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Primary Teachers and Professional Development - the Early Years

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Education

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Declaration

This thesis is my own work and has been completed to satisfy the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Education. Other work completed as part of the requirements has provided me with information and learning that have been used in this thesis as indicated in the text.

This work has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

Abstract

This study is about teacher development for early career primary teachers, undertaken at a time of particular interest in providing a coherent professional development programme for teachers in the first five years of their career. It was undertaken from my perspective as a primary headteacher with the desire to improve the experience of professional development for these teachers.

The research was undertaken by means of questionnaires and interviews and provides a picture professional development provision that is fragmented and lacking in coherence. While enjoying a relatively wide range of activities and experiences overall, early career teachers appear to have a more limited ongoing provision. This seems to be only loosely linked to any personal needs that may have been identified. A lack of rigorous evaluation procedures may well contribute to the situation where there is little clarity about the outcomes of professional development activities and experiences. Teachers are aware of a wide range of outcomes and value those that support them in their teaching. It is their own teaching that appears to be the focus of teachers' attention in relation to professional development rather than children's learning. Teachers, aware of pressures to meet exacting requirements in their work, appreciate opportunities to learn from those who have experience of similar situations. Professional development can result from meeting the challenges that teachers face in the early stages of their career, but the climate in which those challenges are met can be of crucial importance.

As a consequence of the research conclusions are drawn which can inform my own practice, and also provide material for the consideration of others who have an interest in, or responsibility for, facilitating and nurturing the professional development of early career teachers.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis investigates early career primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of professional development. It focuses especially on what teachers find to be effective professional development, how this development is evaluated and the factors that facilitate or inhibit teachers' professional development. The prime purpose of the research is to provide a better understanding of the current situation for these teachers and take lessons from it to inform the practice of school leaders, including myself, with responsibility to 'support and co-ordinate the provision of high quality professional development' (DfES, 2001a) for the benefit of pupils and staff. This chapter provides an overview of the research and the key factors that influenced its inception.

It should be noted that I use the terms teacher development and professional development interchangeably throughout this thesis.

The research was undertaken at a time of Government interest in providing a coherent programme of professional development for teachers in the first five years of their career and represents an area of particular personal and professional interest as a primary headteacher and as a 'lifelong learner'. Since my own experiences and perceptions have not only prompted the research, but have also influenced the way the research has been conducted, the questions asked, the way they were asked, and the way they were analysed and interpreted (Merriam, 1998), it is appropriate to consider my background and motivation.

Because of my personal and professional interest, not only in the subject of this thesis, but also in the application of its findings, I use the first person in reporting the research.

1.1 My interest in professional development

Throughout my career I have eagerly availed myself of a fairly typical range of professional development activities. The benefits of these experiences were, I think, typical; I attended boring courses, with lunchtime networking the only gain, and inspirational ones that remotivated me, but had little impact on my practice, and others that increased my knowledge and enthusiasm for learning. I observed and team taught with colleagues who provided both positive and negative role models. An experience that was not so typical was that, as I began my career in Leeds in 1975, I took part in a pilot scheme for probationary teachers, closely resembling the current arrangements for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). In retrospect I consider that this experience probably had some lasting influence on my attitude to valuing professional development opportunities. It also gave me an appreciation of the development potential of a wider range of activities than just courses, which, for many people at the time, appeared to be *the* professional development activity.

A professional development activity that had one of the most significant influences on my teaching practice and beliefs, was a course attended not by me, but by a colleague, who brought back recommendations which were trialled in the school. I would not have initiated such a change myself, but having agreed

to change my practice, I became convinced of the benefits of the approach. I have undertaken two Master's courses which have allowed me to step back from the immediacy of classroom concerns to consider theory and gain a broader perspective, and been supported and encouraged by contact with professionals from very different teaching contexts, but with a similar enthusiasm for professional learning.

I have always taken personal responsibility for my own development which has sometimes been facilitated by the school. Early in my career my development had only occasional impact on colleagues or the school, then, as a deputy and ultimately a headteacher, I took a different perspective, keen to encourage the development of the staff, both as an entitlement and as an investment on the part of the school. Initially I expected staff to be responsible for planning their own development, selecting, within the budget restrictions, their own professional development events. Increasingly, with the need to produce and implement detailed plans for school improvement, I became much more aware of the crucial role that professional development had to play in the process and of the need to intervene, balancing teachers' own perceived development needs with those of the school. The need for teachers to provide evidence of their development in relation to threshold and performance management reviews also required more formal procedures for identifying, recording and meeting development needs and for 'quantifying' the impact of professional development activities undertaken.

Trying to motivate teachers to undertake training for initiatives such as the literacy and numeracy strategies, remained problematic. I regarded it as a

Government initiative rather than professional development and felt guilty that I was not able to resist or have greater control over its implementation and had to refer to 'requirements' when asking teachers to attend training. However we had begun to establish a useful system of sharing expertise and good practice in the numeracy and literacy hours which helped teachers feel greater engagement with the imposed pedagogy. We had also appointed two NQTs, for whom I was mentor, so that I had come full circle from my own first year, albeit in a different role. I felt a great sense of responsibility that these new teachers should benefit as I had from the experience and develop a continuing interest in, and enthusiasm for, their own professional development.

As I prepared to leave the school to take up my Ed.D. course, the priority for school improvement was the quality of teaching and learning and I focussed on the need for key staff to engage in appropriate professional development. The desire to approach this crucial task in as knowledgeable a state as possible was a catalyst in my selecting professional development as my area of research.

During my doctoral studies I have undertaken assignments on the nature of professional development and effective teacher development within the context of school improvement. These studies increased my understanding of teacher development as a complex process requiring explicit, integrated planning and support from needs identification through to evaluation and acknowledgement of progress. I was also involved in research for the University of Warwick to explore the issues of professional development for secondary teachers in their early career with a view to offering a new Master's level degree (Shaw and

Hammond, 2003). This experience reinforced my interest in working with early career teachers and influenced my decision to make their career development the focus of my research. The teachers I worked with were enthusiastic and accepting of a centrally dictated innovation, with a strong culture of learning from colleagues. Until that point my work and study concerning teachers' professional development had been undertaken mainly with a background assumption of a typical school staff, with more experienced teachers in a majority. I was eager to learn more about how early career, primary teachers regard professional development. They would have trained with an imposed national curriculum as an established fact, with induction for NQTs recommended or statutory, possibly with mentor support and opportunities to observe other teachers teaching and to be observed by other than Ofsted inspectors. Their professional development could also have been guided by career entry profiles.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

This chapter provides an overview of the research and the key factors that influenced its inception. Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant literature and Chapter 3 presents details of the epistemological considerations that informed the selection of methodology and how these methods were employed to gather and analyse data through questionnaires and interviews.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the analysis of the questionnaires and interviews. The thesis concludes with a discussion of theory suggested by the research, how this

relates to the literature and how the findings contribute to knowledge of professional development. It also examines what the implications are for leading and managing professional development in primary schools.

1.3 The national context

In recent years, while the focus for much Government policy and discussion has been on standards in education, there has been criticism that the training provided to implement initiatives does not represent real professional development. For example, Packwood (1992) found that teachers do not consider the centrally delivered, imposed training as teacher development, but rather the dissemination of a set of instructions.

Possibly driven by the failure of schools to sustain early gains in SATs scores, there has been a belated acknowledgement by the Government of the key role of genuine professional development of teachers in achieving improvements in learning, prompting the General Teaching Council (GTC) to state that ‘professional development has never had such a high profile’ (GTC, 2004a). Accepting the proposals of the GTC that professional development should be career-long with guaranteed entitlement, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published ‘Learning and Teaching: A strategy for professional development’ (DfES, 2001b). In the foreword, the then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett stated that in working towards world class education ‘it is necessary to offer maximum support to teachers in achieving the highest standards possible, and taking on this challenge of change’.

(DfES, 2001b, p.1). There is an acknowledgement within the document that centrally developed training to support national strategies may fail to take account of the variety of school contexts within which professional development may occur, and might not address teachers' individual needs. This latter point is also recognised by the General Teaching Assembly for Wales, which states that provision for local and national initiatives has resulted in individually focussed CPD being 'particularly neglected' (GTCW, 2002). The identification of the neglect of individual needs was swiftly followed by advice for teachers on producing personal professional development records (DfES, 2001c). The GTC, which, since its inception, has shown a particular interest in promoting individual teachers' active participation in professional development, has also published 'The Teachers' Professional Learning Framework' (GTC, 2004b) which is designed to encourage access to a diverse range of professional development opportunities and activities.

Along with the publication of these documents various schemes were developed or extended, including Best Practice Research Scholarships, Teachers' International Professional Development and Sabbaticals, and of particular interest here, Professional Bursaries were extended from Excellence in Cities areas and Education Action Zones, to include all teachers in their fourth and fifth years of teaching. These bursaries offered teachers up to £500 to pay for activities and resources to support their career and professional development needs. A pilot programme for Early Professional Development was also put in place in twelve local education authorities (LEAs) across England.

This programme was envisioned as building on statutory induction for NQTs, introduced in 1999, requiring schools to appoint a mentor for beginning teachers and to hold regular meetings to evaluate progress and plan future development. The Early Professional Development programme was to provide funding of up to £2,100 annually for teachers in their second and third years of teaching to direct their own, individual professional development with guidance from the LEA and their designated mentor. The programme was thus to provide a link between statutory induction and the Professional Bursaries. Effectively this package would complete a range of support for teachers' professional development from the completion of initial training to threshold assessment. This first five years of career is increasingly presented a particular phase in teachers' careers. Bubb has written a book on early professional development for 'your first five years as a teacher' (Bubb, 2004). Jones (2006a) writing about early professional development relates it to the first five years of teaching life and comments on the 'Teachernet' as having been developed to help teachers better plan their careers and CPD in their first five years in the profession (Jones, 2005). While it could be argued that the first year should be considered separately from the other four years because of the different experiences of the induction year, such an approach does not facilitated continuity of provision. Seeing the induction year as a separate professional development phase is hardly likely to improve the situation described by HMI in 'Teachers' Early Professional Development' (Ofsted, 2003). They found that in most of the sixty-one schools visited there were no special arrangements for identifying the professional development needs of teachers in their second and third years of teaching and that this situation related back to the end of the induction year where there was poor review of

progress made. If schools and teachers were encouraged to think of the NQT year as the start of a five year period of professional development then there might be a greater inclination to see induction as providing support, not only for teachers' survival and adjustment to the realities of the classroom, but for establishing practices and attitudes that provide the foundations of professional development, which, with effective planning and a longer term view, can be built upon in the next few years.

The Early Professional Development programme was seen by the National Union of Teachers as beginning the realisation of the James Report proposals after a thirty year delay, treating teachers as professionals, capable of directing their own learning and conducting research (Bangs, 2003). The DfES (2002a) celebrated the end of the first year of the scheme by highlighting its benefits, not only to teachers in their early career, but also for their mentors. When the pilot scheme ended an evaluation identified benefits for the school and the profession as well as for individuals (Moor *et al.*, 2005). Several of the lessons learned were considered to be transferable to future professional development activities, but, uniquely, the EPD scheme was seen to provide teachers in the second and third years of their career with feelings of being valued and empowered. Despite these benefits, and the fact that the pilot programme was intended to run until July 2004, it became the victim, in March 2003, of a £59 million claw back, when money earmarked for the schemes emanating from the department's professional development strategy, was diverted to the standards fund grants because of the crisis in funding over national insurance and pensions

contributions, and the need to fund the agreement on workforce reform (Thornton and Fletcher, 2003, Bangs, 2003).

There was much disappointment and criticism of the failure to retain the programme (Adams, 2003) which was seen as a much needed initiative to stem the flow of new teachers leaving the profession. The programme was seen to have had some success in this respect, with Lewisham, one of the participating LEAs, reporting a drop-out rate of only 5% for second year teachers in contrast to 25% of NQTs. This figure, however, raises questions as to the effectiveness of induction in comparison.

It is interesting to note that a DfES briefing on the 'Early Professional Development Pilot Programme' (DfES, 2002b) highlighted recruitment and retention as the prime reason for the whole professional development strategy that had been outlined in 'Learning and Teaching: A strategy for professional development' (DfES, 2001b):

The government realises that attracting and retaining good teachers is largely dependent upon offering them a comprehensive package of development and training opportunities. That is why it has launched the first ever national strategy for teachers continuing professional development (CPD) on 1 March 2001. (DfES, 2002b).

There would seem to be some rather mixed messages coming from central Government regarding the fundamental role of professional development. Is it

the means by which the 'highest standards possible' will be achieved or a necessary condition of service for early career teachers in order to attract and retain an adequate workforce? The Government has given belated support for professional development as opposed to training and, in particular, for early professional development, but that fulsome support has been rather fleeting and fragile. This is an area then where research may provide some interesting contributions to knowledge about how this rather confused situation is experienced by early career primary school teachers. The fact that these efforts to promote professional development have been developed at Government level also prompted an interest in establishing how these efforts might be experienced at the level of individual early career primary teachers. With recent reports that the revised standards for teachers will play a role in determining pay as well as stimulating the demand for professional development (Jones, 2006b) the link between pay and professional development are becoming quite explicit. So this is an area that will become increasingly important for beginning teachers and their careers as well as for school performance. The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) has recently advised that the developing concept of 'new professionalism' places the responsibility for the professional development of its staff firmly with the school (NAHT, 2006) which increases the need for headteachers to better understand the process for the various staff within the organisation. At the same time, because of pressures on headteachers that lead to tensions between meeting needs at the personal, policy and organisational levels (Goodall *et al.*, 2005), this research focuses only on the views of teachers and not those responsible for the allocation of resources to their professional development.

1.4 The Literature

The literature presented provides a conceptual and empirical context for the research (Hammersley, 1999) and demonstrates that my research builds on previous work in the field. It is also necessary to acknowledge that some of the literature such as Evans (2002) and MacGilchrist (1997) will have influenced my thinking and act as background assumptions to my research. The literature relates to the basic concepts inherent in the research questions and permeating the data so that it assists understanding of the analysis. The literature included provides concepts and theories against which the findings from the research can be better understood. So that the literature about teachers adapting to loss of autonomy and the current climate by developing a new professionalism, such as Day (1999), Sachs (2000) and Evans (2001), provides a background for examining teachers' attitudes to outcomes of professional development. The literature reviewed also helps in fitting the research into the wider picture so that theoretical insights from this thesis may be seen to be applicable to other contexts.

An examination of the research literature indicates areas where contributions to knowledge can be made. Much of the research concerning teachers' professional development is located within the school improvement movement, and takes successful schools as a starting point (Harris *et al.*, 2001). Even where innovation is successfully adopted, evaluation tends to focus on what has been achieved rather than on how the necessary underlying professional development

has been brought about (Guskey, 2000). Acknowledging that school improvement is tied to teachers' professional development, this research is based on the premise that, rather than working backwards from pupil outcomes related to externally initiated innovations, teachers' perceptions and experiences may be a valuable starting point.

Research into teacher development (Edmonds and Lee, 2002, Riley, 2003) often relies on the opinions not just of teachers, but also of headteachers, other staff, parents and governors. While studies such as Day's (2000a) and Ovens' (1999) present the voices of teachers, the teachers in their samples were drawn from those undertaking higher degrees or a science course and were not focussed on early career teachers. They are of interest here, not only because they lack the experience of their long serving colleagues, but also because they have not experienced a process of greatly reduced classroom autonomy and have learned about, rather than experienced, the implementation of relatively recent initiatives. Early career teachers are the focus of much that has been researched and written by and for teacher educators, especially concerning how well their training prepares teachers for the challenges of their first post (e.g. Loughran *et al.*, 2001) and the transition from initial training (Jones and Stammers, 1997), or specific aspects of training or support (Cross, 1995, Kearns, 2001) but the intention here is to look at teachers' professional development broader experiences in the early years of career.

Concerns for the integration of theory into practice have prompted many projects and much research into university-school partnerships (e.g. Day, 1999) and

collaborative action research projects. But while some such projects have enjoyed a measure of success they often depend on continued support from research partners (e.g. Butler *et al.*, 2004). While this sort of collaboration may be a useful strategy for professional development, it is not easily initiated by schools nor can it encompass the range of development needs of the typical primary school.

1.5 Research aims and objectives

With the combined influences of my experience and learning and with the purpose of better understanding how I might foster professional development in the future, I established that the main aim of the research was to investigate early career, primary teachers' experiences of professional development. Within this main aim there are two specific objectives; to gain an understanding of what constitutes professional development for these teachers and to explore what makes these experiences effective.

In preparing for the research and informed by the outcomes of the first stage of research the research questions were adapted and refined and finally conceived as:

- What constitutes the professional development experience of early career primary teachers?
- Which professional development experiences have these teachers found to be effective and how are they evaluated?

- What factors do early career primary teachers consider support or inhibit their professional development?

The approach taken to the research was pragmatic with decisions about the method to be employed focused on the research questions. The research strategy involved the collection of data in two sequential stages, employing questionnaires and then interviews. The questionnaires contained closed and open questions. The closed questions were analysed producing frequencies and descriptive statistics and the chi-square test was employed to investigate particular differences between teachers in different career years. The open questions were subject to content analysis, as were the interview data.

The next chapter reviews the literature related to the central topic of this research and the theories and concepts underpinning it.

Chapter 2

What do we know about early career teachers and professional development?

The literature presented in this chapter has been selected for the background it provides on the substantive topic and the theoretical concepts that inform it. The main purposes for this literature review are to locate my own work within the wider body of knowledge and to compare my findings and ideas with those of others. While its function is the role it plays in the thesis, it also represents some of the personal learning that has occurred in the process of completing the research (Murray, 2002). In making judgements about what to include from the extensive body of work on the subject I recognise my own active role in selecting and arranging what is presented from that which is available (Merriam, 1998). It also seeks to justify the research, demonstrating the significance of the research questions and why they are worth pursuing (Wallace and Poulson, 2003)

2.1 Teachers' voices

This research has been undertaken because I believe it is necessary to highlight early career teachers' views in the professional development debate. Literature exploring the school and governmental perspectives of teacher development is presented indicating that these may fail to give sufficient priority to teachers' professional development needs and define that development in a limited way.

and so affect teachers' professionalism, which is briefly considered. These perspectives indicate the need for research from the teachers' point of view. Goodson (2000) calls for research that places teachers at the centre of the research in an attempt to generate a counter-culture that will resist the tendency to place them very much at the periphery.

Literature is presented that examines different approaches to teacher development and the effects these may have on teachers. The way that effectiveness of teacher development is determined is then considered along with various views on how effective teacher development may be conceived and achieved. The chapter is then summarised with a reiteration of the need to focus on teachers' understanding of, experiences, and responses to, professional development. The review begins by considering definitions of teacher development and how it may be more clearly understood.

2.2 Defining the term

The focus of this research is teacher development, which is my preferred term for what is also frequently referred to as professional development. The terms are used interchangeably in this research especially in relation to considerations of other authors use and of writing style, but it is recognised that the term teacher development rather than professional development avoids association with the contested concept of teacher professionalism. Teacher development is not well defined in the literature. As Evans (2002) remarks:

Definitions of teacher development are almost entirely absent from the literature: even those who are generally considered leading writers in the field do not define precisely what they mean by the term (p.3).

The situation is further complicated by the fact that a range of terms are used to cover similar concepts and similar terms are used to describe quite different concepts. In the opinion of Evans (2002) Day's (1999) definition of professional development could just as easily be termed teacher development. Craft (2000) suggests that what has been referred to as in-service education and training (INSET) is now more commonly referred to as continuing professional development (CPD). She observes that the terms are often used loosely and interchangeably, covering a broad range of activities designed to contribute to the learning of teachers after they have completed their initial training. She notes that INSET is sometimes used to cover external courses and/or those organised by the school and that it is also used in a wider sense. The terms CPD and professional development are sometimes used to cover all forms of learning undertaken by qualified teachers, or in a narrower way to refer to professional courses, or to describe moving teachers forward in relation to their skills and knowledge.

Garret and Bowles (1997) comments that the various terms associated with what they refer to as CPD: staff development, in-service training, and professional development have been used interchangeably 'often reflecting the terminology associated with various funding mechanisms' (p. 27).

The main area of clarification would seem to centre around the distinctions between INSET and on the one hand and professional development, CPD and teacher development on the other. INSET is widely used to refer to the whole range of planned activities that occur in and outside the school primarily for the purpose of developing the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and performance of the school's professional staff (Oldroyd and Hall, 1999). Oldroyd and Hall (1999) see professional development as a broader concept implying improved capacity for control over working conditions, enhanced professional status and career advancement. Craft (2000) identifies a trend towards a broader view of professional development that includes a greater emphasis on what goes on before and after training events in relation to needs identification and planning, and follow-up and evaluation.

In attempting to gain a clearer understanding of what is involved in teacher development it is useful to draw together Evans' (2002) findings from analysis of the views of some of the leading figures in the field. She concludes that common themes would seem to be that it is to do with the acquisition and development of: knowledge and instructional skills, and beliefs, ideas, theories and feelings. It also has a role in career enhancement, working with colleagues, and professionalism. However all views do not include all these aspects and some include aspects that are not included here.

According to Evans, (2002) promoting a shared understanding of the concept of teacher development through research requires clarity of concept and definition in order to reduce threats to validity, to help establish parameters of the field of

study and to identify the teacher development process. A view which fits well with the definition of teacher development informing the theoretical framework of this research is Day's (1999) explanation of professional development:

Professional development consist of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives (p.4).

Day (1999) includes the opportunities for development as well as the process in his definition. Unlike others, he includes planned and unplanned experiences, commenting that, in pursuing the goals of their work, informal leaning for teachers is of far greater significance than formal learning. The GTC also recognise formal and informal opportunities for what they refer to as professional learning, which is seen as deepening and revitalising teachers' skills, abilities and knowledge (GTC, 2004b). This term has the benefit of linking teacher development with the concept of professional learning communities which related to school level characteristics which are supportive of the learning of community members and are discussed later in Section 2.8.

The wide ranging nature of the outcomes of professional development in Day's (1999) view is also of importance. Evans' (2002) concept of teacher development includes that it impacts on professionalism, related to knowledge, skills and procedures used in teachers' work, and professionalism, related to status. It is seen as bringing about beneficial changes, including learning, affecting intellectual and motivational attitudes and teachers' functions; what they do and how they do it.

Blandford (2000) points out that the approach a school takes to teacher development will be dependent on its views of its employees. Similarly in the literature teacher development is presented in different ways according to the perspective and purposes of researchers and commentators. In clarifying what he means by professional development, Guskey (2000) identifies three defining characteristics; that it is intentional, ongoing and systemic. He acknowledges that this excludes many processes and activities that are often labelled as professional development, suggesting a wider concept than his own definition. His purpose in this instance is to examine the evaluation of professional development and his definition presumably draws boundaries around those aspects that can usefully be subjected to the evaluation process he presents. A broader view is presented by Earley and Bubb (2004) who consider it to be all the formal and informal learning that enables teachers to improve their practice. An even broader definition of teacher development is used by Head and Taylor (1997) as: 'the process of becoming the best kind of teacher that I personally can be' (p.1).

I share this broad view of teacher development defining it for myself as the process whereby teachers enhance their professional knowledge, skills, understanding, attitudes, values and theories for the purpose of performing better their roles and responsibilities, and to enhance their careers.

The effect of different perspectives on the view of teacher development presented is recognised by Higgins and Leat (1999). In striving to provide better support for teachers in their role as university based teacher trainers, they identify three perspectives relating to current models of teacher development. The three perspectives are; personal (for the authors this relates to their role as university based providers of teacher training), governmental and school and 'each perspective tends to generate a particular or partial view of professional development' (p.304). The authors acknowledge their bias in that they view the current climate as neglecting individual needs, but that other perspectives have strong claims either through 'legitimacy of power' or the 'democratic claims of accountability'. It is in an effort to give greater prominence to the perspective of early career teachers that this research has been undertaken.

Investigating different definitions of teacher development helps to clarify what exactly is being researched, and recognition of varied perspectives raises awareness of the preoccupations of researchers and commentators, schools and governments as well as teachers themselves. Further clarity and understanding of teacher development is gained by posing various questions relating to its purpose, the process and the context in which it occurs. Higgins and Leat (1999) question what develops, how development happens, why development occurs

and where that development occurs. To these questions they add the crucial notion of the locus of control of the development. Garret and Bowles (1997) question who the development is for, who identifies the need and the time scale involved. Craft (2000) raises the issues of whose needs are being met, who is involved in the process and the intended level of impact.

2.3 The school perspective on teacher development

Higgins and Leat (1999) identify the school and government perspectives as separate views, but I would suggest that in practice, through policy and other pressures, the governmental perspective can influence that of the school, as can the considerable body of literature on school improvement. There is widespread recognition in the literature that school improvement is dependent to a large degree upon teacher development. The ‘intelligent school’ is seen by MacGilchrist *et al.* (1997) as willing to invest resources in teacher development, ‘because it understands the significance of contributing to a climate that values the importance of continual learning’ (p.54).

There is a view that school and teacher development are mutually dependent (Bubb, 2004, Hargreaves, 1994) and that:

A teacher cannot improve his or her performance consistently if the organisation is in poor health, and the total functioning of the school rests on the sum of the individual teachers’ contributions (Bell, 1991, p. 4).

This perspective looks to the school as the context for and promoter of teacher development and focuses on such subjects as the role of senior managers in relation to teacher development (Evans, 1998, Wood and Anderson, 2003, Bubb and Earley, 2003). This perspective may also highlight the school culture as a crucial factor in teacher development (Fullan, 1995) and promote the notion of learning communities as an ideal context for professional growth (Blandford, 2001, Good and Weaver, 2003) where interaction and collaboration can be a vehicle for teacher development (Day, 1999).

Meeting the needs of the individual and the organisation is an abiding problem in managing professional development, attempting to provide for the needs of individuals, which are subject to personal motivation and priorities, within the organisation, which inevitably views its own needs as superior and controls resources (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998, Law and Glover, 2000). There is the view that the professional development needs of teachers have now taken second place to the needs of the school in a system that is subject to political manipulation (Gaunt, 1997) and where a strong Government and research focus on school improvement, can cause the neglect of teachers' development needs in the pursuit of organisational needs (Edmonds and Lee, 2002). It is perhaps not surprising that a perspective which has improvement of pupils' learning at its core may tend to regard teacher development only as a means to that end. But schools that have been successful in implementing improvements are found to be those that attend to 'staff development' 'since it is unlikely that developments will occur without developments in teachers' practice' (Hopkins and Harris, 1997 p.150).

So not only might teachers' needs be less of a priority than those of the school, but where teacher development is conceived of only as relating directly to classroom practice it could be seen as too narrow a perspective. Teachers are highly motivated to undertake professional development which has a strong focus on teaching and learning, but teachers have other developmental needs too (Day, 1997). Day (2000) identifies that policies and studies of school effectiveness and improvement are dominated by issues related to training and the ability and skill of teachers to 'deliver' results. The governmental perspective of teacher development has been the focus of much debate and criticism.

2.4 Education policy and teacher development

Attitudes towards teacher development relate closely to the view taken of teachers and their role in relation to the perceived goals of the education system. Hodgkinson (1997) recognizes technical rationality in education, a situation where teachers are viewed as artisans to be controlled rather than as professionals to be empowered. Political intervention in education since 1989 has been based on the assumption that improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and the outcomes of schooling could be brought about by legislation with curriculum and procedures for teachers to follow being centrally dictated (Darling-Hammond, 1994, Wood, 2004), with teachers as the users of knowledge developed by outside experts (Wideen *et al.*, 1996) and the inspection process and reports focussing on effective practice (Wood, 2004). Goodson (2000) questions whether teachers are being turned from intellectual workers, in control of their

own pedagogy and curriculum, into technicians delivering the prescriptions of others. Dadds (1997) criticises a 'delivery' model of educational reform along with an 'empty vessel' model of teacher development, where development takes the form of training for implementation and problems are seen as relating to failure of implementation rather than being problems of practice (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992). Hodgkinson's (1997) observations match my own and colleagues' perceptions that 'good' teachers are those who strive uncritically in contexts determined by others to achieve targets determined by others in ways increasingly prescribed by others.

Issues of teacher development associated with implementing initiatives to improve education are considered to be far more complex than the provision of appropriate training. Besides failing to address the school culture and its effect on teacher development, with its potential for influencing both the capacity and the willingness of the school staff to engage fully with the changes expected of them (Presage and Williams, 1999), issues are seen to be associated with the mandated nature of the changes required (Urquhart, 2002). Teachers may be required to alter deeply rooted self-defining attitudes, values and beliefs (Nias, 1989, Tatto, 1999). Commitment and morale issues are also seen as having been neglected (Dadds, 2001) and morale has been undermined by sustained political criticism of teachers (Hancock, 2001). The tone of official documents such as the consultation document on the induction of new teachers (DfEE, 1998) which appears to focus mainly on ensuring the removal of the weak rather than considering detailed strategies for how they might be supported, adds to this effect (Prestage and Williams, 1999). Research by Helsby and McCulloch

(1996) concludes that teachers' professional confidence was weakened with the introduction of the National Curriculum, their morale was lowered, and they were left uncertain as to their ability to cope and their right to take major decisions about the curriculum. A majority of over two thousand secondary teachers surveyed felt they could not keep up with the demands made of them and half of them felt that their personal development needs had not been met .

Imposed change presents few opportunities for teachers to engage with the reform agenda meaning that they have no intrinsic stake in making it a success and may not develop a deep understanding of the underlying principles (Garret and Bowles, 1997, Riley, 2003, Poulson and Avramidis, 2003) and may even resist the change (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992) and 'adopt, adapt and subvert new skills and techniques according to their existing practice, and their existing conceptualisations of teaching and learning' (Higgins and Leat, 1999 p. 313).

There are nevertheless signs of optimism in relation to recent changes and innovations supporting teacher development. Teachers reported undertaking more professional development activities in the than in the previous year in the 2005 'GTC Survey of Teachers' (Lewis *et al.*, 2005). The introduction of induction arrangements for NQTs, have generally been appreciated by teachers (Ofsted, 2001) and seen by heads and induction tutors as helping NQTs to be more effective teachers (Smethem and Adey, 2005). But while the assessment and monitoring procedures can provide teachers with reassurance that they are doing well and highlight areas to be addressed, the same procedures can also be seen to be threatening (Earley and Bubb, 2004). While there is general

agreement that the quality of provision has improved since 1999 (Bleach and Rhodes, 2004), there is evidence of uneven provision (Lewis and Varley, 2000, Totterdel *et al.*, 2002). While it has been seen as a successful in providing a bridge between teachers' initial training and their first teaching post (Ofsted, 2001) and, where the whole induction support programme is in place, it has improved continuity and progression into further professional development in early career (Totterdell *et al.*, 2002, Smethem and Adey, 2005), there remain issues to be resolved. The end of year review was found to be mostly poor or in need of significant improvement in relation to informing future professional development objectives (Ofsted, 2003). The 10 per cent non-contact time provided is generally used on routine tasks rather than professional development and a 'broader view of professional education rather than training' (Smethem and Adey, 2005, p.199). is required for successful induction.

As mentioned in Section 1.3, the Early Professional Development programme, a pilot programme of special provision for professional development of teachers in the second and third years of their career, lasted from September 2001 to July 2004. It was seen as helping to fulfil the long recognised professional development needs of these teachers (Bubb, 2004). The programme was reported as having very positive effects including improved practice and that teachers were more effective members of the school community, and had clearer ideas of their preferred career path (Moor *et al.*, 2005). Unfortunately the scheme was discontinued and while there are lessons to be learned from the scheme concerning teacher autonomy, and support from mentors schools and LEAs that can be applied elsewhere, it is considered that the scheme itself

offered something unique in relation to teachers feeling valued and empowered (Moor *et al.*, 2005). Another scheme, Best Practice Research Scholarship, designed and found to support teachers' professional development (Campbell and Jacques, 2003), has also been discontinued.

