

HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POLICY

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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POLICY

Introduction

‘Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better’ [Dylan William].

At Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre, we are committed to supporting colleagues’ on-going professional learning, irrespective of their role or stage in their career. Professional Learning is an integral part of ensuring high quality teaching, learning and assessment, which contributes to improving outcomes for our students. Professional Learning is an important aspect of our Practice Development [Performance Management] process, with at least one objective being related to Professional Learning.

Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote on-going professional learning and development for all staff
- raise awareness of professional learning opportunities at Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre
- support development of pedagogy and practice for staff at all stages of their career
- develop learning, teaching and assessment at the academy
- develop leadership and management at the academy
- support practice development [performance management]
- contribute to the promotion and development of the teaching profession
- aid recruitment and retention

Professional Learning Programme

At Highdown School there are three main strands of Professional Learning: our core offer, our optional/collaborative offer and our bespoke offer as outlined below:

CORE OFFER	OPTIONAL AND COLLABORATIVE OFFER		BESPOKE OFFER
5 minute teachmeets	Joint Practice Development [JPD] weekly twilight sessions	Staff pedagogy and practice library	CfE 3:2
Learning & teaching communities	Coaching for Excellence [CfE]	External visits, e.g. INSET, school visits	CfE 2:1
INSET days	Digital pedagogy, e.g. Highdown ZfL website / @HighdownZFL	Teachmeets	CfE Post-16
Sharing good practice in meetings and bulletins [main and ZfL]	Aspiring middle leadership programme	Aspiring senior leadership programme	CfE R2L
Learning walks and observation feedback			Work sampling feedback
ITT/NQT/RQT programmes			Lesson observation follow-up discussions
Practice Development			‘Martini’ coaching
Highdown 10x10 handbook			Action research
			Middle Leaders Development Programme

Professional Learning at Highdown School is supported by formal lesson observations, feedback from Learning Walks and from work sampling. It is also promoted through a variety of media including a termly learning and teaching bulletin (Zest for Learning bulletin), a professional learning bulletin, access to a school twitter feed (@HighdownZfL), a library of learning and teaching resources (Office365), and a Learning and Teaching handbook (10x10 Handbook) which is produced within the Teacher Planner.

(a) Core offer:

(i) Professional Learning Days [INSET days]: As per STPCD, teaching colleagues have five calendared school days which are dedicated to professional learning which supports individual practice development objectives, curriculum and school improvement plans.

(ii) 5-minute Teachmeet: The Professional Tutor, in collaboration with Curriculum Leaders and other colleagues, organises a weekly 5-minute Teachmeet. All teaching staff are expected to attend this short session in which a single practical teaching idea is demonstrated/modelled to staff.

(iii) Learning and Teaching Communities [LTC]: Staff attend a termly meeting which is calendared and is focused on a collaborative approach to developing a specific aspect of subject knowledge, pedagogy or practice.

(iv) Initial Teacher Training [ITT]: Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre will continue to develop its strong links with university providers, such as Reading, Oxford, IoE, Bath, Brighton and Kings College. Highdown School also supports development of partnerships with other schools, for example being a Schools Direct trainee placement school working with Reading School. In addition to welcoming PGCE and BA trainees, Highdown School expects to make a contribution to the university-based programmes through delivery of lectures and tutorials, be represented on steering groups or interview panels at universities. Furthermore, Highdown School is committed to hosting students as part of the Student Partnership Scheme and provide observation experience, support and advice for pre-PGCE candidates and those interested in teaching as a career, including Schools Direct candidates and primary-phase trainees.

Each ITT will be supported by the Professional Tutor, Assistant Professional Tutor and curriculum mentor. In addition to observing, team teaching and teaching lessons, ITTs will also be allocated to a Mentor Group to develop their understanding of the role of the mentor/tutor and contribute to students' social and personal skills beyond through the curriculum.

ITTs will also participate in the weekly Professional Studies sessions facilitated by the Assistant Professional Tutor. ITTs will be observed by a range of teachers, their curriculum mentor and the Assistant Professional Tutor during their placement(s), being provided with written feedback which is supportive and developmental.

