence about the specific impact of teaching and learning developments on particular sub-groups of children's learning processes and outcomes and link with the wider evidence base ○ support colleagues in identifying and tracking their own evolving needs in the context of pupil needs (to enable further delegation of 	<p>Links to useful resources and details of possible CUREE support are included below.</p> <p><u>Developing action research/ enquiry skills, processes and tools</u></p> <p>The Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) offers free examples of very early research tools to help teachers make use of research insights and carry out 'micro-enquiries' in the classroom developed by CUREE. These can be found in the Practitioner Applications section of the TLRP website. Pete Dudley's Lesson Study UK website provides lots of freely available information about Research Lesson Study (RLS) and would complement the school's existing use of videos and observation. It explores the role played by lesson observation and includes a downloadable copy of the Lesson Study handbook drawn up by Pete. Using the TLRP and/or RLS tools collaboratively would enable Professional Learners to further strengthen connections between their own and their pupils' learning, and collect more fine-grained evidence about learning processes and outcomes of particular sub groups of learners.</p> <p>A colleague may wish to attend a CUREE RLS workshop. These develop specialist expertise in gaining the most from this intervention and avoiding some of the common pitfalls e.g. in some cases RLS can reinforce less strong practices if the strategies in relation to e.g. literacy are not selected on the basis of evidence about impact. CUREE has also developed specific support materials for using RLS to close gaps for vulnerable pupils.</p> <p><u>Pursuing the existing plan to develop peer coaching skills</u></p> <p>As peer support is key to successful action research/ enquiry XXXX's will find it beneficial to align the development of action research with its existing plan to develop peer coaching.</p> <p>The freely available National Framework for Coaching and Mentoring highlights the key skills needed by co- coaches in both the coaching and professional learning roles and shows how this relates to specialist coaching and mentoring.</p> <p>Providing colleagues with structures and tools will be key to the successful development of peer supported enquiry. CUREE's <i>Effective Mentoring & Coaching (EMAC) packs</i> (and linked workshops) contain a wide variety of tools and resources for making the development of peer coaching effective, manageable and sustainable. These would support the school's existing training plans, provide illustrative micro enquiry tools to ensure co-coaching evidence- based, and help colleagues to develop a shared language for debriefing and reflecting on the effectiveness of collaborative support.</p> <p>Sustaining new approaches and ensuring they are coherent and focussed firmly on the school's aspirations for pupils also calls for something to pull efforts together into a whole bigger than the sum of the parts. One engaging, efficient and effective way of doing this would be to use one of CUREE's research route maps. This could be a co-constructed, bespoke Research Route Map alongside tailored in-school workshops on co-coaching and or the</p>

<p>responsibility and support succession planning at all levels)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ build on emergent research practices to develop a more systematic approach beneficial for the whole school <p>✎ Pursue the existing plan to develop peer coaching skills and processes to enable all colleagues (teachers and TAs) to gain the full benefits of on-going collaborative support and to help develop a language to debrief and reflect on the effectiveness of collaboration.</p> <p>✎ Examine what makes effective CPD in order to plan and evaluate CPD and succession planning particularly for middle leadership.</p> <p>✎ Developing TA access to internal and external specialist expertise.</p>	<p>RLS/ enquiry process. Or you might like to use one or more of CUREE’s off the shelf route maps. Research Route Maps provide a range of teacher friendly, time efficient resources including more up to date versions of practitioner applications for a wider range of research and with more practical support embedded in them. They make it easy to thread coherent and sustained evidence based professional learning and development activities into day to day meetings and activities. They connect colleagues with the evidence needed for deciding on strategies to be used as part of the RLS process.</p> <p><u>Examining what makes effective CPD</u></p> <p>Developing Great Teaching -Lessons from the international reviews into effective professional development outlines the findings from a recent systematic review of the international research literature examining the evidence of what makes effective teachers' professional development and learning.</p> <p>CUREE on-going specialist coaching (face-to- face and telephone/ email) would support a key CPD lead in action planning and ensuring that the recommendations are driven forward in a way that maximises the benefits for XXXX’s and its priorities including the development of middle leadership. A research route map would generate easily accessible evidence for evaluating impact through the micro enquiries colleagues carry out as part of peer/co-coaching. This would work for individual teachers and analysis by the CPD lead would work for the school as a whole.</p> <p>A colleague might also wish to attend an Evaluating the Impact of CPDL workshop to extend their specialist expertise in this area.</p>
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Appendix A - School Background and context

Background

XXXX's is a larger than average size school and is oversubscribed in a number of year groups. The pupils are arranged into 6 single-age classes and 3 mixed age classes including a Nursery. Almost all of the pupils are from a White British background and the percentage of those from minority ethnic groups is lower than national. The percentage of children eligible for Free School Meals has also risen since 2010 and is now 23%. The percentage of SEN children is below national however the percentage supported by School Action Plus or with a statement is above national.

