

Making change happen in teacher professional development:

Understanding mechanisms for change in policy and school environments which lead to embedded teacher professional development

Why has there been only limited sustained change towards the goal of all teachers being able to participate in high quality professional development throughout their careers?

We want to develop greater understanding of how to make change happen:

- the implementation of innovations and programmes in relation to the policy landscape and the school environment;
- the mechanisms and processes which underpin change.

Study funded by Wellcome

<https://research.shu.ac.uk/psemc/>

A multi-stranded, mixed methods approach

Leadership for professional development: supporting schools and empowering teachers to be PD ready
Systematic evidence review of national and international research
Strand 1

System leadership: policy implementation in mathematics and science professional development
Analysis of policy implementation in mathematics and science professional development
Strand 2

Embedding change in teacher professional development
Primary mixed methods data collection
Strand 3



Overview of the session

- Intro to the project
- Overview of Strand 1, reflections and discussion
- Overview of Strand 3, reflections and discussion
- Overview of Strand 2, reflections and discussion
- Overall implications and next steps

In teacher professional development interventions implemented effectively, nationally and internationally, what 'mechanisms for change':

1. underpin school leader activities in prioritising professional development?
2. establish effective professional learning cultures in schools?
3. support change-readiness in the school environment?
4. underpin system leaders' and policy makers' support for schools to create the conditions for professional learning?
5. support effective policies to enable teachers in all subjects, contexts and phases to participate in high-quality professional development?
6. embed professional development in teachers' careers?

The importance of professional development leadership

What do leaders of professional development do to create environments which allow the effective implementation of professional development and the change that results from it?

Leaders of professional development are practitioners with:

- specific professional development leadership roles - internal and external to schools
- generic leadership roles which include professional development

Themes:

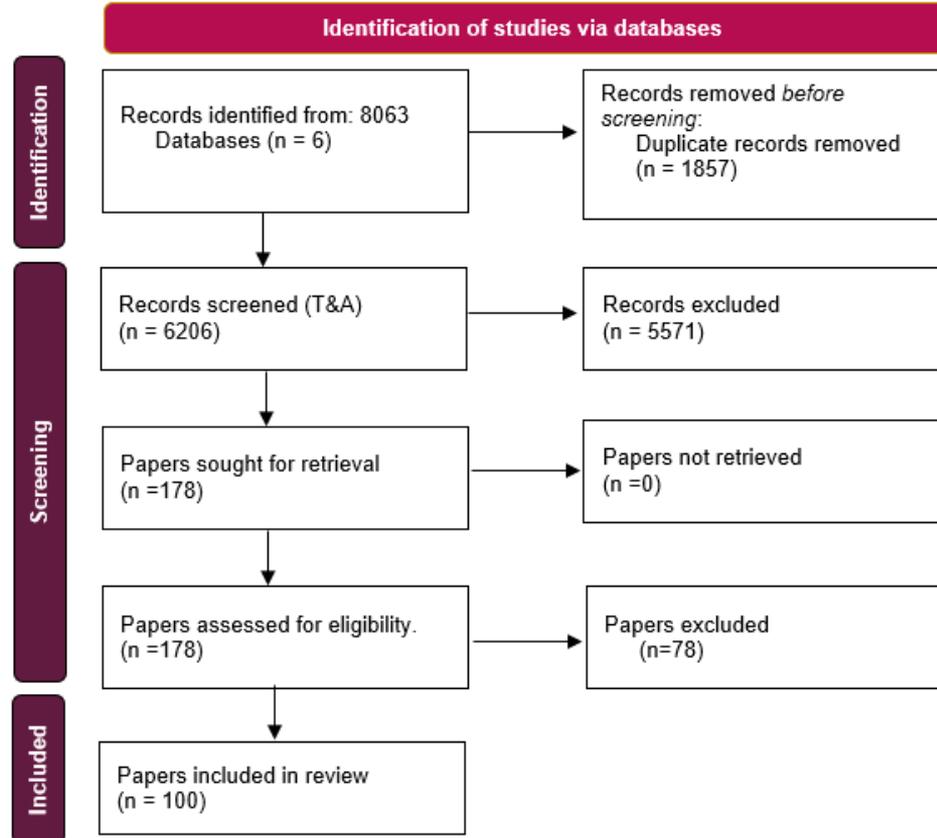
- The roles of professional development leaders
- How leaders carry out their roles
- How leaders are supported in their roles
- How leaders support others in their professional development (leadership)

