

THE SIR BERNARD LOVELL SCHOOL

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POLICY

RATIONALE

We believe that the process of professional and personal learning and development is central to the work of a developing and improving school. A clear commitment to the provision of high quality professional learning for all staff is essential in promoting a community which values life long learning. Professional learning is also integral to our work as a self-evaluating school with a strong emphasis upon school-based research and enquiry.

PURPOSES

Professional learning activities should:

- focus upon meeting students’ needs and enable students to achieve their full potential
- encourage every member of staff to work towards the achievement of the school’s vision, aims and objectives
- be clearly linked to the priorities and areas of focus outlined in the plan for continuous improvement
- provide opportunities for staff to evaluate current practice and extend, develop and update their professional skills, knowledge and qualifications
- increase the effectiveness of staff, both as individuals and as members of teams
- promote equal opportunities
- prepare staff for progression in their careers and enhance job satisfaction
- provide opportunities for staff to develop their skills to work internationally
- meet statutory requirements for Performance Management

GUIDELINES

(i) General

Professional learning opportunities will be provided for all staff, and will include the following:

- an induction programme for all newly appointed staff

- a full programme of induction and support for newly qualified teachers, in line with TDA guidelines
- appropriate training for staff who change roles/responsibilities within school
- access to information about courses, conferences and other staff development activities
- meetings and consultation with line managers and other appropriate staff.
- guidance and support in completing professional learning plans and objectives
- access to coaching and mentoring

(ii) Types of professional learning

Professional learning can take many forms. Whilst we are happy for staff to attend externally provided courses that clearly meet identified needs, we recognise that other, more cost-effective methods of delivery can be appropriate. We are keen to develop as a self-evaluating school with a strong emphasis upon school-based research and the sharing of good practice within and across teams. We are also keen to take part in networks beyond the school which will help to develop our own practice. The activities that we would wish to see include:

- sharing good practice by emphasising the discussion of teaching and learning (rather than administration) in meetings
- sharing feedback from lesson observations, including peer observation, within and beyond the curriculum area
- feedback from staff who have engaged in professional learning activities such as external courses
- running school-based training, which is made available to other schools
- participating in the advocate model
- engaging in partnerships with higher education for the purposes of initial teacher training, research, continuing professional learning (CPL) for staff, and postgraduate professional development (PPD)
- networking with staff with similar roles in other schools
- working on national and international projects
- visits to other institutions, for instance to see best practice, or to develop cross-phase working
- publishing ideas in the school professional learning journal, and keeping up-to-date through reading books, articles and magazines
- counselling, coaching, shadowing and mentoring other staff
- taking on an additional responsibility, with particular reference to staff in their second and third years of teaching
- participating in the Advanced Skills and Fast Track Teacher schemes
- studying and financial support for additional qualifications

(iii) School Based Enquiry and Research

We will develop further as a research school, with strong links with our partner HEI's and the school-based International Learning and Research Centre.

Staff wishing to engage in research will receive training and mentoring, for instance through our partnerships with HEI's and the International Learning and Research Centre. They will be encouraged to develop lines of enquiry which are linked to the priorities identified in our plan for continuous improvement and a strategic plan for research activities will be written annually. Research projects will be expected to impact upon the work of the school, and staff undertaking research will be expected to publish and share their findings through regular school meetings, the professional journal and networks of teacher-researchers.

Where appropriate, students will be involved directly in the research. Researchers will seek to listen to the student voice, and where appropriate to engage students (as researchers).

(iv) Responsibilities

- All staff should:
 - actively identify their own professional needs, through their professional learning plan, and provide information necessary for the management of professional learning
 - take responsibility, with their line manager, for ensuring that job description and professional review paperwork is up-to-date, and that their professional learning portfolio is actively used
 - participate in preparing proposals for professional learning related to school and team development plans
 - participate in the evaluation of any professional learning activity they have undertaken. In their planning, staff should think clearly about the purposes of the activity and how it will impact upon their work in school. They will be expected to complete an evaluation form, to write a report and/or to give verbal feedback to a line manager or team. Further activity such as the production of resources or the “cascading” of training will often be appropriate
 - engage, where possible, in networks beyond the school including opportunities to work nationally and internationally.
- Line Managers should:
 - recognise and celebrate the achievements and progress of all staff
 - support and facilitate the sharing of good practice
 - assist staff in identifying their professional learning needs