Appraisal was introduced with one of its official purposes as assisting teachers in their professional development and career planning (Bartlett, 2000), and performance management, as it is now called, has been found to have made clearer teachers' entitlement to a range of professional development activities (Ofsted, 2002a). The performance review is seen as a mechanism for reconciling individual and school development priorities and for allowing individuals to view their own development in relation and as a contribution to, school development and improvement (Earley and Bubb, 2004, Garret and Bowles, 1997). Storey (2001) recognises that the performance review has the potential to supply both support and challenge for professional development. However the Ofsted report on performance management of teachers (Ofsted, 2002a) found that, in almost half of the schools visited, objectives related to teachers' professional development were concerned with activities and tasks and did not detail strategies and support requirements. There is the view that linking appraisal to performance related pay and target setting has divested it 'of all possibility to offer individual professional development' (Gold, 1998 p.61), since teachers may be inhibited from talking freely about their work by concerns to safeguard their jobs and pay.

Similarly the development of competencies and standards associated with various stages of teachers' careers, and the development of career entry profiles

are considered to provide a rational approach to planned professional development from novice to expert by helping teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses (Shelton Mayes, 2001). Ingvarson (1998) describes an Australian project as not only providing a focus for teacher development based on the attainment of high standards, but also of promoting teacher ownership of in-service education, as teachers were involved in developing the standards. On the other hand where they have been used elsewhere, they have been found to justify development activities undertaken rather than to scaffold them (Kearns, 2001), and did not match teachers' experiences or help them make sense of their learning (Drever and Cope, 1999), and they were task orientated leaving no space for independent thinking about the nature of the job (Ryan, 1998). James *et al.* (2005) consider that although the inclusion of professional attributes has been an improvement in the new standards document for qualified teacher status (TTA, 2003), the emphasis is still largely on 'what the teacher can do, rather than what the teacher is and can become' (James *et al.*, 2005 p.1).

Riley (2003) was encouraged by the attitudes of teachers attending workshop sessions. While they felt that elements of the 'shame and blame' culture still existed and they experienced a restrictive and overtly competitive climate, discouraging of co-operation, they were also keen to talk about what motivated them and enabled them to develop their professional skills. Cause for optimism was also found by Helsby (2000) in exploring how recent changes in their work had impacted on secondary teachers' sense of professionalism. She concluded that control of pedagogy lies at the heart of teacher professionalism rather than control of curriculum content. This finding however provides a concern for the

professionalism of primary teachers in relation to the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

The 'conventional wisdom' prevalent at the time of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy in 1998 was to blame national economic failure on under-performing schools and especially inadequately skilled and poorly managed teachers (Graham, 1999). It was deemed that pedagogical decisions could no longer be left to teachers (Dadds, 2001) and, sweeping away the fundamental principle of the original National Curriculum that stipulated what had to be taught, but not how, the National Literacy Strategy describes the means of teaching literacy term by term throughout the primary school. To the Government direction of what students learn, what they are expected to achieve and what standards apply (Day, 1999) was added the way it must be taught. As well as introducing the danger that teachers would follow the format rather than the principles of the model of teaching presented in the strategy (Fisher, 2000), this is seen as questioning teachers' professional judgements (Wood, 2004), as representing a significant weakening of teachers' professional autonomy (McGuinn, 1998) and sending a message to teachers that they should know their place (Urquhart, 2002).

Government dictated changes in education are seen as not only ignoring basic principles of implementing change, but also as a failure to appreciate teachers' understanding of teaching and insights into the way children learn as a valid form of professional knowledge (Hancock, 2001). Such attitudes are seen not only to misunderstand teachers as people and their training needs, but to

diminish teacher professionalism (Hodkinson, 1997). My own view from experience as a practitioner and a head is that teachers have been disorientated in relation to their professional development and have felt deskilled as a result of changes introduced since the Education Reform Act. Along with comments on the ‘proletarianisation’ of teaching and diminished professionalism in the literature this prompts a brief examination of the concept of professionalism.

2.5 Professionalism in teaching today

The concept of professionalism, especially in relation to teachers, has been debated for many years. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) refer to a lack of consensus relating to the meaning of professionalism. There seems little doubt that whatever it means to be a professional has changed in recent years with the debate focussing on whether the ongoing restructuring of education is enhancing or diminishing prospects for teacher professionalism (Law and Glover, 2000), resulting in deprofessionalisation or reprofessionalisation (Day, 2000) of teachers.

Trushell (1999) comments that accountability in relation to the ‘old professionalism’ is characterised as isolated, with virtually unaccountable professionals (accountability to peers was tantamount to total absence of real accountability) making curricular and pedagogical decisions alone without reference to the outside world. The Green Paper (1998) is seen by him as calling for teachers to accept accountability of a managerial and political nature.

It is important in examining professionalism to recognise that those writing about a new professionalism usually do so ‘in the belief that this is how the teaching profession ought to, or, indeed, has begun to, develop’ (Evans, 2001, p. 20).

The DfEE (1998) takes the perspective of what teacher professionalism ought to be in defining professionalism as:

- having high expectations;
- accepting accountability;
- taking responsibility for improving skills and subject knowledge;
- basing decision making on evidence of what works in schools in this country and internationally;
- working co-operatively as members of a team and with outside interests;
- anticipating change and promoting innovation.

This definition is criticised by Rasool (1998) as addressing only procedural and functional managerial aspects and neglecting affective skills, ethical awareness and substantive pedagogical knowledge needed to work with pupils including understanding teaching and learning processes and knowledge of culture and the social world, required to understand ‘the diversity that constitutes classrooms and schools’ (p.86).

Questioning the notion of a new professionalism, Evans (2001) advocates that any notion of professionalism must recognise that individual teachers have their own ‘professionalism orientation’. She embraces Hoyle’s (1975) concept of professionalism as distinct from professionalism (Evans, 1998); the former

referring to the knowledge, skills and procedures which teachers use in their work and the latter to status related elements of the job. Hoyle (1975) formulated two models of teacher professionalism; 'restricted' and 'extended'. The restricted professional is essentially reliant on intuition and guided by a narrow, classroom-based perspective which values that which is related to day-to-day practicalities of teaching. The 'extended' professional has a much wider vision of education, valuing theory underpinning pedagogy and adopting an intellectual and rationally-based approach to teaching. Evans (2001) considers that these two models constitute a continuum along which teachers can be located and that her research and that of others showed that teachers who could be included in the description of extended professionals were more of a marginalized group than a widespread phenomenon in the teaching profession. She draws on the research of others to question the existence of a homogenous professionalism.

Hargreaves and Fullan (1998), rather than accepting an imposed view of professionalism, suggest one that redefines teachers' role in initiating and shaping policy and practice. This assertion of professional knowledge and skills would enhance professional status by shifting the balance of power in decision making. Day (1999) suggests that teachers are far from passive victims of reform and are actively:

re-asserting their autonomy alongside the new accountabilities...actively interpreting the restructuring of their work in accordance with their own

professional judgements...in order to maintain their professional or substantive selves (p.11)

Although teachers' autonomy has been restricted he believes there is still room to manoeuvre and teachers need to come to terms with the situation and take a proactive role. He uses the work of Sachs (1997) in Australia to illustrate how a new set of relationships allows teachers to construct a new model of professionalism. However the national initiatives, which her research identifies as so influential in allowing the development of a new professionalism, were premised on the three core principles of learning, participation and collaboration. It is difficult to envisage that even the most proactive of professionals could influence the initiation of such a project in the current climate in England.

McCulloch (2000) and Whitty (2006) both comment on the increased number of classroom assistants employed in recent years and their changing role, reflected in the Higher Level Teaching Assistant training and assessment programme. McCulloch (2000) focuses on the professional relationship between the teacher, as the multi-skilled core worker, and the less skilled assistant. Whitty (2006), noting the similarity between some of the standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistant and those for teachers, places this development alongside the much broader implications of the 'Children's Agenda' legislation based on the Every Child Matters, Green Paper (DfES 2003), designed to ensure multi-agency working in the interests of children. He suggests that, rather than adopting defensive and exclusory positions associated with traditional models of professionalism, teachers should adopt a more progressive strategy more

appropriate to the times and political projects. Instead of pursuing autonomy for its own sake, Whitty recommends to teachers a democratic professionalism, with an emphasis on collaborating with pupils and with other staff. He suggests that rather than focussing on instruction teachers should be concerned to demystify their professional work and to build alliances within school, with parents and with the wider community. It is interesting to consider how far any examples of a new professionalism are discernable in reports in the literature or whether there is more of a 'compliance culture' (Graham, 1999).

A compliance culture is certainly apparent in anecdotal evidence reported by Dadds, (1997) of teachers expressing the opinion that they should just 'give them what they want', of bowing to the experts, and of teachers attending courses with the hope of finding someone else's Holy Grail as the ultimate answer to the complexities and dilemmas of their work. Similarly, Ovens' (1999) research based on the personal professional development of six primary teachers attending a course to develop science teaching concluded that the destruction of professional trust that followed educational reforms 'causes pretence at every level'. So that teachers pretend, for example, to know the contexts of assessment, appraisal and inspection. This culminates in 'surrender' of independence of thought and action, and, lack of confidence in their own judgement causes the need for teachers to fall back on the 'safety of compliance' and to ask for ever more detailed direction.

A more positive situation is perceived in the later work of Riley (2003). Based on her research to understand teachers' views of the change agenda she was able

to divide the twenty teachers she worked with into two distinct groups; 'skylarks' and 'glow-worms'. These two groups bear some resemblance to Hoyle's (1975) restricted and extended professionals. But Riley's (2003) talk of exercising autonomy by using 'the tools of liberation', and innovations and ideas emerging in 'the space between the cracks', suggests that these enterprises are not easily achieved. Similarly Day's (2000) research found that fourteen part-time Master's students, teachers from primary and secondary schools, were mostly confident in their abilities to develop and undertake changes within or despite difficult cultural and reform contexts.

Helsby's (2000) thirty month study of professional cultures of secondary school teachers, already mentioned, found that immediately after the initial implementation of the National Curriculum only a few teachers were able to take a proactive approach seeing the changes as a framework for their professional development. After the Dearing review and as teachers became more familiar with curriculum requirements and more confident in manipulating them, an increasing number took a more positive view. However this situation was associated with control over pedagogy and the presence of factors such as adequate time for planning and reflection and a degree of collaboration or collegiality as well as professional confidence. Helsby (2000) concludes that her evidence suggests that for most teachers these factors are not likely to be present.

2.6 Perspectives on teachers, teaching and teacher development

Many of those concerned with the development of teachers are critical of the current context for its limited view of teaching. While some may recommend a narrow focus directed at mastery of discrete skills and procedures for teachers to apply in the classroom, others see the development of classroom practice as a complex and holistic process (Martin, 2004). Those who believe that the role of teachers: ‘regularly calls for individualization, improvisation, creativity and emotional sensitivity’ (Berliner, 2004, p.329) are likely to reject a technical rationality that prescribes certain teaching styles as inherently superior (Hodkinson, 1997). A view of teaching as largely a technical enterprise, with teachers applying pedagogical techniques and a curriculum devised by others, over which they have little control (Poulson and Avramidis, 2003) is contrasted by those who think that:

Teachers don’t merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define it and reinvent it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get (Hargreaves, 1992, p. ix).

The view taken of teachers can influence, not only their opportunities for professional development, but also opportunities to address children’s learning needs according to Tatto (1999) who found that where teachers are seen as

mostly externally regulated few opportunities are available for them to reflect on or align their practice to student learning needs.

There is also the view that not only does recent reform fail to take account of teaching as a 'complex process', but that it also fails to take account of what is required of teachers in engaging in change and that the crux of teacher development is located in their personal and professional lives and contexts in which they work (Day, 1999, Tatto, 1999).

The focus on teachers as people and professionals recognises that the way teachers teach is not just related to skills and knowledge they may or may not possess, but is also rooted in their backgrounds and biographies (Hargreaves, 1992, Smith, 2005). Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) identify three approaches to training and developing teachers:

- teacher development as knowledge and skills development (so that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective teaching);
- teacher development as self-understanding (associated with personal qualities, commitment and self understanding in order to become a sensitive and flexible teacher);
- teacher development as ecological change (creating a work environment that is supportive of continuing professional learning).

These three approaches provide a useful framework for examining conceptions of teacher development and some of the teacher development experiences most widely available to teachers.

2.7 Teacher development as knowledge and skills development

It is well recognised that teachers who are well informed in relation to subject knowledge and classroom management techniques are well placed to improve pupils' learning experiences (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, Day, 1999, Craft, 2000, Banks and Shelton Mayes, 2001). Skills- and knowledge-based forms of teacher development, such as courses, workshops and conferences constitute the 'training', that for many teachers and schools is synonymous with professional development (Guskey, 2000, Goodall *et al.*, 2005). Blandford (2000) uses the term 'professional training' and recognises it as emphasising practical information and skills, and usually managed and delivered by LEAs, external consultants or HEI trainers. It sometimes leads to academic awards or accreditation towards national standards. The practical aspects of such training are seen as an advantage of this approach as they are well understood by teachers and of use in classrooms. They are seen as easily packaged with a clear focus and easily organised (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992) and cost-efficient in sharing ideas and information with large groups (Guskey, 2000). These features are of benefit when concerns are to address identified gaps in practice or management identified by Ofsted, monitoring or appraisal, or to introduce new developments or responsibilities (Garret and Bowles, 1997). Research indicates that teachers judge courses to promote their professional learning when they can see how the

training can be used and it is appropriate for their needs (McMahon, 1999, Goodall *et al.*, 2005). Other strengths of the course-led model of teacher development are that it provides stimulating contact with people perceived to be experts in the field (McCarney, 2004) and with colleagues from a range of backgrounds, enabling professional dialogue and discourse, giving rise to new perspectives and exchange of ideas between institutions (Craft, 2000, Edmonds and Lee, 2002, McCarney, 2004). These forms of teacher development may also be associated with follow-up activities which can increase the chances of the newly acquired skills being used in the classroom (Blandford, 2000, Guskey, 2000, Hopkins, 2001).

Conversely where there is no appropriate follow-up there is often little impact on practice or student learning (Garret and Bowles, 1997, Craft, 2000, Harris *et al.* 2001, Joyce and Showers, 2002). Good and Weaver (2003) suggest that short single session courses and workshops are no longer seen as an effective method for developing teachers. Training frequently over emphasises particular skills with an associated neglect of other supportive factors such as appropriate personal skills that could enable teachers to manage themselves the better to utilise new knowledge. Management skills to create a supportive school culture may also be neglected (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992). Craft (2000) identifies weaknesses of the traditional course-led model as being dominated by off-site activities, frequently undertaken during the school day, focused on the individual rather than the group and school, and disruptive to teaching commitments. Participants may also see ‘theorists’ who deliver the course as removed from their sphere of practice and the theory presented may be too generalised and

remote from teachers' practical situations (Korthagen, 2001). Training offers few opportunities for choice or individualisation so is unlikely to meet participants' needs equally well (Guskey, 2000). Limited resources are seen to be directed towards the trainer rather than the teacher who is the focus for development (Garret and Bowles, 1997).

Despite research findings that teachers have a reasonably varied professional development provision, (Day, 2000) and that there is a growing awareness of the value of a wider range of professional development activities than courses, they have remained until recently the main vehicle for professional development (Ofsted, 2002b) and the only INSET experienced by a majority of teachers (Blandford, 2000, McMahon, 1999). But this situation may be changing as recent research for the NFER (Sturman *et al.*, 2005) reports teachers' most frequent experience of professional development as collaborative learning with other colleagues in the same school. The compulsory and top-down nature of much training for recent innovation, which was the focus of many courses, was subject to the problems of mandated change already discussed. It is Hoban's (2002) view that teachers are not empowered by conventional INSET and where it is a large part of what teachers experience they are likely to become conditioned to expect information delivered to them as passive learners. The need for teachers' participation in their professional development is reinforced in the findings from the evaluation by NFER of the Early Professional Development programme (Moor *et al.*, 2005) that the greater their involvement in selecting their development programme the more likely teachers were to feel

that their professional development needs had been met and the greater the reported impact on teaching practice and professional attitudes.

One of the most fundamental criticisms of skills- and knowledge-based forms of teacher development is concerned with the 'excessive reliance on supposedly incontrovertible findings of research in order to justify the teaching methods they promote' (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, p. 4). Since teachers and classrooms are so variable and constantly changing, the things that are known about them are tentative and provisional and likely to change as understanding and the context change.

Muijs and Reynolds (2001) recommend providing teachers with access to knowledge of effective teaching so that they do not need to invent 'good practice' for themselves. But a contrasting view is provided by Creisen and Knight (2002). They observe that there is often an over emphasis on finding courses as the solution to every development need when the best ideas come from within the organisation, and they talk of experiencing:

the excitement of discovery and the motivation of being self-learners – rather than just copying the ideas presented by a third party through the over-use of a million PowerPoint slides (p.5).

Hoban (2002) too criticises forms of professional development that do not empower teachers to generate their own knowledge and to 'think outside the square they teach in' (p. 163). Garret and Bowles (1997) question the

underpinning rationale of 'the right way' to do things with its attendant danger of disregarding teachers' experience and expertise.

O'Sullivan and West-Burnham (1998) reflect on the extent of the impact on classroom practice, and leadership and management effectiveness as a result of the time, energy and money that has been invested in teachers attending courses and conferences. They comment that courses and conferences may serve a valid purpose in raising awareness, stimulating interest and motivating, but that with concerns about effective use of resources and possible disruption to schools and classrooms, then the validity and integrity of such experiences has to be questioned. James *et al.* (2005) comment that concentrating on teaching skills and methods can produce teachers who can manage a class and instruct pupils, but that professional teachers are aware of a wider social setting, are flexible and able to anticipate and respond to change and even to challenge what is required of them when necessary. Hargreaves and Fullan, (1992) conclude that such teacher development is provided in a context of technocratic and bureaucratic control where the rhetoric of bottom-up development is in reality top-down implementation that fails to take account of how appropriate sponsored skills and knowledge are for the teacher as a person, for their purposes and for the classroom setting. They go on to suggest that more humanistic and critical forms of, and understanding of teacher development, that take account of teachers as people and address characteristics of the system are likely to be more successful despite having problems as well as virtues.

2.8 Teacher development as self-understanding

The term teacher development as self-understanding is used to cover both the development that can follow from teachers' greater understanding of themselves as people and as practitioners, and also to examine a view of teacher development that understands teachers to be people as well as practitioners (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992). Those who embrace a view of teacher development as self-understanding consider that teacher development involves more than changing behaviour since empirical research 'provides ample evidence' that behaviour and beliefs are closely bound together (Tatto, 1999). There are different views as to the nature of this relationship, with some commentators regarding self-understanding in the form of reflection on personal and practical knowledge of teaching coming before any meaningful changes in teaching behaviour (Day, 1999) and those who consider that changes in behaviour usually precede changes in belief (Fullan, 1992). Whichever is the case the argument is that it is misguided to address changes in behaviour without considering antecedent or subsequent beliefs and understanding that those beliefs may be affected by teachers' life histories as well as professional experiences (Smith, 2005).

The personal development that underpins teacher development has been seen to involve three dimensions (Nias, 1989, Leithwood, 1992):

- development as a person, where personal maturity may affect professional development;

- life-cycle, where energy and commitment associated with age may affect attitude to change;
- experience of teaching career with its associated positive and negative influences on attitudes to further development.

There has been much work on identifying various stages in teachers' careers and their associated characteristics and professional development implications such as Huberman (1995), Fessler (1995) and Sikes (1985). Huberman (1995) explains that the study of teachers' careers is based on the assumption that there are commonalities in how teachers' professional lives progress and that particular types of development may be appropriate to parts of the sequence. He suggests that if teachers' efforts to revise instructional practices are especially strong during the first six to eight years of practice then this can be acted upon in teacher development planning. Similarly Corkindale and Trorey (2002) suggest 'Segmentation' of the workforce into distinct groups, often based on age or responsibility. Identifying common characteristics of the segment allows for the provision of professional development opportunities matched to perceived needs. The notion of segmentation is somewhat called into question by research into adult learning that stresses personal approaches to learning, such as Honey and Mumford (2001) and the fact that teachers may belong to more than one group. Good and Weaver (2003) found that teachers in their first year of teaching preferred, what they refer to as, 'take and make' methods of professional development presentation, but so did elementary and early years teachers in general. Keltchermans (1994) identifies critical incidents and people that, in retrospect, were seen to have an influence on developmental outcome.

There is the opinion that the challenges facing teachers at the beginning of their career should not be underestimated (Jones and Stammers, 1997), since they are considered such that initial concerns have been seen to be associated with 'survival' (Nias, 1989, Fessler, 1995) and development needs centre on being supported to understand the complexities of interactions that occur in the classroom (Jones and Stammers, 1997). Huberman (1992) identifies the themes of the early years of career as being concerned with discovery as well as survival and teachers' experiences ranging from easy to painful beginnings. Olson and Osborne (1991) suggest that novice teachers must develop a role identity that may be at odds with their previous beliefs and that their initial concerns may be more associated with their sense of self than their tasks or their pupils. Blandford (2000) considers early career teachers to have broader concerns and, that with the help of management, they seek to develop particular abilities, associated with understanding and responding to the talents and learning needs of their pupils and evaluating, assessing and reporting on progress. They are keen to provide learning for the whole child including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Their own professional knowledge, skills, strategies, techniques, beliefs, values and personal characteristics are a development focus, as are their working relationships with others in the school community and fulfilling their responsibilities. Perhaps because of the considerable challenges they face, teachers in the first three to five years of career are perceived as more open to professional development than more established colleagues (Wood and Anderson, 2003).

The concept of expertise is used by Berliner (2001) to identify teachers at stages of professional development from novice to expert. Luntley (2002) believes that the distinctive aspect of expertise is that it requires not only knowledge that can be transmitted through books and lectures, but also experiential knowledge. Although there are some insights into the differences between novice and expert little is known about how teachers progress from one to the other (Evans, 2000, Berliner, 2001).

Teachers in their first five years are likely to be in the first three stages of the journey from novice to expert (Berliner, 2001) and, although space does not allow for a detailed examination, it is interesting to briefly consider each stage for its implications for teacher development. Teachers in their first year of career are likely to be novices. This stage is a time of learning facts and features of the situation and for real world experience rather than verbal information. Teachers are likely to conform to rules and follow procedures they have been told. In second or third year of career teachers are seen as likely to be advanced beginners. At this stage teachers are beginning to let the context guide their behaviour and to know when to break the rules. Teachers are beginning to recognise similarities across contexts and are building episodic knowledge. At both these stages teachers are not actively determining what is happening through their personal action. With sufficient motivation, teachers in their third and fourth year and beyond may have reached the stage of competent performers. At this stage they are more personally in control, following their own plans and responding only to the information they choose to and they tend to feel more responsible and less detached from what happens and feel more emotional about

successes and failures. At this stage teachers still lack fast, fluid and flexible behaviour.

As schemes to support teachers early in their careers become more widespread the nature of the challenges teachers face is likely to change. Earley and Bubb (2004) state that the induction entitlement for NQTs should protect them 'against the worst of experiences that others have encountered during their first year' (p. 129), and there is some evidence of such schemes succeeding in this. A small scale study by Smethem and Adey (2005) compared secondary teachers who had experienced statutory induction support with those who had not. Compared with those who had not experienced induction, those teachers who had, had been enabled to engage in more reflection and to adopt new teaching strategies from observing colleagues which gave them a greater sense of competence. This group also had greater opportunities for feedback about their performance resulting in their experiencing feelings of being valued. However both groups were faced initially with a period when they were focussed on survival. This was in some contrast to the results of a study of teachers involved in a one-year internship with provision for systematic mentor support in the USA (Bullough *et al.*, 2004). There was no strong evidence that the interns went through a self-absorbed survival stage at all and from the beginning were able to focus clearly on student learning. When support provided by such schemes ceases at the end of the first year of teaching teachers may feel 'a little at sea' (Bubb, 2004, p. 9) in the following years, which reinforces the need for a comprehensive approach to supporting professional development.

Reflective practice, undertaken for the purpose of understanding and improving one's practice (Bleach, 2000), is perhaps the most obvious strategy for bringing about self-knowledge. Maynard and Furlong (1995) draw attention to the finding that reflection is frequently prompted by the need to solve problems, but Jones and Stammers (1997) consider that the nature of their work often precludes novice teachers from reflecting on a problem before attempting to solve it. There is also the opinion that there is little impetus for teachers to question their assumptions (Day *et al.* 1998) and without the assistance of others it is unlikely that dissonance or challenge will be created to stimulate the search for alternatives (Leithwood, 1992). Glazer *et al.* (2004) state that in trying to become more reflective on and in their practice, teachers working alone are less likely to be successful than those working with colleagues. Whether or not teachers are able to engage in some sort of reflection, there is a view that reflection is an elusive concept (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998) and more complex than it is sometimes presented. Louden (1992) suggests that besides its role in problem solving, it may also be concerned with 'what works', with self-understanding or with questioning critically the context and purpose of one's work. Reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983) is criticised as likely to draw on teachers' existing frameworks to solve problems rather than to define them (Day, 1999). Drever and Cope (1999) warn that reflection related to competencies operates at a technical level when what is required is a higher level of questioning of assumptions and the ideology underlying practice. The learning conversations suggested by the GTC (GTC 2004c), based on experience, where reflection is encouraged so that participants are enabled to generate their own solutions to professional challenges may be regarded by Korthagen and Vasalos

(2005) as only one of a range of different models that are appropriate for different levels of reflection. While they consider that a cyclical model can be useful for supporting teachers' reflection in practical situations and their behaviour, skills and beliefs in those situations, there is a need for what they term 'core reflection' where teachers address issues of 'identity' and 'mission'.

When conceived of as more than problem solving, reflection can be an effective key to professional learning capable of providing understanding of experience by giving it meaning (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998). Ovens (1999) understands it to be the most important influence on teacher development. 'Craft' influence is exerted through apprenticeship type relationships with others and associated professional learning is mostly involved with know-how. 'Authority' influences are usually distant from teachers and enacted as policy and direction, and associated professional learning includes know-how and know-that. Although these two influences may form the majority of the influences on teacher development it is the use of the teacher's own reflective and reflexive capacities to learn about and improve practice by drawing on evidence, that acts as a validating, critical or creative influence on developments that originate in craft and authority learning and adds the element of know why.

Reflection can provide the link between new learning from developmental activities and practice (Blandford, 2000), between theory and practice, especially when extended to action research (Harris *et al.*, 2001). While teachers are traditionally seen to consider theory and research as remote from their work, it could be more a case of teachers' working conditions militating against any

activity that does not contribute to their hands-on work with pupils (Hancock, 2001) and that teachers want research, in accessible language, to inform what they do (Gore and Gitlin, 2004). Goodall *et al.*, (2005) comment on the contrast between teachers' apparent ambivalence about learning informed by theory on the one hand and on the other their repeated requests for time for reflection and reflective practice and their satisfaction with theory based initiatives such as 'brain gym' and multiple intelligences. After all, as Sweeney (2003) observes, all teachers use some sort of theory to structure activities and guide decision making and Goodson's (1997) experience of 'great teachers' is that their constant reflection on and refinement of practice constitutes an on-going research of their own practice. Crucially for teacher development, research indicates that theory encountered in training may only be really learned when encountered in practice (Olson and Osborne, 1991) and then used to provide explanations rather than solutions (Drever and Cope, 1999). While beginning teachers may look to experienced teachers for right or best ways to teach, what is deemed important for their professional development is the questioning of their experiences as the basis for development of personal theories (Russell and Bullock, 2001), of finding 'their own sense of what works' (Tabberer, 2005). Bleach and Rhodes (2004) point out that the potential of reflection during the induction year should not be underestimated since teachers bring 'freshness and vitality' to their first posts which can be harnessed to develop self-awareness and self-knowledge. The process of reflection, especially during induction may well be assisted by a mentor or critical friend.

Mentoring is seen as an important aspect of induction and of teacher development in general, and, although it can take different forms in different settings, is typically seen as pairing an experienced and successful teacher with a less experienced colleague:

Regular opportunities are then provided for the discussion of goals, the sharing of ideas and strategies on effective practice, reflection on current methods, on-the-job observations and tactics for improvement (Guskey, 2000, p. 28).

The quality of mentoring for beginning teachers is considered to have a significant effect (Rodger, 2005). Blandford (2000) regards mentoring as being capable of addressing career development and interpersonal skills and as a process for passing on knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities as a method of developing teachers' professional competence. O'Sullivan and West-Burnham (1998) see it primarily as focusing on improving job performance through the setting of targets identified by analysis, reflection and diagnosis, with the mentor engaged mainly in listening, understanding and aiding reflection and concerned to recognise, reinforce and praise. Moor *et al.* (2005) found that mentor support had slightly different effects on teachers in their second year of teaching than teachers in their third year. Mentoring had a strong influence in improving teaching practice and career development for second year teachers, but had less influence on teaching practice for third year teachers, although remaining valuable for career development. Mentoring can be differentiated from coaching which can be considered to be more concerned with practice and

implied active intervention (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998) and its use of questions rather than advice (Earley and Bubb, 2004).

Mentoring and coaching are seen to be effective when they are based on reflection and underpinned by appropriate trust and respect. It is also beneficial for the relationship between the partners to be collaborative with both having similar responsibilities and a strong commitment to the enterprise, which can benefit both partners (Guskey, 2000, Gabel-Dunk and Craft, 2004, Lopez-Real and Kwan, 2005). Mentors were also found to fulfil a role in enabling the whole school to benefit from the professional development experiences of mentees (Moor *et al.* 2005). Teachers in programmes which include mentoring report very positive attitudes towards being mentored and observed by experienced colleagues (Thornton, 2003, Moor *et al.*, 2005, Smethem and Adey, 2005).

The drawbacks of mentoring are that it can be a process for passing on bad habits and mentors might not be able or willing to pass on knowledge and they may also lack the patience to do so (Blandford, 2000). On its own mentoring may limit opportunities for broader collaboration and sharing (Guskey, 2000) and because of its interventionist nature coaching may be deemed to impinge on professional autonomy (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998). The mentor may appear to have an assessing rather than assisting role so that teachers may feel threatened rather than supported (Good and Weaver, 2003).

Observation may form part of the mentoring process, but is regarded as a teacher development activity in its own right. Guskey (2000) considers that one of the best ways to learn is to observe or be observed by a colleague, with specific

feedback, which forms the subject for analysis and reflection that can lead to professional growth. It is recommended as a practical and powerful way to support practice and knowledge about teaching and learning (GTC, 2004d). The importance of observation lies in its role of providing data for reflection and coaching (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998). It is recommended that it is undertaken as part of an on-going process with a negotiated focus and not arbitrary or one-off. It must also be followed by factual and constructive feedback, preferably immediately after and in a more comprehensive form later (Muijs and Reynolds, 2001). It is about trust and support between colleagues and works best when colleagues choose to work together (GTC, 2004d). Observation provides the experience of watching a fellow professional, gaining new ideas as well as the opportunity to reflect on one's own practice and to prepare feedback (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998, Muijs and Reynolds, 2001). By watching it happen, observers can better understand complex classroom interactions and connect knowledge and practice (GTC, 2004d). One of its main advantages is that, like mentoring it can benefit both parties (Guskey, 2000, Holden, 2002). Being observed provides another's point of view of one's performance, new insights and helpful feedback. It allows for a focus on specific practices and strategies (GTC, 2004d). The process is also seen as reducing isolation with colleagues working together on shared improvement goals (Guskey, 2000) and the opportunity to engage in discussion of practice based on a common experience (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998, Muijs and Reynolds, 2001). Disadvantages are that it has negative connotations in that it is associated with Ofsted, appraisal and competence assessments (O'Sullivan and

West-Burnham, 1998). It also requires significant time commitments with co-ordination of schedules during the school day (Guskey, 2000).

The limitations of a humanistic approach to teacher development are acknowledged. Day (1997) warns against over simplistic conceptualisations of professional development as cyclical or linear since they are not based on the perspective of 'teacher-as-person', but on a managerial perspective of 'teacher-as-employee'. While Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) point out that research indicates that factors such as age, stage of career, life experiences, and gender factors affect people's responses to innovation and their motivation to improve, elsewhere they recognise that a humanistic approach to teacher development has its limitations and many studies that take this approach are not easily replicated, assisting intellectual understanding rather than providing a model for development (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992).