The school is located in the XXXX of the City in the XXXX neighbourhood which is one of the city's XXXX neighbourhood areas. The majority of the children come from a locality that is relatively deprived and their social and economic backgrounds reflect the characteristics of the area. Violent crime in the area is high and the aspirations and expectations of parents and children are mixed.

Key improvement priorities

The school has a number of priorities, which fall within the following categories: teaching and learning, achievement (within which targets are made for each year group), leadership, Ofsted priorities, SEN. Each priority area has a number of actions, which all list a lead person, the success criteria, resources needed, who will quality assure this, and up to 3 milestones.

Appendix B: The Evidence Base

Evidence for this report

The evidence for this report is based on an analysis of school documentation, an interview with the SLT, a focus group and a survey.

The group interview was held with the Senior Leadership Team, including the executive headteacher, the head of the teaching school alliance, the assistant head with responsibility for KS1/ foundation, the assistant head with responsibility for lower KS2 and the assistant head with responsibility for upper KS2.

The focus group was attended by 6 members of staff with 3 middle leaders, a NQT, a curriculum specialist working across the TSA and the head of the teaching school alliance. In addition short interviews were held with 2 Teaching Assistants and the head of school.

The survey was completed by 18 colleagues including the following roles:

- ✎ 4 classroom teachers with middle management responsibilities
- ✎ 1 classroom teacher
- ✎ 2 newly qualified teachers
- ✎ 4 teaching/learning support assistants

The Benchmarks

Based on an analysis of the international evidence base and the research and inspection evidence in the UK, CUREE, an internationally recognised centre of research about continuing professional development, has identified five core areas which are crucial for a school professional learning environment to be effective and efficient. These areas are:

- ✎ needs analysis;
- ✎ collaboration;
- ✎ use of specialist expertise;
- ✎ evidence for learning ; and
- ✎ leadership of CPD.

For each of these areas, CUREE has developed research-based benchmarks which encompass a four point range of quality and consistency of professional learning practice across a school. These express key characteristics highlighted by the international and national research specifically for each core area. Broadly speaking the quality range is:

- ‘developing’ – the school offers its colleagues an opportunity to engage in a number of external and internal CPD opportunities, in accordance with either the school priorities or colleagues’ needs and interests;
- ‘enhancing’ – a significant proportion of the school colleagues participate in a range of good quality CPD, including long-term work-based learning opportunities and access to specialist expertise; many of the opportunities are well tailored to colleagues and their students’ needs and are also linked to school development priorities;
- ‘embedding’ – most of the school colleagues, including the leadership team, behave as professional learners on an ongoing basis and are aware of, and explicit about, their learning; they are engaged in iterative development of practice and collaborative enquiries with colleagues; the school has tools and mechanisms in place which aim to create coherence and depth of professional learning across the school and tightly link it with pupil learning

and outcomes; and

‘transforming’ – the school is a highly successful, transparent and coherent learning environment to which all colleagues make a positive contribution. Learning processes and support are characterised by the presence of all of the features internationally recognised to be required and significant for truly effective colleagues’ learning and development.

Appendix C: Links to useful research and resources

Some of the **research and resources** that the school might find helpful in developing and enhancing its CPD programme include:

1. Cordingley, P. (2011) *Evidence for professional learning*. Summary available at: <http://www.curee-paccts.com/node/2439>
2. *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why Summary of the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) conducted by V. Robinson, M. Hohepa and C. Lloyd.* (2009). Available at: <http://www.curee-paccts.com/files/publication/1260453707/Robinson%20Summary%20Extended%20Version.pdf>
3. *The role of the specialist in the teacher's CPD* (2008) GTC Research for Teachers summary. Available at: <http://www.tla.ac.uk/site/SiteAssets/RfT1/06RE045%20The%20role%20of%20the%20specialist%20in%20the%20teachers's%20CPD.pdf>
4. Cordingley, P. (2008) *Sauce for the Goose: learning entitlements that work for teacher as well as their pupils*. Available at: <http://www.curee.org.uk/content/sauce-goose-learning-entitlements-work-teachers-well-their-pupils>
5. Bell, C.et al. (2010) Practitioner Use of Research Review Available at: <http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/1292498712/PURR%20Practitioner%20Summary.pdf>