

# Brook Learning Trust

## Continuous Professional Growth Policy: Pilot (Teachers)

### Introduction

At Brook Learning Trust (BLT) we bring together our unique academies in our belief in the power of education to change lives and communities. It is our steadfast purpose to challenge and defy the barriers that constrain the educational progress of any child. We set high aims for aspiration and secure collective responsibility for all our children's achievements. Our work is underpinned by the values of Integrity, Respect, Courage, Optimism, Excellence and Accountability.

The BLT Continuous Professional Growth Policy (CPG) puts the highest quality of teaching at the very heart of the performance management process. CPG has been introduced across BLT as an approach to support teacher and leadership effectiveness. This in turn will lead to improved organisational performance and improved outcomes for our students. We regard professional development as a key driver not only for staff development, but also for recruitment, retention, well-being, and academy improvement. We are driven by a sense of moral purpose and a desire to continuously improve.

### Rationale

This approach is designed to change the way we view professional development and accountability. It replaces the BLT Teacher Appraisal Policy, moving away from measuring progress against data based objectives and annual targets. In implementing the new approach, professional growth and the systems underpinning it become a means to generate professional effectiveness, not solely to measure it.

CPG is a process that requires a commitment from all teachers to active, cognitive and practical engagement in order to seek further growth in professional knowledge and practice. The CPG approach will provide guidance on how to assess teachers' engagement in learning and collaboration, will incentivise teachers' participation in job-embedded professional learning and will recognise and account for teachers' commitment to continuous improvement. The approach creates a culture that encourages staff to stay and grow within the BLT family of academies and supports staff to make the next steps in their careers.

### Purpose

The key purposes of CPG are:

- To recognise and promote a culture of professionalism
- To build and enhance professional expertise
- To deliver the highest quality teaching
- To realise enhanced organisational performance
- To improve outcomes for our students
- To secure the involvement and accountability of each teacher for their development.

The approach supports each teacher's development within the context of the Trust or academy plan for improving educational provision and performance, the National Teachers' Standards and the specific expectations of BLT for all of its teaching staff. Teachers are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. The Teachers' Standards define the minimum level of practice expected of teachers from the point of being awarded Qualified Teacher Status. The Teachers' Standards also set out a number of expectations

about professional growth. At BLT the standards remain live and current and we believe that all teachers benefit from continuously revisiting these.

This document also sets out how CPG engagement is reflected in teachers' pay progression.

## **Principles**

We will implement CPG arrangements on the following principles:

- Equality of opportunity: all staff take action to ensure the CPG process is fair, equitable and non-discriminatory
- Openness: all staff are encouraged and supported to achieve their potential through clarity of expectations and job role, regular feedback, CPG conversations and reviews
- Commitment to excellence: all staff have the potential to increase proficiency in all areas of responsibility through engaging with the CPG approach
- Accountability: all staff learn and improve, accepting accountability for the quality of their work with others and a joint accountability to undertake continuous professional development.

## **Conditions**

CPG works most effectively when essential conditions are continuously cultivated. These conditions include a culture of trust, continual learning and collaborative inquiry within our organisation. From our teachers and leaders, these conditions require a willingness to continually improve and a commitment to support one another to develop, so that our students benefit from the highest quality teaching.

CPG is a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all teachers have the skills they need to carry out their role effectively. Continuous Professional Growth:

- Acknowledges that knowledge and expertise is domain specific and learning is grounded in day to day practice
- Recognises that novices and experts learn differently
- Focuses on what works, challenges existing assumptions and is therefore, evidence-informed
- Involves collaboration with colleagues and peer support
- Is shared and transparent so that others can benefit from what has led to improved performance for one teacher and one group of students
- Is sustained over time and includes frequent opportunities for learning, experimentation and practice, reflection and evaluation, honest frequent feedback and solutions-focused coaching
- Applies to all teachers who have completed their NQT induction regardless of which pay scale they are currently on.

