



Meaningful self-evaluation

Graham Handscomb and Duncan Ramsey provide thinking and practical guidance on using reflective teaching as a fundamental part of professional development and explain the important contribution it has to make to school self-evaluation.

■ ■ ■ The self-evaluation age

We live in an era of school self-evaluation. This has emerged as a steadily unfolding consequence of the school development planning movement of the 1980's, the emphasis on school self-management during the 1990's, along with the growth of school inspection and accountability, and the all pervading emphasis on school inspection and raising standards. The changes to the Ofsted inspection framework have brought a welcome focus on the school's own capability to evaluate and know itself. A cycle of review and evaluation that leads to action, planning and future improvement is a model that most professionals would prefer to adopt in contrast to an overdependence on external evaluation.

■ ■ ■ Data rich, information poor

So all schools are now in the business of self-evaluation. Indeed, in an educational climate that has clear accountability and self-management as two of its main features, schools are required to become self-evaluating open to scrutiny, evidence-based, data rich. However, many have become concerned that whilst schools are now

swimming in data they have become "information poor" (MacBeath and Mortimer, 2001). It is feared that teachers have limited ownership of the data that schools are expected to use or to generate and do not perceive it as information that they value.

The move to an Ofsted inspection process that concentrates more on examining the quality of the school's ability to examine itself has heartened those who have been calling for this approach to accountability for some time. This of course puts the onus on the school's aptitude and skills to conduct self-evaluation in a rigorous and effective way.

Ironically, for many who have called for an emphasis on self-evaluation rather than external inspection, some disappointment if not alarm, is now being expressed. There are worries that some schools are replicating onerous aspects of external inspection with their own version! There are stories of over zealous managers weighing down teachers with an excessive regime of lesson observations (Slater, 2006). In compiling the self-evaluation form (SEF) there is a clamour to capture any and all aspects of school life, with, for instance the school trip bus driver being asked to repeat his complement so it can be recorded for the SEF!

So these concerns and the focus on self-evaluation have a number of implications:

- what data and whose data?
- how is information gathered and by whom?
- what counts as evidence?
- self-evaluation seen as scrutiny of others or a collaborative process participated in by all?
- how to foster a climate of ownership of self-evaluation?

And above all:

- how to equip schools and individual staff with the tools and skills needed for effective self-evaluation?

Ownership, accuracy and application are key issues. For self evaluation to be fruitful, schools need to ensure that the information collected is accurate and that staff are part of this and willing to implement the developments that arise. Problems of implementation, particularly related to staff adoption of implementation plans, and the data on which they are based, are a key stumbling block to bringing about lasting change. It is important to remember that ultimately “it is teachers who will change the world of the classroom by understanding it” (Stenhouse, 1975). Children and young people also have a vital contribution to value school self-evaluation (MacBeath et al, 2000).

With the imperative for self-evaluation there is a danger that managers will scurry to precipitate judgement about their schools without taking what we would call a due regard to the evidence. This requires a set of skills that clearly sit within the realm of enquiry and research, which in turn are underpinned by a disposition for reflection. As Rudduck cogently observes the process of reflection and “research leads teachers back to the things that lie at the heart of their professionalism: pupils, teaching and learning.” (Rudduck, 2001)

So this article aims to give some insight into the relationships between reflective practice and self-evaluation and to provide some practical professional development guidance on how reflection can contribute to effective evaluation.

Reflective teaching and the self-evaluating school

The value of reflective teaching

The cycle of school self-evaluation and improvement that is currently being encouraged in schools has many similarities with the concept of reflective teaching as proposed by Schon (1985) and Pollard and Tann (1993). Pollard and Tann have proposed a cyclical model based around reflection, planning, making provision, acting, collecting data, analysing data, evaluating data and then back to reflection which in turn leads on to further action in a continual cycle.

