



...children, their world, their education

RESPONSE BY THE CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY REVIEW TRUST TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (DfE) CONSULTATION ON A WORLD CLASS TEACHING PROFESSION

Note. DfE's online submission form did not include sections for preliminary notes or additional comments, only the seven questions below. In the Trust's online submission, therefore, the section below that precedes Q1 was placed after the response to Q7 under the heading 'Explanatory note, evidence and additional comments'.

This is a collaborative response from the Cambridge Primary Review Trust (CPRT), successor to the Cambridge Primary Review (CPR). The Review stands as the largest and most comprehensive enquiry into English primary education for half a century. It collected, *inter alia*, substantial evidence on England's system of primary education including pedagogy, teachers' training, expertise, development and deployment, professional leadership and workforce reform.

For the relevant findings and proposals from the Cambridge Primary Review, see:

- Alexander, R.J. (ed.) (2010) *Children, their World, their Education: final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review*, London, Routledge, especially chapter 21, 'Teachers: expertise, development, deployment', chapter 22, 'Professional leadership and workforce reform', and pp 504-8 (conclusions and recommendations in these areas).
- Alexander, R.J. (ed.) (2010) *The Cambridge Primary Review Research Surveys*, London, Routledge, especially Part 6, 'Teaching in primary schools: structures and processes', and part 7, 'Teaching in primary schools: training, development and workforce reform'.

Developing a pedagogy of repertoire, rigour, evidence and principle is one of the eight priorities of the Cambridge Primary Review Trust (CPRT)

The Trust was formally launched in September 2013. We hope that the Department and parties involved with developing an independent College of Teaching will be prepared to discuss our work in this area as it develops through the Trust's programmes of research, school leadership and professional development.

We are, in principle, supportive of the proposal to create 'a new, independent body which can support the teaching professions as a whole and act as an advocate for the highest professional standards', led by an 'evidence-based profession which confidently grounds its practice in robust research and evaluation'. In working towards this ideal, the following general points need to be considered.

- There must be a continued effort to improve the prestige of primary education and the status of its teachers by increasing public understanding of the nature and importance of their work and parity of their qualifications with those of secondary teachers. Giving more primary teachers opportunities to engage in professionally-related research would help in this process.
- There is a long standing failure to resolve the mismatch between the curriculum to be taught, the focus of teacher education, and the staffing of primary schools. The principles to be applied are those of curriculum entitlement adopted throughout the Cambridge Primary Review. That is, (i) children have a right to a curriculum which is consistently well taught regardless of the perceived significance of its various elements or the amount of time devoted to them; (ii) inspection and research evidence consistently demonstrates an association between the breadth and quality of the wider curriculum and children's tested attainment in literacy and numeracy. It is therefore neither right nor efficient that teachers' expertise should be perceived as an issue only for the core subjects. Every primary school should be staffed with the full complement of curriculum expertise and with sufficient flexibility to enable teachers to be deployed according to the school's particular needs, whether as generalists, semi-specialists, specialists or a combination of these, to enable this principle to be applied, so providing the highest possible standards of teaching in all curriculum domains. In too many schools, as Ofsted subject surveys, these basic requirements are still not met.
- This problem has been the subject of several enquiries and at least one Select Committee report, and from 2010-12 DfE undertook an in-house investigation into primary schools' curriculum capacity at our request and with our involvement. The report from that investigation supported CPR's conclusions, but it was neither published nor acted on. If DfE is serious in its commitment to create a world-class teaching profession, it must revisit the long-standing yet unresolved challenge of the specialist curriculum expertise required by a modern curriculum and how this can be provided in the context of a phase of schooling historically staffed by generalists.
- The professional learning journey for teachers should be seen as a continuum encompassing initial teacher education - which requires reform - leading to induction and support for NQTs and continuing professional development for experienced teachers. Our Review argued for a pedagogy of repertoire and principle rather than recipe and prescription, and this needs to be better reflected in teacher education and professional development thereafter. If, as DfE and the teaching profession want, teachers are to become more autonomous in their classroom decisions, then the evidence on which those decisions are based becomes ever more critical. Teaching needs to be fully, rather than selectively, informed by research, especially recent pedagogical, psychological and neuroscientific evidence that clarifies the conditions for effective learning and teaching.
- DfE may wish to note that CPRT has commissioned two updates of CPR's research reviews on these matters and these will be published shortly: Goswami, U. (2015) *Children in Early Years and Primary Education: what does the evidence tell us about their learning?* York, Cambridge Primary Review Trust; Hogan, D., Kwek, D. and Renshaw, P. (2015) *Research on Teaching: what do we know and how should we act?* York, Cambridge Primary Review Trust.
- In general, as the CPR final report concluded, greater attention needs to be given in professional training and CPD to evidence-based pedagogy, subject and pedagogical content expertise and the open exploration of questions of value and purpose. Professional development approaches should balance support for the inexperienced and less secure teachers with freedom and respect for the experienced and talented.