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Leadership for professional development: Supporting schools and empowering teachers to be professional development ready

Systematic evidence review of national and international research (Strand 1)

Leadership for professional development (Strand 1): Methods



Leadership for professional development (Strand 1): Findings

Trusting leadership

- Teachers can be empowered to have agency over their own professional development (22)
- Responsibility and accountability for professional learning goes beyond the school leadership (32)
- School leaders are responsible for creating and sustaining a culture for professional learning (26)

Engaging leadership

- School leaders can provide leadership for professional learning by engaging in, and supporting others to engage in, appropriate professional development (37)
- School leaders can recognise and integrate the professional development needs of individuals, the team and the school as a whole (21)
- School leaders can encourage, develop and support professional collaboration for professional development (28)
- Material-economic support is necessary for professional development to be successful (21)
- School leaders can prioritise making time and space for professional development – before, during, and after (17)

Learning leadership

- School visions should include outcomes for teachers, pupils, within and beyond school priorities, and should be communicated clearly by leaders (34)
- Appropriate use of data by school leaders can support access to, and implementation, of professional learning (17)
- School leaders can broker connections and access to external sources and activities to support professional learning (11)

Leadership for professional development (Strand 1): Implications/recommendations

Effective professional development implementation in schools combines leader-initiated, teacher-led and instruction-focused learning: *“a hybrid of formal and informal learning in which teachers drive the content”* (Barton & Dexter, 2020, p. 102).

To make change happen in teacher professional development, the evidence base shows that leaders can:

- involve teachers in decision-making related to school-wide and individual professional development
- facilitate teacher collaboration around improving instruction and student learning within a wider school climate of trust
- act like 'professional development role models' and engage in professional development with and like peers
- develop a school vision that focuses on teacher learning as well as student learning
- recognise the diverse professional development needs of staff and integrate individual and departmental professional development pathways within collective, school-level visions of change.
- consider the process (i.e. how) as well as the content (i.e. what) of professional development
- prioritise time, money and space for professional development
- be supported to develop the appropriate skills and experience to support staff in their professional learning

Leadership for professional development (Strand 1): Questions, reflections, points for discussion

- Do our findings resonate with you?
- How can we support school leaders in developing the skills and knowledge which can embed effective professional development?
- Where are the intersections between leadership of professional development and school leadership more generally?

Embedding change in teacher professional development

Primary mixed methods data collection (Strand 3)

Mixed methods	Quantitative: survey in-school CPD Leads (46 respondents) Qualitative: interviews – head teachers; in-school CPD Leads; school governors; focus groups – classroom teachers, 3-5 per group
Case studies	11 case study schools visited Selected from survey responses, existing contacts/networks Mix of phase, type, geographical location
Research questions	Reflect overall study questions

Embedding change in teacher professional development (Strand 3): Findings

- Role of CPD Lead in schools is generally part of wider leadership responsibilities
- Effective professional development activity is characterised as taking place over two to three terms or longer, with a focus on response to school improvement plans alongside individualised options

School leaders...

- encourage positive attitudes towards professional development
- negotiate budgetary issues to invest in relevant professional development
- communicate the purpose, context and structure of professional development
- establish structures for professional development
- build a sense of collective efficacy and shared vision
- promote team cultures and collaborative approaches to professional development
- engender 'togetherness' which encourages teacher confidence to engage in professional development
- establish and maintain a culture of professional development through modelling behaviours
- establish supportive environments to engage in professional development and embed changes in practice
- encourage risk-taking from professional learning in non-judgmental and supportive ways

Embedding change in teacher professional development (Strand 3): Implications/recommendations

- **Walk Through's and Staff Share** – collaborative action staff involved in peer observations and reflections.
- **Collaborative Carousel** – contextualising identified CPD theme

Initial session led by CPD Lead focusing on Quality First Teaching, then department-based groups discussing ideas of implementation in their context with final plan agreed.

- **Theory-driven curriculum mapping** – use of evidence

CPD Leads and head teacher developed curriculum maps for each department including lesson structures. Departments then modified the maps and structures and fed-back to whole school. Each department finalised curriculum maps for subjects.

- **Staff Empowerment** - A new approach to behaviour management was stimulated by an idea from the SENCO and EYFS Lead. The action the Headteacher implemented was devolving 'authority' and 'power' to his two colleagues to be able to represent their idea through acting on their 'own' authority.