We argue that the adoption and encouragement of reflective teaching strategies within a school can contribute significantly to the effectiveness of data collected as part of a school self-evaluation schedule. Pollard and Tann’s model identifies clearly the importance of evaluation in terms of collecting and analysing data, in order to engage in an evaluative process which can inform or strengthen the quality of reflection. In particular, reflective teaching can help the school to: -

- Undertake rigorous self-evaluation and use the findings effectively;
- Monitor performance data, review patterns and take appropriate action;
- Develop effective performance management procedures which are effective in bringing about improvement.

Reflective teaching and professional development

Reflective teaching is a term that is widely used in the current educational climate. Many initial teacher-training programmes include courses designed to develop reflective teaching skills and there is a significant amount of research interest in this area. Much of the focus for this work is in the area of the professional development of teachers. Reflective teaching as a professional approach for teachers is seen as important because it enables teachers to effectively evaluate their own performance. They use this process of evaluation and subsequent reflection to improve the quality of teaching through developing the teaching/learning process.

Over the years, reflective teaching has played a central role in the development of new teachers entering the profession. Many teacher training institutions run reflective courses as

part of their compulsory studies and developing reflective skills in teachers has been seen as a powerful way in which practitioners can improve the quality of their teaching.

With the advent of the increasing importance that is being attached to the school self-evaluation/review schedule, we want to argue that the adoption of a Reflective Teaching approach across the whole school can provide a valuable contribution to an effective self-review cycle by allowing the school to accurately analyse the quality of its teaching and learning and identify appropriate strategies for improvement. The strength in using this approach is that class teachers are more likely to “own” the results of the reflection and thereby are more likely to act upon identified areas of development that will impact on teaching and learning, both in their own classrooms and across the school.

■ ■ ■ What is Reflective Teaching?

Reflectivity is an important way of thinking about teaching that encourages the practitioner to question his/her perspectives on education. Reflection can range from whole scale perspectives such as a person’s philosophy of education to more focused viewpoints such as the best way to teach a given mathematical concept to a given class. Reflectivity is a useful skill because it allows one to face difficulties in a constructive manner developing, helping to inform, and make sense of the teachers professional practice. It is a skill particularly relevant to teachers because teachers’ knowledge of themselves, their students and their classroom is filtered through a wide range of images, tacit understandings and intuition. In particular, the external pressures placed on teachers combined with the innate tension of being within a classroom of thirty or so children make self-evaluation and more general reflection particularly difficult.

Reflective teaching concepts and issues offer a framework in which theories related to teaching can be combined with practical applications in the classroom. There is a danger of seeing reflective teaching as another jargon term denoting obscure complexity and hidden depth. In fact reflective teaching is down to earth and highly practical. In its rawest sense it involves thinking or reflecting upon the teaching processes and their outcomes that a teacher experiences i.e. “thinking about doing”. This can be before, during or after the event and

might manifest itself in planning, re-directing lessons or reviewing lessons.

■ ■ ■ Upsetting the apple cart!

A word of caution though. Reflective teaching when applied effectively causes teachers to evaluate their own practice with a desire to bring about change. This can have a de-stabilising effect on the school in the sense that teachers are encouraged to challenge pre-conceived notions of teaching practice and procedures. Where effective reflection takes place within the school, class teachers will be wanting to bring about change within the school in order to further improve the teaching and learning that is taking place. Schon (1983) explores the meaning of reflective practice within a bureaucracy. His reflection in action can be both a consequence and cause of surprise for both the individual and the institution. He points out that when members of a bureaucracy embark on a course of reflective practice, allowing themselves to experience confusion and uncertainty, subjecting their frames and theories to conscious criticism and change, they may increase their capacity to contribute to significant organisational learning, but they may also become a danger to the stable system of rules and procedures within which they are expected to deliver their technical expertise.

Pollard and Tann (1993) have identified six key characteristics of a reflective teaching. These are:

- Reflective teaching implies an active concern with aims and consequences, as well as with means and technical efficiency.
- Reflective teaching is applied in a cyclical or spiralling process, in which teachers continually monitor, evaluate and raise their own practice.
- Reflective teaching requires competence in methods of classroom enquiry, to support the development of teaching competence.
- Reflective teaching requires attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness.
- Reflective teaching is based on teacher judgement, informed partly by self-reflection and partly by insights from educational disciplines.
- Reflective teaching, professional learning and personal fulfilment are enhanced through collaboration and dialogue with colleagues.