- The Review's findings support moves to distributed school leadership, but urges that headteachers be given more support, especially in their non-educational tasks. They should be helped to concentrate on the job for which they are most needed: leading learning.
- On the issue of curriculum expertise and leadership in primary schools, we commend, in addition to the evidence included in *Children, their World, their Education* and *The Cambridge Primary Review Research Surveys*, the report prepared by Robin Alexander for the National College: Alexander, R.J. (2013) *Curriculum Freedom, Capacity and Leadership in the Primary School*, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership.

Q1. What are the greatest impediments teachers and schools face in regularly undertaking high-quality professional development?

- The failure of some some head teachers and/or leadership teams to recognise the importance of individualised professional development based on constructive performance review and/or initiated by teachers themselves to meet their own needs at different stages of their professional learning journey, and allocated sufficient time to engage with, and reflect on, this professional development.
- The failure to balance these individual needs and integrate them with professional development undertaken to meet whole school priorities.
- The failure of some school leaders to allocate sufficient financial resources to meet the requirements above.
- Time available and/or allocated to CPD, which is generally insufficient, especially in primary schools. In this context, DfE might note the finding of Darling-Hammond and Lieberman from their comparisons of successful international education systems that an annual CPD commitment of less than 50 hours per annum is unlikely to make a significant difference to the quality of teachers' practice. (Darling-Hammond, L. and Lieberman, A. (2012), *Teacher Education Around the World: changing policies and practices*, London, Routledge.

Q2. To what extent, and how, do teachers currently evaluate their professional development? What would support more rigorous evaluation?

- Teachers leading their schools towards the Primary Science Quality Mark, for instance, or gaining Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach), are committed to evaluating their professional development. In the case of CSciTeach, teachers complete a professional review that provides evidence of professional expertise and competence in relation to: (a) *professional knowledge and understanding* which provides the underpinning base for practice; (b) *professional practice* which relates specifically to the development of effective teaching and learning strategies, including those which contribute to enhancing the quality of the educational experience of students and to the wider professional context of science education; c) *professional attributes* which are the overarching principles that characterise professional autonomy and relate to self-evaluation, collegial activity, personal responsibility and leadership.
- Additionally, Chartered Science Teachers are expected to demonstrate work with colleagues and others in developing science education beyond the classroom or laboratory, to work within the professional code of conduct for Chartered Science Teachers, and be able to demonstrate their

commitment to continually maintaining and updating their professional expertise and competence on an annual basis.

- However, such models of good practice - and this is just one example - are not universally understood or taken up, having been developed in an ad hoc manner; whereas if an intuitive, easy to access, nationally recognised system were available, which provided an informative standard report this would encourage both record-keeping and reflective practice. If a College of Teaching were to provide and maintain this - based on existing good practice, validated by reference to research on professional development, the wider discourse of curriculum, knowledge and skills, and to pupil learning outcomes, with the record forming part of a continuing registration process - it would be performing a very useful function.

Q3. Where should the balance of responsibility lie between teachers, schools and Government for ensuring that appropriate professional development is undertaken? How, in the longer term, might responsibility sit with a new independent professional body?

- Professional attitudes and behaviour are underpinned by the development of the individual's knowledge and skills for which the individual takes responsibility. The role of schools as employers and as the responsible systems in which teachers operate should enable this to happen. For Government the role is the provision of the appropriate resource, strategic oversight of the management of that resource, and promotion of the value of continued, reflective professional activity underpinning professional standards.

Q4. Despite the growing reach of the Teaching Schools network, are there areas where coverage of schools would remain a concern? How could any gaps be addressed?