- arrange an annual professional learning review meeting, and interim reviews as appropriate
- encourage staff to keep up-to-date with educational developments
- raise awareness of and encourage participation in professional learning activities
- liaise with external providers concerning professional learning opportunities
- provide an induction programme for new members of staff
- provide appropriate training for staff who change roles/responsibilities within school
- create opportunities, especially for staff in their second and third years of teaching, to widen their responsibilities and to maintain their professional enthusiasm
- ensure classroom observation is carried out within a developmental framework
- ensure that professional learning is monitored and evaluated in relation to its benefits to students

(v) Newly Qualified Teachers

Our Induction Programme for NQT's outlines our interpretation of our statutory duties in this area. In line with national guidelines we will ensure that NQT's have no more than a 90% timetable in their first year, and that they are protected from cover (except in emergencies) in their first term. We will ensure that a full programme of professional learning is made available to them through the appropriate use of the Standards Fund for NQT's.

(vi) Initial Teacher Training (ITT) (see also our ITT Policy)

We believe that we should take an active part in developing new teachers, and so will form partnerships with a range of higher education institutions for this purpose. We will also participate in the Graduate Teacher Training Programme, and will encourage other schools to develop their involvement in ITT through our role as a Training School.

Curriculum areas will be asked to 'bid' for trainees each year. If it is felt that the demand is too great, we will 'rotate' requests year-on-year across different departments. Where departments take on trainees, we will transfer funding from HEI's excluding cover and other staffing costs.

Since we regard ITT as a professional learning opportunity for our own staff, we will ensure that a range of staff are given the opportunity and training for mentoring. The entitlement of trainees to high quality training and mentoring is set out in our ITT policy and in the agreement signed with our partner HEI's.

We will evaluate our work as a Training School annually, against the criteria set out in our Training School development plan and national benchmarks.

(vii) Funding

Funds for professional learning activities will be administered centrally, in line with the whole-school professional learning plan. The school will commit a proportion of its own budget to supplement other funding streams and to ensure that all support staff receive appropriate training. Whilst we do not allocate an equal proportion of funding to each member of staff, the Headteacher will seek to ensure that there is a fair distribution of funding over time.

Staff may request financial help towards the cost of courses leading to further professional qualifications. Applications will be considered in the light of the following criteria:

Priority A

- i) the qualification is directly linked to the current job role, and
 - ii) the qualification meets a need identified in the PCI
- 75% of fees will be met up to a maximum of £500 p.a. for a maximum of three years.

Priority B

- i) the qualification is directly linked to a proposed future job role, and
- ii) the qualification will enable a greater role to be played in school development

50% of fees will be met to a maximum of £300 p.a. for a maximum of three years.

Priority C

The qualification is in education or the applicant's specialism
A grant will be made for course materials to a maximum of £100 p.a. for a maximum of one year.

Staff may only receive support for one qualification in every five year period.

In line with South Gloucestershire Council, we may ask that staff undergoing very expensive specialist accredited training (e.g. in ICT) pay back their course fees pro rata, if they leave The Sir Bernard Lovell School's employment within one year of completion of the accredited training. We adhere to the policy set out by South Gloucestershire Council.

(viii)

Timing

The Appendix to this policy outlines how professional learning planning fits with the cycle of whole-school planning and development.

We will do all that we can to minimise disruption to teaching, in line with Government guidelines. As a general rule we will only support professional learning activities which disrupt classes in very exceptional circumstances during the first two weeks and the last two weeks of the academic year. We will also keep to an absolute minimum disruption at key times of the year. Curriculum Leaders will be asked to consider very carefully activities which disrupt examination classes, especially in the run-up to exams. Teachers missing post-16 classes will always be expected to set and mark appropriate work and to inform students in advance of their absence.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on Initial Teacher Training, Performance Management and Equality, Diversity & Cohesion Policy.

Adopted: Date:
Head

Adopted: Date:
Chair of Governors

Reviewed: Date:
Head

Reviewed: Date:
Chair of Governors