

Staff Professional Development

2026



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Staff Professional Development Policy

1. Purpose

At Tadcaster Grammar School, high-quality professional development is central to improving the quality of education, developing staff expertise and securing the best possible outcomes and experiences for students.

We recognise professional development as an ongoing process rather than a series of isolated training events. Effective professional development develops knowledge and expertise over time through **training, modelling, deliberate practice, implementation, feedback, professional dialogue, reflection and refinement.**

Professional development is closely connected to school and curriculum priorities, the needs of our students and evidence about the quality and impact of our provision. It also contributes to staff development, leadership capacity, professional fulfilment and career progression.

We seek to create a culture in which colleagues learn from one another, engage with relevant evidence and subject expertise, practise and refine aspects of their work, and take collective responsibility for continually improving provision.

2. Principles of Professional Development

Professional development at TGS is underpinned by the following principles:

Students first – professional development should ultimately improve students' learning, experiences and outcomes.

Sustained development – meaningful improvement takes place over time rather than through isolated training events.

Deliberate practice – where appropriate, professional development should provide opportunities to practise specific aspects of professional practice in a focused and purposeful way, receive feedback and refine them before and during implementation.

A shared approach with subject specificity – there are important aspects of effective teaching that we develop collectively as a school, alongside the distinctive pedagogical and curricular expertise required within individual subjects.

Evidence-informed practice – professional development should draw upon appropriate research, evidence, professional expertise and evaluation.

Professional collaboration – staff should have opportunities to learn with and from colleagues within departments, year teams, across the school and through appropriate external networks.

Responsive development – professional development should respond to the School Improvement Plan, curriculum priorities, quality assurance, student need and the development needs of individuals and teams.

Professional trust and improvement – quality assurance and professional development should work together to recognise strengths, identify areas for development and support improvement.

Our approach to professional learning

Where appropriate, professional development follows a cycle of:

Develop knowledge → model and exemplify → deliberate practice → feedback → implementation → reflection and refinement → evaluation

Not every professional development activity will contain every stage. However, when the intention is to develop or change professional practice, staff should have opportunities to move beyond simply receiving information towards **practising, applying and refining what they have learned**.

3. Our Professional Development Model

Professional development takes place through a combination of whole-school, curriculum-specific, pastoral, leadership, individual and external opportunities.

These elements are complementary. Whole-school development establishes shared principles and approaches; curriculum development enables these to be interpreted through individual subjects; pastoral development ensures staff understand and respond to the students they teach; and individual development enables colleagues to refine particular aspects of their practice and develop professionally.

Staff Training Days

Staff training days provide extended opportunities for whole-school professional development.

Their content is determined by school and Trust priorities and may include teaching and learning, curriculum, SEND and inclusion, safeguarding, pastoral practice, statutory training and other aspects of school improvement.

Where training is intended to develop professional practice, sessions should, where appropriate, include opportunities for **modelling, worked examples, rehearsal or deliberate practice**, rather than relying solely upon presentation.

Training days should contribute, where possible, to sustained programmes of development which are revisited through TLCs, CDTs, coaching, QA or other professional dialogue.

Whole-School Teaching and Learning – TLCs

Teaching and Learning Communities provide a principal mechanism for developing shared approaches to pedagogy across the school.

Our current whole-school TLC programme focuses on the training and implementation of the school's **five-part lesson structure - we call this the TGS Classroom**. Sessions develop shared understanding of effective practice, provide practical strategies for classroom implementation and create opportunities to revisit and refine practice over time.

TLCs should combine relevant evidence and professional knowledge with:

explanation → modelling → deliberate practice → classroom implementation → feedback and reflection → refinement.

Deliberate practice within TLCs allows colleagues to focus upon manageable components of teaching rather than attempting to improve complex practice all at once. This might include, for example, rehearsing an explanation, practising questioning, planning checks for understanding, refining modelling or considering how a particular element of the five-part structure will work within a specific classroom context.

The purpose is not to prescribe identical teaching. Staff use their professional and subject expertise to apply shared principles appropriately to their subject, curriculum and students. Whilst staff retain autonomy over how they teach specific content, there are consistent routines and expectations in the classroom to reduce cognitive load for staff and students.