## **CPG, Teachers' Standards and Effective Professional Reflection**

The following expectations summarise the connections between CPG at BLT, the Teachers' Standards, developed by the Department for Education, and professional reflection. Teachers will:

- Keep their knowledge and skills up to date and be self-aware and reflective
- Take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how students learn and how this has an impact on their teaching
- Have a secure knowledge of relevant subject(s) or curriculum areas
- Know and understand how to assess the relevant subject(s) or curriculum areas
- Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of their teaching

- Where relevant develop high quality leadership attributes, qualities and mind sets that ensure the delivery of high quality education.

The CPG experience should be clear about what teachers and leaders already know and do and what is planned to be achieved through the CPG process. Within BLT the Teachers' Standards form our benchmark for reflection, review and evaluation in order to ensure that our teachers identify areas for further growth and continue to maintain the level of competence that qualified them at the start of their careers. Coaches will work with colleagues to plan deliberate practice and offer high quality feedback through authentic evidence of performance. Teachers and leaders must dedicate time to reflect on that feedback.

## **Leadership**

Leaders will engage in the process of continuous professional growth. BLT has identified Trust wide Leadership Attributes which all leaders will commit to developing and against which promotion and recruitment to leadership roles will be assessed. The professional learning and support for leaders will refer to these Leadership Attributes, informing development goals for existing and aspiring leaders of all levels.

All those who are currently on the leadership scale or engaged in leadership responsibilities or the line management of others will reflect on the Leadership Attributes in addition to the Teacher and Upper Pay Range (UPR) Standards where relevant.

## **Monitoring CPG progress and engagement**

BLT encourages a culture in which all teachers take personal responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development. Professional growth is linked to Trust, academy, subject or project group improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers and the students that they teach. The evidence we use to reflect on performance and development will not be based solely on student data or a small number of lesson observations.

Evaluation of CPG engagement and impact will use multiple measures which may include: classroom observation, assessment of student learning through teacher planning and student work, survey results, delivery of key projects, CPG record books (see below), and any other performance indicators identified within the academy improvement plan or Trust business plan.

The Trust recognises that lesson observation, learning walks and book looks are not proxies for judging the quality of teaching. Therefore lesson observations will not be graded and will not be used as a single indicator of performance or as a single indicator for assessing whether the Teachers' Standards have been met. The Trust will have no high stakes observations. However, it also recognises that feedback from observing and being observed are essential to growing great teachers.

The protocols for lesson observation and learning walks are defined by each academy within their Teaching and Learning policies.

## **CPG Record Books – The Professional Growth Plan**

Continuous Professional Growth record books will support engagement with the BLT CPG approach, outlining and scaffolding the process. Teachers and leaders will identify with their coaches which part of the record books applies to them depending on whether they are a Main Scale Teacher, An Upper Pay Scale Teacher, Main or Upper Scale with an additional TLR or on the Leadership Scale.

CPG record books are differentiated as we recognise that colleagues with different levels of experience and responsibility within the organisation will have diverse growth plans. However the CPG approach pertains to all levels of staff employed on teaching terms and conditions of employment and should be applied when undertaking CPG.

The books are divided into six sections:

- Part 1: Reflection on Teaching Standards (applicable to all)
- Part 2: Reflection on Personal and Professional Conduct (applicable to all)
- Part 3: Reflections on Upper Pay Scale criteria (applicable to UPS teachers)
- Part 4: Reflections on BLT Leadership Qualities (applicable to those on Leadership Scale and those whose role attracts a TLR 2 or a TLR 1)
- Part 5: A selection of goal setting and goal impact evaluation forms
- Part 6: A final 2019/20 academic year evaluation of the CPG process and impact

Following a self-reflection process which will be undertaken by all teachers and leaders, the initial meeting will establish the first CPG goal which will form the professional growth plan. This individual CPG record will identify what teachers will learn or do differently, the agreed approaches to achieve this and the intended impact of their work on students' outcomes or organisational development. It is recognised that in the complex process of teacher growth, impact on students' outcomes is rarely a sole or direct correlation. However, improving a teacher's practice will change student learning experiences and therefore impact outcomes.

NQTs will undertake their own CPG reflection through their identified NQT induction routes and this process will lead our NQTs seamlessly into the CPG process when induction has been successfully completed.

### **Professional Reflection**

At the start of each CPG cycle, leaders and teachers will reflect on their successes, strengths and areas for further growth against the Teachers' Standards, UPR criteria and BLT Leadership Attributes, as appropriate. There is a personal scaling exercise for each standard.