The Professional Tutor and Assistant Professional Tutor will work closely with the ITT providers to ensure that clear information is shared about the structure and expectations of the ITT course and relevant assessment patterns and to ensure reporting processes are correctly adhered to.

(v) Newly Qualified Teachers [NQT]: The induction programme for NQTs is usually completed in a single school year for a full time teacher or over 195 service days for part time teachers. It is a stimulating, structured and personalised programme that both guides and supports new teachers in successfully completing the Teacher Standards (2012).

Each NQT will be supported through fortnightly meetings with their allocated curriculum mentor. Furthermore, NQTs attend a monthly NQT network meeting to review practice and identify development steps with the Professional Tutor. NQTs at Highdown School also take a full and active part in the NQT Professional Learning Programme which includes attending calendared cross-borough CPL sessions with Wokingham Federation and at Reading University.

Evidence to support the successful completion of the induction programme will be recorded on NQT Manager Portal, and will include formal lesson observations by the Headteacher.

(vi) Recently Qualified Teachers [RQT]: At Highdown School, Recently Qualified Teachers are those in their second year of teaching (first year after completing their NQT induction). RQTs are supported on a daily and weekly basis by their curriculum leader and have full access to the range of professional learning opportunities as outlined in the summary above.

RQTs also have a termly network meeting, facilitated by the Assistant Professional Tutor, which focus on reviewing practice and identifying development steps. RQTs will also be supported through an individual review meeting with the Professional Tutor twice in an academic year.

(b) Optional, collaborative and bespoke offer:

(i) Joint Practice Development [JPD]: A programme of weekly twilight professional learning sessions is planned in the summer term for the following academic year. These sessions focus on developing learning and teaching pedagogy and practice across the curriculum and are delivered by a range of teaching staff. Staff are expected to attend at least nine of these sessions in the academic year and this time is incorporated in the Directed Time calculation.

(ii) Coaching for Excellence [CfE]: There are four strands to the CfE programme – Getting to Good, Good to Outstanding, Post-16 and Ready to Learn coaching, which is supported by a small team of learning coaches. Some staff are recommended to participate in a CfE programme, for example where they are not yet meeting an aspect of the teacher standards. Staff may also request to join a CfE programme, for example if they would welcome additional coaching and support to develop their post-16 teaching or with developing their repertoire of behaviour management strategies. Coaches are supported through regular meetings and observations, including informal peer observations and learning walks and formal observation. Programmes will usually last approximately 10 weeks, although will differ according to need. Colleagues successful in the programme are formally recognised by the Headteacher in their graduation.

(iii) Leadership Development: There is a termly calendared leadership development workshop for middle leaders focused on developing aspects of their professional practice and whole school improvement. Highdown School also offers calendared programmes to support aspiring middle and aspiring senior leaders, focusing on aspects such as leading change, interview technique, managing challenging conversations and understanding data.

(iv) External agencies: Highdown School recognises the value of, and supports the attendance to, external conferences and courses, e.g. PiXL meetings, where they promote school and/or curriculum improvement, in a cost-effective manner. Visits to, and sharing good practice with, other local schools is encouraged as good practice. Links with Science Learning Centres are also an important source of bespoke training in STEM subjects.

(v) Support staff: All support staff have at least one practice development objective related to professional learning related to their role. Appropriate, and statutory, training is supported to ensure support staff are able to fulfil their roles and responsibilities, for example first aid and working at heights training. Visits to, and sharing good practice with, other local schools is encouraged as good practice.

Managing the policy

Staff will evaluate the impact of professional learning activities through BlueSky portal, which links to their Practice Development objectives.

School leaders will evaluate the impact of the professional learning policy through monitoring and evaluation of practice and pedagogy, in addition to discussion with staff, students and external agencies, where appropriate.

Professional Learning of ITT will be evaluated through collaboration and quality assurance by external providers with Professional Tutor. Professional Learning of NQTs will be evaluated by the Headteacher, Professional Tutor and Reading Borough Council.

The policy is reviewed and overseen by the Governors' Finance, Staffing and Premises Committee who will assure themselves of the implementation, promotion and development of Professional Learning at Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre.