



CASE STUDY

Using pupil voice to lead staff development at **Luckley House School**

How to make CPD have an impact in the classroom? Luckley House School in Wokingham have put pupils at the heart of their programme, using Optimus resources to complement what they do



Luckley House School

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Luckley House in numbers

1:1

Luckley House will be soon running a one-to-one scheme, issuing every pupil with a tablet

94%

In 2015, 94% of all GCSEs were in the A*-C range

300

Luckley will be growing to 300 pupils by 2020, remaining a close-knit school

90%

Over the past five years, 90% of pupils have left Luckley to join their first choice of university



How can you ensure that professional development really does improve the quality of teaching? Luckley House School have helped staff to take ownership of their CPD and make an impact.

School context

A small school with a Christian ethos and an emphasis on individual attention to pupils and a well-rounded, complete curriculum, the CPD programme of Luckley House needed to reflect its ethos.

When the staff set out to define what outstanding teaching and learning meant for their setting, one of the key features was that 'teachers take responsibility for their own professional development' and are engaged in the process of continual improvement.

Prioritising professional development also meant putting the pupil at the centre of activities: it's their achievement and progress that development activities are ultimately meant to affect.

Ian Vallance, Deputy Headteacher at Luckley House, explains that while it's the SLT who will coordinate much of the training, pupil voice activities help set priorities for individual teachers, and it's the teachers themselves who will decide what CPD they need to undertake based on this feedback and their professional judgement.



Using pupil voice for staff development

'We use pupil voice to get feedback for specific teachers, on specific issues', says Ian. While Luckley House do have a whole-school programme of Inset days, most professional development activity is tied into the cycle of pupil feedback.

What does this look like in practice?

The pupil voice programme seeks feedback from specific classes on aspects of teaching. The results are then shared with the relevant teacher, and from this they can make an informed decision about what professional development they wish to prioritise over the course of the year.

The CPD programme is designed to allow easy access for teachers – most training sessions take place at lunchtimes, on a range of topics so that teachers can choose the ones most relevant to their needs.

Importantly, attending these sessions is not compulsory. Instead there is an expectation that teachers will engage in CPD as part of their personal development, managed through the appraisal process. Engagement in professional development therefore feeds into teachers' ability to progress, which helps emphasise its importance to the school.

As Optimus members, the leadership team use relevant resources to help pick out areas to focus on: 'the resources on leading CPD help us make sure that what we're doing reflects best practice', explains Ian.

Just as important is follow-up. Without evaluation and reflection it's difficult to tell if time spent on CPD is really worth it. The way Luckley House approach this is to hold peer observations following training: 'staff say "what I want to change in my teaching is this" and two peer observations give feedback on whether they have accomplished it'.

A follow-up pupil voice survey then focuses on the area for development that the teacher identified, and gives feedback on this area.

In this way the school creates a virtuous feedback cycle, using training, peer observation and pupil voice to continually reflect on teaching, and improve it.



Focusing on teaching and learning

Much of Luckley House's focus this year has been on developing teachers' use of ICT. Next year they will be concentrating on what outstanding teaching and learning looks like in practice.

Ian plans to offer lots of differentiated options, so teachers can attend the sessions that are most relevant to their needs. In order to make this possible without teachers having to spend hours preparing bespoke resources, the school is planning to adapt some of Optimus's ready-made training sessions.

They'll be using:

- deep learning in the classroom: Unit 1 of Optimus's Teacher Development Programme
- the peer observation course from the In-House Training library
- the resources and training linked to our guidance on making lesson observations meaningful.

Luckley House will run all seven units of the Teacher Development Programme independently, again putting the emphasis on the freedom of staff to choose what most directly relates to their strengths or weaknesses.

'What training teachers attend will be directed by feedback from pupil voice, and led by what will make an impact on pupils.'

With recent upheavals in assessment, their training will also focus on reporting and tracking to ensure teachers are confident and skilled in this often tricky area.

All this training will follow the same structure of being tied into feedback from pupil voice, and led by what will make an impact on pupils. Pre-reading and initial tasks are sent out before sessions to ensure that the CPD is as impactful as it can be, and learning is sustained.



Making CPD relevant and personalised

Almost every school will face the challenge of balancing whole-school strategic priorities with staff's individual development needs.

Luckley House's approach to CPD tackles this dilemma by putting pupil feedback at the heart of it. Senior leadership may set the general direction, but pupil voice gives specific feedback to teachers, so that they can choose what is most relevant to their needs.

By tying professional development into the appraisal process, the school ensures that it is viewed as a priority for all teachers – but without prescribing exactly what sessions they have to attend, or delivering one size fits all training.

This approach is helping to ensure that training has an impact where it is needed most: in the classroom.

Want to find out how Optimus Education can help your school?

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