Other criticisms of the humanistic approach are that it can be time consuming and costly with unpredictable outcomes so system-wide benefits cannot be anticipated. Such an approach still places teachers in a position of dependency on superior insight and expertise. Additionally there is the danger that teacher development becomes separated from its context which can be a crucial factor in whether the self-understanding that has occurred is incorporated into practice (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, Garret and Bowles, 1997). Dadds (1997) states that the values, attitudes and interactive practices within the learning context can have as great an influence on teachers' learning as their own inner qualities and professional drives.

2.9 Teacher development in the context of the school

There is a view in business and industry (Armstrong and Baron, 1998, Beardwell and Holden, 1997) that:

career resilient self-starters with a high degree of self efficacy...persist with learning, even when the environment is not conducive to such activity (Martin *et al.* 2001, p.69).

In teaching too a mark of professionalism is that teachers take responsibility for their own learning (Gaunt, 1997) and there is some evidence to suggest that it is teachers who do not feel that their schools are supportive of their professional development that are more likely to fund their own CPD (Sturman *et al.*, 2005). But there is still a well recognised role for the organisation in providing resources and others to fulfil support roles. A school's resources for supporting professional development include its staff. Research shows that teachers at the same school are the first choice for teachers seeking help (Good and Weaver, 2003). The availability of time and financial resources, especially supply cover, is crucial in allowing release time for teachers to engage in developmental activities from planning together and acting as peer coaches to attending courses and visiting other schools. Poor accommodation and lack of appropriate materials can have a demotivating effect of teachers and students (Garret and Bowles, 1997) and overcrowded classes can preclude development as survival takes precedence (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992). There are criticisms that the

learning environments and experiences that teachers are recommended to provide for children are not always the model for learning environments and experiences provided for teachers (Hoban, 2002, Smith, 2005).

Features of culture and leadership are of even greater importance than the physical aspects of the learning environment. A report from the CPD regional adviser team concluded that in relation to professional development 'culture is probably the most important thing for schools to achieve' (Bracey, 2005, p. 6). Edmonds and Lee (2002) found that the headteacher's enthusiasm and philosophy towards teacher development were perceived as a key factor in generating a supportive ethos.

Sergiovanni (1998) suggests that what is needed is a view of the school as a community rather than an organisation. In organisations teacher development will tend to be rationally planned, related to formal systems of evaluation and supervision, but where community ties are established teacher development is associated with norms, values, professional socialisation, collegiality and interdependence. A professional learning community is seen as a place 'where all the people working in it see themselves as learners' (Bracey, 2005, p.6) and Wood and Anderson (2003) remind us that it is school leaders who determine that such communities are maintained. Bolam *et al.* (2005) found that the most effective professional learning communities exhibit eight key characteristics which include:

- shared values and vision
- collective responsibility for pupils' learning

- collaboration focused on learning
- reflective professional enquiry
- openness, networks and partnerships
- inclusive membership
- mutual trust, respect and support.

The focus in effective learning communities is on pupil learning and a positive association between pupil achievement and professional learning, with a high priority given to a well led and managed development culture, with leaders promoting an ethos that regards all pupils and staff as learners in their own right (Earley and Bubb, 2004). Such schools recognise that for teachers to engage in change they need not only to perceive the need to do so, but also feel secure and safe enough to be self-critical (Day, 1999).

Professional learning communities consult with all members and share decision making so that members feel empowered and a sense of ownership in planned change (Day, 1993, Evans, 2000, Earley and Bubb, 2004). The shared values and vision are considered by O'Sullivan and West-Burnham (1998) as the means by which a balance can be achieved between individual and school needs, rather than through a detailed schedule of organisational needs. The collaborative learning that is a key feature of professional learning communities is based on the recognition of the expertise within schools and considered to benefit teachers' professionalism and well-being (Earley and Bubb, 2004) and was found to be much favoured by teachers as a professional development activity (Ofsted 2002b). It should be noted that Bullough *et al.* (2004) call for a balance

between collegiality and collaboration on the one hand and autonomy and solitude on the other, so that teachers can absorb what they have experienced.

While the characteristics of a professional learning community are supportive of teacher development, Day (1999) reminds us that there are organisational aspects to teacher development and that the task of headteachers is twofold: as leaders to develop a culture, articulate a vision and promote shared ownership and as managers to ensure structures and systems are in place to achieve the tasks.

2.10 Evaluation of effectiveness

There seems to be little dissent from the view that much of what is termed teacher development, professional development CPD, INSET and training, is of questionable value (Hopkins and Harris, 2000). A TTA (1995) survey of teachers found that only 26% of respondents thought professional development opportunities had an effective impact on classroom practice and concluded that little was known about the nature, extent and impact of CPD. Guskey (2000) questions: ‘How can it be that something universally recognised as so important can also be regarded as so ineffective?’ (p. 4)

Fullan (1995) suggests available research evidence presents a ‘bleak picture’ of poorly conceptualised teacher development, insensitive to the concerns of individuals and perhaps critically, making little effort to help participants relate learning experiences to their workplace conditions. Ofsted (2002b) concluded that although continuing professional development was becoming better

organised, there was a need for effective and robust plans for individual professional development. Such plans need to be informed by a process of evaluation. But where most schools failed to specify outcomes expected from professional development activities it might be anticipated that the evaluation procedures were also found to be weak, especially as evaluation was often confused with dissemination and while time was often made for dissemination of learning from CPD, the process often went no further (Goodall *et al.*, 2005). Where evaluation was undertaken it was often limited to participant satisfaction levels (Ofsted, 2002b, Goodall *et al.*, 2005). However evaluation of professional development is not a simple process.

The school improvement perspective has its focus clearly on ‘impact at the classroom level’ (Hopkins, 2001, p. 34) and much cited research by Joyce *et al.* (1999) identifies components of effective training, where effectiveness is defined as the transfer of skills taught into classroom practice. There is much agreement that the most ‘authentic’ assessment of professional development activities may be how they translate into classroom practice and ultimately with the benefits provided for pupils (Thomas *et al.*, 1998, Hanscomb, 2004).

However issues surrounding evaluation of professional development remain to be resolved. It is recognised that teacher preferences relating to professional development may not impact on pupil attainment or behaviour (Good and Weaver, 2003) and that contributing to teacher well-being and career development are also legitimate purposes for professional development (Hanscomb, 2004). There is concern that the contribution of teacher

development is characterised as a simple cause and effect relationship with pupil attainment (Powell and Terrell. 2003) and a lack of appreciation of the purposes of teacher development alongside a narrow view of education (Hoban, 2002, Handscomb, 2004). Ofsted (2002b) report a narrower focus for professional development priorities in primary schools than secondary schools with the former concentrating on ICT, literacy and numeracy. In Harland and Kinder's (1991) typology of INSET outcomes, impact on practice is just one, with others relating to knowledge and skills, and motivation and attitude. Craft (2000) comments on a simplistic, technicist model of teaching with underlying assumptions of teaching as a question of uniform generalisable behaviours with no account taken of the specific teachers and learners involved. Given the complexity of changing classroom practices it is considered to be important to establish realistic timelines for looking for change in practice (Thomas *et al.*, 1998, Ofsted, 2002b, Poulson and Avramidis, 2003).

Guskey (2000) suggests that the impact of teacher development activities can be evaluated at five different hierarchical levels with pupil learning the highest level:

1. Participants' reactions;
2. Participants' learning;
3. Organisational support and change;
4. Participants' use of new knowledge and skills and
5. Pupil learning outcomes.

Handscomb (2004) comments that demonstrating causal impact of professional development on teachers is highly problematic, let alone its impact on pupils.

There are also calls for pupil learning to be conceived of as more than just exam results. Jones (2006c) suggests that a much richer concept might include consideration of such features as a child's library use. Earley and Bubb (2004) suggest embracing such characteristics as attitudes, beliefs, skills and behaviour. Poulson and Avramidis (2003) point out that much powerful teacher learning is indirect and that it is not always easy for teachers to supply tangible and immediate evidence of impact when forms of professional learning and development may be largely qualitative, and, even where it is appropriate to measure student learning, the enterprise is hampered by the lack of robust standardised measures of student learning in many fields.

Although the relationship between professional development and improvements in student learning is assumed, efforts to identify definitive connections have met with little success (Guskey, 2000, Oldroyd and Hall, 1991). Guskey (2000) has developed a model to illustrate the multi-dimensional relationship between professional development and improved student learning indicating the influence of parents and school policies as well as teachers' knowledge and practices.

Any method of evaluation is likely to be complex, but on a practical level the use of professional development records as recommended by Bubb (2003) can at least allow for the recording of teachers' own perceptions of outcomes of professional development. It can also provide a link between separate professional development activities and reinforce the notion of the 'responsible and reflective practitioner' (p.21).

2.11 Effective approaches to teacher development

There is no lack of opinion as to how teacher development should be approached. There is a growing body of insightful research into teacher development activities that impact at classroom level. Harris *et al.* (2001) found that learning can be linked to classroom practice through opportunities to practice the innovation, and active learning through action research with support networks and external agencies providing support and critical friendship to encourage reflection. The research reported by Joyce *et al.* (1999) identifies five major components of effective training, resulting in the transfer of skills from training into classroom practice as:

1. Presentation of theory;
2. Modelling and demonstration;
3. Practice in workshop or simulated settings;
4. Structured feedback and
5. Coaching for classroom application.

Joyce *et al.* (1999) recommend that for effective implementation of new initiatives several and perhaps all the components are used. It is stated that as many as twenty or thirty hours may be necessary for the study of theory alone. This represents a massive investment of time and it is unlikely that such an investment is possible in most instances, even as a one off project and not surprisingly Fullan (1992), recognising the levels of sophistication, effort, skill and persistence involved in such projects, observes that similar approaches are not widespread, nor implemented in such a way that success is sustained beyond

the project for which it is initiated. Criticisms of schemes like these are not only associated with practicality. There is much support for the notion that teachers' practice is about who they are as well as the technical things they do (Goodson, 1997) so that:

If teachers are to be developed, then, attention must be paid to their thinking, moral purposes and skills as change agents, their pedagogical and management skills and the leadership and cultural contexts in which they work (Day, 1999, p.20).

O'Sullivan and West-Burnham (1998) call for an emphasis, away from structures and outputs, to adopting a reflective and reflexive stance to learning, not just new skills and competencies, but also learning how to learn. It is suggested that the current fragmented approach to teacher development can be addressed by promoting the view of teacher development as a mechanism for long-term capacity building rather than a quick-fix to improve pupils' attainment scores (Kelly and Williamson McDiarmid, 2002). Gaunt (1997) calls for a coherent system that satisfies both the demand for skills-based training and for opportunities for 'education', seen as 'the reflective scholarly activity essential for long-term professional development' (p.12).

This balancing of the need for training, associated with external knowledge, and education or development, related to internal insights, is a recurring theme. Head and Taylor (1997) suggest that rather than comparing the respective merits of each it is more useful to picture the two together as complementary components

for developing fully rounded teachers. Some commentators see the balance as needing to be weighted much more in favour of education and development than is currently the case. Dadds (1997) appreciates that advice, debates and the examination of theory can be of use, but believes that it is crucial to nurture 'inner wisdom and critical judgement'. Outsider theories can only be supportive in the evolution of personal theories because, when formal courses and development initiatives have finished, it is learning that has been made personal learning that will be used independently.

2.12 Summary

This chapter has discussed the definitions of teacher development and considered the school and governmental perspectives that may place teachers' professional needs below other considerations. Approaches to teachers, teaching and teachers' development have also been discussed along with evaluation and conceptions of effective professional development and how these may affect professional development for early career teachers. As the purpose of the research has been to highlight early career teachers' experience of professional development the literature selected focuses on those aspects which are close to teachers' experiences. School improvement and teacher effectiveness are not the focus here, nor are special projects and initiatives far removed from the usual experience of teachers in the early stages of their careers.

As a headteacher my own reflections and deliberations on teacher development, my 'research on practice' (Goodson, 1997), has been conducted in a context of

pressures from Government, governors, LEA, Ofsted and parents to achieve constantly improving results. Teachers' voices have had to compete with a chorus of others and while I have made efforts to listen well in the past, hearing them in isolation may facilitate the balancing of teachers' views with those presented through 'legitimacy of power' or 'democratic claims of accountability' (Higgins and Leat, 1999). This research has the intention of seeking the voices of teachers in their early career, of gaining an insight into the activities and experiences that make up teacher development that may not be part of a joint project or set up with research preoccupations, to investigate how teacher development provides for the important day-to-day demands on teachers (Beattie, 2003).

Chapter 3

Carrying out the research: theory and practice

My theoretical framework, the lens through which I view the world and which determines what I am curious about, what puzzles me and what questions I ask (Merriam, 1998), is derived from my personal theories, which in turn are affected by my values, career, learning experiences and the demands of my role as a headteacher. I view opportunities for professional development as an entitlement and, while acknowledging that professional development of teachers is central to school improvement, recognise the need for individual priorities to be addressed. I consider that endeavouring to bring about professional development is a crucial aspect of the headteacher's role. Other aspects of that role require that I have the best interests of the pupils' education at the heart of my endeavours, while remaining accountable to the school's immediate and wider community. This requires that I take note of both quantitative and qualitative data to gain information about the school and its performance. Undertaking the headteacher role with its complexity of responsibilities and perspectives, I regard 'social reality as constructed in different ways in different contexts' (Silverman, 2000, p.99).

3.1 The central theme

The central theme of my enquiry relates to the situation where teachers have been increasingly required to respond to priorities that may not be their own,

because of the increased formalisation of school improvement planning and the requirements of continued Government initiatives. Teachers as a group, and especially early career teachers, have had little input in relation to national development priorities, the types of 'training' available and the required outcomes of that training. Writing about more than a decade of change aimed at enhancing the quality of education and raising standards of pupil achievement Kirk (2000) comments:

Not one of the national initiatives originated in the work of teachers: they were all politically driven. Worse still most if not all of these initiatives have been vigorously opposed by teachers. Teachers, therefore, far from being masters of their own destiny, pointing the way to educational improvement, have been perceived as the objects of change rather than its drivers (p. 244).

It is a situation typified by Scott and Usher (1999) as one of dictated policy based on research, where, research experts are distinguished from those who are to be informed by the knowledge, and the researchers or their knowledge are privileged over the practitioner. This position is seen to be shaped by positivism; that there are answers out there that researchers can find, and technical-rationality; seen as an:

enactment of positivist principles in the realm of practice of expertise based on the law-like generalisations or nomothetic statements based on scientifically derived knowledge.' (p. 12)

The concern about teachers' professionalism in the context of Government directed educational change is further complicated by criticisms of the sorts of professional development opportunities that tend to accompany them (Blandford, 2001) and the apparent gap between some of the most common models of professional development and those identified in research as the most effective (Muijs and Reynolds, 2000). Added to this are concerns about the lack of meaningful evaluation of the opportunities that are available (Guskey, 2000).

I was keen to gain a better understanding of the perspective of those who have trained and begun their careers when reforms for improvement have been largely 'centrally directed, requiring uniform responses' from teachers (Riley, 2003). I was eager to learn more about how they view professional development, the opportunities available to them and which experiences are effective in bringing about their professional development. Rather than focussing on prescribed models identified in the research literature (e.g. Joyce *et al.*, 1999), or the strategies recommended by DfES ('learning from each other...learning from what works', DfES, 2001, p.12) the intention has been to concentrate on teachers' actual experiences, which may provide a more effective and viable starting point from which to consider improvements.

Lewis and Lindsay (2000), writing about the need to research children's perspectives in relation to improving schooling, suggest that teachers' perceptions and assumptions about pupils' experience of schooling will be flawed, and that 'without listening seriously to the recipients of schooling, the ostensible improvers may simply get it wrong' (p.61). In a similar way, I think

that for those wishing to improve teachers' professional development, attention needs to be directed to teachers' perspectives. I also decided not to include the views headteachers and managers who are subject to different expectations and demands than early career teachers. Research shows that the perceptions of those with responsibility for the resources for professional development may differ from those of teachers. CPD leaders were found to be more likely than teachers to identify INSET days as highly effective (50% compared with 32% in a survey conducted by Goodall *et al.*, 2005). It would seem likely that CPD leaders would be involved at some level with the planning and presentation of INSET days and, with evaluation so problematic, may well be inclined to view them as more effective than those who had merely experienced them. In the same study, heads and CPD coordinators saw performance management as the main way of defining teachers' professional development needs in school. Most teachers did not make the same connection, linking performance management more clearly with the review and setting of targets.

My research purpose was to inform my practice in leading and managing professional development within a primary school and to provide information which may be of interest to others with similar responsibilities. While the purpose can be considered to fit with technical rationalism and Hammersley's (2002) somewhat critical categorisation of research that tells us 'what works', 'what works best' or 'what works most efficiently', it is assumed that this can be done most successfully by balancing the influence of those outside the classroom with the views of practitioners, making them a more equal partner in the process

by paying close attention to what teachers can contribute about their experiences and perceptions.

3.2 Use of mixed methods

This research was undertaken using mixed methods, a subject of some discussion. Although some authors still devote much space to promoting the superiority of their favoured paradigm, there seems to be general agreement that the ‘paradigm wars’ of the past are over, (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Sikes (2004) observes that the dichotomy over methodology and methods merely represents ‘a framework for comprehension rather than an accurate representation of how things really are’. Miles and Huberman (1994) consider that, at a working level, there is little of the polarity which seems still to be present in the literature, and even that lines between epistemologies have become blurred. They subscribe to the view that each perspective can add a meaningful layer to the research without being contradictory. This view is shared by Layder (1993) who suggests that the use of different methods and methodologies provides perspectives that are like taking a cross section of a plant at different angles, together providing a more accurate picture than a single cut which, while not wrong, is only partial. He suggests that, even from a distinctly qualitative approach to research, quantitative data have the potential for a complementary, rather than just a supplementary, role to play, and that mixed methods provide a ‘more intense trawling and sifting of the data,’ with greater coverage resulting in findings that are anchored in a more robust interpretation and explanation of the area being researched. Foss and Kleinsasser (2001) hold a

similar view, that multiple data reflect an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomena in question, providing 'rigour, breadth and depth'. It is this desire to encompass breadth and depth which prompted the use of mixed methods for the purposes of this research.

While the blurring of the differences between epistemologies can be used as justification for using mixed methods, concerns that the use of one paradigm precludes the use of the other are countered by emphasis on the separation of epistemologies from methods (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggest that within qualitative research no particular methodology or method holds a privileged place, but that methods associated with statistical measures are not likely to be reported in the same way that a quantitative researcher would. Crotty (1998) points out that most methods used by qualitative researchers have been used in the past in an empiricist, positivist manner and that research can be qualitative and quantitative without it being problematic if it serves our purpose. What he questions is the extent to which it is possible 'to be at once objectivist and constructionist', insisting on the necessity of a consistent epistemology, so that the truth claims proffered on behalf of the same method of research will differ according to the researcher's epistemology.

An alternative approach is taken by pragmatists. Pragmatism is seen as a rejection of the forced choice between positivism and constructivism in relation to methods and epistemology, instead embracing both points of view. Rather than concerning themselves with questions about reality and the laws of nature,

they embrace the ‘dictatorship of research questions’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Concern is with applications and solutions to problems:

We believe that pragmatists consider the research question to be more important than either the method they use or the world view that is supposed to underlie the method. Most good researchers prefer addressing their research questions with any methodological tool available, using the pragmatist credo of ‘what works’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, p. 21).

Taking a pragmatic perspective implies no commitment to any one system of philosophy and reality, the world is not seen as an absolute unity, truth is what works at the time. Applied to mixed methods this approach allows the researcher to use both quantitative and qualitative assumptions in their research and to use the techniques and procedures that best meet their needs and purposes in providing the best understanding of the research problem. Pragmatists are of the opinion that research always takes place in multiple contexts including social, historical and political, with an emphasis on the consequences of the research so the approach is seen as suitable for research which uses a theoretical perspectives reflecting aims such as those related to social justice.

It was the pragmatic approach that was employed in this research as a basis for a mixed methodology.

3.3 Rationale for the use of mixed methods in this research

My view of social reality as constructed in different ways in different contexts is well matched by a pragmatic approach to the research. As a head teacher I deal with macro level statistical data concerning the school's performance, but it is only in considering individual children's progress that effective measures can be taken to improve that performance. My concern has been first and foremost to address the research questions within the context of whole school and Government policies and priorities. My research purpose matches the category of 'what works', so it seemed apt to adopt the pragmatist credo of 'what works' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) and utilise methodology accordingly.

Using mixed methods in this research has benefits in relation to design, data collection and analysis. All research methods have limitations and using a design with more than one method is regarded as tending to average out error associated with individual methods (Creswell, 2003, Robson, 2002, Denscombe, 2002). In relation to data collection, greater scope and breadth was added in that the views of a greater number of teachers were gathered than interviews alone would have allowed and greater depth was provided than questionnaires alone could elicit. While data from large numbers of questionnaires can provide a 'broad understanding of surface patterns', interviews provide 'depth and roundedness' (Mason, 2002) to the data. It was intended that by using the quantitative and qualitative strategies in this research a more comprehensive picture could be produced of the phenomenon as a whole. The use of questionnaires and interviews allows for complementary, but different questions

to be addressed by the most appropriate method when there is a choice (Robson, 2000) so that the more factual questions were covered in the questionnaire and those requiring more expansive answers in the interviews.

The use of questionnaires is traditionally seen as providing the researcher's perspective, and interviews as presenting the participants perspective. The use of both allows for the incorporation of both perspectives (Robson, 2000). The questions asked in the questionnaire can be seen to represent the researcher's informal theories (Scott and Usher, 1999) and in conducting the questionnaires first these informal theories could be tested and adjusted, so that the questions covered in the interviews were more likely to reflect teachers' concerns and issues as well as mine, and to provide more focus in a broad area of study. The two data sets are therefore presented sequentially rather than together, the strategy being to build on the first set of data. Although the results of the questionnaires can, to some extent, be corroborated with information from the interviews (Denscombe, 2002), the main purpose of the interviews is to develop greater depth to the questionnaire findings. A very practical, but essential purpose of the arrangements was that volunteers for the interviews could be located from responses to the questionnaires.

A pragmatic approach to mixed methods requires that researchers make 'the most efficient use of both paradigms in understanding social phenomena' (Creswell, 1994). This statement is interpreted here in a broad sense since it is recognised that:

Rarely is there only one way to go about things. To present a research design as being a straightforward, technical matter of ‘horses for courses’, with researchers objectively choosing the most appropriate, if not the only possible methodology and procedures for a specific project will be misleading...(Sikes, 2004, p. 18).

The most efficient use of paradigms is taken here to include considerations of constraints to what is feasible. In this instance they included time and resource, which if they did not apply might well result in a different choice of approach. An awareness of my own ‘personality, attributes and skills’ as a researcher also informed the choice of research design (Merriam, 1998).

3.4 Ethics

The principles that have guided this research are those of clarity about what counts as data, informed consent, guarantees of confidentiality or anonymity, beneficence and non-maleficence (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Importance was also attached to informing respondents that I was grateful for their participation, appreciated the time and co-operation they were giving and that their views were respected. Although ethics have been a consideration from the start of the research design, the closer contact between researcher and respondents in interviews that provides the opportunity to gather rich descriptions, also requires further consideration of ‘who might be harmed by my research’ (Bell, 1999).

The topic of the research is not considered especially sensitive and it was judged that potentially harmful effects could be addressed through guarantees of confidentiality and non-identifiability. To this end the names of teachers, schools and LEAs have been changed. The benefits for the research participants are not considered to be great, but it may be that teachers welcomed the experience of having their opinions sought and listened to with attention. In balancing my research needs with the rights of respondents I was careful to adhere to the principle that I would not ask for greater time and co-operation than I have been willing to give myself in similar situations. Comment is made at appropriate points throughout this chapter to indicate strategies used in relation to ethical considerations.

3.5 The strategy

The research strategy used is similar to that described by Creswell (2003) as a ‘sequential explanatory strategy’. It begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data from self-administered questionnaires, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data in face-to-face interviews with the intention of using one set of data to inform the collection of the second set of data.

The research also used a dominant-less dominant model (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) with the greater weight being given to the qualitative phase. The qualitative phase having ‘set the scene’, for the rich and highly illuminating material (Robson, 2002) from the interviews. Pring (2000) identifies three

factors that impinge upon and shape practice, one of these is the perceptions and values of the participants, which reflects the focus here. The other two factors are 'official expectations and values', and physical conditions and resources. These two represent the context within which the research is grounded. The first stage of the research was intended to serve as a starting point, to move the focus from my preoccupations or informal theories to the perceptions of early career primary teachers. In taking account of professional development as a complex process the emphasis is on the qualitative aspects to explore how 'experiences and individual differences interact' (Forrester and Draper, 2005). The concern to obtain the specific language and voices of those being researched (Creswell, 2003) is reflected, not only in the weight given to the interviews stage of the research, but also in the questionnaire with the inclusion of several open questions.

3.6 The questionnaire sample

Problems were encountered in locating a large sample of eligible teachers. There is no means of identifying individuals in the population of primary school teachers in the first five years of their career. Similarly there is no information concerning their location. It was not possible even to ascertain the number of teachers in the first five years of career currently employed in primary schools. Since it was intended to draw the sample for the interviews from those responding to the questionnaire survey it was decided to seek respondents within two LEAs in the midlands region where I was located to minimise subsequent travelling time and expenses during the interview stage. Some schools contacted

were reluctant to provide details of individual teachers' service because of data protection issues and time and resources did not allow for protracted negotiation with the 246 schools in the LEAs to ascertain the location of any eligible teachers. So questionnaires were sent to all primary schools in the two contrasting LEAs. Seventy-six questionnaires were returned. It is not possible to assess what the response rate was as it is not known how many eligible teachers received the questionnaire. Bourque and Fielder (1995) suggest that a single mailing to the general community with no incorporated incentive 'can probably expect no better than a 20% response rate. If each school contacted represented one eligible teacher, then this would represent a fairly reasonable response rate of 30.9%. However a situation where every school had an eligible teacher would be highly unlikely. Seven schools made contact to say that they did not have eligible teachers, (one teacher in her seventh year of career responded 'in case it's of use',) and it might be supposed that the number of schools with no eligible teachers could be far greater. On the other hand there were likely to be a number of schools with more than one eligible teacher. This criterion-based selection of what was effectively an opportunity sample is acknowledged to have severe limitations in terms of validity. The sample was not randomly drawn, but was dependent on a number of factors including the willingness of headteachers or co-ordinators to distribute the questionnaires and could be biased towards those teachers with an interest in their own professional development and educational research. It can be said in principle to be representative only of the sample itself and it is not possible to estimate how representative the results are for all teachers in the first five years of their career.

3.7 The interview sample

The teachers who were interviewed were selected from twenty nine questionnaire respondents who had volunteered to be further involved in the research. Twelve teachers were interviewed (see Table 15 in Section 5.1), to fit with time and resource limitations and were selected to be reasonably representative of the questionnaire respondents. Because of the small number of teachers in each of the various categories, the limited number volunteering to be interviewed and the small number that could be interviewed it was not possible to be statistically representative of all the reported characteristics for the whole population of questionnaire respondents. Two or three teachers were interviewed for each year of career. It was possible to select interview respondents that roughly reflected the characteristics of the questionnaire sample in relation to qualification route into teaching, the LEA they worked for, and the reported post they held. A limitation of the questionnaire design was the lack of clarity in requesting information about teachers' posts. Several interviewees had failed to report responsibilities that they held in addition to being class teachers on the questionnaire, so it is highly likely that other respondents also held responsibilities that were not reported.

3.8 Generalisability and transferability

It is appropriate here to consider generalisability claims; 'the extent to which the findings of the enquiry are more generally applicable outside the specifics of the

situation studied' (Robson, 2002). The nature of the sample used does not allow for claims to any level of generalisability (Miller and Brewer, 2003), rather the approach is to claim that the findings can be transferred to other similar settings and situations. Claims for transferability can be based on the extent to which the sample is 'typical', rather than representative. Consideration was given to features which are of some relevance to the population in that questionnaires were sent to primary schools of all sizes, in urban, suburban and rural locations, and, although school details were not requested from respondents, those who volunteered to participate further, worked in the full range of schools from a rural state primary school with seventy-one pupils on roll to an urban Roman Catholic school with four hundred and forty-six pupils. A possible atypical feature of the sample relates to interest in professional development and motivation to assist with research. It is assumed that respondents were more or less self-selecting, and it is possible that respondents were teachers who are interested in professional development, perhaps more so than non-respondents, apart from this there is no reason to believe that the sample was atypical, not having any 'particularly unusual characteristics that mark them out from the rest' (Denscombe, 2002).

Claims for transferability can also be based on the rigour with which the analysis was conducted to demonstrate accuracy of method. The analysis demonstrates how and why things work in a range of contexts, addressing specificity and differences (Mason, 2002). There is a role for both researcher and reader in terms of transferability of qualitative research findings. The researcher interprets and evaluates the findings providing information that is:

sufficiently detailed to allow informed judgements about how far and how well the findings map on to other situations (Denscombe, 2002, p. 149).

According to Scott and Usher (1999) the burden of proof falls to the reader or user of the research. The reader engages with the interpretation and evaluation and, using their own knowledge and values, decides whether a transfer can be contemplated as a possibility in other situations. The importance of understanding the context in which the research occurred and knowing the context in which it may be applied, is highlighted by Guba and Lincoln (1985). A concept which reflects my attitude towards the transferability of my findings is Bassey's (1999) 'fuzzy generalisations' where typically the claim is that it is 'possible, likely or unlikely' that what has been found in the particular case will be found in similar situations elsewhere.

3.9 Stage 1 of the research – the questionnaires

The purpose of the questionnaire (Appendix 1) was to collect preliminary information, beginning to seek some answers to the first two research questions:

- What constitutes the professional development experience of early career primary teachers?
- Which professional development experiences have these teachers found to be effective and how are they evaluated?

Although Robson (2002) considers that surveys are not well suited to exploratory work, being 'inefficient' and 'ineffective' for the purpose, the intention here was to begin to explore these areas; 'to collect facts and describe situations/events' (Denscombe, 2002), and was considered appropriate for the purpose of informing the later interview stage of the research. It was also designed for the important purpose of identifying teachers willing to participate in the interviews.

Two questionnaires, used for large scale projects on professional development were studied in designing the questionnaire for this research. Some of the questions included were adapted from those in the large scale projects and others were added to meet the specific purposes of my research. The questionnaires studied were 'The Impact of Continuing Professional Development' undertaken by Warwick and Nottingham Universities funded by the DfES, and 'Consulting Teachers on Continuing Professional Development', undertaken by Manchester Metropolitan University in partnership with Education Data Surveys funded by the DfES in 2002. A DfES CDP advisor was also consulted to check for any issues that may have been neglected.

The questionnaire consisted of eight questions. The first three questions elicited background information on respondents; the number of years in teaching, post held and qualification route into teaching. These were two multiple choice and one open question. Of the questions relating to teachers experiences and perceptions, two were closed, consisting of rating scales. The remaining three were open questions. These can be excessively time consuming to analyse (Cohen *et al.* 2000), but it was anticipated that the number of responses to be

processed would not be especially high, so it was appropriate to include a relatively high proportion of open questions. Teachers were also thanked for their participation, reassured about anonymity and confidentiality and asked if they would be willing to participate further in the research.

The rating scale questions related to teachers opinions of effectiveness of the forms of professional development that they had experienced so far and how important they considered various outcomes of professional development. Since the emphasis in this research is to gain teachers' perceptions these question formats included 'other' sections so that the predefined categories reflecting the researcher's perspective, did not limit the range of responses. Open questions also related to the criteria teachers employ in evaluating the effectiveness of their professional development experiences and sought details of such experiences that had had an impact on classroom practice. No definition of professional development was provided in an effort to explore teachers' conceptions of the process.