- At issue is the viability of a system of primary education that continues to treat the generalist class teacher as the default. As noted above, DfE responded positively to CPR's 2010 recommendation of a review into primary school staffing in relation to the expertise that a modern primary education requires, but its 2012 report was not followed up. It now needs to be. This underlines the importance of teachers' subject and pedagogical content knowledge – the point at which the primary class teacher system is most vulnerable.
- But subject and professional content knowledge, though vital, are not enough. Research on the defining characteristics of expert teachers shows that they combine real depth of engagement with subject matter with cognitively challenging classroom interaction allied to constant assessment for learning and feedback on which children's learning and understanding can build. It remains a source of concern to us that the specifications of professional expertise and trajectories of professional development informing the current professional standards for teachers took very little account of such evidence, preferring instead to rely on the subjective judgements of members of the review in question. Until such discussions and decisions are informed by professional experience and rigorous research working in tandem, little progress will be made in securing for teachers the kind of professional development that makes a difference to them at whatever stage of career or competence they have reached. We are not convinced that all members of the government's Teaching Schools scheme have the knowledge, will or ability to plug these gaps.
- Since the abolition of QCDA and the reduction in the CPD role and capacity of local authorities, subject associations, professional bodies and not-for-profit organisations such as our own have increasingly tried to make good the consequent CPD resource deficiency. So, for example, CPRT is working with its main sponsor, Pearson, to develop innovative jointly-branded professional

training and support materials in areas such as national curriculum implementation, curriculum audit, assessment without levels and children's voice:

<http://www.pearsonschoolsandcolleges.co.uk/Primary/GlobalPages/pearson-primary-professional-development/curriculum-2014-conferences/The-Cambridge-Primary-Review-Trust-and-Pearson.aspx>

- We would like to see a more integrated approach which draws such organisations into collective identification of the professional development needs of the primary teaching force and of the best ways that such needs can be met. Subject to procedures for assuring the quality of provision, the involvement of a range of organisations offering highly regarded professional development alongside the Teaching Schools network would help to create a healthy mixed economy with coverage across the country.
- These comments apart, there is an assumption in this question that Teaching Schools are the best schools, and *vice versa*. There is no evidence that this is the case. Teaching Schools are those that have applied for this status and have met certain criteria. Many outstanding schools have not applied, and the quality of the work and its contribution to teachers' professional development should not be overlooked.

Q5. What should the funding criteria be for Teaching Schools wishing to draw on the new funding pot for professional development? Should there, for example, be a requirement for Teaching Schools to work with a predetermined proportion of schools that are not already "good" or "outstanding"?

An overarching priority for the Cambridge Primary Review Trust is that of equity: tackling the continuing challenge of social and educational disadvantage, and finding practical ways to help schools to close the overlapping gaps in social equity and educational attainment. It will be important that Teaching Schools and other organisations drawing on the funding pot for professional development directly engage with schools and teachers in challenging circumstances in their locality. Numbers and targets will depend on local situations rather than centrally agreed targets.

Q6. Will teachers benefit from an online platform that collates and presents evidence-based best practice?

One of the challenges for the Cambridge Primary Review Trust is to actively engage primary schools, their leadership teams and teachers with the Review's evidence, ideas and principles, using a variety of print, broadcast and online media as well as professional development courses and other support services in association with Pearson. The proposed online platform providing teachers with the information that they need to make evidence-based approaches to developing their practice the potential to be beneficial. The Trust has thirteen regional professional networks and an alliance of schools and is committed to advancing and disseminating evidence-based practice. It would therefore be interested in contributing to these developments.

Q7. In addition to the proposals outlined here, what other approaches would help schools to remove barriers and incentivise effective professional development for teachers?

We would like to hear your views on our proposals.

Perhaps the most basic change required is in the stance of government, ministers and DfE towards the teaching profession. At present this is contradictory and inconsistent. On the one hand ministers insist that they are replacing the previous government's regime of prescription and compliance by one of respect for teachers' professional expertise and autonomy within the broad framework of a

national curriculum, especially in respect of pedagogy. On the other hand, the same ministers routinely intervene in the fine detail of teachers' practice, telling them what to do and how to do it and implying that without constant ministerial exhortation and pressure, teachers would remain, in the terms of one senior government adviser, 'professionally uninformed' and that standards would plummet. The latest example is 'character education', which the Secretary of State's recent pronouncements signal was neglected by schools until government invented it. This of course runs directly counter to the historic evidence that English schools, and especially primary schools, have always been committed to the whole child and the development of rounded and resilient personalities and have never confined their efforts to the formal curriculum narrowly conceived. There are many other examples of this tendency.

The government cannot have it both ways. Either it respects and trusts teachers or it doesn't. If trust and respect are genuine and evident, rather than reserved for a handful of favoured school leaders, so too will be the incentive for schools to take ownership not only of teaching but also of teachers' professional development.

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