Being the best we can be

SPARKLE MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



ORCHARDS INFANT & JUNIOR SCHOOL

POLICY FOR CPD

REVIEWED SEPTEMBER 2026

Continuing professional development: Teachers as learners

'Highly skilled, committed and qualified staff are at the heart of effective teaching and learning'

At its heart, professional development is the enhancement of staff's knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Professional Learning enables teachers to respond to the changing demands of practice and exercise their professional judgement in informed and creative ways. Learning is an integral part of professional practice and the means by which teachers rejuvenate their practice on a daily basis in their desire continuously to extend themselves and their children. As members of a professional learning community we must understand that teaching involves skills, knowledge, a values base and a level of creativity found in few other roles and that all these must be enriched and sustained.

It is essential that all those who work in our school learn and develop their professional expertise throughout their careers. It is recognised that engaging staff as learners in collaborative enquiry is a powerful factor in school improvement and in raising standards. Continuing professional development is an important element of the school's commitment to raise the quality of learning and teaching and standards of achievement within a broad and rich curriculum; it is an integral feature of the support for school improvement.

- We recognise fully the value of good CPD for staff and ensure that the following principles are engaged:
- all staff have regular access to a range of suitable opportunities
- CPD is at the heart of their approach to Performance Management.
- CPD plays a major part in our recruitment and retention.
- We have staff that are highly motivated and want to be a part of innovation and change.

There are many forms of CPD available, such as individual self-study, attending courses, running

in-house sessions or bringing in an external consultant to run courses or offer support within schools and other settings.

School organisation for CPD

The role of the leadership team, and the way that we organise ourselves, is crucial in creating an effective professional learning community. Our organisation aims to:

- ensure CPD has a direct relationship with what teachers are doing in their own classrooms;
- use internal and external expertise linked to school-based activity;
- involve observation and feedback – especially teachers observing and learning from each other and expert colleagues;
- enable colleagues to support one another rather than leadership by supervisors;
- provide scope for participants to identify the focus of their development;
- enable all staff to be reflective and focus on their contribution to children's learning and attainment;
- provide opportunities to work with other colleagues and share practice;
- include opportunities to receive regular and structured feedback;
- apply processes for sustaining CPD over time to embed learning in classroom practice;
- include opportunities for independent self-study.

There are whole-school policies on learning and teaching that closely integrate professional development, performance management and school improvement. Specific responsibility for the leadership and coordination of professional development is clearly located within the senior leadership team, and ensures that integration happens in practice and effective professional development opportunities are created within the school. Knowledge of relevant CPD opportunities is widely shared at Professional Learning meetings and on a dedicated CPD board. The impact of CPD on teacher practice and pupil achievement is regularly monitored and evaluated. School-level CPD plans (School Improvement Plan) are developed with staff, cover all staff, and link school priorities with individual needs and aspirations. There is a specific budget allocation for professional development, combined with an approach that makes the maximum use of available resources, including systematic and

effective use of INSET days, and the skills of expert teachers. All staff are both entitled to, and responsible for, their professional development, with individual development plans reflecting self-evaluation and wider assessment through the performance management process. Teachers in the early years of their careers are specifically supported to develop their skills and knowledge in the key areas of pedagogy and whole-school issues through a detailed mentorship process. The Leadership team is expected to model effective CPD as 'lead learners'.

The school has a firmly established culture where observing and commenting on each other's practice is accepted by all the staff. Teachers are engaged as learners through a systematic programme of professional learning with regular monitoring procedures in place to evaluate impact. The success criteria is based upon the positive impact upon children's learning in the areas the programme was seeking to enhance.

Activities characterising CPD at the school.

- There is a strong emphasis upon internal and external, specialist expertise. This takes the form of:

  • providing examples of relevant, existing research to inform teachers' choices about where to focus their development;

  • providing support in identifying manageable goals;

  • modelling new practices in classroom contexts;

  • coaching teachers through tackling new approaches;

  • providing a focus for debate, encouraging professional reflection;

  • advice on collecting, analysing and interpreting data.

  • a strong emphasis on professional peer support teachers observing each other's practice;

  • shared planning and development of materials within an explicit learning environment and extended professional discussion.

All staff at the school are given control over their learning by being given choices about the pace and scope of the CPD programme. We believe that teachers' learning is enhanced by peer support with structured professional dialogue, shared planning within a framework of learning objectives, informal and formal mutual observation of practice, shared interpretation of observed episodes and collaborative interpretation and adaptation of new strategies for teachers' own contexts. Professional dialogue between teachers, and between teachers and specialists, fulfils many functions including:

• exploring teachers' understanding and interpretations of new approaches that have been explained, illustrated or modelled;

• enabling teachers to build on what they know and can do already;

• prompting teachers to make explicit and to explore their beliefs about teaching, learning and the subject under discussion;

• guiding and refining teachers' efforts to adapt new ideas to their own specific classes and community.

Shared planning is another important ingredient of peer coaching at the school. Sharing development of lesson plans and schemes of work to accommodate new approaches provides an important test bed for interpreting the implications of new ideas for existing practice and for specific groups of pupils. It helps to shape and inform discussions of observed lessons. It can also help participants experience professional development as an effective use of time – they work smarter, not harder.

Observation and peer coaching are key elements in our development programme. Both informal and formal observation, with follow-up discussion, have an important part to play rooting professional dialogue in evidence and acting as another stimulus for reflection. Observation is seen as supporting the learning of both the observing and the observed teachers. Questions, rather than suggestions, are used to prompt the observed teachers' thinking about the next steps to take. Peer coaches emphasise shared exploration and interpretation of classroom events in relation to their agreed learning goals. It is acknowledged that high-quality professional learning is demanding of commitment and time. Peer coaching models make effective use of time by ensuring specialist inputs are reinforced by in-school support, fitting coaching opportunities into the school day in short chunks of time and enabling teachers to plan the timing of their own peer coaching. The use of Planning, Preparation and Assessment time is a particularly useful vehicle for this vital element. Teachers are aware of the importance of social interaction in pupil learning and peer coaching involves securing similar benefits for teachers by providing support that enables them to take risks structure for dialogue and reflection. Attention is paid to the process of building trust with agreed learning goals and ground rules for shared planning.



Realistically high expectations leads to high performance

Features of our CPD @ The Orchards

- ☺ CPD is a key aspect of our School Improvement Plan
- ☺ CPD happens on the job as well as on courses
- ☺ Time is set aside for PDR and PM&D interviews
- ☺ Professional Development Portfolios are used
- ☺ There are targeted training programmes
- ☺ Peer coaching is facilitated
- ☺ Coaching skills are taught
- ☺ Targeted development funds are available
- ☺ Opportunities exist for career enhancement within the school
- ☺ Opportunities exist for staff to meet socially
- ☺ Sharing good practice is encouraged – the staff room exhibits these
- ☺ Meetings are kept to a minimum and focus on professional learning
- ☺ Induction is immediate and mentors allocated
- ☺ Systems are in place to support what people want to achieve