Questionnaires were posted to all primary schools in a shire and city LEA during the week commencing 9th June 2003. This was in the hope that teachers could complete them before having to undertake end of year report writing. Care was taken to ensure that the questionnaire was contained on two sides of A4 paper to limit the perception that its completion would be onerous, while trying to ensure sufficient detail and precision in the data collected. It was also printed on coloured paper in the hope of making it more noticeable among the large quantities of white paper sent to schools and teachers each week. Two

questionnaires were sent to each school with an invitation to photocopy should more be required. The questionnaires were addressed to the headteacher/continuing professional development co-ordinator requesting their distribution to teachers who were in their first five years of career. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included for replies and was marked to show which LEA it was sent to. A covering letter also gave details about me and the purpose of the survey (Appendix 2). Responses were received from the week following distribution until the end of July 2003.

Analysis of the questionnaires took place during the autumn term 2003. The open questions were post-coded and subject to content analysis, quantified and treated in a similar way to the results from the closed questions. The data from the closed questions were analysed using SPSS to produce frequencies and descriptive statistics and the chi square test was used to investigate any possible significant differences between responses from teachers in different career years. These were considered appropriate for the size of the sample and purposes of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was piloted to assist face validity. This was undertaken with three teachers in the first five years of their career, who were not included in the sample. They completed the questionnaire in order to ensure that respondents understood the questions and what was required of them. The pilot respondents were also asked, after discussion about the aims of the research, if they could suggest any items that should be included to better answer the questions being

posed. Some adjustments were made to the wording of questions following the pilot.

Where content validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Fink, 1995) evaluation of questions concerning the forms of professional development that teachers have experienced is fairly straightforward, but, since perceptions cannot be directly measured, issues of content validity for other questions are more complex, so a fellow research student was also asked to provide her 'expert' opinion on the all the questions.

Although there is an expectation that questionnaires 'have the potential to supply researchers with exact figures' (Denscombe, 2002) I consider that it is highly likely that some responses represent an 'approximation' on the part of respondents in that they are likely to select an answer from predetermined list, when a non-constrained response might have elicited a slightly different answer. It is interesting to compare this process to that which occurs with interview data when, at the analysis stage, the data may be displayed in a matrix after 'much condensation and standardization' having been 'pooled and crudely scaled' (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Given the traditional view that questionnaires reflect the views of researchers and interviews the views of respondents, it is interesting to note that the difference in these situations is that the respondent makes the judgement about the approximation in completing a questionnaire, whereas the decision is the researcher's when analysing interview data.

The findings were compared with the literature as an accuracy check. Some confirmable data was also included in the interviews and interviewees were asked to consider if the findings from some of the questionnaire items were credible, if they 'rang true' with them.

In terms of reliability of the questionnaires, the nature of the method is unlikely to disrupt 'normality' to a great degree. However it is not possible to ensure that respondents were not unduly fatigued or stressed when the forms were completed leading to errors, or inaccuracies. It is also possible that since the forms were distributed via senior staff there may have been some concerns regarding confidentiality.

The findings from the questionnaires were intended to inform the development of the interview as a research tool. The number of responses received was not large and, as it was not possible to obtain a representative sample, no claims are made that the sample was designed as a probability sample. Transferability claims have already been addressed.

3.10 Stage 2 of the research – the interviews

The interviews were conducted to elicit further and more detailed answers to the research questions which formed the focus of the questionnaires and a further research question which had not been directly addressed, namely: What factors do early career primary teachers consider support or inhibit their professional development?

Within the context of the mixed methods strategy, issues and contradictions from the questionnaire findings and verification of data were addressed in the interviews. The interview schedule used in the project 'The Impact of Continuing Professional Development' (DfES) was consulted and informed the wording of some questions for the interview schedule (Appendix 3).

Using the notion that when asking questions, the structural dimension can be considered as a continuum, rather than sharply contrasting arrangements (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996), the interviews were more highly structured than many qualitative researchers would advocate. Although the questions were organised into a schedule it was flexible so that best use was made of the opportunity to reflect teachers' views and experiences and so that interviewees could talk about issues out of order and supplementary questions could be asked to gain more detail and to seek clarification.

Mason (2002) considers it 'unsatisfactory' to prepare a structured sequence of questions, advocating rather that a specific set of intellectual and social skills are developed so that the researcher can respond to the content and the sequence of the interview as it progresses. Awareness of the difficulty and time involved in developing such skills was influential in the decision to adopt a more structured approach. Wragg (1994) commends the semi-structured interview for allowing respondents to express themselves at length, but preventing aimless rambling that can result from unstructured interviews especially for those who are relatively inexperienced in the technique – a group to which I belong. The

‘broad understanding of surface patterns’ (Mason, 2002) had been established by analysis of the questionnaires so that I had identified specific areas that I wished to pursue in the interviews. These gave rise to questions that were more specific than may have been the case had the questionnaires not been conducted first.

The interviews were conducted during the last three weeks in November 2003. The interviewees, selected from questionnaire respondents who had volunteered to assist further with the research were contacted by telephone, or in one case, through the email address that had been supplied. Respondents were thanked and reminded of the research topic and briefly informed of the areas that would be covered. This was so that teachers could make a more informed decision about whether they wished to participate further and to allow them time to reflect on the areas we would cover. They were then invited to suggest a time and place for the interview in the following three weeks. This allowed teachers to select what was for them, a comfortable and non-threatening venue, as well as acknowledging their work load commitment and my appreciation of their participation. All those contacted were able to participate and dates, times and locations for the interviews were agreed. All took place after the end of the school day in the interviewees’ schools, with the exception of one occasion when it was conducted in the interviewee’s home at her suggestion. Shortly after each interview a contact summary form (Appendix 4), adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994), was completed. This allowed for the recording of initial impressions and possibly significant points, as well as an opportunity for reflecting on how the interview had progressed.

I was aware that what was asked and the way it was asked, (the focus and frame of the questions, Scott and Usher, 1999) would possibly provide clues to the interviewees as to how they should respond and also that paralinguistic clues, including dress and behaviour could also have an influence. While encouraging respondents to give full and honest answers by verbal responses and body language it was deemed necessary to retain a degree of neutrality (Miles and Huberman, 1999), so that interviewees were not unduly influenced by my comments or reactions. With power relations in mind, I took the conscious decision not to 'power-dress' but to dress smartly. This was to reinforce the message that was given verbally, that my position of headteacher and classroom teacher for many years gave me the background knowledge that allowed me to understand their working context, but that I was there as a researcher to seek their views which I respected. I also waited to be invited to be seated. Before the interviews began the interviewees were reminded of the research purpose, reassured about confidentiality and informed that they could terminate the interview at any point and could decline to answer any specific questions. They were asked for their permission for the interview to be recorded on tape as well as through written notes, so that I could more faithfully and fully represent their responses to the questions.

Validity, a strength of qualitative research (Denscombe, 2002) is not treated in the same way as it is in quantitative analysis. In order to enhance the 'trustworthiness', 'authenticity' and 'credibility' of this research certain explicit steps have been taken. Munn and Drever (1990) suggest that the presentation of results is to persuade people to a certain point of view and to open results to

scrutiny and so to validation. For this reason results of the research are reported in detail. Miles and Huberman's (1998) emphasise that efforts to enhance validity also help us to be clearer about what is actually going on during the research. This was the case for me as I reflected on my role as researcher and attempted to present more fully the bias I bring to the research. My role in the interview process – 'the primary instrument for gathering and analysing data' (Merriam, 1998) enables me to be responsive to the interview situation and maximise opportunities for collecting meaningful information, but it also means that the process is subject to human error and that personal bias may result in missed opportunities. Scheurich (1997) refers to the researcher as 'this plethora of baggage' and it is this baggage that brings about bias. It can be a threat to validity in the way that undeclared assumptions and preconceptions of the researcher affect some aspect of the research, or it can be a positive dimension, an intentional and explicit approach to the enquiry. It is to ensure that the former situation is minimised and the latter maximised in this research that I have included details of my theoretical framework, experience, values and beliefs.

Rich thick description is presented to enable the reader to share in the experience to some extent and negative and discrepant information is included. The data was organised as a matrix to permit the viewing of data from all respondents in one location, arranged systematically in relation to the research questions. Although this is a data reduction process which can be seen as a loss of detail, it was undertaken using the notion of Tesch (1990) that it is a process that concentrates the data. A process of constant reference back to the data was used

during the data reduction, data display stages and the drawing of conclusions, for testing and verification purposes.

Peer debriefing was undertaken at stages throughout the research to ensure that it resonated with other people. Although it is acknowledged that member checking with interviewees is a useful tool to enhance validity, I considered it too demanding of the respondents. Instead the same group of early career teachers who had piloted the questionnaire were invited to comment on the findings.

3.11 Summary

In designing this research decisions were made about which methods best suited its purpose and which data-collection instruments would produce the required data. With due regard to the limitations inherent in all research methods and instruments and acknowledging the particular limitations of the sampling frame utilised in this research, those chosen were those judged best to produce a complete piece of research (Bell, 1999), given the constraints that applied. A mixed methodology utilising questionnaires and interviews was employed, not only because of its ability to fulfil the research purpose, but also because of its congruence with my theoretical perspectives and personal attributes as well as issues of feasibility, and time and resource limitations. The degree of success of the research design will be evident in the extent to which it has enabled the research questions to be answered and will be addressed in the conclusion of the thesis. Various limitations of the strategies for collecting and analysing the data are discussed at appropriate points in the thesis.

The next two chapters present the findings of two stages of the research.

Chapter 4

What the questionnaires tell us about early career primary teachers and professional development.

This chapter presents and examines the findings based on questionnaire data. As outlined in the previous chapter, the purpose of the questionnaire was to collect preliminary information of the perceptions and experiences of early career primary teachers' professional development to inform the interview stage of the research. The analysis is presented to reflect the order that the questions appeared on the questionnaire. The chapter is structured so that the main features from the analysis are initially reported and then discussed starting firstly with the characteristics of the respondents. Teachers' experiences of professional development are considered second and thirdly their perceptions of the effectiveness of those experiences. Fourthly the criteria that the respondents used in evaluating the effectiveness professional development activities are discussed. Next analysis of the importance of various outcomes of professional development is examined. Finally analysis of the activities and events that teachers have reported as having had an impact on their classroom practice is outlined. Statistical data is presented in the form of tables as well as in the text. Limitations of the questionnaire are discussed in the context of the data relating to the specific question in which they arise.

In general the sample of teachers is treated as a whole and results are mostly presented on that basis. However, in order to explore any particular differences

between the responses of NQTs and teachers in other career years further analysis was undertaken and results are presented in the relevant sections. The data from the open Questions 6 and 8 were analysed at the level of career year of respondent and examined to identify any particular differences that became apparent. The data from the closed Questions 7 and 8 was subjected to the chi-square test to compare the actual frequencies with those that would be expected to occur on the basis of chance alone. The test was conducted for each item on these questions, comparing the responses of teachers from each career year group with those from each of the others. The results are presented where the computed chi-square test value is significant at the 0.05 level of statistical significance. These results are presented with a note of caution that the numbers on which they are based are quite small, and that they represent only an indication of areas to be considered more closely.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings based on the questionnaire data and the implications for the next stage of the research with in-depth interviews.

4.1 Respondents

The sample consisted of seventy-six teachers in their first to fifth year of teaching (Table 1). Twenty-two responses were received from NQTs; twice as many as were from teachers in their fifth year of career. According to figures obtained from the recruitment offices of the respective LEAs, the twenty-two responses from teachers in their first year represent 5.5% of the total number of

NQTs employed by the two authorities in that year. Further analysis indicates that responses from first year teachers in City LEA were 6.8% of the 161 NQTs employed compared with 4.6% of the 240 NQTs employed by Shire LEA. In 2002/2003 401 NQTs were appointed by the two LEAs, an increase of 61 on the previous year at a time when overall teacher numbers in these LEAs were fairly static; in the same period they increased by the equivalent of only 23.4 full-time teachers (DfES, 2004). This may be a factor in the relatively higher response rate of teachers who began their career in 2002/2003, but it may also be related to their situation as NQTs. Because of induction arrangements these teachers are likely to have had non-contact time in which questionnaires could be completed. They may have felt more obliged to fill in forms passed on by senior members of staff or more inclined to do so because of their initial enthusiasm for their first post. Information about the numbers of teachers employed by LEAs in other years of career is not available.

Table 1 *Characteristics of respondents*

No. years in teaching	No. of teachers	Class teacher	Class teacher and manager of 1 subject	Class teacher and manager of 2 or more subjects	Management role	Teaching qualification	
						BEd./ BA/BSc /QTS	PG CE
1	22	20	1	1	1 (1 missing)	13	10
2	16	12	3	1	-	11	5
3	13	10	2	1	-	8	5
4	14	7	2	4	1	10	4
5	11	4	3	2	1 (1 missing)	8	3
Total	76	53	11	8	2 (2 missing)	50	26

Almost two thirds of respondents had trained via the Bachelor of Education (BEd.), Bachelor of Science with Qualified Teacher Status (BSc. QTS) or Bachelor of Arts with Qualified Teacher Status (BA.QTS) with the other third having qualified through a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Comparing the career year of teachers and their teaching qualifications, the tendency was for a greater proportion of respondents to have undertaken a PGCE course the nearer they were to the beginning of their career. This feature can be seen against a background, for the appropriate years when respondents began their teaching careers, of increasing numbers of teachers completing the primary PGCE course; from 4,530 in 1999 to 6,800 in 2003. In relation to those completing primary BEd, BSc and BA with QTS courses during the same period, after a sharp decline between 1999 and 2000 (from 7,210 to 5,350) numbers stabilised around the 5,100 mark (DfES, 2004).

There were no respondents who had taken any other route into teaching. Other options would be the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), the Registered Teacher Programme (RTP) or the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme (OTTP), but the numbers of teachers qualifying to teach in primary schools through these programmes are small with 1,270 successfully completing the GTP, 130 the RTP and 330 the OTP in 2002/2003.

A limitation of the questionnaire is that the term 'post held' can be interpreted as distinguishing between class teaching and senior management posts only, or to include curriculum and other responsibilities. At least one teacher who reported her post only as class teacher later commented on her curriculum responsibilities.

So it is likely that curriculum and other responsibilities were under reported. However 20 out of the 22 first year career teachers recorded themselves solely as class teachers whereas only 4 of the 11 teachers in their fifth year of career did so. The 2 teachers with management posts were in fourth and fifth year of career. The distribution of teachers with responsibility for co-ordinating one subject or more appears to be unrelated to length of career. However the number of teachers within each category is very small and the limitations concerning 'post held' make it difficult to undertake accurate observations about the relationships between teachers' professional responsibilities and year of career or teaching qualification. A similar situation applies to teaching qualification and post held.

4.2 Range of professional development activities teachers have experienced

Question 4 invited teachers to rate forms of professional development that they had experienced so that information could be gathered about what had been experienced as well as how effective it had been. Before considering the results it is necessary to note some limitations. In inviting teachers to indicate that they had not experienced a form of professional development by leaving that category blank and, at the same time, including a 'don't know' option, some confusion was generated. There are three particular areas where inaccuracies could occur in relation to forms of professional development experienced:

1. 'Don't know' could have been ticked instead of the item being left blank when teachers had not experienced that form of professional

development. (Two teachers amended their ‘don’t know’ column to indicate that they had not experienced that particular form of professional development.)

2. Teachers may have given an opinion of the effectiveness of a form of professional development that they had not experienced.
3. An item may have been missed in error rather than left blank intentionally.

The first two limitations are likely to result in the range of experiences reported being greater than it actually was. The third limitation is likely to have the opposite effect. Examination of ‘don’t know’ responses indicates that, with the exception of a single response, they were used for all items where an opinion was not given as to the effectiveness of the activity, reinforcing the notion that this response was used instead of leaving a blank. It was decided to include ‘don’t know’ responses on the basis that they were likely to indicate that the activity had not been experienced.

Overall, ‘don’t know’ responses constitute only 6.7% of all responses to this item and comparing results where ‘don’t knows’ are included and excluded, the effect is that the rank order of forms of development is affected in only one instance; ‘networking with other schools’ and ‘membership of professional organisations’ exchanging places. Where ‘don’t knows’ are excluded the actual numbers on which the percentages are based are reduced. It is not possible to estimate

inaccuracies due to teachers expressing opinions about forms of professional development they have not experienced or where items were missed in error.

Table 2 Forms of professional development experienced

Forms of professional development		% respondents indicating that they had experienced the activity
1=	Staff/key stage meetings	98.7
1=	Observation of a colleague	98.7
3	Observation by a colleague	92.1
4	Being mentored/coached	89.5
5=	Conferences/lectures	88.2
5=	Workshops	88.2
7=	Team-working	81.6
7=	Own reading	81.6
9	Meetings to share good practice	75.0
10	Membership of professional organisations	60.5
11	Networking with other schools	57.9
12	Mentoring/coaching a colleague	40.8
13	Job shadowing	39.5
14	Preparing and presenting a paper/project	35.5
15	Action research	17.1
16	Higher qualification courses	11.8

Table 2 represents a ranking of the forms of professional development that were presented in Question 4. Results indicate that staff or key stage meetings and observation of a colleague have been experienced by 98.7%, all but one, of the sample. These are closely followed by being observed by a colleague and then being mentored or coached; activities required as part of the induction programme for NQTs.

Conferences, lectures and workshops were also experienced by more than 80% of respondents, as were ‘own reading’ and working as a team member. Action research and higher education courses had been experienced by less than 20% of

respondents. The only activities added by the respondents under 'other' were undertaking the role of subject coordinator and running an after school club.

The most widely experienced professional development activities can be seen as generally in line with those reported by teachers in the GTC survey of teachers in 2005 (Sturman *et al.*, 2005), which found that the most frequently occurring CPD activities could be described as collaborative learning with colleagues in the same school. The three least common CPD activities reported in the GTC survey were undertaking action research, taking a sabbatical or secondment and being supported by a coach or mentor. Taking a secondment or sabbatical was not presented in Question 4 and was not included by respondents in 'other'. The placing of action research in the bottom three activities in this research is in line with the GTC survey, but the widespread experience of early career teachers of being mentored or coached is in some contrast to that of teachers in general as reported by the GTC, suggesting that such activities are not utilised much outside of the induction programme.

Further analysis indicates that significant differences between teachers in different career years are associated only with mentoring and coaching (Table 3). Specifically significant differences were found concerning experience of being mentored or coached between teachers in Year 1 and Year 5 ($\chi^2 = 9.103$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$) and teachers in Year 2 and Year 5 ($\chi^2 = 6.830$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). While all respondents in their first two years of career indicated that they had experienced being mentored or coached, in Years 3 and 4 percentages fell to 84.6% and 85.7% respectively, with only 63.6% of fifth year teachers indicating

they had been mentored or coached. Differences between Year 1 and Year 5 teachers were found in experience of mentoring or coaching a colleague ($\chi^2=6.188$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). Mentoring or coaching a colleague had been experienced most widely by teachers in their fifth career year with the NQTs experiencing it least.

Table 3 *Experience of mentoring/coaching*

	% of respondents having experienced being mentored/coached	% of respondents having experienced mentoring/coaching a colleague
Year 1	100.0	13.6
Year 2	100.0	37.5
Year 3	84.6	38.5
Year 4	85.7	50.0
Year 5	63.6	54.5

Since attendance at staff and key stage meetings is usually a requirement for teachers its widespread experience can be understood. Observation of and by a colleague and being mentored are part of the NQT induction programme which became compulsory in 1999. All but ten of the respondents would have been entitled to this statutory provision and guidelines suggesting that similar support should be provided had been in place since 1992 (DFEE, 1992), but this was not the case especially for the teachers in their fifth year of career, for whom the provision was not statutory. It was not anticipated that mentoring or coaching a colleague would have been widely experienced by teachers early in their career as it is seen to involve an experienced and successful teacher working with a less experienced colleague (Guskey, 2000) and it is perhaps surprising that respondents indicated they had experienced it as frequently as they did. It is

possible that much of the experience reported in earliest career years may have been associated with mentoring student teachers.

It is interesting to note that observation of a colleague was more widely experienced than being observed and being mentored. This may be because, as part of the induction process, it is relatively easy to arrange and experienced teachers may be willing to demonstrate their skills to those with less experience. Arranging opportunities for experienced teachers to observe and provide constructive, critical feedback for early career teachers may be more problematic. It might also be supposed that early career teachers might avail themselves of opportunities to observe others more readily than opportunities to be observed.

The attending lectures, conferences and workshops, which can be included in the term courses, might have been anticipated to be more widely experienced, as courses had been found during Ofsted inspections to constitute the main vehicle for professional development (Ofsted, 2002b). Both LEAs provide a wide range of courses including those designed specifically for NQTs, but budgetary considerations inevitably exert an effect on opportunities for teachers to attend such events.

The forms of professional development that were experienced by 60% or less of respondents were those that are relatively dependent on priorities within particular schools and individual interest and motivation. Acceptance onto higher qualification courses such as MAs often requires a minimum of two years

teaching or some management experience and, although both LEAs provide some assistance with costs of higher education courses, they still usually represent a major financial, as well as time commitment for teachers. These factors may help to explain why higher qualification courses were the least widely experienced with only 11.8% of respondents indicating participation.

4.3 Other activities that teachers consider contribute to professional development

One of the purposes of the questionnaire was to identify activities that teachers consider contribute to professional development. Teachers were asked in Question 5 to specify any other activities that were not covered in Question 4 that they would like to experience to enhance their professional development. Five teachers considered that teaching a different age group or teaching in a different school or country could contribute to their professional development and one teacher identified that teaching new topics encouraged further reading and research. Observing teachers in the different environment of another school was an activity that two teachers would like to experience for purposes of professional development. Of the eight responses two were concerned with watching others teach, an extension of the activities presented in Question 4. The other six responses introduced a new element of developing professionally from ones' own experience of teaching.

4.4 Effectiveness of forms of professional development experienced

The second part of Question 4 requested teachers to rate the effectiveness of professional development activities they had experienced. It is necessary to note at this point that percentages relate to the number of respondents indicating experience of the activity, which differs considerably from one activity to another as indicated in Table 2.

Table 4 indicates that the activity most consistently rated as highly effective was observation of a colleague, with 74.7% of those expressing an opinion indicating that they considered it a highly effective form of professional development. This is 8.5% higher than the next most highly rated activity of team working (66.1%) and 22.6% higher than mentoring or coaching a colleague (54.8%), indicating teachers appreciation of the this activity, the positive features of which include the gaining of new ideas, the opportunity to reflect on ones' own practice and for discussion based on a common experience (O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998, Muijs and Reynolds, 2001).

Observation of a colleague and being observed by a colleague along with being mentored, mentoring a colleague and team working constitute the five activities considered to be highly effective by 50% or more of those expressing an opinion. These activities involve teachers working closely with colleagues with a focus on practice. Observations and mentoring usually involve two teachers focussed on the teaching of one of the participants. Team working, which stresses the aspects of working together, probably on a task of relevance or interest to team members,

rates highly more often than ‘meetings to share good practice’, which while still involving the shared aspect of practice, may not focus on areas of particular need and may involve a lower level of interaction for some participants.

Table 4 Highly effective rating of professional development activities

	Activities rated highly effective	% respondents expressing an opinion about the activity
1	Observation of a colleague	74.7
2	Team-working	66.1
3	Mentoring/coaching a colleague	54.8
4	Observation by a colleague	51.4
5	Being mentored/coached	50.0
6	Meetings to share good practice	45.6
7	Workshops	41.8
8	Job shadowing	36.7
9	Networking with other schools	34.1
10	Higher qualification courses	33.3
11	Action research	30.8
12	Own reading	24.2
13	Staff/Key stage meetings	22.7
14	Membership of professional organisations	19.6
15	Preparing and presenting a paper/project	18.5
16	Conferences/lectures	17.9

Supporting evidence is provided by the finding that membership of professional organisations, preparing and presenting a paper or project and attending conferences and lectures were found to be highly effective by less than 20% of those experiencing them. These activities tend to require, or allow for, little interaction between participants and may not be concerned with classroom practice.

Mentoring or coaching a colleague is rated as highly effective by a higher percentage of those expressing an opinion than being mentored or coached, although the smaller number of teachers indicating that they had mentored or coached a colleague must be borne in mind (31 as opposed to 68 who had been mentored). Observing a colleague is also rated above being observed by a colleague, suggesting that respondents may consider activities highly effective more often when they have some measure of control over the process or when they are working as equals with colleagues, rather than when the activities are 'done to them'.

Table 5 shows the somewhat effective rating for professional development activities. To a large extent the somewhat effective ranking of activities is the inverse of the highly effective ranking, in that the activities that were not frequently rated as highly effective tended to be frequently rated as somewhat effective. Conferences and lectures were found to be somewhat effective by the highest proportion of teachers who expressed an opinion about the activity (73.1%) followed by 'own reading' and staff or key stage meetings (67.7%). Ignoring 'other', the bottom three places are filled by observation of and by a colleague and team working.

Two activities given as 'other' and rated as somewhat effective by two individuals were undertaking the role of subject co-ordinator and running after-school clubs. These represent two further opportunities focussed outside the teachers' own classroom.

Table 5 *Somewhat effective rating of professional development activities*

Somewhat effective rating of professional development activities		% respondents expressing an opinion about the activity
1	Conferences/lectures	73.1
2=	Own reading	67.7
2=	Staff/key stage meetings	67.7
4	Higher qualification courses	55.6
5	Networking with other schools	54.5
6	Meetings to share good practice	54.4
7	Membership of professional organisations	54.3
8	Action research	53.8
9	Workshops	53.7
10	Job shadowing	50.0
11	Preparing and presenting a paper/project	44.4
12	Being mentored/coached	42.6
13	Mentoring/coaching a colleague	41.9
14	Observation by a colleague	38.6
15	Team working	32.3
16	Observation of a colleague	24.0
	Other - role of subject co-ordinator	100.0
	Other – running after school clubs	100.0

The three activities most frequently rated as somewhat rather than highly effective, attending staff or key stage meetings and ‘own reading’ were experienced by more than 80% of respondents (Table 2) which might prompt concern about the overall effectiveness of professional development opportunities provided for these teachers. The literature provides many reasons why conferences and lectures might be frequently be found to be somewhat as opposed to highly effective. Such activities can be relatively inflexible, which

means they are unlikely to meet the needs of all participants equally well (Guskey, 2000), without follow-up they appear to have little impact on practice or pupil learning (Craft, 2000, Harris *et al.* 2001) and the theory presented may be perceived as too generalised and remote from teachers' practical situations (Korthagen, 2001).

Staff meetings and key stage meetings, although frequently used for professional development purposes such as training, curriculum review, development planning and dissemination of information and resources from colleagues' courses, may reflect whole school priorities and be organised to meet management needs which may be of less importance to respondents than issues related to their own teaching and classrooms.

Teachers engaging in reading to further their professional development may suffer from poor provision of resources, a lack of focus and a lack of support. It is usually a solitary activity and does not benefit from the close working with colleagues that appears to be associated with perceptions of high levels of effectiveness.

The patterns of highly effective and somewhat effective rankings indicate that overall teachers had fairly positive views about the effectiveness of the forms of professional development they had experienced. Taking somewhat and highly effective ratings together, apart from presenting a paper, and membership of professional organisations, which had 62.9% and 73.9% respectively, all forms of professional development were reported as somewhat or highly effective by

more than 80% of those expressing an opinion about them. ‘Meetings to share good practice’ was the only activity that all participants found to be effective to some degree.

Table 6 Somewhat and highly ineffective rating of professional development activities

Forms of professional development	% respondents expressing an opinion about the activity	
	Somewhat ineffective	Highly ineffective
Membership of professional organisations	26.1	-
Preparing and presenting a paper/project	25.9	11.1
Action research	15.4	-
Job shadowing	5.3	-
Networking with other schools	11.4	-
Higher qualification courses	11.1	-
Staff/key stage meetings	10.5	-
Observation by a colleague	9.9	-
Own reading	8.1	-
Conferences/lectures	7.5	1.5
Workshops	4.5	-
Being mentored/coached	4.4	2.9
Mentoring/coaching a colleague	3.2	-
Team-working	1.6	-
Observing a colleague	1.3	-
Meetings to share good practice	-	-

It is interesting to consider the actual results indicating negative opinions about the effectiveness of the activities (Table 6). The first aspect of Table 6 to note is that only three activities were rated highly ineffective. Preparing or presenting a paper was considered to be effective to some degree by less than 63% of those expressing an opinion so its rating as the most highly ineffective activity is in line with this opinion. The highly ineffective rating of conference or lectures by one person, and being mentored or coached by two people, when these activities

were widely considered to be effective to some degree, might be seen as more of a contrast.

One of the two respondents who rated being mentored or coached as highly ineffective wrote in the margin that ‘mentoring in my NQT year was not regular or particularly helpful.’ Two other respondents, one in their fourth year and one in their fifth year also made a note to say that they had not experienced it. They did not make additional comment on any other items. It could be suggested that these teachers felt quite strongly about not receiving the quality of mentoring, to which they felt entitled.

Its lack of opportunity for working closely with a colleague focussed on practice may be the reason that such a large proportion of respondents should find preparing and presenting a paper somewhat ineffective. Membership of professional organisations was found to be somewhat ineffective even more frequently. While this activity also lacks the features for effectiveness already mentioned, it can also be envisaged that teachers may belong to professional organisations in order to protect their individual and professional rights and, although such organisations can provide a wealth of materials and opportunities that may contribute to professional development, teachers usually need to actively seek them out.

Within these overall findings there were differences between teachers in different career years associated with four activities, observing a colleague, being observed, being mentored and mentoring a colleague (Table 7). Specifically,

Table 7 Differences in perceptions of effectiveness between teachers in different career years

Year of career	Rating	Being mentored /coached	Mentoring /coaching colleague	Being observed by colleague	Observation of colleague
1	Highly effective	59.1	33.3	85.0	71.4
	Somewhat effective	36.4	66.7	15.0	28.6
	Somewhat ineffective	4.5	-	-	-
	Highly ineffective	-	-	-	-
2	Highly effective	62.5	33.3	62.5	93.8
	Somewhat effective	31.3	50.0	37.5	6.3
	Somewhat ineffective	-	16.7	-	-
	Highly ineffective	6.3	-	-	-
3	Highly effective	45.5	44.4	25.0	76.9
	Somewhat effective	54.5	55.6	58.3	23.1
	Somewhat ineffective	-	-	16.7	-
	Highly ineffective	-	-	-	-
4	Highly effective	33.3	85.7	15.4	64.3
	Somewhat effective	41.7	14.3	46.2	35.7
	Somewhat ineffective	16.7	-	38.5	-
	Highly ineffective	8.3	-	-	-
5	Highly effective	28.6	66.7	44.4	63.6
	Somewhat effective	71.4	33.3	55.6	27.3
	Somewhat ineffective	-	-	-	9.1
	Highly ineffective	-	-	-	-

there was a significant difference of opinion between teachers in their second and those in their fourth career year (x^2 4.051b; df = 1; $p < = 0.05$). While 93.8% of second year teachers rated observing a colleague as highly effective only 64.3% of fourth year teachers did so and 63.6% of fifth year teachers expressed the same view. Observing a colleague may be especially effective for second year teachers who are beginning to gain more confidence in their own classroom and are receptive to observing others’ practice as a source of professional development. Teachers in their fourth and fifth years of career may already have had some opportunities to learn from the classroom practice of various

colleagues and have some professional development needs that can be more effectively addressed by more focussed activities.

Significant differences of opinion related to being observed are also apparent. In this instance the differences are between first and third year teachers ($\chi^2 = 12.228^a$; $df = 3$; $p < 0.05$), first and fourth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 17.249^a$; $df = 3$; $p < 0.05$) and second and fourth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 11.250^a$; $df = 3$; $p < 0.05$). So on the one hand being observed is considered to be highly effective by 85% of NQTs' and 62.5% of second year teachers, but by only 25.0% of third year and 15.4% of fourth year teachers. This is in some contrast to observing a colleague which is rated as highly effective by more than 60% of teachers in all career years. While opportunities to observe colleagues may be more restricted once induction is completed, teachers are likely to continue being observed by a colleague beyond their induction year, but as part of processes such as monitoring, performance management and Ofsted preparation, when it may be perceived as less supportive and more threatening than when it forms part of induction support. The 44.4% of teachers in their fifth year indicating that being observed is highly effective may be suggestive of greater confidence in their own classroom practice. If these teachers were also involved in observing colleagues as part of subject or management responsibilities they may be inclined to have a more positive view of the effectiveness of the process.