The focus of TLCs will evolve in response to school priorities and evidence about teaching and learning.

Curriculum Development Time – CDTs

Curriculum Development Time enables curriculum teams to develop **subject-specific curriculum and pedagogy**.

We recognise that effective teaching is rooted in the discipline being taught. CDTs therefore provide an important bridge between whole-school pedagogical principles and the specific knowledge, methods, vocabulary, misconceptions, explanations, representations and approaches that characterise individual subjects.

CDT may be used to develop and refine curriculum sequencing and planning; core or foundational, disciplinary and procedural knowledge; prior and future curriculum links; disciplinary vocabulary and literacy; explanations and modelling; questioning; assessment and responsive teaching; retrieval and practice; support for SEND and other groups of learners; and subject-specific resources.

Where appropriate, curriculum teams should also use CDT for **subject-specific deliberate practice**. For example, colleagues might collectively develop and rehearse an explanation, evaluate different models or representations, practise subject-specific questioning, anticipate misconceptions, moderate assessment or refine how an aspect of whole-school pedagogy is enacted within their discipline.

CDT also provides an important mechanism through which teams respond to **QA, assessment information and identified next steps**, translating evidence about provision and student learning into subject-specific professional development.

This builds upon the previous policy's expectation that curriculum development and pedagogical refinement should be ongoing within subject teams. Staff Development at TGS 2023-24

Year Team Development and Weekly Student Updates

Professional development also includes ensuring staff have an up-to-date understanding of the **students they teach and the barriers some students may experience**.

Year team meetings provide opportunities for professional discussion and development relating to students' pastoral, behavioural and wider educational needs. They support a shared understanding of particular cohorts and effective approaches to attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, personal development and engagement with learning.

Alongside these meetings, **weekly updates share relevant information about vulnerable students with staff**. This enables colleagues to remain aware of emerging or changing needs and respond appropriately in their interactions, classroom practice and support.

This recognises that effective support for vulnerable students depends both upon professional expertise and upon staff having timely and relevant knowledge about the students they teach.

Information is shared appropriately and proportionately in accordance with safeguarding, confidentiality and data-protection responsibilities.

Curriculum Team Leader Meetings – CTLs

Curriculum Team Leader meetings support both **curriculum leadership and middle leadership development**.

They provide opportunities to develop leaders' understanding of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, QA and effective departmental leadership, while enabling leaders to share practice, consider evidence and address common priorities.

CTL development may also incorporate modelling, scenario-based discussion, rehearsal and deliberate practice where appropriate—for example, practising professional conversations, giving

developmental feedback, facilitating departmental professional learning or responding to different leadership situations.

This recognises the significant role middle leaders play not only in assuring quality but in **developing the expertise of others**.

4. Quality Assurance, Feedback and Next Steps

Quality assurance is an integral part of our professional development culture.

QA is not simply a mechanism for evaluating provision. It enables us to **understand the quality and impact of curriculum and teaching, recognise effective practice and identify appropriate next steps for development**.

Evidence may be drawn from a range of activities, including lesson visits, curriculum discussions, student voice, work scrutiny, assessment information and curriculum review. No single source of evidence is considered in isolation.

An important part of the process is **feedback following QA**. Relevant findings are shared with staff and leaders so that colleagues understand strengths, areas for development and agreed next steps. Feedback may operate at whole-school, curriculum-team, leadership or individual level depending upon the evidence.

Where QA identifies effective practice, this should be recognised and, where appropriate, shared. Where development is required, leaders consider the most appropriate professional development response. This might include **whole-school training, CDT, discussion within a year or curriculum team, modelling, deliberate practice, individual coaching or appropriate external development**.

QA therefore contributes to a continuous professional learning cycle:

Priorities and student needs → professional development → deliberate practice and implementation → QA → feedback and next steps → further practice, support and refinement.

The purpose is to ensure that QA leads to meaningful professional learning and improvement rather than simply the collection of information.

5. Individual Coaching, Deliberate Practice and Professional Dialogue

Individual coaching provides a personalised form of professional development and is an important mechanism for supporting **deliberate practice**.