Embedding change in teacher professional development (Strand 3): Questions, reflections, points for discussion

How can we raise the collective importance of professional development across the system to maintain its priority even when other challenges arise?

In the current high stakes accountability system, encouraging risk-taking through professional learning might in itself be risky. Meanwhile, school leaders need to ensure there are opportunities for individualised teacher professional learning in parallel with meeting whole-school development needs. These are tricky balancing acts; are there ways in which school leaders could be better supported to manage these challenges?

Modelling learning by participating in professional development requires school leaders to allocate time to participate alongside teachers, to share aspects of their practice as teachers and to potentially admit vulnerabilities in identifying their own learning needs. How do school leaders learn these role-modelling behaviours in relation to professional development? Is (enough) attention paid to them in headteacher development programmes?

System leadership: policy implementation in mathematics and science professional development

Analysis of policy implementation in mathematics and science professional development (Strand 2)

Methodology	Review of policy texts: generic CPD policy and Science and Mathematics specific CPD policy Multiple case study of Science Learning Partnerships and Maths Hubs
Case studies	National Cases: the Maths Hub Network and the Science Learning Partnership Network Area cases: 5 Maths Hubs, 6 SLPs Sampling for a diverse range of locations, length of time organisation has led the SLP/network; overlap of geographical areas – including Hubs and SLPs led by the same organisation
Data collection	National Cases – Interviews, documents, and correspondence with STEM learning SLP leads and NCETM leads Area cases interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Maths Hub Leads/Assistant Leads and 4 Maths PD facilitators • 6 SLP leads; 3 PD facilitators Interviews by videoconferencing, recorded and transcribed
Analysis	Case analysis using a framework informed by models of CPD implementation and PD leaderships Cross Case analysis across SLPs and Maths Hubs

Policy implementation in mathematics and science professional development (Strand 2): Findings

- Successful policy implementation evidence by acceptability, reach, sustainability, replicability
- Maths Hubs have greater resources than SLPs and this supports greater innovation and variation and tailoring of professional development
- Coordinator, design and facilitator functions important to successful implementation
- The functions and corresponding roles operate at different system levels
- Important to success is the combination of formal and informal activity, including enabling leadership as support for adaptive leadership
- A key aspect of professional development **coordination** is adaptive leadership involving roles of innovator, networker and system worker with qualities of authoritative knowledge, ethical purpose, agentic action and collaborative relationships

- Policy: the maths and science hubs are led by organisations with considerable subject expertise providing broad programmes of PD to meet multiple needs – this model could be adopted for other subject hubs currently run by the DfE
- Policy: support agency and adaptation by policy implementors
- Policy and PD providers: include support and resources for informal leadership roles in PD policy implementation
- PD providers: consider the models of PD leadership roles in ‘developing the developers’ programmes
- PD leaders: consider using the models of PD leadership roles as tools for personal professional development
- School leaders: consider the applicability of the leadership models for school settings and trust networks
- Researchers: PD coordinator and designer roles are under-researched

Policy implementation in mathematics and science professional development (Strand 2): Questions, reflections, points for discussion

- What are the skills and expertise required for different professional development leadership roles, at different system levels?
- What should we do to best support people in PD leadership roles across different system levels?
- How can we ensure their knowledge and expertise is understood, valued and resourced?
- What models are (or could be) used to share learning across different 'hub' models of professional development (national, regional and local) and with other policy-driven professional development initiatives?