It is interesting to make some comparisons between first and second year teachers. Being observed by a colleague was the activity most frequently identified as highly effective by NQTs (85%). Results from second year teachers

may show them as in a stage of transition. While they may be still be influenced by their earlier beneficial experience of being observed and may still be receptive to direct guidance from others they find it highly effective less frequently than NQTs. On the other hand second year teachers represent a peak of valuing the effectiveness of the observation of colleagues. It may be that in the first year teachers find it most effective to focus on their own practice and by the second year they are also able to benefit from seeing the practice of others and applying it to their own as appropriate.

In their attitudes to the effectiveness of being mentored or coached there are again similarities between teachers in the first two years of career. There are significant differences between first year teachers and those in their fifth year of career ($\chi^2 = 11.354^a$; $df = 4$; $p < 0.05$) and second year and fifth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 9.741^a$; $df = 4$; $p < 0.05$). During the time that teachers were actually entitled to a programme of mentoring support some 59.1% of them found it highly effective. The 62.5% of second year teachers who rated it as highly effective might suggest a valuing of a form of professional development that was generally no longer available to them and possibly indicate an ongoing need for more direct and personal guidance (Bubb, 2004). It may be that after their second year teachers progressively forget how effective it was as they moved through their career. With only 28.6% of fifth year teachers perceiving being mentored or coached to be highly effective, this may well reflect poor provision for these teachers already mentioned in Section 4.2. It is also possible that teachers who have begun their career more recently have benefited from the acknowledged improvements to the induction programme since its introduction

(Bleach and Rhodes, 2004). The decline in perception of being mentored as highly effective may be a comment on the appropriateness of this form of professional development for teachers' current needs and indicate a greater appreciation of other forms of professional development.

Attitudes to mentoring or coaching a colleague also differed between teachers in different career years. In this instance the significant differences were between NQTs and fourth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 8.199^a$; $df = 3$; $p < 0.05$). Only 33.3% of NQTs rated mentoring or coaching a colleague as highly effective in contrast to 85.7% of fourth year teachers who expressed this view. Mentoring a colleague is an activity that has been experienced by an increasing number of teachers in each subsequent career year (Table 3) and it may be supposed that as they become more experienced, teachers feel more confident that they have something to offer and something to learn from mentoring or coaching colleagues. Teachers in earlier years of career may have expressed views of a process in which they have been the recipients of mentoring, rather than the mentor, perhaps not appreciating the possible benefits of the role.

4.5 Criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development activities

Question 6 was an open question asking teachers how they evaluate the effectiveness of professional development activities. Teachers mostly reported using more than one criterion to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development activities. In attempting to 'present the data without

misrepresenting the message’ (Cohen *et al.* 2000) careful consideration was given to the terminology used by the respondents since this is an area where there is some scope for misinterpretation. The analysis of the responses was undertaken initially by compiling a list of all the criteria reported. While this was undertaken categories began to emerge which allowed for the criteria to be grouped. With the aim of reflecting the naturally occurring variations in the responses, they were allocated to categories which were further modified and refined during the process. The data reduction continued until almost all the responses had been accommodated within the categories identified. The few remaining responses were coded as ‘other’. The raw data has been presented numerically and in tables to allow comparisons to be made between criteria and between teachers in different years of career.

Table 8 Criteria used to evaluate effectiveness of professional development activities

	Criteria	% of all responses
1	Impacts on classroom practice	24.1
2	Improves teaching/ as a teacher	14.5
3	Increases knowledge/skills	13.8
4	Provides resources, ideas, etc	11.0
5	Relevance to own situation	9.0
6	Increases confidence/reassurance	8.3
7	Provides school-wide benefits	5.5
8	Other	4.1
9	Assists career development	3.4
10	Improves learning	2.8
11	Provides inspiration/enjoyment	2.1
12	Encourages reflection	1.4

Results in Table 8 show that by far the most commonly cited criterion was the extent to which an activity impacted on classroom practice and was used in teachers’ classrooms. The criteria rated sixth and above can be seen to be related

to improving teachers and providing them with the appropriate knowledge, skills, tools and confidence that they need to teach, including confidence in themselves and in implementing change. Among the criteria that were mentioned less frequently it is interesting to note that, as a criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development, pupils' learning was mentioned only four times. This is in line with recent research findings that, where the impact of professional development is evaluated, it is least frequently evaluated at the pupil level (Goodall *et al.*, 2005).

Other, less frequently used evaluation criteria, acknowledge a focus other than teachers and their immediate classroom concerns and consider benefits for the school as a whole and for teachers' career development. There is little evidence of teachers using criteria related to the language and perspectives of Government documentation relating to improving standards, and providing examples of good practice (DfES, 2001b)

Criteria that were collected together as 'other' and each reported by only one teacher, include that professional development incorporates follow-up activities and opportunities to interact with colleagues, the extent to which they enable teachers to save time, to meet targets and to become familiar with expected standards.

Analysis of the criteria given on the basis of career year (Table 9) shows little by way of any pattern to teachers' views in different career years except to emphasises the importance that teachers in all career years place on evaluating

effectiveness of professional development activities in terms of subsequent impact on classroom practice.

Table 9 Criteria used by teachers in different career years to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development activities.

Criteria. That activity:	% of all criteria given by teachers in each career year				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Impacts on classroom practice	26.7	22.2	24.0	22.2	23.8
Improves teaching/ as a teacher	17.8	11.1	4.0	26.0	9.5
Increases knowledge/skills	17.8	14.8	4.0	7.4	23.8
Provides resources, ideas, etc	6.7	14.8	12.0	11.1	14.3
Increases confidence/reassurance	13.3	11.1	12.0	-	-
Relevant to own situation	6.7	7.4	16.0	7.4	9.5
Provides school-wide benefits	2.2	-	16.0	7.4	4.8
Assists career development	6.7	3.7	-	3.7	-
Other	-	3.7	-	11.1	9.5
Improves learning	2.2	-	8.0	-	4.8
Provides inspiration/enjoyment	-	7.4	-	3.7	-
Encourages reflection	-	-	4.0	-	-

Another noteworthy feature is that teachers in their fourth and fifth years did not include increased confidence as a criterion, while it was given fairly consistently as a criterion by teachers in their first three career years. After three or more years of teaching experience teachers appear not to look to professional development activities to contribute to confidence and reassurance. Teachers in the first year of their career, which has been characterised as a period of ‘survival’ (Nias, 1989, Fessler, 1995), are understood to need ‘guidance and

support' provided by the induction programme (DfES, 2003) while they develop confidence as teachers. However respondents in second and third years, showing that 'learning to teach confidently takes years' (Bubb, 2004, p.9), still sometimes look to professional development activities to reinforce confidence and provide reassurance, once induction support is withdrawn.

4.6 Importance of outcomes of professional development

Question 7 asked teachers to rate a range of outcomes of professional development and to add outcomes not listed. The results in Table 10 indicate that teachers' valuing of the outcomes of professional development would seem, once again, to reflect the importance that they place on their classrooms and their teaching. Those outcomes most frequently seen as very important were improving teaching skills (86.7%) and improving teachers' practice (81.6%). The results of the very important and important ratings together reflect almost the same rank order as the very important rankings alone, with the improvement of teaching skills, teachers' practice and learning outcomes considered important or very important by 100% of respondents and support of Government initiatives and contributing to Ofsted action plans still rated almost the lowest in terms of importance (74.3% and 73.3% respectively).

The ranking of professional development outcomes considered very important, and reflected by importance overall results, reinforces a pattern whereby the closer the outcomes can be perceived to be to teachers and to their work in their own particular teaching contexts, the more frequently they are considered to be

Table 10 Very important and important outcomes of professional development

Professional development can:		% valid responses		
		Very important	Important	Very important/ Important
1	Improve teaching skills	86.7	13.3	100.0
2	Improve teachers' practice	81.6	18.4	100.0
3	Improve learning outcomes	69.3	30.7	100.0
4	Improve teachers' knowledge	67.1	31.6	98.7
5	Assist career development	42.1	55.3	97.4
6	Infirm teachers about educational developments	30.3	64.5	94.8
7	Improve management/leadership skills	37.3	52.0	89.3
8	Contribute to school development plans	22.7	61.3	84.0
9	Support the implementation of Government initiatives	13.5	60.8	74.3
10	Contribute to Ofsted action plans	14.7	58.7	73.3
11	Provide a break from classroom routines	16.0	30.7	48.0

important. As outcomes relate more to teaching in general, management and whole school issues they are increasingly seen as less important, with contributing to Ofsted action plans seen as very important by only 14.7% of respondents. The lowest rating, in terms of importance, of professional development activities providing a break from classroom routine, reinforces that respondents generally hold positive attitudes to the outcomes associated with their development as teachers and their work in the classroom. Respondents were invited to add other outcomes that had not been included on the questionnaire. Two respondents made suggestions which they thought were very important; one was improved confidence, which can be seen to relate closely to teachers, and the other was the opportunity to communicate with colleagues. This could be seen as more removed from teachers and their working context,

although it may well relate to gaining support and information from colleagues, which enables teachers to teach more effectively.

In relation to the outcomes that teachers considered to be not very important or not important at all, Table 11 serves to present a similar pattern to Table 10, but in reverse. Providing a break from classroom routine can be seen to be the only item that was rated as not important by more than half of the respondents overall.

Table 11 Not very important and not important at all outcomes of professional development

Professional development can:		% valid responses		
		Not very important	Not important at all	Not very important/not important at all
1	Provide a break from classroom routine	37.3	14.7	52.0
2	Contribute to Ofsted action plans	21.3	4.0	25.3
3	Support the implementation of Government initiatives	17.6	4.1	21.7
4	Contribute to school development plans	14.7	1.3	16.0
5	Improve management/ leadership	9.3	-	9.3
6	Inform teachers about educational developments	5.3	-	5.3
7	Assist career development	2.6	-	2.6
8	Improve teachers' knowledge	1.3	-	1.3
9=	Improve learning outcomes	-	-	-
9=	Improve teachers' practice	-	-	-
9=	Improve teaching skills	-	-	-

Of particular interest is the third place ranking of improving learning outcomes as very important and its rating by 100% respondents as important or very important. Although it was considered very important less frequently than

teaching skills and practice, this is still in some contrast to its lack of prevalence as a criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development activities in Question 6 (Section 4.5). It could be suggested that attitudes towards the importance of the outcomes of professional development might be reflected in the criteria that teachers use to evaluate its effectiveness. It would appear though that where improving learning outcomes was presented to teachers in a list of possible outcomes they acknowledged its importance, but where they had to choose their own criteria they focussed on other perspectives. A similar process could operate in relation to the importance of assisting career development where thirty-two teachers considered it to be a very important outcome, but only six teachers used it as a criteria for evaluating effectiveness. It should be noted however that there are ten outcomes listed in Question 7 whereas teachers were inclined to include no more than three or four criteria in response to Question 6.

Further analysis of the data from Question 7 indicates that there are two areas where there are significant differences in the opinions of teachers in different year groups, improving teaching skills and improving teachers' practice (Table 12). In relation to both outcomes differences were between teachers in the first three years of career on the one hand and those in their fourth and fifth years on the other. In relation to improving teaching skills the chi-square test indicated significant differences between:

- NQTs and fourth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 5.984$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)
- NQTs and fifth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 6.555$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)

- Second and fourth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 6.857b$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)
- Second and fifth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 6.857b$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)
- Third and fourth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 6.857b$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)
- Third year and fifth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 6.295b$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 12 Rating of outcomes of professional development by teachers in different career years

Career year	Rating	Outcomes of professional development	
		Improve teaching skills	Improve teachers' practice
1	Very important	95.5	90.9
	Important	4.5	9.1
	Not very important	-	-
	Not important at all	-	-
2	Very important	100.0	93.8
	Important	-	6.3
	Not very important	-	-
	Not important at all	-	-
3	Very important	100.0	100.0
	Important	-	-
	Not very important	-	-
	Not important at all	-	-
4	Very important	64.3	57.1
	Important	35.7	42.9
	Not very important	-	-
	Not important at all	-	-
5	Very important	63.6	54.5
	Important	36.4	45.5
	Not very important	-	-
	Not important at all	-	-

All the respondents in second and third years rated improving teaching skills very important and this is in some contrast to fourth and fifth year teachers where only 64.3% and 63.6% respectively held this opinion. A similar situation of teachers in the first three career years holding different opinions to those in the

fourth and fifth years is associated the importance of improving teachers' practice, where statistically significant differences were found between:

- NQTs and fourth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 5.644b$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)
- NQTs and fifth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 5.802b$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)
- Second and fourth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 5.593b$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)
- Second and fifth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 5.797b$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)
- Third and fourth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 7.163b$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$)
- Third year and fifth year teachers ($\chi^2 = 7.464b$; $df = 1$ $p < 0.05$).

While over 90% teachers in the first three years of career think improving teachers' practice is a very important outcome of professional development, only 57.1% of fourth year and 54.5% of fifth year teachers agree with them. The finding that teachers in their fourth and fifth year place less importance on professional development improving skills and teachers' classroom practice than less experienced colleagues suggests a growing confidence in their own teaching competence and is in accord with their not using increased confidence as a criterion for evaluating professional development activities (Section 4.5).

While twelve teachers reported using an increase in confidence as a criterion for evaluating professional development activities in Question 6, it is interesting that only one person included it here in the 'other' category. It could be suggested that this provides an insight into the completion and design of questionnaires rather than teachers' views.

4.7 Professional development activities and experiences that have had an impact on classroom practice

In Question 8 teachers were asked, as an open question, to provide details of a professional development event or experience that had had an impact on their classroom practice. Analysis was undertaken in the same way as with of the previous open question reported in Section 4.5, except that the data was divided into three parts. Each example given was analysed to identify data related to the actual professional development activity, what it was that teachers valued about it and what impact it had on teachers' practice. However in many cases teachers did not refer to all three areas and some teachers gave more than one example. The language used in the responses does not reflect that used in the questionnaire so caution must be exercised in making comparisons with the results of other questions. Information is presented numerically and in table format where this assists clarity and comparisons between items.

Results in Table 13 show that the event or experience most frequently reported as having had an impact on practice was attending a course. Teachers' use of the word course tends to be fairly broad and the nature of the courses reported varied considerably. The term is used in Table 13 to include activities where an 'expert' leads a meeting where information is imparted to an audience, who engage, to varying degrees, in different forms of participation, away from the classroom. Courses that lasted more than one session were reported in more than a quarter of instances, with extended maths courses being specifically mentioned

four times. Other courses covered such subjects as AT 1 science skills, maths through stories and observation skills for foundation stage teachers.

Table 13 Professional development events/experiences that had an impact on classroom practice.

Professional development activity	% all activities reported
Course	57.5
Observing colleagues	18.4
Being observed	12.6
Other learning from colleagues	6.9
Visits to other schools	2.3
Other	2.3

Courses constitute more than half of all the activities reported, far more than the next most frequently reported activity of observing colleagues (18.4%). In this instance colleague was defined broadly to include teachers in own and other schools, ‘lead teachers’, LEA advisors and outside experts. Similarly colleagues carrying out observations included mentors, other teachers, co-ordinators and senior managers in teachers’own schools and LEA advisors and inspectors.

The category ‘other learning from colleagues’ includes specific activities such as mentoring and job shadowing, and more general activities such as ‘support’ and ‘advice’. Responses included as ‘other’ are those which could not be included in the established categories and consisted of non-contact time and a visit to an education exhibition. These two examples are in some contrast to the others as they can be undertaken alone. One teacher responded that no professional development experiences or events had impacted on his classroom practice.

Overall the examples that teachers selected to report as having had an impact on their classroom practice can be summarised as; gaining ‘expert’ or colleague advice, in or out of the classroom, observing how other education professionals carry out their work and support from colleagues.

Teachers’ emphasis on reporting courses as having had an impact on their classroom practice can be compared with the results of the research reported elsewhere. Before this is done it must be remembered that teachers were only requested to give an example of professional development impacting on classroom practice, not to list all such experiences. Caution must also be used in comparing categories from different sections, for instance in comparing categories relating to activities that have had an impact on classroom practice (Section 4.7) with those associated with the effectiveness of professional development activities (Section 4.4). Teachers’ criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development are not totally associated with classroom practice and not all professional development is designed to impact directly on the classroom as in the case of career development and management training. But with these limitations in mind some observations can be made.

The most frequently used criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development experiences (Section 4.5) was reported as the extent to which they had an impact on classroom practice (Table 8) and courses have been selected most frequently as professional development experiences that had impacted on classroom practice (Table 13). But conferences and lectures, included here as courses, were not frequently rated as highly effective (Section

4.4, Table 4). However it was also found that attendance at courses was widely experienced by teachers (Section 4.2, Table 2) and it is likely that teachers have attended courses which varied in content, form and duration as well as quality. While one course may have been highly influential, and comment has already been made on the number of longer courses that had impacted on teachers classroom practice, the great majority of courses attended may have been less effective.

Table14 Professional development events/experiences that had an impact on the practice of teachers in different career years.

Event/activity	% of all activities events reported by teachers in each career year				
	Year1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Courses	44.4	42.9	61.0	93.3	53.8
Observing others	18.5	35.7	16.6	-	23.1
Being observed	22.2	14.3	5.6	-	15.4
Other learning from colleagues	7.4	7.1	11.1		7.7
Visits to other schools	-	-	5.6	6.7	-
Other	7.4	-	-	-	-

Taking the career year of respondents into account, it can be seen that teachers in all years selected courses most frequently as activities that had had an impact on their classroom practice. However, teachers in their fourth year of career reported them almost to the exclusion of other types of event or experience (Table 14). The courses that fourth year teachers reported were varied with two of them lasting two days or more with content relating to subjects such as boys’ achievement and PE. The frequent reporting of courses by fourth year teachers may be indicative of more restricted opportunities available to them, or it may be that some professional development needs of teachers at this stage of their career can be effectively met by course type provision.

The selection of teachers' experiences of observing colleagues and being observed by them as activities that had had an impact on classroom practice is in keeping with their rating for effectiveness (Section 4.4, Table 4). 'Other learning from colleagues' emphasises the importance that teachers place on formal and informal opportunities to learn from other teachers. This reinforces the concerns of teachers reported by Sturman *et al.* (2004) that insufficient time was allocated to sharing knowledge and expertise with new teachers.

Since it was not specifically requested, information as to why and how professional development activities had had an impact was not always reported. Where reports were given considerable repetition of key words indicates that teachers valued activities for their direct application to the classroom. Of the 54 responses in this area, the word 'ideas' was used 16 times, 'practical' was used 10 times and resources or materials were mentioned 8 times, as were strategies associated with teaching and behaviour management. Children and their learning and development were mentioned only 4 times and theory was valued only once and then when it was accompanied by practical sessions. Teachers also valued professional development activities for increasing confidence and morale and for providing support. This was referred to 3 times in relation to positive feedback from being observed during the first year of teaching. It is interesting to note that 2 of these respondents were no longer in their first year and were referring back to what was presumably a very significant aspect of their professional development. Two teachers in fourth year of career reported gaining support and confidence from courses, in one instance when undertaking a new role.

As might be anticipated from the wide variety of courses reported, they were valued for a wide range of attributes and outcomes including providing practical activities and resources, increasing knowledge, providing inspiration, enthusiasm and the confidence to be more innovative, opportunities for discussion with colleagues, providing role play opportunities and, in the case of a two-day course, the opportunity to assimilate what had been learned. The attributes and outcomes of observation activities were more restricted. Being observed was associated with providing positive feedback, and targets and strategies for improvement, as well as increasing confidence and morale. Support from colleagues which was valued for providing opportunities to discuss problems 'off the record'.

The questionnaire asked only for details of the event or experience that had impacted on their classroom practice, but it is interesting to note that only eighteen respondents gave any detail of what that impact was, perhaps illustrating a tendency of teachers not to focus on the effects of professional development at classroom level. Where teachers stated what the impact had been on their classroom practice this was mainly related to effectively applying new techniques, strategies and knowledge gained from the professional development experience. Two teachers also found that the selected example of professional development resulted in their teaching and classroom being more exciting. In relation to pupils, three teachers reported improvements to children's learning from courses and workshops and one teacher reported imparting enthusiasm to pupils as the result of a course.

The features that teachers appreciated from these events and the outcomes that they chose to report correspond with other findings that teachers appear to focus on their own teaching role rather than on children's learning. The range of formal and informal experiences and processes that were reported were valued for providing teachers with the tools to teach effectively including resources, knowledge, confidence and enthusiasm. This reinforces the findings relating to the criteria employed to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development (Section 4.5).

4.8 Summary

A large proportion of the respondents had experienced observation, mentoring and school meetings and the most frequently experienced were largely those activities that are a requirement of induction, or a regular part of school routine. Some of the most widely experienced activities such as key stage or staff meetings and attending courses were frequently rated as only somewhat effective. These activities may tend to be inflexible and not well suited to meet individual needs, being focussed on priorities that may not be those of the participants.

The activities that teachers rate as highly effective are those that involve working closely with colleagues with a focus on teaching. Teachers most frequently consider professional development experiences to have been effective when they bring about improvements to their teaching practices or are used in the classroom. The experiences that teachers report as having affected their

classroom practice are opportunities to see how other education professionals work, colleague advice and support and attendance at course type events.

Although attending conferences and lectures are rated most frequently as somewhat effective, these activities are frequently cited as having had an impact on teachers' classroom practice – a widely used criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development. It would appear that while many of these events fail to have the desired effect, on occasion they can be highly influential on teachers' practice. This situation highlights the need for quality provision of a well-planned and individualised programme of professional development.

The aspects of professional development activities that teachers value are associated with equipping them to undertake their role as teachers. The more remote outcomes can be considered to be from teaching and classrooms the less important teachers consider them. Teachers' perspectives are very much focussed on their teaching in their own classrooms. When children's learning was presented to them as a possible important outcome of professional development it was acknowledged as such, but it was not often included in teachers' own wording of responses.

In a similar way career development was not often referred to by respondents, but was seen as a relatively important outcome of professional development. It was not anticipated that the aspect of professional development activities providing support and increasing morale or confidence would be as prevalent as

it was. As a criterion for evaluating effectiveness it was referred to three times more often than children's learning and featured at a similar level when impact on classroom practice was considered.

It might be suggested that teachers in their first year of career are in a unique situation and that teachers in their second to fifth year of career might more usefully be studied separately from them. The special provision provided for NQTs is acknowledged, but the findings in relation to the issues examined in this research do not indicate that NQTs form a distinctive group compared with slightly more experienced teachers. The induction year provides experiences that help to form teachers' perceptions and attitudes that are likely to persist beyond the actual induction period. Teachers in the first two years of their career held different views to those in later years concerning the effectiveness of mentoring and observation. These activities are components of the induction year and attitudes towards them would appear to persist from induction into teachers' second year of career, with these teachers being especially receptive to the direct guidance associated with being mentored and observed. On the other hand it was teachers in the first three years of career who were more inclined to consider as very important the outcomes of professional development that relate to their actual teaching skills and practices compared with teachers in their fourth and fifth year of career. Along with their lower reports of concern with confidence and reassurance, this may reflect the increased confidence of the more experienced teachers. So this research indicates that where significant differences occur they do not follow a particular pattern, but are most likely to be

between teachers in the first few years of the five year period and those in the later years of the period.

4.9 Implications for the next stage of the research

As with most research, the limitations of this part of the research indicate areas for further work (Oliver, 2004). The findings from the analysis of the questionnaire data indicated several questions and issues that are pursued in the interview stage of the research. No definition of professional or teacher development was given in the questionnaire in the hope that teachers would include information about the activities and experiences that they consider to bring about professional development. But seeking teachers' definitions can provide further insight into the process as teachers experience it. Similarly the terms 'reflection' 'experience' (in the sense of time spent in a teaching career) and 'theory' were purposely avoided in further efforts to encourage teachers to report their own thoughts and wording. The interviews provide an opportunity to investigate teachers' concepts of these terms.

While the questionnaire responses indicate which activities have been experienced they do not provide a picture of the overall professional development provision that teachers receive. Another aspect of provision requiring further investigation is needs identification, since the extent to which needs are met is likely to be associated with perceptions of effectiveness. Similarly the questionnaires provide details of the criteria that teachers use for

evaluating professional development activities, but not how often or consistently these criteria are deployed or evaluations used to inform future actions.

Indications are provided in the questionnaires of which activities teachers find effective, but the interviews provide an opportunity to further explore the concept of effectiveness and the features associated with effective professional development experiences. Equally further data on the outcomes of effective professional development experiences and how important it is for these to relate to teachers' classroom work can be explored.

The interviews also provide the opportunity to gain further insights into attitudes to observation of and by colleagues, the mentoring process and the importance of professional development activities helping to improve teaching skills and providing confidence and reassurance – areas which findings from the questionnaire analysis indicate are viewed differently by teachers in different career years.

This first stage of the research was designed with the aim of addressing the first two research questions regarding the professional development experience of these teachers, what they had found effective and how they evaluate their experiences. It was deemed more appropriate to address the question of the factors that support or inhibit teacher development in an interview situation, including the role played by the school.

The next chapter deals with the interviews and presents the findings that follow from the analysis of the interview data. These provide a picture of early career primary teachers' experience of the process of professional development.

Chapter 5

What the interviews tell us about early career teachers and professional development

Since ‘professional development has never had such a high profile’ (General Teaching Council, 2004) it might have been expected that the professional development experience of early career primary teachers would be found to be well organised and comprehensive. During the interviews the situation that appeared to be emerging was of a piecemeal process lacking organisation and direction.

5.1 The interviews

The interviews were conducted to build on the information gained from analysis of the questionnaires and reference is made to findings from the survey at various points throughout this chapter. The interviews were undertaken during the last three weeks of November 2003. Interviewees were volunteers from the questionnaire respondents. Table 15 provides details of the twelve teachers who were interviewed and selected to be broadly representative of the questionnaire sample within the limitations of those volunteering to be interviewed, with two or three teachers interviewed from each relevant year of career. It should be noted that, as the questionnaires were completed in the summer term and the interviews in the following autumn term, teachers had begun their next year of

career at the time of the interviews. All interviews took place after the end of the school day in

Table 15 Interviewee details

Name	School + no. on roll	1st or subse- quent school	LEA	Year of career	Additional Responsibi- lities	Qualification Route
Jane	RC Primary 446	1st	City	1/2	Girls PE	PGCE
Richard	C of E Primary 208	1st	City	1/2	Music	BA QTS
Vicky	RC Primary 446	1st	City	2/3	DT	BA QTS
Patricia	Primary 165	2nd	Shire	2/3	Music	BEd
Rachel	Primary 116	1st	Shire	3/4	Maths & RE	BA QTS
David	Primary 336	1st	Shire	3/4	CT, Sc, PE & DT (+1 salary point)	BA QTS
Carmel	RC Primary 222	3 rd	City	3/4	Music & Geog,	PGCE
Jonathan	C of E Primary 115	2 nd	Shire	4/5	Sc, DT & unofficial ICT & Sport	BEd
Sandra	RC Primary 106	1 st	Shire	4/5	Geog, ICT & Foundation Stage	BSc QTS
Clare	Primary + Nursery 311	1st	City	4/5	Music	PGCE
Leighton	Primary 71	2 nd	Shire	5/6	Maths & PE	BEd
Lucy	C of E Primary 178	2nd	City	5/6	Maths + DT	PGCE

the interviewees' schools, with the exception of one occasion when, at the interviewee's suggestion, it was conducted in her home. Analysis of the data

produced during the interviews proceeded through the completion of contact summary forms, transcription and the development of matrices, with constant referral back to the data at all stages.

5.2 The professional development experience - identification of professional development needs

Overall the interviewees do not appear to have had access to a robust system of professional development needs identification. Nearly half the teachers talked first about the performance management meeting in relation to needs identification and there was a range of perceptions as to how far respondents were involved in identifying targets and the extent to which these were related to their own development needs.

We talk about things that I feel I want to develop or she tells me about things she thinks I need to do. (Carmel)

But up till now it has only been the needs of the school I feel, as opposed to the needs of the individual. There's one aspect, they almost tell you what that's going to be, so even if you've got an area they still have the last say. (Vicky)

It would appear that satisfaction with the process is to do with personal circumstances and perceptions as well as the system. Vicky felt strongly that her needs were not being met and that professional development was for the school

rather than her, but Jane, who works at the same school and in the same team, seemed happy with her contribution to the review process:

We just discussed and decided what the targets were going to be with my team leader...But I've certainly had input in them. (Jane)

There was also little evidence of the performance review as part of an on-going process supporting teacher development. Teachers reported a lack of proper assessment, and possible celebration, of what had been achieved in relation to targets from previous performance management reviews:

But at the next meeting they're only very briefly reviewed. You don't do it at all really. (Rachel)

Although two teachers reported performance management procedures involving target setting, termly review and the setting of new targets. There were instances where the system did not work in the intended way:

We have a system that starts with an observation, then a meeting, with a review held half way through and then an observation and a review at the end, but it just doesn't happen. (David)

When it first came out we all had to go for an interview and I was a bit awkward...But no one has ever had another performance management to assess those targets. (Clare)

There was only one report of individual needs, identified during a performance review, being followed up by professional development activities and no other reports of activities or planning to meet individual needs identified in the performance review. There were however, instances of teachers attending courses on topics relating to school priorities and several teachers reported professional development activities related to preparation for Ofsted inspections, such as reviewing policies and being observed teaching.

Recognising their own professional development needs was the main source of identification for almost all the respondents:

I think I'm like most teachers; quite critical of myself. So I know where my weaknesses are. (Clare)

Awareness of their needs resulted from acknowledgment of a lack of knowledge or experience, from areas of uncertainty and as the result of confronting a problem, in Patricia and Sandra's cases, when compared with the perceived needs of the class, such as special educational needs. One of the few references to pupils' learning throughout the whole of the interviews was Richard's comment that it was the children's reaction to his teaching that indicated to him where his development needs lay. The problem of finding professional development opportunities to match needs was avoided by two teachers who looked through a booklet of available courses as a means of establishing their needs. Apart from opportunities presented during performance management

reviews Patricia, beginning her third year of career, was the only person to mention identifying needs with the assistance of a colleague, specifically as a result of being observed.

5.3 The professional development experience - opportunities and entitlement

None of the teachers interviewed reported having a current, formal, explicit entitlement to professional development in terms of money available or the number of events that could be attended. Patricia had been entitled to a termly, half day of non-contact time and two courses in the previous year, but, because of the difficult budget position, that was no longer the case. However she found the concept of an entitlement amusing since, although opportunities to attend external events were limited:

If you need professional development it will happen because people do not want you to fall by the wayside or feel that you can't cope with things. (Patricia)

Only Jonathan and Sandra reported having timetabled release time in which they could engage in developmental activities. There was almost universally a system where teachers requested attendance on courses as the need arose. All the teachers appeared reasonably satisfied with the professional development opportunities the school could offer them, recognising the constraints on budgets and release time. Some staff commented that their professional development

requests would need to fit with their age range or subject responsibilities and Clare doubted that she would be able to visit another school if cover was needed, but was usually able to attend appropriate courses. Several teachers talked of seeking advice and assistance from colleagues in school who appeared to respond to any requests. A comment was made that such support often requires extra time commitment on the part of those seeking and providing it.

