

Professional Development

Our core aim is to ensure that students receive high quality teaching thereby allowing pupils to achieve their very best outcomes. We firmly believe that effective professional development is essential in developing teaching quality.

Our approach is built on very clear approach to professional development through our pathway approach and focus on subject specific professional development.

Building Knowledge	Motivating Staff	Developing teaching techniques	Embedding Practice
<p>Teachers gain an understanding of teaching: Building Subject Knowledge</p> <p>Subject leads identify areas of development within their teams and organise a subject CPD slot in each faculty area in order to extend subject knowledge of teachers as well as to explore new teaching practices.</p> <p>Teachers gain an understanding of how students learn: Cognitive Science</p> <p>Staff will be exposed to a range of training sessions to explore how students learn and retain new knowledge. This will enable to them to apply this to their teaching practice.</p> <p>Teachers gain understanding of themselves: Professional Development</p> <p>Staff are encouraged and supported in accessing a range of external professional development opportunities. This includes the full suite of NPQs, as well as Masters, MBAs and professional development courses offered by BlueSky Learning and the Great Teaching Toolkit. In addition, both support and teaching staff can access a range of adhoc courses in order to develop the knowledge of their role.</p> <p>CPD Pathways</p> <p>The Duston School has invested heavily in a range of CPD Pathways which aim to support and prepare staff for their current or next stages of career progression:</p> <p>DART</p> <p>Teachers are encouraged to engage with research and apply this to their own teaching practice, as well as conducting their own research. Staff then led on INSET to share their outcomes with teaching staff, as well as being given the opportunity to present at ResearchED Northampton to share with the wider teaching community.</p> <p>Early Career Pathway</p> <p>Teachers deserve high quality support throughout their careers, particularly in those first years of teaching when the learning curve is steepest. It is essential that early career teachers are able to develop the knowledge, practices and working habits that set them up for a fulfilling and successful career in teaching. This two-year pathway will work alongside the Teach First ECT induction programme. Sessions will support key areas addressed during ECT seminars and self-directed study, focusing particularly on approaches used at The Duston School.</p> <p>Responsive Teaching Pathway</p> <p>The Model for Great Teaching builds on our whole school teaching and learning core priorities, taking each dimension and exploring the different elements which contribute to great teaching. Along with the Model, teachers have access to a large bank of resources within the Great Teaching Toolkit to help them develop their practice in each area, as well as student surveys to help prioritise dimensions of their own teaching.</p> <p>Head of Department Pathway Course Aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the strategic, operational, and interpersonal leadership skills required to lead a successful department. To build confidence and competence in managing curriculum, people, and performance. To foster a reflective and forward-thinking approach to middle leadership that aligns with whole-school improvement. <p>Aspirant Senior Leaders Pathway</p> <p>A two-year pathway aimed to develop middle leaders and prepare them for a role within a Senior Leadership Team in the future. ASLP delegates will be exposed to key strands of knowledge that is essential in stepping into leadership responsibilities in the future. ASLP delegates are expected to take this learning and apply this to driving a whole school improvement project in the second year.</p> <p>Succeeding in Senior Leadership Pathway</p> <p>This is a two-year pathway model that is designed for senior leaders operating at an Assistant/Senior Assistant Principal layer within the school. This pathway will expose delegates to the wider thinking involved in being a senior leader at a higher level, notably as a Vice Principal, Head of School, Principal and Executive Leader. This pathway will help to enrich the holistic understanding of staff and support them in their current leadership position.</p> <p>Delivering Statistics Pathway</p> <p>GCSE Statistics began being taught in 2024 with the first cohort to be examined in the Summer of 2025. With the time allocated this programme is to develop staff such that they have the confidence and ability to teach the GCSE Stats programme.</p>	<p>Professional Improvement Plan</p> <p>The school has adopted a system of professional improvement based on staff working towards three school driven targets. Staff then identify their own objectives based on their professional responsibility and career stage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Professional knowledge (Subject, pedagogical or other knowledge relevant to their role) Teaching practice Team contribution (Department, Year team or other) <p>Staff outline the success criteria for each objective linked to either school or department priorities, with a clear outline of the actions to be taken. Progress towards these objectives are reviewed at three points throughout the year in order to keep them in focus. The professional improvement model is underpinned by the Teacher Workload Advisory Group who outlined that <i>‘Teachers should have goals that are within their control, that are closely tied to genuinely actionable behaviours and that are aspirational yet achievable’</i>.</p> <p>Professional Trust/ Respect</p> <p>The school fosters an environment of professional trust. Formal lesson visits are only undertaken during the whole school QA process and are not linked to an individual’s professional development. Leaders are trusted to manage their own teams according to their needs and opportunities for development, such as courses and school visits are encouraged as they arise according to staff members’ own areas of interest and development.</p> <p>Principal Conversations</p> <p>During the course of the school year, the Principal arranges a meeting with all individual teaching staff on a one-to-one basis. This is to give staff the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have and to give feedback on their experiences. They are also a chance to discuss staff career aspirations and any CPD needs they may have going forward.