Coaching is developmental. Its purpose is to help colleagues identify specific aspects of practice that they wish or need to refine and then support them in doing so.

A coaching cycle might include:

Identify a precise area for development → explore and model effective practice → rehearse or deliberately practise → receive focused feedback → apply in the classroom → reflect and refine.

Effective deliberate practice is **specific and manageable**. Rather than attempting to improve “questioning” or “behaviour management” as a whole, for example, a colleague might practise a particular questioning routine, the wording of an instruction, a transition, an explanation or a method of checking for understanding.

Depending upon the focus, coaching may therefore involve observation, professional dialogue, modelling, rehearsal, scripting, co-planning, focused feedback and repeated opportunities to practise.

Feedback should be precise, constructive and connected to an agreed aspect of practice. Where appropriate, colleagues should then have opportunities to repeat and refine that practice rather than simply being told what to improve.

The school seeks to develop a culture in which **observation, practice, feedback and professional dialogue are normal features of professional learning**.

Coaching can support colleagues at all stages of their careers and should not be viewed solely as a response to underperformance.

6. Appraisal and Professional Growth

Appraisal is an important part of our professional development culture. It provides a structured opportunity for colleagues to reflect on their contribution, professional practice and development, and to identify meaningful priorities for the year ahead.

Our approach to appraisal is organised around three complementary objectives: **Impact, Practice and Growth**. Together, these recognise that effective professional development should consider the difference colleagues make, the quality of their professional practice and their continuing development as professionals.

Impact focuses student attainment and inclusion. Staff should consider how their work supports students to achieve well and ensures that all students, including vulnerable students and those with SEND, can access and succeed within an ambitious curriculum.

Objectives should be informed by students’ starting points and needs, with impact evaluated through appropriate evidence and professional discussion rather than any single data measure.

Practice focuses on developing pedagogy through the school's five-part lesson structure.

Teachers identify a specific aspect of their practice to develop, informed by their own needs, their subject and the students they teach.

Development is supported through TLCs, CDT, coaching and QA, with an emphasis on **modelling, deliberate practice, feedback, implementation and refinement**. The aim is to improve the quality of teaching within the five-part structure, rather than simply to demonstrate compliance with it.

Growth focuses on the individual's wider professional development. This may relate to developing expertise, extending responsibilities, leadership development, subject or role-specific knowledge, engagement with professional networks or associations, coaching, mentoring, an NPQ or another appropriate professional development opportunity. Growth objectives should reflect the individual's career stage, aspirations and development needs as well as opportunities within the school.

The three objectives should be distinct but connected. Appraisal should not operate as a separate process from the school's professional development programme. Where appropriate, colleagues' objectives should be supported through Staff Training Days, TLCs, Curriculum Development Time, year team development, CTL development, coaching, external training and other professional learning opportunities.

Appraisal is an ongoing professional conversation rather than a single annual event. Progress should be reviewed during the year so that colleagues can reflect on what they have learned, consider the impact of changes to their practice and identify any further support or development required.

Evidence used within appraisal should be proportionate and appropriate to the objective. Quality assurance may contribute to professional discussion and help identify strengths or areas for development, but individual QA activities should not be treated in isolation as appraisal judgements. The emphasis should be on building an informed picture of professional practice, development and impact over time.

Appraisers have an important role in supporting professional growth. This includes helping colleagues establish meaningful objectives, identifying appropriate development opportunities, facilitating support where required and creating opportunities for reflection and professional dialogue.

Through this approach, appraisal contributes to a wider cycle of professional learning:

Reflect → identify priorities → learn and develop → deliberately practise → implement → receive feedback → evaluate impact → refine and identify next steps.

Appraisal therefore supports both individual professional growth and collective school improvement, while recognising that professional development is most effective when colleagues have ownership of their development and appropriate support to improve.

7. External and Subject-Specific Professional Development

We recognise that expertise also exists beyond the school and that staff benefit from engagement with appropriate external organisations.

Subject teams and individual colleagues may undertake external professional development where this supports curriculum, pedagogical, professional or statutory priorities.