The support is here, but it does come out of your own time largely.
(Patricia)

5.4 The professional development experience - anticipated outcomes

The picture of professional development for early career teachers as somewhat piecemeal and lacking coherent planning is emphasised by the fact that about half the teachers said they did not usually have specific or desired outcomes in mind when they made professional development decisions or participated in events. Where reasons were given it was due to not having a clear idea of what the outcomes might be beforehand, the limited choice in arranging professional development opportunities, or, frequently, to the experience of not having expectations met in the past:

But I think if you go in open minded there is less chance of you coming out feeling negative about it, because you're not expecting anything as such, you're just expecting to get something from it. (Clare)

Some teachers had occasions when they undertook professional development with an open mind about outcomes, but at other times had specific requirements, often related to school priorities or the subjects they managed:

I think it's quite good to go with an open mind, but if you've booked planning you've done that because that's an area you want to develop.
(Carmel)

Where the majority of comments related to the outcomes of courses, two teachers mentioned activities and opportunities that only became apparent as developmental in retrospect:

On my maths course I wanted to know how to use an interactive white board, but there are other forms that you don't realise are professional development at the time. (Rachel)

While acknowledging the frustration of attending a course that did not meet her needs, only Patricia was absolutely positive about having definite goals to be met when planning or embarking on professional development since, as a teacher, learning objectives were so prevalent in her work.

5.5 The professional development experience – activities and events

While analysis of the questionnaires provided information about the range of professional development activities that respondents had experienced, the

intention in the interviews was to gain an understanding of the balance of the various activities and experiences as they constitute an on-going process. It should be noted that during the interviews, teachers were presented with findings from the questionnaire analysis so they may have been inclined to comment on those activities that were listed and for me as interviewer to ask supplementary questions based upon them.

The most regularly reported form of professional development experienced was the, mostly weekly, staff meeting. This was reported by almost all the respondents and four of them also had weekly or fortnightly phase/key stage meetings. Teachers noted that although they were frequently used as occasion for members of staff to give feed-back about courses they had attended, the purpose of staff meetings was frequently related to school management rather than teacher development. Reflecting this view, five teachers reported that the main proportion of their professional development experience was made up of courses and related activities, despite having weekly staff meetings.

For most teachers courses were considered to be a significant part of their professional development experience. All the interviewees commented on courses throughout the interviews. Four teachers mentioned the frequency of courses attended as an NQT with attendance varying from two a term to two a week most weeks. This frequency had reduced the following year with the pattern of course attendance for post-induction years tending to relate to training, especially for new initiatives, meetings for subject management, frequently at twilight sessions, and other relevant courses as they occurred. So the actual

number attended depended to some extent on the range of subjects managed as well as particular needs and resources, but typically would be one or two a term. Sandra reported a far from typical attendance at fourteen courses, cluster meetings and school INSET events in the fourth year of her career. School based INSET or teacher training days were not mentioned by everyone, but Leighton pointed out that these tended to occur about three times a year. All those who worked in the foundation stage referred to attendance at cluster meetings usually once or twice a term, but this form of meetings was not replicated for teachers of other key stages. Specific mention of attendance at workshops and conferences was infrequent.

Other than courses and meetings, professional development activities that were reported as regularly experienced were associated with observations, especially during the induction year, involving personnel from within and outside the school, but individual experience varied quite considerably. Jonathan was able to observe teachers of all the other year groups in the school, but was observed only by his mentor. On the other hand Rachel had been observed sixteen times as an NQT, as part of her induction and because the school was in special measures, but had no opportunities to observe others at that time and very little opportunity since. Patricia reported that she had observed other teachers as part of her induction programme and identified that being observed had been her most frequent professional development activity since her induction, in preparation for Ofsted inspection. Three teachers commented that observation did not make up a large part of their professional development experience at all. David, in his fourth year of career had only ever observed two colleague and

been observed three times. Clare had only observed two colleagues and been observed twice despite being in the fifth year of her career. In contrast Leighton in his sixth year of teaching reported being observed about twice a term by the head, deputy, subject co-ordinators and, recently, Ofsted inspectors. It was in relation to being observed that most comments were made about mentors.

Five teachers, who had recently completed their first or fourth year of career, referred to having had a mentor during their induction year and for two of these teachers it was a very limited or much neglected process. A teacher beginning her third career year reported that her NQT mentor had mostly been 'away', contributing to a 'disastrous' induction year. David had enjoyed an informal mentor type relationship with the deputy head and Leighton, beginning his sixth year in teaching, commented that, at a time when it was recommended, he had not been allocated a mentor as an NQT. Two teachers reported that, in the third year of their career, they had mentored colleagues.

When teachers were asked about opportunities for reflection it did not appear to be an important element of the professional development experience. Leighton was the only teacher to have mentioned it before being specifically questioned about it, although when asked, Carmel identified herself with Leighton, as a reflective practitioner. Half of the respondents commented that they had little or no time to undertake reflection, or that they only had the opportunity to do it in their own time, during lessons, or during performance management reviews. Much of what was reported was undertaken alone without the assistance of a

critical friend. Even where school systems and policy allowed for reflection it did not always occur:

only the performance management at the end of the year, but it's not for reflection. I wouldn't say it's an overall reflection either. It's quickly pick one out in the time before you've got to get back to class. (Vicky)

I probably spend very little time actually reflecting, actually giving time to reflecting how I am teaching. (Clare)

On our planning we have a section where we are supposed to reflect, but only about two staff fill it in. I tend to look forward rather than back, so I suppose reflection is part of that. (David)

Where it did occur, the majority of instances quoted were concerned with personal reflection on how lessons were going or had gone, with a view to improvement for the next time or to inform planning and assessment. The instances given were often:

when things go wrong rather than when they go right. (Richard)

Some instances were given of reflecting with others and in a wider context, such as after observation and during staff meetings and teacher days. Where teachers gave several examples of taking opportunities to reflect some very positive comments were made:

Well you're always reflecting on your own practice, because, in theory, it does shape your teaching as you carry on. Our planning involves reflecting, because we always look at where children were, where they've got to, any problems that occurred in the week or in a particular lesson, and so there's time built into your planning for that. And I suppose after observation. I think reflection goes on all the time, but it isn't necessarily communicated with anybody, but it could make a large impact on your teaching. (Patricia)

Jane, who was conscious of her own role in making professional development effective, drew attention to the fact that reflection may aid professional development, but may not be developmental in itself.

Several teachers had worked as part of a teaching team or year group team with regular meetings and weekly planning. Three interviewees were in the process of undertaking Master's degrees on a part-time basis. This represents a relatively high proportion of the group (and two other teachers spoke of wanting to undertake a Master's degree in the future), but perhaps is not surprising as teachers who are interested in undertaking further study might well be more motivated and willing than others to become involved in this sort of research. The three teachers involved, Vicky, David and Leighton were probably the three interviewees who were least satisfied with their experiences of professional development provided by the school and LEA. David and Leighton both described themselves as 'cynical' in relation to their experiences and Vicky was

very disillusioned that the support she was offered in her second year of teaching did not address her needs as she perceived them.

Individual reports of other regular professional development experiences were probably significantly affected by personal perceptions and experiences of what constitutes professional development. Jane considered the feedback from half-termly monitoring as part of her professional development experience. Patricia reported that although money to attend courses was limited, within school there were continual developmental opportunities such as informal discussion and advice from other members of staff and support and advice on planning from the headteacher.

Other activities that were reported as having occurred less frequently were shadowing or working alongside the subject co-ordinator from whom interviewees had taken over responsibilities. Three teachers spoke of class swapping as an occasional experience. Leighton had undertaken action research, within school and at county level. He was also one of four teachers who regarded reading as a source of professional development, which for Clare, was limited to the education press and, along with several other teachers, she expressed the opinion that finding time for reading education literature was very limited.

Teachers had occasional opportunities to visit other schools, mostly as part of their induction year or through early years cluster group meetings as already mentioned. Clare however had visited a primary school in Finland with

colleagues from her school, at their own expense and in their own time. The fact that she only mentioned this as an explanation for reading articles passed to her by the headteacher on education in Finland, probably reflects the point that teachers emphasised the things that they found to be professionally developmental. Clare spoke of the trip as interesting, but felt that the teaching context in Finland was far removed from that of her situation.

5.6 The professional development experience - follow-up to activities and events

All interviewees suggested that there was a system of feedback to colleagues after course attendance, usually at staff meetings, although several teachers reported that there was scope for more informal reporting back. The majority reported that formal feedback was not necessarily an automatic process and that it mostly occurred where it was judged to be useful:

If you go on a course you are expected to report back to relevant people about it, so usually it happens at either a staff meeting if it's a whole school thing or a key stage meeting. If it's a music co-ordinators meeting, nobody ever really asks me about it, that's pretty much just for me. But if it's a more general course like modern foreign languages, I came back and reported to everybody in Key Stage 2 what we'd done so they could do it as well. (Clare)

There was universal agreement that the system of feed-back to colleagues after courses provided a professional development opportunity, with interviewees benefiting from the professional development experiences of others. But appreciation ranged from Leighton's supposition that he must have benefited without any actual concrete recollection, to Sandra's unreserved endorsement of it as a good way to share ideas. The benefits of this feedback were often related to ideas and resources that could be used in the classroom. Richard reported two, and Jonathan reported one school-based training day that was part of a whole school initiative that included further staff discussion and action. There was little evidence of professional development events being followed up in any other ways.

5.7 The professional development experience - evaluating professional development

Interviewees' attitudes to evaluating professional development opportunities seem to be summed up by Lucy and Leighton:

I think that's a big area that none of us really do that much of. (Lucy)

I know they haven't got a strategy for doing it that works. (Leighton)

There was a tendency, when talking about evaluating professional development opportunities, to comment on course type activities. Several teachers equated evaluation with making judgements about the presentation of the course, or the

work and effort put in by members of staff for school-based activities, with little or no consideration of anticipated outcomes being achieved.

Some teachers, with differing lengths of service, talked of a wider view of what evaluation ought to be. Richard expressed a desire for more of an overview of what he had achieved rather than just 'snippets'. Jonathan considered that it was important that targets were set, reviewed and new ones set for professional development, just as they would be for pupils' learning. And Rachel talked of evaluating the benefits to the school as well as the individual and emphasised the need for a safe environment in which to admit to weaknesses. But these were teachers' ideals rather than their actual experiences.

Teachers who tended to view evaluation as a judgement of quality of events were likely to use their evaluations to determine whether or not to attend future courses. Leighton reported that his evaluations resulted in avoiding courses whenever he could. David acknowledged that although evaluation should, it did not affect future decision making. Only two teachers reported actually using evaluation to gauge the effect of their experience on their own personal progress and using their judgements to inform future decision making regarding targets and focus for professional development activity:

I went to visit several different settings, but I would go with a different focus each time, because I'd get so far and then I'd think, 'Well what now am I missing; what do I now need?' (Sandra)

Besides the informal individual evaluation there were five instances of more formal systems in place. Two teachers filled in forms after course attendance, but these appeared to be for information only and two teachers reported that in practice no one actually completed them. Only Carmel had the benefit of a school system requiring forms to be completed after professional development activities prompting her to consider how the benefits from the activity might be incorporated in school:

when you come back into school daily life takes over again. If you don't look back at it and really decide how you are going to use it then it's just pointless isn't it? (Carmel)

When teachers were asked about the specific criteria they used to evaluate professional development activities they most frequently said that they made judgements in terms of what they had gained from it and what they could use in the classroom and school.

5.8 Doing it right

Analysis of the questionnaire data indicated that confidence, reassurance and support were more widely valued outcomes of professional development activities than had been anticipated, mostly for those teachers in the first three years of their career. There was no indication from the interviews that after their third year of career teachers are less concerned that professional development experiences should increase their confidence and reassurance. Clare, Jonathan

and Leighton who had recently completed four or five years in teaching all commented on its importance. Teachers across the range of career years were anxious about 'doing it right' and coping with expectations. All interviewees thought there was a need for professional development to provide reassurance and confidence, both to encourage teachers that they were delivering what was expected and to counter accountability pressures and criticism that teachers saw as coming from 'everybody':

you're never told you're doing it right. (Jonathan)

we need reassurance about what we're doing. (Richard)

reassurance ... that I'm doing it right. (Sandra)

It was especially noteworthy that some courses not only failed to provide confidence and reassurance, but actually had the opposite effect. LEA courses in particular were seen as a major source of concern. There was an apparent mismatch between teachers' perceptions of their own performance and the perceived message about what was 'required' of them:

I think LEA courses inhibit. (Leighton)

Courses can give you the feeling that you're doing it all wrong. (Lucy)

I just think a lot of them are so unrealistic and you end up feeling, sometimes, quite inadequate. (Jonathan)

There is too much that is negative. LEA courses always make me feel bad. (Rachel)

There was also a sense of the message and accountability being passed on, with Leighton commenting that it came for the LEA to heads and then on to teachers, with everyone carrying out their responsibility to pass on the message rather than trying to build on what had already happened with previous requirements. David was aware of co-ordinators attending meetings and then feeding-back to staff exactly what they had been told so that they were 'just off-loading the pressure on to teachers'.

Some teachers also felt that they had little or no choice in attending courses or training which they felt was not appropriate. Rachel spoke of 'being put on courses', and David and Vicky both gave instances of having to attend training that they had already undertaken.

Three teachers spoke of having to prioritise from all the responses that were required of them as to which ones they would tackle first or which ones they would tackle at all, and three teachers referred to having to establish a work-life balance and of not letting the job take over their life.

Having been struck by the emphasis that teachers placed on reassurance and striving to do things in an approved way and especially the negative effects of professional development events and experiences that communicated expectations to teachers, I looked for evidence that this situation was balanced by instances of teachers exercising their own judgement as to how to do it right, having confidence in their own expertise and generally displaying a degree of independence and autonomy.

Mention has already been made of the high proportion of teachers identifying their own professional development needs as an indication of a lack of a comprehensive system, but it can also be seen as teachers taking some responsibility for their own professional development, in a system that frequently neglects them. Ten of the teachers spoke, not only of identifying their own development needs, but also of taking some independent action to satisfy them. This usually took the form of seeking help from school colleagues, especially subject co-ordinators, but also included Sandra and Carmel applying for bursaries to meet the cost of activities they had identified to address their professional development, and others engaging in reading. Comment has already been made of the three teachers who were undertaking a Masters' course, and all three made reference to meeting their needs outside of the school provision. David considered that reading for his course satisfied his own interests, as distinct from those of the school.

Teachers' views on the place of educational theory were varied and sometimes confused or contradictory, possibly displaying a lack of clear definition of the

term in the interviews. Responses concerning theory provide examples of an awareness of the imposed nature of the curriculum and of expertise based outside the classroom, but there were also views that there is a role for teachers in applying theory. Patricia, having experienced a difficult first four terms in her career in a non-supportive school, still indicated, at the beginning of her third year of career, a need for an expert to demonstrate how theory presented in courses could be applied:

unless you're showing us how you put that into practice and how that influences your teaching it's a waste of time. Just because I know that some people learn visually...its not going to help me unless you say, so if you do this, or you do this, that would help. (Patricia)

Rachel considered that theory was divided into two types, one was the 'beneficial' type that would be used on a Masters' course, the other was the type of theory presented by the LEA amounting to 'what we should be doing', which she saw as very idealistic and problematic to achieve. Clare shared a similar notion. While she expressed an interest in revisiting the theory she learned at university in the light of her four years of teaching experience, and appreciated that experience provided opportunities to apply theory in practice, she also found it difficult to put expectations into practice, without practical guidance as to how it could be achieved. There were also attitudes expressed by a couple of teachers indicating that they saw theory as an 'option':

Well I think, I think it depends on the person, doesn't it, whether experience or whether theory works for you better? (Vicky)

Teachers also demonstrated that they saw a role for teachers in using their judgement in the use of theory. Vicky and Jonathan both expressed the need to be given a range of theories and strategies from which they could select. And while Jane and David both spoke of teachers needing to adapt theory to fit their own situation, this was more in relation to bridging the gap between theory and practice rather than as an opportunity for exercising judgment. Leighton and Carmel seemed to have positive attitudes to theory and did not appear to see it as problematic. They shared the view that although teachers might know what to do in the classroom theory provided the explanation as to why.

Other examples of teachers enjoying some autonomy and independence and using their own judgement could also be found. These opportunities would seem to increase as careers progressed, but less experienced teachers were not precluded from wanting them. Jonathan, in his fifth year of career, and Vicky beginning her third, had both experienced team planning and Jonathan now appreciated opportunities to plan alone, where Vicky wanted the opportunity to do so. Sandra commented that she had now developed her own 'unique' style, as opposed the way others would do things. Leighton rejected the notion of good practice and the 'super-teacher tag':

It sounds as though everyone thinks they have to be a clone. (Leighton)

Leighton, Jonathan and Rachel indicated resentment at being told what to do, preferring to find out how others did things and deciding what to try for themselves so that:

at least you can learn from each other, rather than being dictated to.

(Rachel)

Subject management, and especially of music, also provided examples of teachers displaying confidence in their own abilities and judgement. Clare expressed frustration about experienced teachers' inability to ask for help with her subject with which they were struggling when she was eager to provide assistance. Carmel and Richard both reported that while they were happy to attend most courses with an open mind, they had very specific objectives in mind when attending music courses and Richard's strong views on assessment of music, differed from the recommendations of the LEA, which he was not willing to apply, even, he joked, if it resulted in his being sacked. Other teachers spoke confidently of feeding back at staff meetings on courses concerning their subject specialisms.

The situation would seem to be that, around the edges of the areas dictated by government and school priorities, some teachers can see a 'space' to exercise their professional judgement and that there is some desire to exert a degree of professional judgement or autonomy, often in the face of constraints and pressure from 'the system'.

5.9 Professional development outcomes

While the literature emphasises that the ultimate end of professional development is to improve children's learning, during the interviews it was noticeable that interviewees referred very little to pupils' progress, but reported a wide range of professional development outcomes.

In responding to the questionnaires, where outcomes were presented for teachers to choose from, they indicated that the most important outcomes of professional development were associated with teaching and learning in their own classrooms. Where teachers were free to construct their own responses in the interviews they were inclined to emphasise the teaching related outcomes and make limited references to learning. The notion of professional development improving the work that teachers do was powerfully presented when interviewees defined the term professional development and gave reasons why they valued it. Teachers most often related it to becoming better and well informed teachers, keeping abreast of constant change and in some instances, continuing the development begun in initial teacher training:

Anything that improves you as a teacher. (Rachel)

making me become a better teacher. (Clare)

things are changing so much that you continuously need the courses and professional development to keep up with things. (Lucy)

Being a new teacher and doing a PGCE, that one year was very quick and, certainly starting my first year, I just felt it didn't really prepare me at all for what it was going to be like and especially not enough experience in schools. So I try to go on whatever I can. (Carmel)

Six teachers also associated professional development with advancing their careers. Other features were that it assisted teachers in their role as subject managers and helped them become more effective and efficient in time management. Richard valued professional development activities that provided the opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues.

Differences in individual attitudes to their experiences of professional development are perhaps reflected in comments about the purposes of the process:

developing what you are good at and what you enjoy. (Vicky)

to tweak existing skills and implement new knowledge. (Leighton)

developing your weaknesses or what the government tells you your weaknesses are. (David)

It is interesting to note that in discussing definitions and the value of professional development the only mention of children was Clare's view that she needed to

keep the children up-to-date as well as herself, but there were no references to children's attainment.

It was only when teachers were asked specifically about the importance of classroom related outcomes and evaluation criteria for professional development activities, that there was any emphasis on the role of professional development in enhancing children's learning with half the teachers making comments such as:

I don't see what the other aim is really. The whole point of being professional development is to be a better teacher...to make good progress with the children in your class. (Jonathan)

It's all about benefits for the kids, through teaching, to make education enjoyable. (David)

However this still left six teachers who followed the more usual overall trend of focussing on their teaching:

as long as it addresses my skills as a teacher. (Rachel)

When teachers were asked to sum up what had changed as a result of professional development and especially in relation to their practice, attitudes and beliefs there was universal acknowledgement that professional development had had an effect on practice. All teachers had given examples of professional development affecting their practice during the course of the interviews, although

in Leighton's case it was somewhat tentative. His response to the question of what changes had occurred as a result of professional development activities was:

I don't know, none probably. (Leighton)

However he acknowledged elsewhere that:

You bring back something and you think I'll use that book or I'll use that resource or I might try that way round of doing things or whatever and it might put a little bit in there and perhaps all those little bits then do develop in improving your teaching. (Leighton)

Jonathan was eager to emphasise that changes to his practice were related to curriculum delivery:

I don't think I've changed in terms of teaching style...it's more in how it's delivered that's changed. (Jonathan)

On the other hand, Sandra, like Jonathan beginning her fifth year in teaching believed that she had now developed her own teaching style, rather than 'modelling' herself on teachers she had observed.

Teachers were less sure that professional development had changed attitudes, and where they had been affected, there were negative as well as positive effects.

Richard had become more career-minded and now took part in a wider range of school activities including becoming a teacher governor. Patricia recounted how her attitude had changed as a result of her experiences in two very different schools and through a range of professional development activities:

I went in thinking, 'I know what I'm doing, no problem'. And through experiences in school and discussion and observation and courses and all sorts of things my opinion of myself has completely changed and I've realised that you're always learning. You're always finding new ways of doing things. (Patricia)

In relation to negative effects, David and Leighton reported that they had become more cynical through their general and professional development experiences and David now retained enthusiasm only for teaching PE. The negative effects of courses have already been mentioned in Section 5.8.

There were few instances of teachers considering that their beliefs had been changed by professional development:

Beliefs, it hasn't changed (Sandra).

I wouldn't say they've changed (Jane).

In the two instances where there had been a change in beliefs, one was the result of a specific RE course and resulted in disaffection concerning religious beliefs.

The other was the result of professional development in general and resulted in Carmel recognising the importance of teamwork and discussion with other teachers rather than being overly self-reliant:

I think when you first start you think you should know it all (Carmel).

An examination of references to outcomes of professional development experiences throughout the interviews reinforces that, for these teachers, the outcomes are to do with improving teaching, with classroom and subject management, extending knowledge and keeping up-to-date, resource awareness, gaining new ideas, effective time management, improvements and adaptations to planning, assessment and record keeping, career advancement, awareness of the need for continuing professional development, and development of teaching style. But several teachers included outcomes associated not only with confidence and reassurance, but also with self-esteem, motivation and enthusiasm, as well as advice and problem solving. There were also references to the development and application of school policies, improving staff relations and improving extra curricular activities.

It is interesting to note outcomes that could be termed 'enlightenment'. One teacher spoke of courses not having an immediate impact, but then attending another course and it being like a:

light bulb going on about the other courses. (Vicky)

A couple of teachers also referred to instances where there seems to have been a sudden awareness or understanding:

And this course really opened my eyes. (Sandra)

It was a visit to a special school and I couldn't even see the point of it at the time. But I did see the point once I'd gone. (Lucy)

These instances were considered by the teachers to be quite significant steps, and Leighton refers to the notion of significant points of enlightenment when speaking about the limitations of formal professional development activities:

But I don't think you have any big bang thing where you go somewhere and...you come back and you do it this way now. (Leighton)

So a considerable proportion of outcomes could be considered to be associated with improving the work of teachers as classroom practitioners and promoting the affective state necessary to undertake the role and its challenges. Questionnaire respondents indicated that improving teaching skills and practice were seen as very important outcomes of professional development activities more frequently by teachers in the first three years of their career than those with more experience, but there was no indication of this distinction in the interviews. However, when asked what it was that they valued about their professional development opportunities responses indicate that at a time of rapid educational change, those who have completed their training most recently may be more

confident with innovations covered in their courses, while those who have taught for longer may feel less well informed about these and other changes. All but one of the teachers who had recently completed their fourth or fifth year commented on the importance of professional development activities keeping them 'up-to-date'. Teachers at all career years were also interested in outcomes associated with career development and improving their role as subject managers as well as other school level outcomes, such as running after school clubs.

5.10 The sources of professional development outcomes

As might be anticipated the various outcomes were frequently the consequence of different professional development activities and experiences and the broader the outcome the more activities and experiences tended to be associated with it (Appendix 5), and obviously different activities are designed to bring about different outcomes. Potential improvements or adaptations to teaching were reported as associated with twelve different activities, ranging from school-based INSET and courses to observing others and being observed. Sandra reported how teaching the same age group for a second year enabled her to act on the problems she had identified the year before and to tackle them more effectively. Jane suggested that feedback from planning monitoring had been influential regarding different ways of teaching and presenting work to children.

On the other hand, awareness and acquisition of resources was associated with only four activities and mostly with courses, either attended by the respondents

or other members of the school staff who subsequently disseminated information:

The LEA ICT advisor ran a session, he gave us a CD ROM with hundreds of sites for maths, so we can just find what we want and I thought, 'I'm so glad I came on this course!' (Rachel)

Lucy had a similar experience from an early years cluster meeting that had provided a bag of resources for each teacher to take away.

5.11 What works for teachers

There is much in the literature that focuses on the failings of professional development activities as they are experienced by the majority of teachers and much that prescribes how that experience could be improved. My interest here lies in examining the factors and features of activities, events and experiences that teachers find significant in bringing about their professional development. The somewhat contradictory findings from the questionnaires, that courses were generally considered to be only somewhat effective, but frequently cited as bringing about changes in practice are reflected in the interview responses.

Interviewees tended to agree that conferences, lectures and courses were less effective than observation, mentoring and team working. The very negative comments about experiences of courses especially those provided by the LEA

have already been referred to in Section 5.8 and there was much other criticism of courses:

I can't really say that I've been on many courses that I've really found useful...even if I've thought them good at the time. (Jonathan)

Other criticisms related to issues such as 'experts' not providing adequate assistance with teachers' problems, such as curriculum adaptations for mixed age classes, or not recognising problems of implementation related to adult-pupil ratios.

In a similar finding to the analysis of the questionnaire data, interviewees agreed that courses are only somewhat effective, but when asked what their best professional development experience had been, nearly half of the interviewees described a course type activity, ranging from behaviour management and on-going subject manager courses to a school-based INSET day on thinking and learning skills, a maths conference and a three day literacy and numeracy course. The courses were valued for the appropriate resources and practical strategies that had been provided and were subsequently used in the classroom. Analysis of these and other examples of courses that teachers valued or considered successful provide a series of what would appear to be significant factors. These are examined in some detail.

The findings from the questionnaire analysis and interview definitions of professional development indicate an emphasis on teachers' classroom work, and in line with this emphasis, when teachers spoke of effective professional

development they were often described as providing what was ‘practical’, ‘useable’, ‘useful’, ‘helpful’ and ‘easily implemented’ and often included resources and sometimes lightened teachers’ work load. Attitudes seem to be summed up by Clare’s comments on attending a course on managing modern foreign languages about which she had concerns:

We came back with a long list of games we could play with the class and activities that we could do, which you can then take straight into your classroom. So its something that you can use, it’s not just helping you plan, its helping you actually teach a thing, but then also giving you practical things that you can pick up and say, ‘Right I’m going to do that today’, and you do it and you feel like you’ve achieved something and you’ve gained something from it. It’s made life a bit easier. (Clare)

Another significant factor appears to be the style of presentation. There was criticism of the over-use of paper and reading, so that teachers became ‘bogged down’ or were disinclined to read it at all. Being ‘talked at’ was also highlighted for criticism. There was a tendency to compare courses teachers had experienced with the accepted wisdom on planning and presenting lessons to pupils:

it wasn’t handing out all the paperwork...or reading...so it was really good...It was just a different way of presenting the curriculum and learning through it (Richard).

We accept that children need more than just being talked at, but you go on some courses and that is what they do. (Rachel)

Richard valued a course that included an element of demonstration:

I mean if you were honest that's basically how we teach children and there's not a vast difference...why should we be different? (Richard)

Comparisons with classroom lessons were evident again, this time in relation to actually taking on the role of pupils:

I went on a TOPs swimming course and we had to get into the pool and I thought, 'Oh my God, I nearly kill my children every week!' It was such a good experience, to make you think about what was going on. (Rachel)

On the other hand Sandra complained about a course where the same video clip was shown three times for different purposes, when it could have been shown once:

maybe treat us a little bit more like adults (Sandra).

The notion of the course being appropriate for the teacher's context was also important, so that what had been learned or gained from courses could be carried forward. The issues of relevance and appropriateness were seen as relating to several factors; the situation in which teachers work, school priorities and

budgetary considerations. The content needed to address teachers' and schools' current needs, interests and priorities and not cover old ground:

I went on this course and it showed how ICT can be integrated into science...Last year that course would have been no good for me because we didn't have the money for the resources. (David)

I think...you go on courses sometimes and you get a lot of motivation from courses and then you come back into school, and with individual children being in the class, or the way things go, you can't actually put what you have learned on that course into practice. It might be the fact that we haven't got the resources available, it might be the fact that we haven't got enough adults in the classroom. (Lucy)

It depends how relevant it is at the time...if they're not relevant to what you're doing you're not going to actually improve your teaching or your school's performance. (Vicky)

School priorities could also affect support and interest from other members of staff. There were instances of school-based INSET that affected interviewees' teaching or behaviour management, not just because they gave practical information and included demonstration or participation, but also because they addressed school priorities and were followed up in school with further opportunities for discussion and colleague support.

Overall the aspects of courses that work for teachers would seem to be well represented by a course that Patricia described as; 'spot on'. The course was designed to help motivate the school choir, the running of which was part of Patricia's subject management responsibility. It was 'incredibly interesting'. the ideas were easy to use, participants were given resources and they worked through each activity as a group as though they were the children. On returning to school Patricia was able to present the ideas to the children just as they had been presented to her. She was able to feed back and enthuse other staff and money was available to buy further suggested resources, the children responded well and other staff used the ideas and resources in singing lessons with their classes. Patricia saw it as having had a 'really positive impact'.

In relation to other forms of professional development, interviewees endorsed the findings from the questionnaire that observation, mentoring and team working were among the most effective forms of professional development. The only negative aspects that were associated with observing colleagues were that Lucy found it daunting to give feedback, Leighton found it irritating, since teachers do not all teach alike and respond in different ways to the same situation. Clare reported that staff in her school, like several interviewees, found being observed daunting and were reluctant to participate in the process.

Observing other teachers was less threatening than being observed and all teachers, except one, found at least one positive comment to make about it with six teachers identifying it as being significant in their professional development. Observing others allowed for personal needs to be met as interviewees could take

what was appropriate from what they saw, or they could observe those doing a similar job. Some teachers also saw it as fitting their learning styles, being more memorable and easier to assimilate than being told information. There was also the issue that seeing things work as 'a real life experience' provided a sort of quality assurance of efficacy that was lacking when teachers were merely told or read about the same strategies and techniques:

If you're given an idea you've got to do it to see if it works. If you see something...you know it works because you've seen it. (Carmel)

I think it's a very effective learning tool, because you see it in action...you have something written down and ok, you can do it, but then again will it work? It's not in action (Richard).

Interviewees agreed to some extent with the questionnaire finding that, although being observed and mentored, and observing and mentoring colleagues were both effective, there was some evidence that observing and mentoring colleagues was seen as effective more frequently than being mentored and observed. Where almost all teachers interviewed found observing a colleague to be effective to some degree, being observed was associated with far more negative comments. Interviewees found being observed to involve some feelings of discomfort and for some these feelings inhibited effectiveness while others could still appreciate the benefits of being observed and mentored. Seven teachers commented on the effectiveness of being observed, despite four of them admitting that they did not enjoy the experience. In all, half of the respondents made negative comments

related to a situation where teachers felt nervous or threatened and that they were being judged or 'on show'. One teacher, who overall found the experience effective, balanced her feelings of nervousness beforehand with the 'ego massaging' that followed. Other positive reactions were dependent on being observed as part of an ongoing and developmental framework with constructive feedback and support for improvement:

being watched can be as effective, as long as you can then change things and be watched again...it's no good being a one off...that isn't then backed up. (Clare)

And Patricia considered that her last observation and feedback from the head had been one of her best professional development experiences as it provided recognition of what she had achieved since her last observation and motivated her to take on the new agreed challenges. One teacher found being properly observed gave her the opportunity for in-depth reflection on her own teaching which she would not have got from observing a colleague. Being observed was valued for the fact that it can be focused on individual needs and works 'from where you are'.

