



Good practice examples

Governance & Participation

Title:

Teacher-Led CPD Planning: Cheltenham Bournside School's Autonomy Model

Purpose:

To empower teachers with meaningful choice and autonomy in their professional development by involving them directly in the design and planning of CPD initiatives, thereby increasing ownership, engagement and alignment with actual teaching needs.

Short description:

Cheltenham Bournside School in the United Kingdom has developed an innovative approach to CPD governance that champions teacher autonomy in professional development practices. Rather than adopting a top-down, prescriptive model of CPD delivery, the school weaves a flexible approach throughout the academic year that gives teachers genuine voice in selecting, designing and participating in professional learning opportunities.

The school's model begins with a comprehensive CPD audit that provides valuable insights into teachers' unique learning needs, strengths, areas for growth and professional goals. This data collection process actively involves teachers through surveys, interviews and departmental consultations, ensuring that their perspectives form the foundation of the school's professional development planning. Teachers are then offered structured options for CPD activities that align both with school development priorities and with their individual professional interests and classroom realities.

Importantly, the school balances institutional needs with teacher agency. While the senior leadership team focuses on the overall school improvement plan, middle leaders coordinate department-specific priorities and individual teachers identify personal learning needs, the CPD planning process integrates these different perspectives rather than allowing them to conflict. Teachers can choose from a range of CPD pathways, contribute to co-designing new professional learning initiatives and participate in decision-making committees that shape the school's professional development strategy.

This approach to CPD governance demonstrates several key principles from research on effective professional development. It recognizes that teachers are more engaged and motivated when they have autonomy within a structured framework. It ensures CPD content

is responsive to teachers' actual classroom challenges rather than external mandates alone. It creates shared responsibility for professional learning between leadership and staff and it makes the governance structures transparent so that teachers understand how CPD decisions are made and how they can influence those decisions.

The outcome has been increased teacher satisfaction with professional development, higher participation rates in CPD activities, greater application of new learning into classroom practice and improved teacher retention. Teachers report feeling valued as professionals whose expertise and input genuinely matter in shaping the school's learning culture.

Link:

<https://www.headteacher-update.com/content/best-practice/cpd-leadership-what-i-wish-i-d-know-back-then/>

FOOTT PRINTTS factors:

- 4.1 Teachers can choose CPD within available options
- 4.2 Teachers want more say in CPD planning
- 4.3 CPD is aligned with school development goals
- 4.4. Authorities and institutions also influence content

Other factors:

- 2.2 Content meets the needs of educators
- 2.4 Overall job satisfaction is high
- 5.4 Flexible scheduling and varied durations