■■■ Improving teaching and learning

The application of the six principles of reflective teaching identified by Pollard and Tann can improve the quality of teaching and learning experienced by pupils within the school because of its focus on accurately understanding the classroom environment and responding to reflective judgements made. This process, if applied effectively, should lead to a spiral of continuous improvement. The development of a reflective approach to teaching also has benefits for the teacher as an individual. Reflective teachers will be able to react to external influences by weighing the implications of change and adapting to the situation so as to maximise the benefit to students. We believe that adopting a reflective teaching approach can be one of the most powerful means by which a school can bring about school improvement because it is more likely to be wholeheartedly adopted by the staff, and therefore more likely to have a lasting impact on school improvement.

■■■ Using reflection to make a difference

A key consideration for any school aiming to bring about improvement is to ensure that evaluation leads to action, and subsequent development. Reflective teaching is not value neutral. If reflective teaching identifies a weakness or a problem in the classroom, then there is an implied need for change. Evaluation entails the measuring of performance but does not assume that a change will occur as a result of the assessment.

Reflective teachers are willing to work in a cyclical process. At the start of this cycle is the collection of data related to classroom teaching and learning. So in a school encouraging reflective processes, teachers would be given the time and the skills to engage in research into their classroom environment. This approach has clear links to the concept of “The Research Engaged School” in which Handscomb and MacBeath (2003, and 2006) have outlined a vision where research and enquiry are “at the heart of the school, its outlook, systems and activity”.

The view presented here is that by developing a staff of reflective teachers, the school will have the necessary skills and staff motivation, not only to engage in research, but to reflect upon the results and implement the findings wholeheartedly. The self-evaluation that takes place can be in many forms which might include reflective logs, lesson

observations, document analysis, pupil interviews, video recording, questionnaires, and concept mapping.

■■■ Reflection and performance management

School leaders can link the concepts of reflective teaching and the research engaged school into an effective performance management procedure. Staff targets can include examining aspects of their classroom which may bring about improvements. These can be on a personal level related to their own class environment, or on a wider scale related to their role as a co-ordinator.

An example of a personal target

To investigate the difference between standards in writing between boys and girls’ writing by examining the differences between high achieving and low achieving boys within the classroom. This could involve the teacher reflecting on his/her practice, interviewing several students to gain their perspective, carrying out observations, and subsequently deciding on a range of strategies that may be implemented in order to bring about an improvement in standards.

In a similar way, subject co-ordinators could be asked to investigate aspects of their subject. One example for a Geography co-ordinator might be to investigate the impact of a field trip on the curriculum. The co-ordinator might review the curriculum in this area, attend the field trip and sample the children’s work after the programme of study is finished. The co-ordinator may decide that the trip could be adapted in some way in order to have a greater impact on the learning that takes place in the classroom. This approach to performance management may well have a more significant impact on overall school standards as it is more likely to be owned by the staff.

■■■ Reflection and the Research Engaged School

Self-evaluation is then best served where reflection becomes an integrated part of the culture of the school, with all colleagues taking ownership of self-evaluation and becoming active participants in the process. These in turn,

are prime conditions for the development of the research engaged school (Sharp et al, 2006; Handscomb, 2005). In the research engaged school teachers have confidence in the process of reflection, and enjoy mutual support in exploring their thinking, scrutinising their practice and taking ideas further. In such a climate “self-evaluation is then not an extra or an imposition, not undertaken to satisfy some external demand but integral to the day-to-day practise of school and classroom” (Handscomb and MacBeath, 2003).

In Essex, the FLARE research forum has pioneered the concept of the Research Engaged School and has influenced national policy and practice subsequently (GTC, 2006; NCSL, 2006; Handscomb and Sharp, 2006). Teachers across the country are reporting on how reflection in their practice leads to development and improvement: “If you can become aware of what you are doing in a lesson, you start to actively think ‘Could I do this differently?’, because you are consciously looking for cause and effect.” (GTC, 2006- primary headteachers) “We see staff as learners. We want to open minds and find ways to improve. Research fits in with the ethos and vision of the school” (NCSL, 2006- secondary deputy headteacher).