</p> <p>Westfield Health</p> <p>All staff are enrolled in Westfield Health’s private healthcare scheme. This gives them access to a range of health and wellness benefits which they are encouraged to make use of throughout the year. These include guaranteed access to a GP, significant discounts on dental, optical and alternative therapies as well as discounted prices on a range of goods and services through Westfield Rewards. Dependant children are covered on key benefits at no extra cost.</p>	<p>Inclusive practice</p> <p>Our ethos encourages and supports accountability for the progress of <u>all</u> learners at all levels of leadership. The SENCo will deliver training direct to middle leaders each term, designed to empower subject leads to fully support and coach their faculty members with respect to inclusive teaching.</p> <p><i>‘The best school leaders expect all staff and pupils to respect, understand and believe in an inclusive vision’</i> (DfE 2010).</p> <p>The SENCo will also train and coach middle leaders to effectively support their faculty members with identifying pupils that may have additional learning needs and where additional exam arrangements may be required. It is also important that faculty leads, alongside the SENCo, determine where vulnerable pupils are not accessing the highest quality teaching through the QA process and ongoing CPD. To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all</p> <p><i>‘High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.’</i> SEND Code of Practice, p. 99</p> <p>Deliberate Practice</p> <p>At a whole school level, there is a research-informed focus on embedding the use of deliberate practice in all lessons. Training on this is delivered during staff briefings and through lesson drop-ins. The focus on specific areas of practice gives staff a clear approach, scripting elements or approaches in lessons to allow them to embed this element of practice easily. The consistent approach means that these elements will have a more immediate and lasting impact. Focusing on a small number of elements means that they can be regularly revisited and will become more fully embedded as school-wide practice.</p> <p>This process is underpinned by Kirschner et al, 2006, who stated that <i>‘Direct instructional guidance is defined as providing information that fully explains the concepts and procedures that students are required to learn as well as learning strategy support that is compatible with human cognitive architecture.’</i></p> <p>Areas of focus:</p> <p>Term 1: Modelling - <i>“Learners should acquire a basic understanding of domain principles while studying examples, which provides a basis for later meaningful problem solving”</i> (Renkl., 2014, p.4)</p> <p>Term 2: Checking for understanding - <i>“Prompt practice or rehearsal of the performance of the behaviour one or more times in a context or at a time when the performance may not be necessary, in order to increase habit and skill”</i> (Michie et al., 2009 p58)</p> <p>Term 3: Embedding oracy - <i>“Practice improves accuracy and speed of performance on cognitive, perceptual, and motor tasks”</i> (Ericsson et al., 1993, p.367)</p> <p>Informal Drop-ins</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to participate in informal drop-ins (WOW walks) with peers to share good practice. The school operates an open-door policy and this helps staff be more open to inviting visitors and discussion around teaching practice. This is underpinned by Dennis, 2003 who outlined that <i>“Practical social support provides the individual with access to a peer who has knowledge and experience of the desired behaviour or practice”</i>.</p> <p>Briefings</p> <p>Weekly staff briefings are held with a focus on developing teaching techniques. These run on a rotational basis, covering aspects of deliberate practice, SEND & Adaptive Teaching, More Able, expectations in lessons, giving opportunities to introduce concepts then regularly review them throughout the year, and ensuring that a consistent message is given to all staff.</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Cycle</p> <p>We do not engage in graded lessons, instead focusing on developmental learning walks across all teaching staff to judge the quality of education in each subject area. The QA cycle involves the following key elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum conversation with Principal and Director of Education to review current curriculum implementation Learning walks across the subject areas involving key post holders to review the enactment of the curriculum Review of student experience of the curriculum through conversations with a variety of ages and abilities Workbook review to evaluate the sequencing and accessibility of the teaching resource, as well as to review the progress of students to date SEND experience is reviewed to ensure that all students are facilitated in their learning to ensure they are successful. <p>Following the subject reviews, subject leads write a full report outlining the areas of strength and areas for development. Subject leaders use this information to update their action plan to drive improvements which are reviewed across the year.</p> <p>This approach is underpinned by the work of Burke et al., 2011, who states that <i>“In order to change behaviours, individuals need to pay adequate attention to their own actions, as well as the conditions under which they occur and their immediate and long-term effects”</i>.</p> <p>Learning Walks</p> <p>At a departmental level learning walks are focused on identifying areas of good practice and areas of development. Subject leads can use these to consider a range of foci for example, staff engagement in deliberate practice techniques or reviews of workbooks. Subject leads use these to review progress against the department SIP targets, as well as to determine actionable targets for teaching staff to work towards.</p> <p>Institutional Expectations</p> <p>We identify a small number of foci across the school so that the messages are clear for staff and that these foci can be revisited regularly throughout the year whilst they become fully embedded in teaching practice.</p>

Professional Development Matters

- The **Senior Leadership team** are responsible for overseeing the successful implementation, continued refinement, monitoring and evaluation of the schools’ approach to professional development.
- Subject leaders** are responsible for facilitating professional development opportunities within their subject area, as well as continuously reviewing their subjects’ performance with regards to delivery of the curriculum and timely refinement where needed.
- Teachers** are responsible for owning their own professional development and exploring a range of opportunities to further their career progression. They should respond to whole school priorities for teaching and learning approaches to ensure that curriculum delivery is responsive and underpinned by cognitive science and curricular thinking.