The findings from the questionnaire analysis indicate that NQTs find being observed to be a highly effective form of professional development and there is a tendency to regard it as such less frequently as teachers progress through their careers. Analysis of interview data indicates greater differences between individuals than between teachers in different career years and emphasises

individual circumstances and schools as the context of the experience. Jane and Richard had both recently completed their induction year but where Jane, despite a certain degree of nervousness had found the experience to be very positive. Richard had found it less so. Besides being nervous and having put on a 'performance' he also found it difficult to relate comments made with his memory of the lesson observed. Just beginning their fifth career year, Jonathan found that he tended to hear only the negative comments made, whereas Clare found it her most effective form of professional development and would have liked to experience it more frequently.

Being mentored, where it was reported as being a positive experience was appreciated because of the support that was provided from colleagues with past or current experience and knowledge of working in a similar situation to the interviewees. There were two reports of mentoring comprising a wider process than being observed. Both interviewees involved had been NQTs in the year that induction provision became statutory. Sandra and her mentor had weekly release time to work together as team teachers and their relationship had continued and developed beyond induction so that now, in Sandra's fifth year of career, it had become one of close collaboration. Jonathan's mentor had arranged for him to observe teachers throughout the school, which had given him a much clearer picture of teaching and learning across the whole primary age range. Two teachers reported having acted as mentors and found that undertaking the role resulted in their examining their own teaching. Rachel, at the beginning of her fourth year, had been a mentor the previous year and was encouraged by noting her own strengths as well as gaining new ideas from her mentee. Jonathan had

also acted as a mentor in his third year and reported that, besides providing a contrast against which to examine his practice, he had also enjoyed having someone ‘under his wing’; one of the very few references to enjoyment.

In a similar way to being properly mentored, team working was appreciated as allowing access to the experiences of colleagues who had dealt with similar challenges and situations to those facing the interviewees. Especially welcomed were the opportunities to gain information about something that had actually worked for other teachers. The team working referred to included fairly informal discussion and advice giving and more formal joint planning and team teaching. Lucy considered team teaching with three experienced colleagues in her probationary year to have been her ‘best’ professional development experience.

The four teachers who tended to disagree with the effectiveness findings from the questionnaires were inclined to concentrate on the need for a variety of professional development activities relevant to particular needs at the time. Rachel acknowledged that, although they sometimes terrified her, courses kept her up-to-date, making up for the fact that, except for informal team working, none of the activities rated highly effective in the questionnaires occurred regularly in her school. Jane, beginning her second year of teaching, acknowledged that she had good experiences of courses so far, which provided ideas, resources and the opportunity to seek advice from experts.

In order to give teachers the opportunity to comment on professional development activities that may not have been mentioned in the questionnaires

they were asked to consider what had made them better teachers. In responding to the question teachers focused much more on the notion of experience as influential in their development. The focus here was very much on people, places and practice, rather than courses and INSET. Past experience, specifically stated, or examples of working in particular situations were most frequently stated as a catalyst in making respondents better teachers, especially where that experience included changes such as working in different schools or with different age-groups or colleagues.

Just the experience of getting to grips with teaching their first class in difficult circumstances was central for some teachers:

I thought I knew it all when I went into teaching and quickly realised I knew nothing...It was a nightmare...that was my biggest learning process. (Patricia)

Besides the learning from colleagues through observation, mentoring and team working already mentioned in this section, other people in teachers' lives were also influential. In two cases it was family members who were credited with guiding and supporting professional development and Sandra had been inspired by the headteacher in her first school who she took as her role model. Vicky considered that responding to the special educational needs of her own child was a major factor in her professional development.

Leighton, exhibiting his self-reliance, had become a better teacher through reflective practice.

The school was also identified as a significant factor in interviewees becoming better teachers with reference made to factors that inhibited as well as supported their professional development. Budget constraints were the most commonly mentioned inhibiting factor to teachers' professional development limiting opportunities for non-contact time, course attendance and visits to other schools. Four teachers related budget constraints to the small size of the school and Rachel specifically related her small school to limiting the types of opportunities that were available to her. Where she would have liked to work alongside another member of staff she was only able to swap classes with another teacher, and where she felt her own practice would benefit from observing others teaching maths, much of her professional development experience was associated with curriculum focussed staff meetings. It was mainly teachers in schools with less than 200 pupils who mentioned the size of the school as an inhibiting factor in their professional development. Richard, in a one form entry school with 208 pupils, recognised that it could be a factor, but had not inhibited his professional development opportunities so far. And while interviewees were aware of the limitations that small schools might present they were also aware of supportive features in their small schools. Jonathan and Patricia, with experience of working in bigger schools, were both aware of the lack of opportunity to plan as a year group team, but Jonathan appreciated the independence of working alone as he began his fifth year of teaching in a smaller school. For Patricia team planning was replaced with the passing on of planning from the teacher who had previously taught the year group. Sandra would have liked the opportunity to

discuss issues with a colleague teaching children in the same year group, but was able instead to discuss the children with colleagues who knew her pupils well. Jonathan also considered that working in a small school provided him with the very positive advantage of being more aware of what was happening throughout the school and of his contribution as a member of the school and its community.

The small size of their schools were seen by Leighton and Patricia as inhibiting their career development in that they provided no opportunities for promotion. This was in contrast to David's perception of the benefits of working in a large school. He was the only interviewee to hold a post with increased salary and the school employed a teaching assistant, who was training to be a teacher and was providing cheap and frequent supply cover.

While all teachers would have appreciated further professional development opportunities, most of them were accepting of the fact that the school did not provide for all their perceived professional development needs and considered that they were relatively well provided for. However the provision referred to was mainly courses and it was in this context that headteachers were often mentioned. Enabling teachers to go on a variety of courses was the most frequently reported example of headteachers supporting professional development, especially when it was seen to occur in a situation of budget restrictions:

The head sees the value of professional development when other teachers tell you that their heads say there is no money for it. (Rachel)

The personal involvement of the headteacher was also identified as facilitating interviewees' professional development. An example of this for Jane was the head's offer to coach her in her lunch break, on how to teach handwriting. The arrangements for regular release time for Jonathan and Sandra, already mentioned in Section 5.3, to work alongside colleagues, to develop subject management or attend courses, involving their headteachers teaching their classes, were seen by them as validating the importance of professional development.

The head is very good. She has her own two day teaching commitment, but she takes my class so I can have my time and its regular and that's important. (Jonathan)

Margaret, my head, she's brilliant...she'll help if you want to go and observe. She'll do her utmost to try and get it covered for you, or she might cover your class. (Sandra)

Sandra and Lucy's heads were also seen to be supportive in passing on various, relevant articles and information from the education press.

Headteacher support appeared to be most significant for Patricia. Despite the fact that she was already in her second year of career when she arrived in the school her headteacher had undertaken a mentor type role with her. She perceived him as dedicating much time and effort to her professional

development, commenting on his supporting her by observing her teach and providing feedback on this and on her lesson planning. Their discussions resulted in a shared insight of her professional development needs and allowed Patricia to feel that she had made a meaningful contribution to her performance management objectives.

Headteachers were also reported to be an influence on teachers in less direct ways. The two headteachers Rachel had worked with provided contrasting approaches to teacher professionalism and the experience had clarified for Rachel her own developmental aspirations. Carmel had worked with three heads, each providing different opportunities for her development. Her first head led the Beacon School where Carmel had seen much good practice to emulate and where the head observed and monitored her work informally and in a non-threatening manner. She considered her second headteacher as less efficient and effective, but this had allowed Carmel to contribute to improving practice in the school. Her third head promoted a style of interaction with children that Carmel adopted as a key factor in her continuing development as an early years teacher. Carmel also praised the professional development forms that the head had developed. Being aware of the need to complete one of these forms whenever she had been 'out of school' focussed her thoughts on how she might be able to use what she had learned when she returned to her classroom.

In some instances headteacher support was demonstrated in a reactive rather than proactive way. Richard found the headteachers' responsiveness to his requests for professional development opportunities, including a change of year group, to

have been beneficial to his professional development. Clare felt that she often had to ask for professional development opportunities and that although she was usually able to attend the courses she requested, she was not able to observe other members of staff even though the school had a 'floating', part-time member of staff. Clare saw this as a result of school priorities being focussed elsewhere and of other teachers' reluctance to being observed.

Other interviewees also reported school priorities presenting inhibiting factors to their professional development. Vicky considered the school to be concerned only with developing teachers to meet its own priorities and not those of individual teachers. While not referring directly to the headteacher in this instance, her perception of the headteacher's support is indicated by a comment elsewhere to the passing on of course evaluations which Vicky considered depended on the head and:

whether she's got time to really listen...She might think your opinion doesn't matter. (Vicky)

Leighton, acknowledging that the school provided opportunities for professional development such as courses and INSET, felt that the headteacher, along with the local authority and central government, failed to appreciate the challenges associated with the changes that professional development necessitates and so failed to support them sufficiently with evaluation and positive feedback. He perceived weakness of leadership and management in the lack of systematic support and monitoring resulting in the failure of whole-school initiatives to

which he had committed energy, time and enthusiasm. A lack of will to challenge teachers over standards of practice was also seen to limit the scope of Leighton's contribution to school improvement.

David saw the head's failure to fill the professional development co-ordinator role, which had been vacant for two years, as indicative of his attitude to professional development:

The head will promise you the world, but little happens...There's not enough thought goes into it. The SMT are leading all the time so there's not enough delegated leadership or outside in-put. Plus they are really only concerned with school development so you have to take your own interests and follow them yourself (David).

Comment has already been made in this section about the ways teachers' colleagues facilitate their professional development. Some of these are associated with structures and systems that the school has put in place such as team teaching and team planning. Although the vast majority of comments about such arrangements were positive there were instances where limitations were experienced. Vicky had contrasting experiences of working with year group partners, who the school encouraged to work together 'in every possible way'. Her current partner had helped her to develop her teaching, given her an enthusiasm for the year group and informed her subject knowledge. The previous year her partner had been 'appalling, professionally'. Vicky considered

that the success of such an arrangement depended on partners teaching in a similar way:

and if you don't work in a similar way that's where I feel there's not enough room for you to develop (Vicky).

Although Jonathan felt he had benefited greatly from the support of colleagues in his year group team in his first school, he was very much aware of a considerable degree of negativity among the staff in general and a cynicism towards professional development activities. He did not find this stimulating or motivating and identified it as one reason for moving schools.

Besides more formal structures teachers also benefited from the less formal support of their colleagues, such as Richard's obtaining advice from the science co-ordinator and Jonathan and David's discussion and sharing of ideas with colleagues. Sandra spoke of how helpful her mentor had been when she was an NQT and went on:

But then all the staff, if I ever didn't know anything, I always asked and they always helped me. I never felt it's a really stupid thing to ask.
(Sandra)

The importance of feeling supported by colleagues and the headteacher was especially significant for Patricia who identified it as the factor that enabled her to continue as a teacher after her difficult experiences in her first school:

It's the difference the school makes and the people you are working with. I was ready to give up teaching...I couldn't believe the difference. It's support. There was no support and now there is and therefore I'm more positive and I'm actually thinking, 'I can do this job!' (Patricia)

But, as with more formal structures, informal collaboration and collegial support were not always accompanied by evidence of a wider learning culture. Clare was aware that staff were keen to support her when she asked for help, but found that they were mostly reluctant to ask for help themselves, even though she was aware that she could assist some of them in teaching music. This limited Clare's opportunities to develop her role as music co-ordinator and, along with other teachers' reluctance to be observed, indicates that more experienced teachers may not have felt secure about admitting to weaknesses or exposing their practice to others' scrutiny. Clare, along with Jonathan, considered that the school could provide greater opportunities to observe other teachers and to be observed, but learning from the practice of others was not a school priority.

There were some examples of attitudes to professional development indicating more of a learning culture applying to all teachers in the school. When talking about their professional development provision Rachel and Sandra both reported that the school staff did much learning together and both commented on feeling safe to admit to problems. Patricia found that, besides all members of staff in her school having something to contribute to her development, there was also a 'terrific team spirit'. It is noteworthy that Sandra did not feel that the school inhibited her development in any way and that Rachel and Patricia, both in quite

small schools and aware of limitations to their professional development provision, were inclined to relate these to the size of the school and the budget, rather than to school priorities, to find compensating factors within the school for the limitations and to comment on the headteacher's support for professional development.

Factors that made professional development work for teachers can be broadly grouped. All teachers expressed the belief that it was very important or paramount that outcomes of professional development can be applied directly to the classroom. It is important that professional development activities provide resources and strategies that are practical and easily utilised. Activities that address or can be directed towards the particular needs of individual teachers are valued and especially when they are seen to be well presented and appropriate for the way teachers learn. Teachers appreciate learning from those who have had similar experiences and from seeing others work in similar situations, or hearing from others how they have tackled problems. Challenges presented in coping with, or adapting to, new or difficult situations may be uncomfortable, but are seen to bring about quite significant development. Teachers felt that such challenges needed to be undertaken in an atmosphere of support from headteachers and colleagues, which promotes learning with and from colleagues in an appropriately resourced environment.

5.12 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the interview analysis and compared them, where appropriate, with findings from the questionnaire analysis.

providing an illustration of the broad experience of professional development for early career primary teachers. The situation appears to be one where the provision of ongoing professional development activities is more limited than that suggested by the actual range of activities and events experienced. This seems to be only loosely linked to any personal needs that may have been identified. A lack of rigorous evaluation procedures may well contribute to the situation where there is little clarity about the outcomes of professional development activities and experiences. Teachers are aware of a wide range of outcomes and value those that support them in their teaching. It is their own teaching that appears to be the focus of teachers' attention in relation to professional development rather than children's learning and teachers appreciate opportunities to learn from those who have experience of similar situations. Working in a situation of an externally devised curriculum with external accountability procedures, teachers are aware of pressures to meet exacting requirements. The interviews provided the opportunity for teachers to respond to the third research question concerning the factors that support or inhibit their professional development. They provided examples of how professional development could result from meeting challenges, but indicated that the climate in which they were undertaken was crucial, highlighting the role of headteachers, colleagues and the school culture in the process.

The next chapter presents a discussion of how these findings relate to the literature that has been reviewed and the extent to which the research questions have been addressed. The chapter also draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the research.

Chapter 6

‘To develop schools we must be prepared to develop teachers’

(Day, 2000, p.101).

In these investigations my thesis has been that in analysing early career primary teachers’ experiences and perceptions of professional development primary school leaders, and primarily myself, could be enabled to make that experience more effective. Two specific objectives were to gain an understanding of what constitutes professional development for these teachers and to explore what makes these experiences effective. The research addresses the following specific questions:

- What constitutes the professional development experience of early career primary teachers?
- Which professional development experiences have these teachers found to be effective and how are they evaluated?
- What factors do early career primary teachers consider support or inhibit their professional development?

The research has much to offer in terms of addressing these questions and informing provision of early professional development for primary teachers, but it is appropriate first to consider some of its limitations.

6.1 Limitations of the research

Limitations are inherent in the methods used in this research and have been discussed in the methodology chapter. In particular the limitations associated with the way the survey sample was constructed are acknowledged in relation to validity and the implications for transferring the findings to a wider setting when it is not known how representative the sample is of the population of early career teachers. The limitations identified in the analysis process are discussed in the findings chapters and it is necessary now to discuss the limitations in relation to the conclusions drawn about the research.

Silverman (2000) warns against attempting to research ‘the whole picture’ recommending instead research that says ‘a lot about a little’ (p.100). This research is relatively wide ranging and important issues were raised where sufficiently detailed data were not available to enable firm conclusions to be drawn. These issues include the nature of teachers’ educational beliefs and teachers’ lack of focus on pupil outcomes in relation to professional development. On the other hand the purpose of this research is not purely academic and a broad picture of teacher development is of more relevance in attempting to improve the process of teacher development. The bigger picture also indicates the interrelatedness of features of teacher development in a situation where in practice it is fragmented and lacking in cohesion.

Definitions of basic terms were omitted in efforts not to influence teachers’ responses, but whereas the interviews elicited teachers’ definitions of

professional development, the concepts of reflection and theory were not clarified in the interviews leaving scope for some ambiguity. Although teacher development is my preferred term, the words professional development were used in the interviews based on my experience that this is the more commonly used term in schools. However use of the term teacher development may have caused teachers to respond to questions in a different way, so that they may, for instance have associated it with a broader view, where there was some tendency to equate professional development with courses and INSET.

A further limitation is that the conclusions drawn relate mainly to the early career teachers as a whole group. While some observations could be made about teachers in particular career year groups from the questionnaire data, making valid comparisons between the two or three interviewees in different career years is difficult. The purpose for interviewing teachers in this research was to gain detail and provide depth to understanding issues raised during the first stage of the research. So the in-depth data about two teachers is likely to provide a picture of individual differences rather than indicating similarities between them based on one aspect of their professional careers. It is useful to compare two teachers who were NQTs at the start of the research project to illustrate this. Although both teachers were proactive in taking action to meet their professional development needs Jane presents a picture of herself as very conscious of her own role in her professional development, aware of the progress she has made already and confident of future progress. She sees theory as a useful tool at the disposal of teachers and considers courses as providing the most effective professional development for her as they provide not only new ideas and

resources, but also the opportunity to consult experts. Richard on the other hand found being mentored and observing colleagues to be most effective. so that he could learn from colleagues' experiences and see their expertise in action. Unlike Jane he was sure that he would need reassurance about his performance for the foreseeable future. In this respect Richard's attitude is more in line with most of the more experienced teachers interviewed. He can be seen to be similar to teachers in different career years in other respects. Clare, having recently completed her fourth year, had a similar appreciation of learning from seeing what works for colleagues and both teachers had little contact with their mentors as NQTs.

Other than the actual provision of professional development opportunities during the induction year there were few examples of obvious contrast between experience as an NQT and that in subsequent years, except for Vicky. As an NQT she felt she had made good professional progress, but subsequently she was very conscious that her professional development needs were not being met as a result of overemphasis on school priorities. An alternative strategy would have been to interview only teachers in their fifth year about the whole of their career so far. This may have given a better perspective on how teachers have developed in the early years of their careers and indicate differences over that period. This would also increase the chances of interviewees having experience in more than one school, potentially providing more contrasting data about the school as the context of professional development. Such an approach would depend on teachers' memories of experiences and perceptions over a number of years and have required the use of additional measures to identify sufficient numbers of

suitably experienced teachers as the only fifth year teachers who volunteered to be further involved were the two who were interviewed.

The stages of the research were designed to be sequential so that the first stage could provide focus and direction for the second, rather than with the purpose of providing two data sets for comparison. Several issues from the questionnaire survey were taken forward to the interviews and interviewees were invited to make observations about the findings before being asked to contribute further to the subject. However because of time constraints it was not possible to conduct the survey and interview phases of the research in the same academic year. This adds to the difficulties of drawing valid and direct comparisons between the findings of the survey and the interviews since none of the teachers interviewed were still NQTs and the most experienced had begun their sixth year in teaching.

While the literature presented was sought in books, journals, the education press, Government publications and through the internet, it is inevitable that, besides time and space restrictions, in deciding what to include in a balanced portrayal of the substantive area of the research, my own theoretical framework will have been influential. Similarly while data analysis was rigorously conducted in relation to reliability, it is likely that another analyst may well have commented on and emphasised different features.

6.2 The professional development experience of early career primary teachers

The interviews provided an adjustment to the picture of the range of professional development provision from the questionnaires, with the frequency of activities indicating a more limited regular experience and tending towards the situation observed by Blandford (2000) and Hoban (2002) of an experience dominated by courses, often associated with curriculum innovation. Overall the picture of teacher development gained is of a very much diluted version of the literature illustrating what the process can or should be.

The induction year appears to have been a positive addition to teacher development initiatives, characterised by greater opportunities than are available subsequently for course attendance and observation by and of colleagues, with interviewees' opinions in line with the views of teachers, headteachers and induction tutors reported elsewhere (Ofsted, 2001, Smethem and Adey, 2005) that the process is generally helpful for NQTs. But, rather than the range of possible benefits of the induction process identified in the literature (Moor *et al.*, 2005, Gabel-Dunk and Craft, 2004, Guskey, 2000, Blandford, 2000, O'Sullivan and West-Burnham, 1998), the situation appears similar to that identified by Smethem and Adey (2005) where they appear restricted to those associated with observation and feed-back. Interviewee reports confirm the questionnaire findings of limited induction provision (Section 4.2) and those of Jones *et al.* (2002) of induction provision failing to meet statutory expectations for a significant minority of NQTs. And career entry profiles, with their potential for

helping teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses (Shelton Mayes, 2001) and plan their professional development (Banks and Shelton Mayes, 2001), were not even referred to.

Leighton's report that he did not have a mentor when he began teaching six years earlier, is in line with the trend identified in the first stage of the research (Section 4.2) for those teachers with most experience to be less likely to have been mentored than those beginning their careers three or four years later. Richard, just beginning his second year and Patricia, just beginning her third, although technically having had a mentor, reported very restricted and an almost non-existent contact with them, gaining little from the experience. These reports support the fact that being mentored was one of the few professional development activities to be rated as highly ineffective and the comments made by respondents to the questionnaires (Section 4.4).

The tendency of teachers not to mention reflection and experience as part of their professional development may reflect the literature which shows teachers tending to view training as synonymous with professional development (Guskey, 2000, Goodall *et al.*, 2005). Certainly teachers were inclined to refer to courses first when talking generally about professional development, but they also readily referred to observations too, which are not training activities. It may be more the case that teachers view formal activities as synonymous with professional development. And although the lack of references to reflection and experience may be related to their not being mentioned in the questionnaires, formal opportunities for reflection were few and far between and so were likely to have

contributed little to teachers' perceptions of their professional progress. I believe the lack of opportunities for teachers to reflect formally on their experiences of teaching, to understand it by giving it meaning (O'Sullivan and Burnham-West, 1998), had an effect on teachers failing to categorise their teaching experience as professional development, but recognising it as having contributed to their becoming better teachers when asked.

Where teachers spoke of reflecting it was often as a response to things going wrong, and a desire to find alternatives, consistent with novice teachers' engagement in a trial-and-error search to adapt their idealism to the necessities of the job (Olson and Osborne, 1991, Maynard and Furlong, 1995). This appears to contradict Leithwood's (1992) observation that without others being involved in the reflection process it is unlikely to create the dissonance or challenge necessary to prompt teachers to find alternatives. This situation may be more applicable to experienced teachers since early in their career teachers are likely to encounter dissonance between their ideals and the reality of the classroom. Much of the reflection reported would fall into the category of 'lesson fixing' with the danger that teachers would only draw on their existing framework to solve the problem (Day, 1999) in the absence of a critical friend, after induction, and lacking regular formal opportunities to reflect could result in teachers only responding to the most obvious areas of dissonance and challenge, failing to critically question the context and purpose of their work (Louden, 1992). Teachers may be missing opportunities to gain a varied perspective through collaborative reflection (Glazer *et al.*, 2004) and to increase their awareness of their own practice (Blandford, 2000) as they lack assistance and occasion to do

so. An occasion that teachers identified as having the potential for reflection with a colleague was the performance review meeting, but this appeared to involve little real reflection in practice.

The perception of these meetings as of limited benefit to teacher development is reinforced by the way teachers' needs were attended to. Early career teachers' needs may be more firmly focussed on their sense of self (Olson and Osborne, 1991) and their survival (Nias, 1989 and Fessler, 1995, Maynard and Furlong, 1995), issues that may not be accommodated within school priorities. But feelings that their needs were neglected were reported even by teachers who were in their fifth year of career, when such issues might be supposed to have been resolved. The teachers' objectives in the 'pyramidal hierarchy of objectives' (Bubb and Hoare, 2001) are perceived on occasion to be very much dictated by objectives of the school and the management. There appear to be some instances of the situation identified by Gaunt (1997) and Edmonds and Lee (2002) that, with a system subject to political manipulation resulting in a strong focus on school improvement, rather than providing a framework for individual needs (Garret and Bowles, 1997, Bartlett, 2000) performance management constrains them, providing much more challenge than support (Storey, 2001). It is not so much a case of teachers' reluctance to discuss areas of weakness because performance and pay are linked as suggested by Gold (1998), but more a case of there being insufficient space or priority for considering teachers' professional development needs adequately. However the situation would seem to be more complex than this for individuals as the two teachers working in the same school had quite different perceptions as to how adequately their needs

were being addressed. It is possible that the difference in perception is related to the extent to which the teachers involved aligned their needs with school priorities, and the extent to which they feel 'a little at sea in the years immediately after induction' (Bubb, 2004, p.9).

Failing to provide the potential advantages for early career teachers identified by Storey (2001) the experience of performance review meetings showed them being associated with target setting and little analysis or celebration of what had been achieved previously. The picture provided is more of the performance management system as part of a compliance culture (Graham, 1999).

The fragmented nature of teachers' experience of professional development includes the selection of activities. There were instances of teachers attending courses specifically to address school improvement priorities which could fit with Creisen and Knight's (2002) observation of an over emphasis on finding courses as the solution to every development need, but in these cases it may have been appropriate, since the objective in attending the courses appears to have been to gain a general increase in knowledge about the topic. On the other hand the objectives for participation in professional development activities rarely seemed to be more explicit than this and teachers often attended courses with a completely open mind as to what they would gain from it. Engaging in professional development activities with such vague objectives, it is hardly surprising that evaluation lacked rigour and focus. Ofsted (2002b) found that evaluation was often limited to participants' satisfaction levels and in a similar vein evaluation for most interviewees was to do with making judgements about

the performance of those presenting the activity. This, coupled with school forms fulfilling mainly administrative purposes, it is not surprising that evaluation appeared to contribute little to the teacher development process (Guskey, 2000).

While the literature increasingly presents a view of professional development as a process involving needs identification, planning, follow-up and evaluation, (Craft, 2000, Guskey, 2000), the range of activities, events and episodes, that teachers experienced were not part of a planned and on-going process.

6.3 Effective teacher development experiences

Analysis of the questionnaire data indicated that teachers find observation, mentoring and team working among the most effective forms of professional development. Interviewees broadly agreed with this finding and initial comments pointed to teachers valuing opportunities to learn from those who have experience of similar teaching situations to their own. Where interviewees disagreed it was to emphasise effectiveness in relation to current professional development needs. Further analysis of the data from the interviews produces a more detailed picture of what makes professional development experiences effective for early career teachers.

Teachers considered a whole range of activities and experiences to be effective in certain instances. While observing others was fairly consistently found to be effective, being observed was effective for some teachers and courses could be very effective on occasion, but have very negative effects on others. Comments

in the literature that effective professional development experiences are those seen as relevant and appropriate for teachers needs (McMahon, 1999, Goodall *et al.*, 2005) are mirrored by the reports of the early career teachers. My analysis indicates that perceptions of effectiveness are related to two dimensions: presentation and format of activities and events, and their relevance.

The somewhat ambiguous situation in the first stage of the research of courses being rated mostly as only somewhat effective, but most frequently reported as having had an impact on classroom practice, which in turn was used most often as a criterion for evaluating effectiveness of professional development, is largely accounted for in the interviews by consideration of issues of presentation and relevance.

In relation to the presentation of courses and training events, those that teachers reported as effective often contained the components that are identified in the literature. The school INSET activities that teachers experienced as part of a bigger programme of school improvement involving follow-up were reported as resulting in transfer of the theory presented to the classroom (Blandford, 2000, Guskey, 2000, Hopkins, 2001). Some of the characteristics identified by Joyce *et al.* (1999) as influential in the transfer of new skills to the classroom were also deemed to be effective. Specifically teachers cited the presentation of theory accompanied by demonstration and instruction for classroom application, and, rather than providing opportunities to practice as suggested by Joyce *et al.* (1999), experiencing activities from the point of view of the pupils. Although it is not possible to say how well sustained the application of new learning may

have been in general, the benefits of Patricia's 'spot on' music course seemed to have been well established in the school, and with far shorter input of training than Joyce *et al.* (1999) consider necessary. It could be that an additional factor here is Patricia's interest in music as the main subject of her B.Ed. training and as music co-ordinator.

The relevance of the subject matter for the teachers is just one example of how effectiveness is not just associated with the professional development opportunities provided, but also depends on a complex range of factors associated with individual teacher's situations. One such factor could be the desire, indicated in the interviews, for more experienced teachers to keep up-to-date with recent innovation which might necessitate attendance on external courses, which more recently trained teachers might regard as unnecessary and an imposition. Analysis indicates that these factors include:

- Relevance to teachers' working conditions
- Timeliness relating to the school's priorities and resource availability
- Relevance to teachers' learning styles
- Timeliness relating to teachers' previous learning and experiences.

The enthusiasm with which teachers reported their moments of enlightenment would seem to be a case in point, with the three different contexts relating to individual situations. Vicky's course illuminated her learning from other courses, Lucy developed a new awareness of an area of her teaching she could improve after a school visit and Sandra found a solution to an on-going problem. While the outcome of these events could be plotted against Joyce and Showers

(1998) levels of impact; awareness, knowledge, understanding and behaviour. this list fails to capture the impression of significance that the teachers expressed. These were examples of teachers making learning personal and making outsider theories personal theories (Dadds, 1997).

The essence of effectiveness then is the match between what is being offered or presented and the individual teacher's situation relating to a range of personal factors, their learning and their working context. Variations in this match would help to account for differing perceptions of those presenting courses as theorist removed from the practical situations teachers face (Korthagen, 2001) or experts providing a stimulating contact for teachers (McCarney, 2004). Consideration of these factors alone would portray teachers as the objects of professional development experiences and would ignore the further crucial factor of teachers' ability to react to what is presented, to adapt what has been offered to fit their situation (Day, 1999, Hargreaves, 1992, Higgins and Leat, 1999). Where there is a good match between teachers' situations and what is presented on courses they can provide 'the best' professional development, but where the gap is too great and the teacher is unable to bridge it, they can be 'terrifying'.

In learning from other teachers this gap is likely to be narrower and Ofsted (2002b) found that teachers favoured collaborative learning. Interviewees were inclined to agree with the questionnaire finding that mentoring or observing a colleague tended to be perceived as highly effective slightly more frequently than being mentored or observed. The interviews provide a generally positive picture of teachers' experiences of observing colleagues and, for the two who had

experienced it, mentoring colleagues. Comment has already been made in Section 6.2 relating the interview findings to those of the questionnaire concerning experience of being mentored. Interviewees' perceptions of the effectiveness of being observed were influenced by individual characteristics and affective considerations. While the effectiveness of being observed was limited for some teachers by feelings of nervousness, several still appreciated its benefits and a few teachers stated that they would have liked to have been observed more frequently. In a situation reflecting that found by Good and Weaver (2003) colleagues in the same school or with experience of teaching the same age group are likely to be aware of the same problems that teachers face, and are certainly perceived as such. Observation and discussion formats are also more adaptable to individual needs and learning about strategies by seeing or hearing how they work for colleagues requires little or no adaptation for transfer to teachers' own classrooms.

The findings from the questionnaire analysis indicate that teachers in their second year of career are especially likely to find observation of a colleague highly effective and especially more frequently than those in their fourth and fifth years and, although direct comparisons cannot be made, comments from two teachers are interesting in this respect. Richard, beginning his second year and Sandra, beginning her fifth year both commented that observing colleagues has provided them with role models to emulate early in their careers. However Sandra went on to comment that although she is still interested to observe colleagues' strategies and use of resources, as she has become more experienced, she has develop her own style of teaching and now uses what she observes in her

own way. This would seem to reinforce the suggestion made in Section 4.4 that more experienced teachers, having already benefited from observing the practice of others have less to gain from it than less experienced teachers.

While ‘learning from each other and learning from what works (DfES, 2001b, p.12) may be relatively safe and effective in enabling teachers to adopt new practices in their classrooms, for me the challenge appears to be to provide professional development opportunities well matched to teachers’ individual situations and at the same time to take a longer term view (Kelly and Williamson McDiarmid, 2002), seeking to ensure not only that teachers can manage and instruct classes, but also to equip them to be flexible, anticipating and responding to change (Jones *et al.*, 2005). Professional development has the potential to enable teachers to develop professional expertise to make informed judgements so that they can adapt or even reject what is being presented so that they can more readily align their teaching to pupils’ learning needs (Tatto, 1999).