Perhaps the next stage of development will be that whilst all schools are now, at least to some degree self-evaluating, in the future they will become self-researching. This would involve a deeper collaborative and more integrated process in which it might be said of schools “thinking is indistinguishable from talking, from striking sparks, from bantering, parrying and playing” (Ignatieff, 1998).

■ ■ ■ Practical professional development suggestions

So the development of reflective teaching skills amongst the staff has the potential to impact on the self-evaluating school positively. School leaders need to consider the way in which reflective skills can be developed amongst staff. In particular, school leadership can impact on the school’s self-evaluation and the quality of teaching and learning by focussing on reflective teaching skills amongst the staff, providing focussed non-contact time for staff and linking reflective practice to the performance management programme of the school. The following are particular useful approaches.

- Reflective teaching skills can be developed by providing training in research techniques so that staff can gain skills that will help them to enquire into and evaluate different aspects of school life. In addition, schools should encourage each teacher to adopt a cyclical process of monitoring, evaluation and development/improvement in the role as a class teacher and a subject co-ordinator.
- Non-contact time should be provided for teachers so that they can engage in research and investigative activities that are related to the classroom and to their role as a manager or subject co-ordinator. Non-contact time should also be used to provide teachers with the opportunity to engage in professional discussion based upon their reflections.
- School leaders should link reflective practice to the performance management schedule by negotiating and agreeing targets that include investigation, evaluation and subsequent action into key areas for development that have been identified through previous cycles.

■ ■ ■ Reflective practice – a cameo guide

Reflective teaching fuels self-evaluation

The reflective teaching process can help improve the quality of the whole school self-evaluation process by supporting the collaborative approach that many schools are developing as part of their self-review practice. Self-reflective teachers will feel positive about engaging in review processes related to the classroom and the school as they recognise the impact it has on their own teaching and learning. The self-review cycle for the reflective teacher thus becomes part of the daily teaching approach. This means that involvement in the whole school review process does not create extra work for the teacher in the sense that they are collecting data and evaluating on their own performance as part of their natural teaching cycle.

The collaborative nature of this approach is strengthened because self-reflective teachers feel positive about the process and can see the relevance of engaging in it because it has an impact on their own classroom. From the management perspective, if all class teachers are engaging in this process then there will not only be an impact on each class but their will also be relevant data from all classes relating to development within each

classroom. The school manager can draw the reviews (and issues identified) from each classroom together and look for whole school trends. He/she can also organise support, training and resourcing to support the issues identified by the class teacher.

So, the reflective teaching process can contribute to the collaborative nature of the whole school self-review process by linking it to a daily teaching approach. This reduces the workload on teachers and improves the impact of school improvement by increasing the level of ownership within individual staff.

Example of how reflection and self evaluation can impact on the SEF.

The OFSTED self evaluation form has become a crucial part of the school self-review process. The School Evaluation Form (SEF) encourages the school to ask itself self-evaluative questions based upon:

- How good is the quality of teaching and learning?
- How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range and interests of learners?
- How well are learners guided and supported?
- Below is an example of how reflective teaching could impact on the SEF

A primary school wishes to review the quality of teaching across all classes. The leadership want to ensure that judgements made are as rigorous as possible. This is because the judgements made will lead to the development of an action plan which should have an impact on standards. In order to make the judgements as rigorous as possible the leadership team decide to compare the results of self-evaluations made by the teachers, with observations made by senior management. One person (perhaps the deputy head), leads the staff in a process of self-reflection where teachers review their strengths and areas for development and identify areas to focus on which will have an impact on the standards of teaching and learning.

At the same time the headteacher may lead a series of lesson observations, which look at the quality of teaching, the classroom environment, planning etc. The head and deputy could then compare the results of their separate reviews to see the relationship between the self-perception

of the staff and the external perception of the head teacher. The combination of these differing perspectives will support the development of a more effective analysis of the school's performance. In addition the involvement of staff in a reflective approach may well lead to greater ownership of the resulting action plan leading to greater impact.