Teachers should use the scale for each standard to reflect on how well they are doing against each standard and, most importantly, what they may do next to become even better.

This reflection will be shared with the CPG coach or line manager as a prompt for the first Goal setting #1 CPG conversation.

Reflection on the Teachers' Standards criteria and Leadership Attributes at the start of the CPG cycle will help to better establish an individual focus for professional growth which is then further detailed in the Goal setting # 1 plan and summary. Each teacher, therefore, needs to carefully reflect on their current context, standards and practice to ascertain the most impactful development focus. The focus will then be discussed and established with the support of the teacher's line manager or coach.

This initial discussion will take place in October / November. The focus is then sustained and all staff are required to engage in opportunities for learning and experimentation, reflection and evaluation, feedback and coaching. It is intended that professional growth and learning, rather than just being confined to meetings in specific times and places, will become embedded into teachers' everyday work practice. Following Goal Setting #1, time will be spent investing in Continued Professional Development (CPD) and the impact of this will be discussed at the first Impact Evaluation Conversation #1.

## CPG Impact Evaluation Conversations and Record Books:

Impact evaluation conversations will:

- Review the intended goal and progress toward its achievement
- Review the impact of the work on students' learning or organisational improvement
- Agree recommendations for colleagues including consideration of how findings may be successfully implemented in other contexts.

To aid developmental conversation between teachers and coaches the CPG record books provide points for focused discussion at both goal setting and impact evaluation meetings. Teachers will regularly reflect on the progress of their CPG records as they design lessons or activities to practise deliberately the focus on their ongoing learning and subsequently reflect on the effectiveness of any changes in practice.

The CPG record books will be presented to their coaches / line managers at the end of the cycle. Leadership / Coaching / Subject Lead and Teaching and Learning Hubs and networks at each academy and at Trust wide level can request access to the records for the benefit of reflection, accountability and sharing best practice.

The CPG record book will form the **Professional Growth Plan**. Record books will replace appraisal paperwork and will be used as part of the audit of pay annual pay recommendations prior to the Teacher Pay Committee.

## CPG and Learning

Research has shown that one-time workshops that are typically outside the context of a school seldom align with ongoing practice and do not reliably lead to improvements in teaching and learning. CPG and the subsequent CPG plans and records require learning to be regular, ongoing and in depth, as this will have a far more positive impact on practice and outcomes for students than brief and superficial 'training' that lacks focus and context.

In the CPG record book, a clear goal is set by each teacher focusing on what to change or develop and identifying with the intended impact. BLT values the importance of autonomy and choice in the focus of each individual's development and we understand that providing staff with opportunities to substantially affect and direct their own goals, practice and inquiry is a powerful motivator. Professionals who set and monitor their own goals are those who will continue to grow. We will, therefore provide effective training, opportunities and time that will give our teachers the chance to work on a focus of their choosing that positively affects the students they teach. The focus for each bespoke CPG plan will be chosen within parameters aligned to student standards, academy curricula and school improvement goals.

Knowledge and expertise is domain specific: expertise requires knowledge in and skill in a specific area. Any professional learning should therefore be as specific as possible to the context in which it will be used: to the subject, topic or year group. With a clear goal and an assessment of what is needed to achieve it, support can then be focused on meeting those needs.

Each CPG professional growth plan and record is a 'live' document to be reflected on, referred to frequently and adjusted where appropriate. Our teachers are therefore expected and encouraged to purposefully practice; to design lessons that force them out of autopilot and ensure a deliberate focus on experimentation within their classroom. To ensure that growth is continuous and progress ensured, teachers are expected to engage with professional support.

## **Professional Support**

Professional support is available for all of our teachers so that they can continue to grow and develop. This support can take many forms: dialogue, conversations, co-planning, mentoring and coaching, analysis, feedback and observation.