This may include:

- **exam boards and awarding organisations**, particularly for subject knowledge, curriculum delivery, assessment and examination requirements;
- **CLEAPSS and other specialist organisations**, including subject-specific health and safety training;
- **subject associations and professional networks**, through which colleagues maintain and develop disciplinary and pedagogical expertise; and
- other appropriate external providers according to identified school, departmental or individual need.

Where appropriate, colleagues who undertake external professional development should share relevant learning with their curriculum team or other colleagues so that expertise contributes to wider professional learning within the school.

8. Leadership Development and Professional Qualifications

TGS supports the development of leadership capacity at different levels.

Leadership development takes place through professional experience, coaching and line management, CTL development, school and Trust opportunities and, where appropriate, externally accredited programmes.

Staff may undertake **National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)** appropriate to their role and career stage, including programmes such as the **NPQ for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)** in agreement with SLT.

Where appropriate, leadership development should also provide opportunities to practise important leadership behaviours and skills rather than focusing solely upon acquiring knowledge.

Participation in external qualifications should complement colleagues' development within school and, wherever possible, enable their learning to contribute to wider school improvement.

9. Early Career and Individual Professional Development

Professional development should reflect career stage and individual need.

Early career teachers and colleagues new to the profession receive the mentoring, training and professional development appropriate to their programme and statutory requirements. This sits alongside participation in relevant whole-school and departmental professional development.

Other staff may have development priorities arising from their role, career aspirations, appraisal, professional dialogue, QA or changing responsibilities.

Where appropriate and practicable, the school supports professional development which contributes to both individual growth and school improvement.

10. Evaluating Professional Development

The effectiveness of professional development is evaluated primarily through its **impact on professional knowledge and practice and, ultimately, students' experiences and learning**, rather than simply through attendance or immediate feedback following training.

Evaluation may consider:

- whether staff have developed the intended knowledge and understanding;
- whether staff have had sufficient opportunity to practise and implement new approaches;
- evidence of implementation and refinement in classroom or leadership practice;
- professional discussion and staff feedback;
- curriculum and departmental development;
- evidence gathered through QA;
- students' experiences, work and learning; and
- whether further modelling, deliberate practice, coaching, training or support is required.

Leaders use this evidence to refine subsequent professional development so that it remains responsive and sustained.

11. Developing our Professional Learning Culture

Our medium- to long-term ambition is to develop an increasingly **collaborative, practice-rich and coaching-led professional learning culture**.

A key element will be the further development of **Teaching and Learning Communities**. Over time, we want TLCs to provide structured opportunities for colleagues to engage with evidence, observe

or explore effective practice, engage in deliberate practice, implement approaches in their classrooms, evaluate their impact and share what they have learned.

We also intend to develop a **Teaching and Learning Team**, drawing upon expertise from across the school. Its role would be to contribute to the development of pedagogy, model effective practice, facilitate professional learning, support deliberate practice and help develop greater capacity for coaching across the school.

Alongside this, we aim to establish a stronger **coaching culture**, in which professional dialogue, observation, modelling, deliberate practice, feedback and reflection become increasingly routine features of professional learning.

These are **medium- to long-term ambitions** and will be introduced carefully as capacity develops. They describe the intended direction of our professional learning culture rather than current provision.

12. Responsibilities

Senior leaders are responsible for establishing professional development priorities, ensuring appropriate provision, communicating relevant QA findings and evaluating the overall impact of professional development.

Curriculum Team Leaders are responsible for developing curriculum and pedagogical expertise within their teams, responding to relevant QA findings, identifying development needs and ensuring that Curriculum Development Time provides purposeful opportunities for curriculum development, professional learning and, where appropriate, deliberate practice.

Pastoral and year leaders contribute to staff development by ensuring colleagues have appropriate information and professional understanding to respond effectively to the needs of students and year groups.

Those leading training and coaching should consider how professional development can move beyond the transmission of information to include modelling, deliberate practice, feedback, implementation and refinement where appropriate.

All staff have a professional responsibility to engage constructively with relevant professional development, remain appropriately informed about the students they teach, respond to professional feedback and agreed next steps, engage in deliberate practice where appropriate, apply relevant learning to their role, reflect upon its impact and contribute to the professional learning of colleagues.