Reflective Practice – Conversations with school governors and the SIP

Information gained from the use of reflective practice to inform school self-evaluation can play an important role in the conversations a school has with its partners. This is because reflection can lead to: -

- clearly focussed improvement, based on school specific information.
- active involvement of staff, thus improving the chances of significant impact.
- increases in the level of collaborative leadership as more people take ownership in the school improvement agenda.
- reduced workload for staff, who are more focussed on clearly defined targets.

Amongst the significant dialogues that a school has are those ongoing interactions with governors and, of course, the school's "single conversation" with its school improvement partner (SIP).

The contribution that enquiry and reflection make to self-evaluation can be brought to bear upon making the critical friend role effective and bring added value to the school. SIPs and governors are likely to probe the following:

- Are we focussed on the most important school improvement actions that will have the greatest impact?
- Are we focusing on the salient issues? In enquiry terms are we asking the right questions?

Reflective practice can bring bite and rigor to the prioritising process. So for instance a school may consider that boys' writing is an area for development

based on analysis of assessment results. There is certainly plenty of guidance available from national programmes about how the area of under-achievement might be tackled. But how can we be sure that this is an area upon which the school should concentrate its efforts, particularly? A reflective school might want to investigate this issue more before deciding on a series of actions. In doing so, it will be in a position to make best use of the critical friend role, bringing to governors and SIPs alike clarity of focus. Crucially in critical friend conversations the school will be able not just to marshal a wealth of evidence but will also be able to share the reflective practice process by which it was obtained.

So when challenged about their actions by for instance governors and SIPs the reflective school will be able to commend the school's improvement agenda as the actions being undertaken will be based on rigorous evidence and is focussed on their own specific school context.

■ ■ ■ Examples of self reflection linking to the SEF.

Below are listed some examples of how teachers engaging a self-reflective processes might produce information that could be included in the SEF.

- Teachers self-review the quality of their classroom environment in terms of assessing its impact on learning.
- Teachers self-review the quality of their lessons, engaging in discussion with a peer, providing mutual support for one another.
- A teacher sets up a small scale research project to examine the impact on the use of a new set of non-fiction texts on Boys reading improvement.

At the end of a half term, each teacher reflects on relevance of the curriculum to their learners. They meet in year groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in terms of how inclusive it has been. They discuss different groups of children and how they have reacted to the curriculum activities. The leadership team compare the results from each year group in order to assess if there is a whole school trend.

■ ■ ■ How is the cycle of self-review maintained?

The maintenance of the self review cycle is a key concept to be considered in the development of whole school self evaluation. Reflective teaching can contribute significantly in this area because it involves an ongoing cycle of development. There is no start or finish to reflective teaching as practitioners engage in a continuous process of self-improvement. The reflective teacher will use different time scales for different reflective activities. In the short term a teacher might reflect upon her lesson as it is happening (reflection in action); she might be reviewing the success of a particular strategy and adapting the teaching appropriately. At the end of the day or week a teacher might reflect on how well her aims for the day/week had been achieved. Had the children made the hoped for progress? The reflective process would consider what went well and what could be improved. It is always important in the reflective process that evaluation leads to action.

On a more long term scale the teacher may engage in a termly review. Looking at the usefulness of schemes of work, the way individuals or groups of children have responded, the different rates of progress or perhaps the appropriateness of the curriculum. These reviews are a constant activity in the reflective teachers approach to educating children and as such provide an internal mechanism for maintaining the process.

■ ■ ■ Skilling up for reflection

The quality of evidence provided by the reflective teacher is a real reason for schools taking the time and effort to develop reflective skills amongst its staff. It is important to note that the development of skill is an essential part of the reflective teaching process. This may be developed through a wide range of activities such as in-service training relating to: -

- Lesson observations
- Examining the classroom environment
- Interviewing children.
- Engaging in professional dialogue.
- Evaluating pupil performance.
- Data analysis



In summary, reflective teaching encourages teachers to be critical of their own practice by developing a desire for continual improvement //

And by specific research skills such as: -

- Framing appropriate questions.
- Interview skills.
- Questionnaire skills.
- Observation skills.