Formal evaluation of their professional development experiences did not appear to be undertaken with any great rigour or frequency and not having specific objectives for professional development activities contributed to this situation. Informally teachers mostly used a sense of what they had gained or could use as a result of their professional development experience as evaluation criteria. This acceptance of a wide range of possible outcomes of professional development activities suggests attitudes in line with those who view professional development as for the whole person (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, Day 1999, Harland and Kinder, 1991, Dadds, 2001) and would seem to support the criticism

of Powell and Terrell (2003), of the portrayal of a simple cause and effect relationship between teacher development and pupil attainment. Reports of their experiences indicate that raising awareness, stimulating interest and motivating were the first steps in changing practice in some instances, reinforcing Evans' (2000) and Day's (1999) opinions that they cannot be ignored as they can be a prerequisite for changes in practice. On the other hand O'Sullivan and West-Burnham's (1998) questioning of the validity and integrity of training that does not result in improved learning outcomes for pupils might prove a useful focus of reflection for teachers. This is especially so as responses of teachers in the interviews as well as those in the questionnaire survey were inclined to be focussed on their own teaching in relation to professional development rather than on children's learning, except where specifically asked, when they acknowledged its importance.

Literature supporting the approach to teacher development as self-understanding emphasises the need to attend to teachers as people as well as practitioners, recognising that changes to practice may require changes to deeply rooted self-defining attitudes, values and beliefs (Tatto, 1999, Nias, 1989, Urquhart, 2002, Smith, 2005). The research shows that teachers did not particularly expect professional development to influence their beliefs and there was almost a sense of bemusement when they were asked to consider how their beliefs may have been affected. It could be that during their prescribed training teachers have been socialised into a profession of official prescription (Furlong *et al.*, 2000) where notions of educational beliefs have little place. Teachers' experiences of professional development may have resulted in their perception of it being

mostly related to improving curriculum delivery (Dadds, 1997, Goodson, 2000). These teachers have trained and begun their careers in an era where official concern is with pre-defined standards and competencies which provide the framework within which teachers are expected to develop as professionals (Jones, 2006a), leaving little opportunity for discussion of beliefs and independent thinking (Ryan, 1998). It is possible that a situation of imposed curriculum and pedagogy has resulted in teachers' uncertainty as to their role in making curriculum decisions (Helsby and McCulloch, 1996). Focusing on their own performance as teachers, rather than that of the pupils as learners, could be a consequence of teachers lacking confidence in their own judgements, asking for increasingly detailed direction (Ovens, 1999) on pedagogical techniques and on a curriculum devised by others (Hodkins, 1997, Poulson and Avramidis, 2003). The message that there needs to be a focus on improving learning outcomes appears to have been obscured by detailed description of how this should be done.

The literature recognises that more is involved in teaching than curriculum delivery and that what teachers believe and do in the classroom is influential since teachers can adopt, adapt and subvert new skills and techniques and interpret and restructure their work (Hargreaves, 1992, Higgins and Leat, 1999, Day, 1999,). But these processes are seen to depend on experience and length of service (Wood, 2004) and to be enacted in accord with existing conceptualisations of teaching and learning and to protect the professional and substantive self. The question here is the extent to which early career primary teachers have developed their professional and substantive selves and what

conceptualisations of teaching and learning they have developed in the current situation. If ‘authority’ influences on teacher development (Ovens, 1999) are that teachers should know their place (Urquhart, 2002) and ‘craft’ influences emanate from teachers that have surrendered independence of thought (Ovens, 1999) and decided to ‘give them what they want’ (Dadds, 1997) then any diminution of teacher professionalism is likely to be acutely experienced among early career teachers, who do not have a previously established professional self and concepts to return to. I believe it is all too possible that the effects of technical rationality in education (Hodkinson, 1997, Hancock, 2001) have been to influence those entering the profession to subscribe to some extent in the belief that good teachers are those who uncritically strive to deliver what has been determined elsewhere.

6.4 Factors that support or inhibit teacher development

Factors that are influential in supporting or inhibiting professional development can be associated with those that make them effective or not, which has already been discussed in Section 6.3. In line with factors identified by others (Oldroyd and Hall, 1999, Good and Weaver, Bell 1991) interviewees found development may be inhibited due to restrictions on the range of activities and experiences that are provided, the way they are presented, their content or message. Lack of opportunity may also be a factor, related to neglect of individual needs or lack of resources necessary to address and support them. This may be the result of budget limitations, the school’s size, or the priorities of headteachers and the quality and style of management, which research shows has such a strong

influence (Edmonds and Lee, 2002, Evans, 1998, Bubb and Earley. 2003). I would also suggest that the situation in which these teachers have begun their careers could be an inhibiting factor.

It may well be that the teachers in this research, are displaying the characteristics of beginning teachers, where in the first six to eight years efforts are especially directed to revising instructional practices (Huberman, 1995), where novices are seen to conform to rules and procedures, and knowing when to break the rules is associated with the second and third year of career, progressing to responding only to the information they chose to as competent performers in third or fourth year or beyond (Berliner, 2001). There was, however, only limited evidence of the competent performer attitude among the interviewees, with teachers up to fifth and sixth year of career expressing concerns, not only about improving their practice, but also the novice preoccupation with seeking out from colleagues and experts 'the right way to do things' (Garret and Bowles, 1997, Russell and Bullock, 2001). These teachers have begun their careers at a time of Government policy firmly focused on raising the attainment of pupils and the imposition of measures to achieve it, where there is criticism of teachers and emphasis on identifying and removing weak teachers (Hancock, 2001, Prestage and Williams, 1999). I believe that the current context of teachers' work causes them to be overly concerned with correct implementation of the curriculum and while they recognise the importance of professional development enhancing pupils' learning, in practice their efforts are focussed on their own teaching.

The literature on teachers' attitudes to their work and development can provide examples with which to compare interviewees, who seem to have something in common with Riley's (2003) glow-worms, focussing on the classroom rather than on what teachers might need to be and do in the future, weighed down by their concerns, using a 'painting by numbers' approach to teaching and lacking spontaneity. Also the sense of enjoyment of teaching, a characteristic of sky larks, was scarce among interviewees. The teachers in this research could also be likened in some ways to Evans' (1998) restricted professionals with a strong focus on the classroom, but lacking the intuition that restricted professionals use in their classrooms.

The lack of professional confidence that was apparent at times may well be a feature of early career, but may also be influenced by a situation of weakened teacher autonomy and lack of ownership and involvement in decision making and a lack of connection with any theory underpinning the requirements of their work as identified in the literature (Ovens, 1999, McGuinn, 1998, Urquhart, 2002, Goodson, 1997). There was some contrast in teachers' attitudes and behaviours to professional development in general and that related to their areas of expertise. When dealing with situations involving their subject areas, teachers' exhibited some of their rare examples of confidence and autonomy. Teachers had specific objectives in mind when undertaking courses in their specialisms. Carmel expressed a frustrated desire to help colleagues struggling with music and Richard refused to adopt the LEA stance on music assessment. Music is a subject associated with lack of confidence among non-specialists, in my experience, which may have the effect of boosting the confidence of music

specialists in particular. My view is that the situation is similar to Riley's (2003) account of the teacher who, having studied the literacy strategy, felt confident to adapt and innovate within it, but who had not studied the numeracy strategy and so applied it as directed. It could be argued that the difference for these early career teachers is the same as that experienced by any teacher beginning their career with more confidence in their specialist area, but it is my suggestion that it is more difficult for early career teachers to develop a sense of confidence about their work where they have so little ownership of it. In the past primary teachers were able to develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum as they engaged in planning and decision making about what and how to teach. The resulting learning was very personal. Now teachers are striving to teach to an ideal that they have had no hand in shaping and often with little appreciation of any underlying theory and may be inclined to follow format rather than engaging with underlying principles (Fisher, 2000), inhibiting opportunities to develop personal theories.

Although some instances were found of early career teachers being able to find space for limited professional judgement and autonomy, they fall far short of the ideal of teacher professionalism as curriculum control prevalent in the first half of the twentieth century (McCulloch *et al.*, 2000). Leighton's rejection of meetings to share good practice as supportive of professional development on the premise that they suggest that teachers should be clones and Richard's refusal to implement the LEA's scheme for assessing music might be seen as examples of teachers understanding professionalism as including 'actively interpreting the restructuring of their work in accordance with their own professional judgements

(Day, 1999, p.11). But there were many examples of teachers taking responsibility for their own learning, a feature of the new professionalism demanded of teachers by the DfEE (1998) as a requirement in providing a world class education service. While for Richard this included seeking advice from subject co-ordinators and asking to teach a different year group to extend his experience, Jane voiced her opinion that the crucial factor in professional development was her attitude towards it and how she acted upon what was presented. The three teachers who were undertaking Masters' courses appeared to be motivated at least in part by their dissatisfaction with professional development opportunities provided through the school. They could be regarded as 'self-starters' (Martin *et al.*, 2001), persisting with their learning despite a non-supportive environment and illustrate an example of the situation reported by Sturman *et al.* (2005) where teachers working in schools that they consider to be supportive of CPD are less likely to fund their own professional development. Clare's frustration at not being able to utilise her expertise to assist colleagues with their music teaching indicates her desire to engage in developing the expertise of other teachers, a feature of the new professionalism associated with the DfES five year strategy document (DfES, 2004).

As in the literature presenting teacher development as self-understanding, teachers found supportive features in their personal life. These included experience gained from child rearing and inspiration and guidance from family members and teachers' own education. An important factor that remains to be discussed is the school context.

Teachers were inclined to regard the provision of professional development opportunities in their schools as at least satisfactory, but this appears to relate to course attendance and a general, narrow definition of professional development as training, but teachers had a broader view of their own needs and were aware of further activities they thought would enhance their professional development that the school did not make available. Although these omissions were sometimes regarded as due to budget restrictions or school size, they were often seen as the result of school priorities being focussed elsewhere.

The importance of the school as the context for teachers' professional development is emphasised by Patricia's experience. She considered that her first appointment in a difficult situation had provided her with a steep learning curve and that the NQT courses she was able to attend helped her to 'survive' her first year, but without the necessary support she had found the experience almost overwhelming. She was able later to look back on her survival in her first school as an achievement, but she considered that her professional development had only begun at her second school, where the support she received persuaded her to stay in teaching.

Sergiovanni (1998) suggests that, for the purposes of teacher development, schools need to see themselves as communities rather than organisations, but this research would indicate that schools need rather to follow the advice of Day (1999) and Bezzina and Testa (2005) and give consideration to organisational as well as community features, since organisational aspects of the school can provide valued opportunities for teacher development. School structures that allowed for team teaching and year group collaboration were widely appreciated

and missed where factors such as school size and budget did not allow for them to occur. Carmel identified that knowing she had to give details on the school evaluation form helped her to focus and plan for how she would implement what she had learned through professional development when she returned to the classroom. However such organisational arrangements had their limitations. Working closely with a year group partner was not always successful for Vicky. Perceiving one partner as ‘appalling, professionally’, suggests that not enough attention had been given in the school to the effective community features of Sergiovanni’s (1998) notion of community members being followers of shared values, commitment and ideals (Sergiovanni, 1998, Bolam *et al.*, 2005).

For Jonathan the organisational arrangement of year group planning had its limitations to some extent in his changing professional development needs. He had purposely taken up his first appointment in a large school where he would receive this support and saw his move to a smaller school at the beginning of his fifth year as fitting his needs, as a more experienced teacher, for greater independence, providing something of a long term balance between collaboration and autonomy, a balance that Fullan (1992) and Bullough *et al.* (2004) consider necessary for reflection. But aspects of the school’s culture were also a factor in that he was partly motivated to move school because of the negative attitude of the staff, which he found unhelpful to his further professional development and motivation. Two further key characteristics of effective learning communities: collective responsibility for pupils’ learning and inclusive membership (Bolam *et al.*, 2005) are indicated by Jonathan’s response to the culture of his new school.

His feeling of being part of a production line was replaced by a sense of belonging to a community and of knowing his contribution to the school.

The experience of early career teachers would seem to support the notion that while aspects of both organisation and community need to be considered in relation to early career teachers' professional development 'culture is the most important thing for schools to achieve' (Bracey, 2005, p.13). Where teachers had a sense of school as a community their perceptions of any lack of organisational professional development features tended to be balanced by appreciation of the community aspects. Jonathan acknowledged reduced opportunities to observe colleagues in his new, smaller school, but appreciated far more being part of a school community and knowing what his contribution was to the work of the school. Rachel would have liked more varied professional development opportunities, but enjoyed that the staff did lots of learning together. Patricia's experience again represents a graphic example of the importance of the school ethos in relation to teacher development. The prevailing culture resulted in her perception that despite the school's inability to fund non-contact time and course attendance because of budget difficulties; 'our staff are so supportive...if you need professional development it will happen'.

An aspect of school support that teachers appreciated was associated with perceptions that the headteacher valued and was encouraging of their development (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992), often in the face of severe budget restrictions. This encouragement was often seen as allowing teachers to attend courses regularly as already mentioned in this section. Where headteachers were

considered to be especially encouraging and supportive of professional development it was when they were perceived as making particular efforts to enable teachers to have release time for team teaching and subject management and where they were personally involved in professional development activities that teachers valued such as undertaking personal coaching and on-going observation with constructive feedback..

Troman and Woods' (2001) observation that headteachers, in attempting to make the education system work, can be the cause of stress for teachers would be endorsed by Leighton who considered that heads and LEAs were concerned merely to pass on the messages they received rather than build new requirements on evaluation of what had gone before. David was conscious of a similar pressure being transmitted by subject co-ordinators, which could be said to be indicative of the prevailing ethos which headteachers are influential in generating (Edmunds and Lee, 2002). The personal qualities and skills necessary to filter policy and exploit the implementation gap (Troman and Woods, 2001) would seem to be lacking in relation to headteachers applying performance management procedures in several instances where early career teachers felt their professional development needs were not addressed.

It is interesting to note that in the schools in which Rachel, Sandra and Patricia, worked where there was evidence of collective as well as individual learning, interviewees had spontaneously given examples of headteachers' facilitating professional development opportunities or personally supporting teachers' professional development. All three had also commented on feeling safe to

admit to weaknesses and the need for support, which along with collective and individual learning, is a feature of effective learning communities (Day, 1999. Bolam *et al.*, 2005).

Collegial support and interaction provided by schools ('Learning from each other, learning from what works', DfEE, 2001b, p.19) were seen as facilitating factors in interviewees' professional development. The team teaching, joint planning, observation feedback, informal discussions and such like could be categorised as the collaborative leaning which is a feature of leaning communities (Bolam *et al.*, 2005) and 'the nexus of teachers' professional development and reflection' (Glazer *et al.*, 2004, p.37). There would seem to be the situation for the interviewees similar to that reported in a GTC survey (Sturman *et al.*, 2004) where there is a high level of teachers sharing their knowledge and expertise with trainee and new teachers, with new teachers in this instance including those in their early years of career, especially where they are receptive to, and seek out, such support. But while interviewees found other teachers to be almost universally ready to provide support and to engage in discussion it is not so clear that other key features of leaning communities were so much in evidence. Clare, beginning her fifth year of career, was aware that the people in her school were keen to help her, when she asked and, while she was happy to do so, she was aware of other staff who were reluctant to admit to difficulties, or to be observed by others. These teachers may have had problems in seeing themselves as learners (Bracey, 2005) or they may not have experienced mutual trust, respect and support in their school (Bolam *et al.*, 2005) or they may not have felt secure or safe enough to be self-critical (Day, 1999). It

may be that there is an expectation in some schools that teachers in the early years of their career are at a stage in their professional development that necessitates further progress, but this expectation does not always extend to the later career years.

Several interviewees expressed very negative feelings about being observed. Some teachers could still appreciate the benefits even though they found it uncomfortable, but others found it too daunting, and, while it may be that individual characteristics such as self esteem and confidence play a part in this reaction, it is also likely to be affected by the culture in which the observation is experienced. David, for instance, described his impression of being observed as threatening, mainly because he perceived it to be focussed on SMT priorities rather than his development. The role of school leaders in developing and maintaining an atmosphere of openness, trust and respect (Wood and Anderson, 2003, Bolam *et al.*, 2005) is illustrated by Carmel's experience of being observed. She considered that in her last two schools it had not happened often enough and in her first school she had welcomed it since it was undertaken in an informal, non-threatening and supportive way. She perceived that the other heads were reluctant to impose it on teachers as it was daunting. This message failed to convey observation as an opportunity for 'collaboration focussed on leaning' (Bolam *et al.*, 2005) and Carmel thought that she would now be quite 'terrified' by the experience.

This research provides an original contribution to knowledge in that it demonstrates a view of early career primary teachers' professional development

experiences defined in their terms and not those who control and influence the professional development available to them. It differs from much of the research in that it does not focus on one particular form or outcome of professional development or a single innovation, and rather than concentrating on the induction period, addresses the first five years of career. The research presents what teachers understand to constitute professional development. It provides a picture of fragmented professional development provision, and, unlike the school improvement literature, indicates that teachers' professional development efforts focus mainly on their own teaching rather than improved pupil performance. There is evidence that some events may lower morale and confidence rather than bring about professional development and that teachers are sometimes in need of assistance in transferring what is required of them to their own classrooms. Seeing and hearing what has worked for colleagues can address this need. The procedures for the induction of NQTs are seen to have produced some benefits, but they are not always implemented and do not yet provide all the potential or hoped for benefits. However interviewees were well motivated to develop professionally. They were enthusiastic about forms of professional development that they found effective and all respondents could identify further opportunities that they would like to undertake. Some teachers were aware of the system failing to address their needs adequately, but there were many instances of teachers being keen to, and often pro-active in, meeting their perceived needs where opportunities existed. Leadership and managements in the schools that provide a context for teachers' early professional development can be seen to have wide ranging effects.

The scope of the research was broad and to that extent it is inevitable that some aspects of early career, primary teachers' professional development experiences have been neglected. I feel a fairly comprehensive impression of the professional development situation has been achieved based on teachers' direct observations and my interpretation of their responses, with the findings from the first stage of the research largely confirmed and clarified by the second.

As befits the nature of the research, the further conclusions relating to understanding what constitutes professional development for these teachers and how experiences are deemed to be effective, are rather tentative, with sample limitations acknowledged, but with rigorous efforts made to represent the data gained. They have been shown to relate to research in other situations and theory has helped to illuminate some of the findings that might not have been anticipated. For instance Hargreaves and Fullan's (1992) identification of the approach to teacher development as knowledge and skills development, along with the concepts of the 'empty vessel model' of teacher development (Dadds, 1997) and official concern with 'delivery' of curriculum (Day, 1999) can provide an understanding of teachers' emphasis on their own teaching rather than its effects, as their concerns centre on how full their vessel is, of how well they are delivering. Further research could explore more fully issues such as the nature of early career teachers' beliefs in the current context and any effects that professional development might have on them.

6.5 Conclusion

A primary purpose of this research was to inform my own practice as a headteacher, responsible for leading and managing professional development for early career teachers, and there are considerable implications related to my learning. These are summarised below:

- Systems and procedures need to provide an on-going and coherent provision in a nurturing and supportive atmosphere, building on an effective induction programme.
- Preparation and follow-up activities need to be planned as thoroughly as professional development events.
- Evaluation criteria should be established and, along with monitoring, be employed immediately after an event and at a planned later date.
- Systems need to serve the needs of teachers as well as schools and external requirements.
- Early career teachers need to play a significant role in the professional development process.
- Early career teachers should be given the opportunity to reflect on their professional development with a critical friend.
- A wide range of professional development activities should be available.
- Headteachers should ensure that professional development activities offered are appropriate for teachers' working context and of a suitable quality.
- Headteachers should endeavour to manage externally directed change to accord with school priorities.

A coherent system should begin with ensuring the quality of induction procedures ‘assisting NQTs to become active agents in their professional learning and fostering a vision of seamless progression beyond the induction year’ (Bleach and Rhodes, 2004, p.13). Career entry profiles, which can be developed into professional development records, provide a first stage to underlining the professional development process with written support. Along with ensuring that the induction year is properly reviewed with new targets for the following year, these measures will help to reinforce the notion of the induction year as merely the beginning of teachers’ continuing development within the school context, rather than an isolated career stage, and of teachers as reflective practitioners.

Teachers need to be recognised as the instrument by which school improvement will be achieved and any systems for appraisal and target setting need to ensure that their needs are adequately considered in a system that is subject to Government changes and may be inclined to focus on school needs and external requirements. Shared ownership is likely to encourage teachers to pursue school aims, but it should also be recognised that early career teachers especially may have needs that are not encompassed within school priorities. Teachers’ input into identifying areas for their development and acknowledgment of their strengths and progress made can help to promote the message that they are valued and that their needs have a place alongside those of the school

A wide range of professional development activities needs to be available and teacher involvement may help match activities to personal learning styles, and

may well include innovative ideas. Expertise within the school should be fully utilised especially among those colleagues who have experience of similar professional responsibilities as those of the early career teachers. The sharing of practice through the much appreciated foundation stage cluster meetings could provide a model for other key stages and contact with other local schools may also provide support from those in the same career phase. Expertise within the school includes that of early career teachers and utilising their strengths to develop the expertise of other staff may increase their sense of being a team member and a professional.

Responding to, and encouraging, the proactive and open approach that early career teachers bring to their careers, as displayed by the interviewees, could be of benefit not only to their own continuing professional development, but also to efforts towards developing a professional learning community within the school

A comprehensive system for professional development should focus on planned objectives and follow-up activities so that the benefits of events, including pupil achievements, are maximised and shared. Teachers should be given the opportunity to reflect on their professional development with a critical friend for formative and summative purposes, for short and longer term development, and to provide enthusiasm and direction for future efforts. Along with benefiting from the expertise and knowledge located within the school, this will enable developing teachers to question their own experiences and develop personal theories on which to build professional judgement and confidence.

Properly planned evaluation criteria should recognise that while teacher development ultimately aims to improve pupils' educational experiences, this may be a staged process. On the other hand early career teachers need to be encouraged to focus beyond their own performance and on how enhanced pupil learning may be achieved. A learning community focused, not only on pupil learning, but on all its members as lifelong learners, provides positive role models for pupils. In developing and sustaining such a community the same considerations of the learning environments would apply to staff as well as to those of pupils. Efforts to develop and sustain key characteristics of learning communities such as shared values, collective responsibility, collaboration, reflective practice and mutual trust are likely to have very positive effects on early career teachers' professional development, their morale and feelings of empowerment.

Headteachers should be concerned to ensure the quality of professional development activities offered including external courses, especially those offered by the LEA, so that they do not unnecessarily demoralise and engender stress in teachers. This monitoring needs to address presentation as well as content so that, for instance, current knowledge on adult learning is utilised. What is offered should be appropriate for the teacher's working context, addressing issues such as adaptations for mixed age groups. External professional development activities should form part of on-going professional development plans with headteachers making efforts to resist or adapt externally directed changes which do not accord with school priorities so that whole school efforts are focused and early career teachers' professional development can be

supported by follow-up activities and discussion with other staff, engaged on similar issues. A limited and clear focus allows time and energy to be invested in staff becoming familiar with any underlying theory of the innovation. This can help teachers feel more involved and confident about implementing and adapting the innovation, perhaps regaining some autonomy over curriculum and pedagogical practices.

It is unrealistic to expect that policy makers would avail themselves of any recommendations emerging from a single research thesis such as this and it is not the purpose of this research to make them. Nevertheless it provides much that is worthy of consideration for anyone responsible for encouraging and managing the professional development of early career primary teachers. While there are issues surrounding teacher development that need to be addressed at a national level, there is much that school leaders can do to make the resources and efforts expended on teacher development, by schools and teachers, more positive and useful.

In considering teachers as individuals with specific needs and characteristics school leaders need to recognise not only their responsibilities to plan and facilitate professional development for these colleagues, but also acknowledge the limitations of what they can do and encourage teachers to share that responsibility. Efforts that school leaders make to develop their schools as organisations and communities supportive of teacher development can be enhanced by involving early career teachers in the process. Such involvement has the potential to ensure that these teachers' particular and individual needs are

met, that they identify themselves as members of the school community and work towards its goals and that their morale and self-esteem are enhanced, with benefits for the teachers themselves, the school and pupils' learning. An excellent foundation on which to build this crucial work is the enthusiasm that early career teachers bring to the teacher development process.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Early Career Teachers' Professional Development Questionnaire.

Please complete the following details.

1. Number of years in teaching.
Please circle one answer.
2. Post held.....

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th

3. Route into teaching. Please circle one answer.

a)BEd/BSc/BAQTS. b)PGCE. c)GTP/RTP. d)OTTP.

4. Of the forms of professional development you have experienced so far in your career, how effective do you consider them to have been? Please tick, omitting any you have not experienced.

	Highly effective	Somewhat effective	Somewhat ineffective	Highly ineffective	Don't know
Conferences/Lectures					
Workshops					
Observation of a colleague					
Staff/Key stage meetings					
Job shadowing					
Action research					
Being mentored/coached					
Team-working					
Meetings to share good practice					
Mentoring/coaching a colleague					
Preparing and presenting a paper/project					
Networking with other schools					
Observation by a colleague					
Membership of professional organisations					
Own reading					
Higher qualification courses					
Other (please specify)					
Other (please specify)					

5. Are there any other activities that you consider to bring about professional development, that you have not had the opportunity to experience that are not listed above?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

PLEASE TURN OVER

6. What are your criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development activities?

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Please indicate how important the following outcomes of professional development activities are for you personally.

Professional development activities can:	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know
Improve teachers' knowledge					
Improve teaching skills					
Improve teachers' practice					
Inform teachers about educational developments					
Contribute to school development plans					
Contribute to OFSTED action plans					
Improve learning outcomes					
Assist career development					
Support the implementation of government initiatives					
Provide a break from classroom routine					
Improve management /leadership skills					
Other (please specify)					
Other (please specify)					

8. Please could you provide details of a professional development event/experience that has impacted on your classroom practice?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you. Would you like to be kept informed about the research project? Yes/No
If yes, would you be willing to participate further by providing more information about your experiences? If so please give contact details. (Confidentiality guaranteed).

Name.....
Address.....
.....
.....
Telephone.....
E mail.....

Appendix 2

Covering letter for questionnaire

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO TEACHERS IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THEIR CAREER.

(Please feel free to photocopy additional copies of the questionnaire if required.)

Ed. D. Research Warwick University

Barbara Shaw

Dear Colleague

I am writing to ask if you would be so kind as to complete the attached questionnaire concerning early professional development to assist me in my research. At a time when so much professional development is dictated by the education system I am interested to explore how professional development is experienced and perceived by early career teachers themselves. This being the case, your co-operation is vital to the whole enterprise. The first few questions are about yourself and the rest are about your experiences of professional development.

As an experienced primary teacher taking time out of the classroom to pursue my research interests, I am only too aware of the calls upon your time and the extent of your workload at this time of the year. However, I can assure you that the findings of the research will be put to effective practical use and I will happily make those findings available to all those who have participated in the research.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be respected in all instances, but if you would like to be informed of the research findings, or would be willing to participate in providing further details of your experiences, please fill in the contact details at the end of the questionnaire.

Your time and effort in completing and returning the questionnaire are truly appreciated. Thank you.

Yours sincerely
Barbara Shaw.

(Address)

Appendix 3

Interview schedule

Greetings and reassurance etc.

About you

1. Check details from questionnaire: **Year of career, post, qualification route.**
2. How long have you held your **current post**?

Experience of professional development

3. What **training** have you received concerning your areas of responsibility? Has it been effective in enabling you to undertake your responsibilities?
4. How do you **define** professional development?
5. How much do you **value** professional development how important is it for you?
6. What do you think has made you a **better teacher**?

Analysis of the questionnaires shows the range of forms of professional development that teachers have experienced (Table 2.). What the table does not show is the frequency with which these forms of professional development are experienced.

7. Could you give me some indication of the **balance** of different forms of professional development you have experienced?
8. How do you identify your professional development **needs**?
9. Would you include '**experience**' as a form of professional development? If so how has it brought about development for you?
10. Would you include opportunity to **reflect** on your practice as a form of professional development? If so what opportunities do you have for this and how effective are they in terms of professional development?
11. What is your opinion of the place of **theory** in professional development?

Effective professional development

Questionnaire analysis indicates that most teachers find observation, mentoring and team working to be highly effective and that lectures, own reading and staff meetings to be most often rated as somewhat effective. (Tables 3 and 4)

12. Would you like to **comment** on this finding?
13. Why do you think more teachers find observing and mentoring highly effective more often than **being** observed or mentored?

14. What has been your **best** professional development experience so far? (Provider, why valued, outcome).
15. What do you think is the **most effective** form of professional development overall?
16. Can you give me an example of a **recent** professional development activity and say what you have gained from it, and what has happened as a result?
17. What features of professional development opportunities **facilitate** and **inhibit** your professional development? How could different forms of professional development be **made more effective**?

Evaluation of professional development

18. Is evaluation of professional development opportunities **important** for you?
19. How does your evaluation inform **future selection** of professional development options?
20. Do you apply the **same criteria** for evaluation of professional development whatever the activity?

Outcomes of professional development

21. Do you have **desired/anticipated outcomes** in mind when making professional development decisions or taking part in activities?
22. What has effective professional development **changed** for you? Has it changed practice, attitudes or beliefs?
23. Analysis of the questionnaires indicates that teachers think the most important outcomes of professional development relate directly to what happens in the classroom. (Table 6) How important is it to you that professional development opportunities have direct application for what happens in your classroom?
24. Is it important for professional development activities/experiences to increase **confidence** and provide **reassurance**?

Professional development and the school

25. Do you think that your school is able to offer sufficient professional development **opportunities**, in terms of range and frequency, to meet your needs?
26. Do you have a professional development **entitlement**? How does it work?
27. Is there a system for **evaluating** professional development activities?
28. Is development **linked** to Performance Management? How?
29. Are professional development events **followed up** in any way? How are benefits of professional development **disseminated** to other staff?

Appendix 4

Contact Summary Form

Name:

Career year:

School address:

QTS route:

Main issues/ themes from interview:

Summary of the information gained:

Interesting, illuminating, important points made:

Other points to follow-up:

Appendix 5

Outcomes and sources of teacher development

(Sources in bold were reported on more than three occasions)

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Sources</i>
Reassurance (associated with class and subject responsibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ talking to colleagues ▪ observing colleagues/experts ▪ courses
Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ working with experienced colleagues ▪ constructive feedback from observation ▪ experience ▪ observing expert ▪ reflection
Other affective outcomes, including self-esteem, enthusiasm, excitement, motivation, pride and inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ courses ▪ being mentored and mentoring others ▪ working with colleagues ▪ observation in other schools ▪ constructive feedback from observation ▪ undertaking responsibility ▪ school INSET
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ courses ▪ feedback from colleagues' courses ▪ cluster meetings/visiting other schools ▪ LEA materials sent to school
Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ courses ▪ feedback from colleagues' courses ▪ cluster meetings/visiting other schools ▪ working with colleagues ▪ education press ▪ mentoring student teacher ▪ talking to colleagues
Classroom management strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ cluster meetings/visiting other schools ▪ constructive feedback from observation ▪ experience ▪ colleagues implementing school policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ courses
Improved/adapted teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ experience ▪ reflection ▪ experiencing activities from pupil perspective ▪ observing and being observed ▪ advice from experienced colleagues ▪ cluster meetings ▪ school INSET ▪ adapting to new resources ▪ courses ▪ being mentored/monitored ▪ working with colleagues
Improved/adapted planning, assessment and record keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ courses ▪ working with colleagues ▪ reflection ▪ school INSET ▪ being mentored/monitored ▪ experience
Increased, up-dated knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ courses ▪ staff meetings ▪ working with colleagues ▪ observation of colleagues ▪ observing in other schools ▪ advice from colleagues ▪ colleagues implementing school policy ▪ Master's course ▪ class swapping ▪ feedback from colleagues' courses ▪ education press
Support and advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interaction with suitably experienced ▪ courses ▪ colleagues ▪ LEA materials ▪ mentor ▪ school staff ▪ constructive feedback ▪ cluster meetings
Subject management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ courses ▪ working with colleague