



## Research

### Brief 6

# The development of leadership capacities across the career trajectory: a focus upon teacher professional development

Research Brief 3 explored the development of leadership capacities across the career trajectory through examination of the OECD report 'Preparing teachers and developing leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century' [1] and Research Briefs 4 & 5 examined leadership development in Scotland post Donaldson. Prior to examining this issue further, it is important to contextualise it within a discussion of the professional development of teachers.

#### The Scottish Context

As outlined in Brief 1, there were several major Scottish policy developments which impacted upon the professional development and working conditions of Scottish teachers, amongst them, *A Teaching Profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* [2], the recommendations of which were the introduction of a statutory induction year; the introduction of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework based upon a set of professional Standards; and the introduction of Professional Review and Development (PRD) [3]. There was an expectation that all teachers would engage in CPD and PRD.

Kennedy and McKay [3] identify that there was a gap in provision for teachers at the 'Early Professional Development' (EPD) stage of their professional careers, those who had completed their induction year but who could not yet access the Chartered Teacher programme (Years 2 – 6). In 2006, a Teaching and Learning Research Report report [4] focused upon this area in Scotland as did a further report in England [5], the latter identifying 'teacher autonomy; school support; mentor support; and LEA support' (Kennedy and McKay, 2011, 556) as being important at this stage. However, Kennedy and McKay note the lack of conceptual clarity around the concept of CPD (other than at the initial stages of the professional career) although there is a general recognition that it is moving away from notions of formal provision towards a conceptualisation of it as lifelong or continuing learning. They argue that teachers at the EPD stage of professional development should not be regarded as a single homogenous group.

Kennedy and McKay make the following recommendations for teachers at the EPD stage:

1. The need for a differentiated approach to professional development
2. The need to recognise the requirements for professional development for those not in continuous employment
3. The need to ensure a smoother transition between the induction year and the ongoing professional development of the teacher
4. The value of mentoring at this stage
5. The provision of CPD which is relevant to the developmental stage of the teacher
6. Opportunities for informal, collaborative professional learning.

#### Reflection Points

- ❖ How might a differentiated approach towards teacher development be constituted? What would it look like?
- ❖ How could a smoother transition between the induction year and the ongoing CPD of the teacher be achieved?

### A focus upon collaborative professional learning

Kennedy [6] develops the theme of collaborative professional learning in a further paper. Within this, she observes that there are wide variations in how collaborative professional learning is construed – what is important is how teachers develop along the trajectory from simply working alongside each other to genuine collaboration and transformative practice. She argues that equal weighting needs to be given to formal, informal, planned and incidental learning as informal learning is a crucial aspect of collaborative learning. Further, drawing from Eraut 2004, she forwards the perspective that it may be valuable to think in terms of 'enabling factors' such as prioritisation of a school culture which is supportive of professional learning' (38), highlighting the importance of school leadership for teacher learning. She also makes the case that it may be of value to examine teacher professional learning through the lens of theory (c.c. Table 1, p26 and ensuing discussion) and that attention needs to be paid to 'the contextualisation of individual learning opportunities and to the overall balance of a teacher's learning experience over a period of time' (38-39). However, she raises the concern that professional CPD which reifies individualised, standards-based professional development may serve to marginalise collaborative and informal learning opportunities. The report highlights that further research into how school leaders can build capacity in terms of teacher professional learning could be of value.

### Interrogating the concept of teacher professionalism

Kennedy, Barlow and MacGregor interrogate the concept of teacher professionalism within the McCormac Report [7] on the review of teacher employment in Scotland, published in 2011. They draw upon Whitty's (2008) typology - traditional, managerial, collaborative and democratic ways of explaining the uses of power - as a theoretical framework by which to examine the report. The authors argue that, 'whilst some superficial appeal is



## The professional development of teachers

made to notions of democratic or collaborative professionalism' (12), the report forwards a view of teacher professionalism which is grounded largely on pragmatic, managerial (financial), rather than democratic or collaborative principles and practices. The quest for professional flexibility as described within the report the authors perceive as largely concerned with a response to an increasingly challenging financial context rather than to improved pupil outcomes. The authors argue that the report engages little with issues which are central to teacher professionalism such as pedagogical expertise, knowledge of curriculum development and critical reflection.

### The International Context

Collinson and her colleagues [1] explore professional development for teachers across four continents (Europe, Australia, Asia and North America) examining seven education systems, including that of Scotland.

### Why the focus upon professional learning and why now?

A communication revolution; growing understanding of how people learn; and considerations of the knowledge society (Drucker 1959, 1993) have led to a burgeoning interest in career-long learning. Professional development for teachers is closely integrated with broader educational and social policies within each country. Post-modernist perspectives (such as those relating to

'... not all professional learning can or should be formally accounted for – there is a requirement for professional trust in order that the benefits of collaborative, informal and incidental learning are not lost in an attempt to formalise and individualise them.' (Kennedy, 2011b, 39)

organic systems) have led to a shift away from 'closed system models, stability and certainty, natural laws and order, and linear thinking' (4) that characterised former developments. According to Druker (1993), learning would permeate all aspects of people's lives, extending beyond schooling, and encompass knowledge creation and problem solving. It would focus upon performance and results rather than upon rules and regulations, the role of the teacher being conceived as 'meaning making.' (4) The implication of the above is that people would need to work together collaboratively to create new knowledge, to disseminate their learning and to build capacity and capability within their organisations (drawing from Collinson and Cook 2007). Mentoring can support this process, however, what is required is not just changes in behaviours but changes in the thinking (beliefs and norms) that underlie behaviours. Education is beginning to embrace these ideas and 'to implement changes that encourage teachers and principals to engage in learning together for the purpose of improving teaching and,