By using the skills gained over a period of time and by engaging in a professional dialogue the reflective practitioner is able to base their reflective conclusions on evidence. In essence they can justify their thoughts with evidence and it is this process that strengthens the quality of information gained through this process and thereby provides effective evidence of evaluation to be included in the SEF.

■■■ Using reflective teaching to improve practice

In summary, reflective teaching encourages teachers to be critical of their own practice by developing a desire for continual improvement. A reflective teacher will be using opportunities for data collection and reflection to engage in strategies for reviewing what has happened in the classroom and bringing about improvements. This then will have an impact on the teaching and learning that is taking place within the school environment.

In particular the reflective teacher will have gained qualities related to competence in methods of classroom enquiry. They will be open to developing skills in classroom research, evaluating classroom activities, interviewing children and reviewing the effectiveness of lessons. The reflective teacher will take this information and use it to formulate ideas for future improvement as part of a personal classroom improvement cycle. Reflective teaching also implies a concern for collaboration and dialogue with colleagues. The reflective teacher will want to discuss ideas with other colleagues, providing support and being supported as part of a natural process of professionalism.

■■■ Self-evaluation – a reflective checklist

- How do you ensure you choose the right improvement priority(ies) to concentrate upon?
- If you start with identifying intuitive self-evident issues to focus on for improvement, what arrangements do you have for testing them out?
- How do you make use of school performance data to ensure it is widely understood and owned throughout the school?
- How could you use staff's reflection on their practice to help them engage with and interpret school performance data?
- What kind of evidence do you use to support the identification of improvement priorities and in evaluating steps taken to address them?
- How do you make sure that you really “appreciate” and have a proper regard for the evidence? Consider how you can use reflective practice to do this more effectively.
- Consider how you can involve colleagues throughout the school more fully in the self evaluation process through reflective activity. Look for opportunities that may be promoted through school activities and organisation that already exist (e.g. professional development time; staff meetings; working groups).
- What arrangements are made to build in a sequence of reflection time into the self-evaluation process?
- Consider what expertise, training and support you may need to foster a culture of reflective practice and implement reflective self evaluation activity. What can be found in the school and what external input is needed to complement the school's own resources?
- How can you involve governors in reflective practice to help enrich and make more effective their strategic and quality assurance roles?
- In preparing for the meeting with your SIP consider how you can portray the part that reflective practice played in the school self-evaluation process.

■ ■ ■ **Reflection and self-evaluation: case studies**

The following case studies give cameo sketches of the practice in two schools—a primary and a secondary - where the contribution of reflective practice to school self-evaluation has been modelled.

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Case Study 1: Staff Review and Reflection Sessions

Henry Moore School has developed an innovative approach to staff meeting timetabling in order to encourage reflective discussion amongst staff. Every third or fourth week staff meetings are turned in to Review and Reflection sessions. During this time, staff are often split into small groups with a particular focus. They are encouraged to discuss different aspects of teaching and learning giving them the opportunity to explore relevant issues in a non-pressured environment.

The senior management team have decided that they want to give the message that thinking time and reflection is important and so they have provided directed time in which this can happen. Interestingly school leadership find the time given to staff to be very valuable.

“It gives the teachers time to philosophise and the different perspectives gained can be very valuable”. The teachers benefit by being able to reflect on their practice in a non-pressured way and the school benefits by feeding back staff viewpoints into a cyclical model of school improvement.

- Review and reflective session
- Feedback into school policy
- Changes in practice
- Further review and reflection.

(Make into a Cycle Diagram)

Recently the school held a reflective session based on information relating to pupil progress. They had collected information throughout the year and wanted to discuss the successes and barriers to development that teacher’s felt in relation to the rate of children’s progress. They timetabled a reflective session to discuss this issue.