Forms of professional development leadership

Forms of leadership

Adaptive leadership

Trust leadership

Engaged leadership

Learning leadership

Administrative leadership

Enabling leadership

Visible/invisible leadership

Leader as coordinator

Leader as designer

Leader as facilitator

Innovator

Responsive and purposeful

Networker

System worker

Brokerage and boundary
crossing

Leadership actions and behaviours

Vision and communication

Community, collaboration and
togetherness

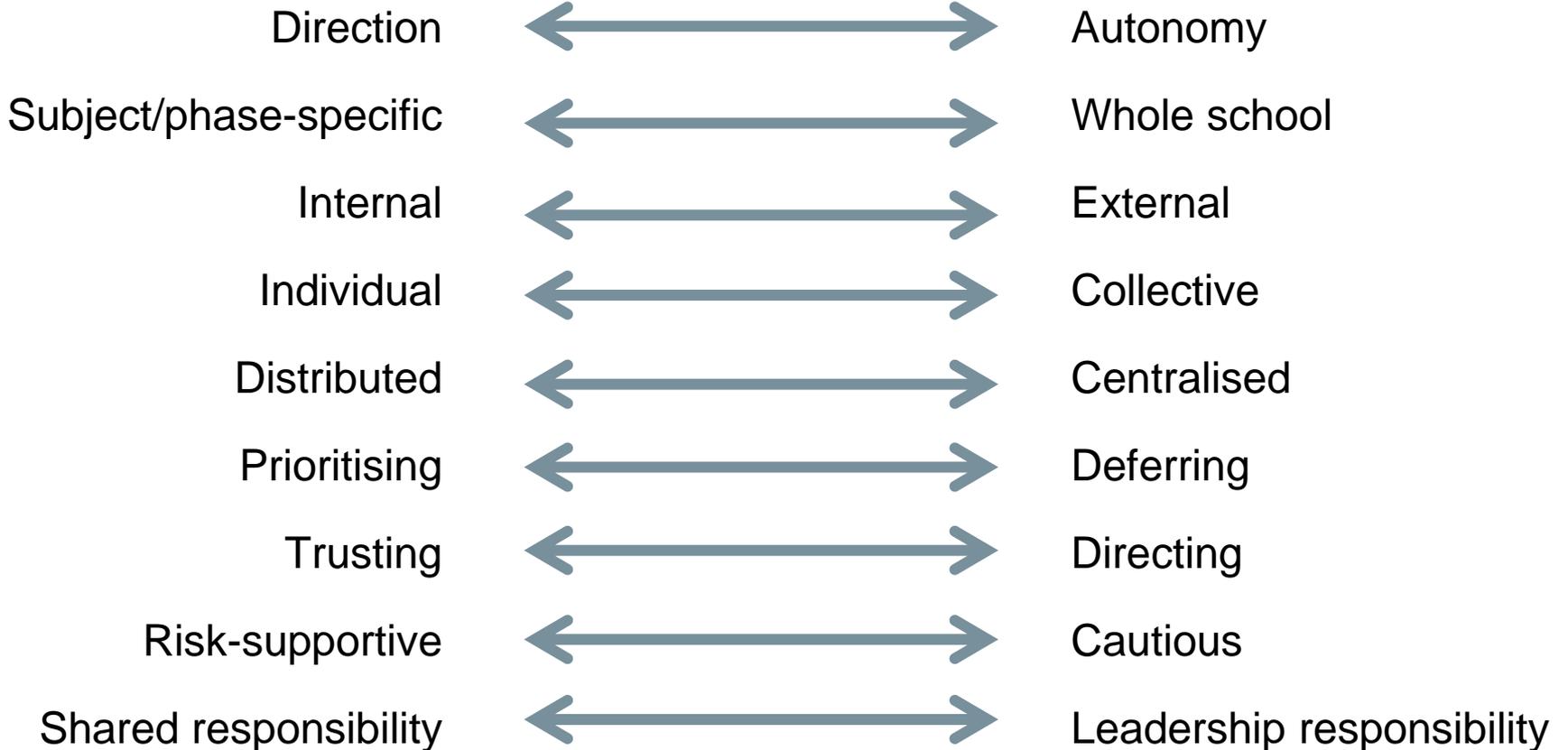
Resources and investment

Advocacy and modelling

Safe environment for risk-taking

Building shared vision and purpose

Professional development leadership balancing acts



Some implications

Professional development leadership is complex

It includes various roles and functions, some formalised, some less formal

Professional development leadership does not follow a standard model

For example, financial resourcing varies between schools, between subjects and initiatives, between system levels

Professional development leaders are able to influence their environment

Within varying constraints, professional development leaders can shape practice in order to implement effective professional development

Implementing professional development requires some tricky balancing acts

Some of these decisions align with, or interact with, other aspects of educational leadership and implementation

it may be useful to make decisions explicit

Making the decisions around these balancing acts explicit may build cultures of professional development with shared values and purpose

Some next steps

- Finalising reports; will be shared via project website
- Further dissemination activity
- Further analysis of data looking at so far less explored themes, e.g. role of coordinator and designer of professional development, understanding knowledge and expertise in these and other roles and how this can be developed and supported
- Further study, e.g. exploring further the intersections of professional development with issues such as teachers' career progression; relationships between professional development and curriculum design; professional development 'Hub' models and links to policy, further comparison of subjects e.g. mathematics and science...