Our teachers are therefore expected to create partnerships with others, including those with expertise, to support their professional learning and generate information about their progress so that they can monitor and adapt their learning. Teachers are expected to support and assist colleagues through structured opportunities to reflect, by reviewing progress and helping the teacher to consider the effectiveness of their practice. The role of any member of staff when supporting a colleague is to push and challenge their thinking so that each teacher becomes an adaptive expert who is capable of continually growing, reflecting on, and expanding, the depth and breadth of their classroom expertise. Our teachers are encouraged to seek feedback from multiple viewpoints.

## **Feedback**

Providing people with feedback on how they are doing against their own goals increases the chances of those goals being reached. Any feedback for the teacher should therefore focus on the agreed development area and should be provided as soon as possible after any support or visit has taken place. Feedback from classroom observation should be fed back as information, be delivered promptly and, where possible and appropriate, be non-judgemental. The subsequent conversation is where the learning and action should take place, enabling reflection on strengths and successes and offering a structured professional dialogue focused on the further development of an area of need for the teacher and/or their students. These conversations will be challenging yet respectful dialogue about improvement. Therefore during this conversation the teacher and the coach will always identify a next step: feedback, without goal setting, is just information.

All teachers are expected to support and learn from colleagues. Therefore, during the course of the year, each teacher is expected to observe a colleague with the sole focus of going to learn from them. This visit will enable each teacher to identify possible next steps in their development based on learning gained from their colleague. Teachers should be the drivers of their own professional collaboration.

## **CPG and Pay Progression**

Pay progression for staff should reflect their overall contribution to the school and their commitment to engage in the CPG approach both as individuals and as team members.

Where teachers and leaders, as appropriate, continue to meet the Teachers' Standards, UPR criteria, work towards Leadership Attributes and engage in the process of CPG, pay progression will be automatic and not linked to any mechanism of traditional appraisal based performance management. We expect teachers to progress up the pay scale as the norm.

Our teachers do not have to be at the top of the main pay scale to apply for the Upper Pay Range. The Pay Policy sets out the relevant criteria and timeframes for applications.

If teachers are underperforming at any point the Trust may remove them from the CPG process and apply the Staff Capability Policy and Procedure. Pay progression may be affected during informal and formal capability stages.

## The CPG Cycle

The CPG cycle runs across an academic year. Within the cycle the frequency of goal setting is responsive to the scope and scale of individual goals, however CPG conversations setting short term developmental and impactful goals should take place each term. Impact evaluation conversations should also take place each term. An example timeline is below:

Meeting	Term
Teachers' Standards Self reflection	Term 1
Goal Setting #1 meeting	Term 2
Impact Evaluation Conversation #	Term 2
Goal Setting #2 meeting	Term 3
Impact Evaluation Conversation #2	Term 3
Goal setting #3 meeting	Term 4
Impact Evaluation conversation #3	Term 4
Goal setting #4 meeting	Term 5
Impact Evaluation conversation #4 **	Term 6
Final Review	September 2020

The final review will include reflection upon engagement with CPG as summarised below:

- Employees self-reflection and evaluation against the Teachers' Standards and (if applicable) Upper Pay Range standards and Leadership Attributes
- Engagement with a minimum of 4 CPG conversations throughout the academic year agreeing short term objectives and including learning, investing in CPD and applying learning in practice
- Commitment to carry out agreed actions and CPD
- Keeping CPG records / journal and sharing evidence with coach / line manager of how CPG engagement and commitment is progressing, including any examples of impact on student outcomes
- Sharing learning gained through the CPG process with others and contributing, where applicable, to the development of others
- Engagement in wider BLT CPG evaluation.

## Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

It is recognised that as a policy this is quite different to the traditional appraisal that teachers have become used to, however we believe strongly that elements of the CPG approach exist already across the Trust and that this shift will benefit our teachers and our students.

CPG at BLT will be piloted during the academic year 2019/20 and during this pilot period teachers will feedback on their experiences of the CPG Policy. The Teaching and Learning Hub will regularly assess and collate learning needs which have been identified and evaluate how these can best be delivered to provide the most impact and value.

### POLICY REVIEW AND RATIFICATION

New policy introduced and this pilot authorised by BLT Board in October 2019. Thereafter, reviewed and ratified biennially by BLT Board in July.

Drafted by BLT Executive Team	September 2019
Summary of amendments	New policy from October 2019
Next routine review & ratification	July 2021