As staff talked they felt that the biggest challenge was dealing with the wide range of ability levels in class. A year three class felt they had children working within the abilities expected of Year R all the way to Secondary school. They decide that dealing with this issue was their biggest challenge. As a result they chose to review their school class structure. In a 2 form entry situation they decided to group classes on a range of factors which included ability, friendship, social and emotional factors. In particular they looked at children in the middle ability level and thought about the way they would respond to being towards the upper or lower end of a class. As a result classes were loosely organised on ability levels, but with a significant impact of other variables related to expected and potential pupil progress.

After a short time, the school held its next reflection session which focused on teachers perceptions of the impact of the changes. Teachers discussed each child in turn and the progress they had made. Their conclusions were that many children had benefited from the changes. The rate of progress overall had improved, and children were perceived as being happier and more motivated. The school also identified some less positive sides, for example the number of children with Individual Education Plans (I.E.Ps) was imbalanced towards one class and this had implications for providing the teacher with extra time to complete these.

In summary, colleagues in the school have found the use of reflection time to be very powerful. Reflection has been put to work action _ reflection _ action _ reflection. By systematically building reflection time into the pattern of By juxtaposing reflective sessions with changes in practice, the quality of improvement achieved has been raised significantly.

Case Study 2: Performance Management and Personalised CPD

Sweyne Park School, a specialist Science and Training School, has fully integrated performance management and personalised CPD into its self-evaluation and improvement cycle in order to raise standards, and in 2006 the school achieved a paradigm shift in its results with OFSTED grading self-evaluation within leadership and management as outstanding.

As with any cycle, there is no true start or end, but this description begins with performance management review meetings which take place at the start of the academic year. Teachers begin by reflecting on their own performance and the effectiveness of the personalised CPD with which they have engaged. They have a wealth of data to call on, including in-house analysis of their own classes' exam results (provided by the Data Team), lesson observations, and portfolio feedback forms. In addition, they may have collected feedback from pupils via questionnaires. This pupil feedback is gathered in a number of contexts - as part of a practitioner research team or co-coaching partnership or received feedback and support from an expert coach (perhaps one of the consultants used by the school).

The next step involves the teachers and their line manager negotiating targets which address previously identified whole-school and departmental targets as well as the individual needs of the teacher. It is then the teacher's responsibility, supported by their line manager and the school's Training Team, to identify the type of CPD which they need to enable them to meet their targets. Following this the CPD co-ordinator allocates resources to facilitate activities. Performance management targets and planned actions are revisited on a termly basis. Feedback from these sessions is used to analyse, evaluate and develop the whole school CPD provision and to inform whole school evaluation and planning.

One of the most powerful strategies for providing time and opportunities for collaborative enquiry and dialogue

at the Sweyne Park School is through Research and Development groups, which are open to all staff. Groups run for one or more terms normally and staff meets weekly, feeding back into a whole school review group at regular intervals. Review groups are usually decided at the end of the academic year in response to the whole school development plan, but modifications can be made in response to issues that arise during the year.

Regular departmental development workshops are also written into the calendar: these allow for curricular development and review. Groups of teachers work together to research and develop materials. The outcomes and evaluations of this research activity are fed back to the leadership team via weekly line management sessions and are collected into departmental self evaluation forms (SEFs), which feed into the whole school SEF. Many departments have curriculum development time written in to the timetables of one or more department members.

Up to three departments or areas, and at least one whole-school theme (e.g. 'literacy') are formally reviewed each year. These reviews involve a variety of methods of data collection and analysis, including pupil questionnaires and interviews, and are usually led by external consultants. The departments, however, are involved in analysing the data and reflecting on the implications for future development. At the end of the academic year, the leadership team has a wide range of evidence to use in completing their whole school evaluation and target setting - much of it provided through reflective teaching and self-evaluation. The cycle continues as individuals evaluate their own progress and performance at performance management review meetings at the start of the next academic year. So in summary we have found that our whole approach to self evaluation, in all its dimensions-school, department, individual - is intrinsically fuelled by a culture of reflection that permeates the school.

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