eplc

creating and sustaining Effective Professional Learning Communities

General Feedback Report for Nursery and Primary Schools and Special Schools deemed Primary

Contents

Note that this general report is a version of the customised feedback report which excludes the presentation of responses from individual schools.

Introduction

A major task of the eplc project was to survey schools about the characteristics of effective professional learning communities. The purpose was to generate credible, accessible and practically useful findings for those within and outside schools interested in creating, developing, supporting and sustaining effective professional learning communities. Currently, there is no clear consensus on what precisely constitutes a professional learning community. However, international research suggests that they are characterised by: shared values and vision; collective responsibility for pupils' learning; reflective professional inquiry; collaboration; and the promotion of group, as well as individual learning. One important aim of this survey is to test out the reality of these characteristics by establishing basic descriptive data on the features of professional learning communities in different kinds of schools in England.

The eplc questionnaire was informed by a review of the literature on professional learning communities and was designed in consultation with the Steering Group and with international colleagues. A draft questionnaire was piloted with a sample of schools and the instrument was revised in the light of feedback obtained at different stages throughout this process. The final questionnaire comprised three parts:

- items designed to gather opinion about professional learning in the school;
- items exploring perceptions of a definition of an eplc and the factors which the respondent felt facilitated or were barriers to the school becoming a professional learning community (these textual findings are analysed and reported in a separate document);
- items related to factual information about the range and extent of professional development and school self evaluation activities in the school.

The questionnaire survey was subsequently administered (one questionnaire per school) to two samples. The first sample comprised 800 nursery, primary, secondary and special schools approached in the summer term 2002 and the second was a different sample of 1500 primary and secondary schools approached in January 2003.

This general report summarises in tabular form the overall survey findings from the sample of primary and nursery schools[1] that returned questionnaires (n=229). Where the overall results are particularly interesting this has been briefly highlighted in the text. However, it is important to note that these findings are a summary of data collected some months ago from one respondent - either the head or CPD coordinator - in each school responding to the survey. Of course the situation may have changed since the data were collected. Nevertheless we hope that the findings provide some useful indicators of the features of schools as professional learning communities, of how they are created and sustained, and of the levels of resources, self evaluation activities and the extent of staff participation in local and national initiatives that support eplcs.

To assist with staff development activities a blank column has been inserted so that school staff have an opportunity to respond to each item themselves and, to facilitate discussion, a number of key questions have been outlined after each section.

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[1] The results for secondary schools have been analysed separately. Special schools are included as appropriate in either the nursery/primary or secondary analyses. The overall response rate was 17% and preliminary analyses indicate that this is a representative sample of all primary schools in terms of socio-economic disadvantage (measured in terms of percentage of school pupils entitled to free school meals). However, the results should be treated cautiously prior to further examination of the representativeness of the sample via analysis of DfES/PLASC datasets.

The school as a professional learning community

The provisional working definition of a professional learning community quoted in the survey was as follows:

> *'An effective professional learning community has the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals and other staff in the school community with the collective purpose of enhancing pupil learning.'*

Overall, respondents from the nursery and primary schools participating in the survey reported their school's position in the following categories:

25%   consider that the professional learning community in their school is mature/established,
57%   perceive that their professional learning community is developing,
13%   see themselves and their colleagues as starting the journey to becoming a professional learning community,
2%   report that they are working to re-establish themselves as a professional learning community and
3%   were not able to respond to any of the given categories.

Note that the majority of respondents (57%) from nursery and primary schools report that their school is a developing professional learning community. This indicates that the overall survey findings outlined in this report are more likely to reflect the features of this – self reported - category of school rather than any of the other school categories and this point should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

How to interpret the tables of results

In this section we have provided some example data from one anonymous nursery or primary school with the aim of providing pointers to the interpretation of the data presented in this general report. It is important to note that data is presented in a simple tabular form showing the overall percentage distribution of responses from all nursery and primary survey respondents. To aid interpretation, the findings from individual survey questions addressing similar topics have been grouped together under specific headings. Part one results (sections A-H) describe the findings about professional learning in the school and part two results (sections A-I) describe the findings on factual information about the school. **The findings should of course be interpreted cautiously given the results are based on one respondent in each school – it is important to remember that other members of the school may have different opinions about the questions.**

With regard to interpreting the findings about professional learning in the school we have provided below a description of the results for two different items. Note also that one item [A.5] was purposefully worded negatively to provide a check on response bias. With regard to interpreting the findings on factual information about the school the meaning of the results is more straightforward given most response categories are either yes/no or a numerical value (e.g. number of staff rooms), where this is not the case further explanation is provided.

Part one: Item [A.1]
The results from item [A.1] show that the majority of nursery and primary school respondents (77% denoted by **a**) considered that 'nearly all' (i.e. 80-100%) of their teachers created conditions for pupils to feel the confidence to learn in their school. On this aspect all respondents commented on the percentage of staff who contributed in their school, as 0% is reported in the 'don't know' or 'missing' column (denoted by **b**). Note that in general higher overall percentages of 'don't know' or 'missing' responses for an item (e.g. >15%) suggest a tendency for school respondents to lack knowledge about and/or feel unwilling to respond to the aspect addressed by the particular item. In relation to changes over time the majority of school responses (61% denoted by **d**) indicated that this aspect of teachers support for learning had not

changed amongst school staff over the last two years. In contrast 35% (denoted by **e**) of respondents indicated that there had been an increase in the percentage of teachers in the school who created positive conditions for pupils to learn and a small percentage of respondents (4% denoted by **f**) did not respond to the question as to whether there had been a change.

The summary of responses from all schools can be usefully compared to individual responses from school staff. Here we discuss the results from one fictitious nursery or primary school. The respondent from the example school indicated that 'most' (i.e. 50-79% denoted by **c**) teaching staff in the school create conditions for pupils to feel the confidence to learn. Note that this response is different from the clear majority of survey respondents (77%) reporting 'nearly all' staff in relation to this item. The example school staff may want to examine any reasons for this difference and the implications of the results for their school's policy and practice. The example school also indicated that there had been 'no change' in item [A.1] in the last two years – a response similar to the majority of respondents from nursery and primary schools.

What percentage of teachers in this school :	The response from an example school	Percentage of Nursery and Primary schools responding in each category					Changes in an example school	Percentage of Nursery and Primary schools reporting a change in the last two years			
		Nearly all (80 to 100 %)	Most (50 to 79 %)	Some (20 to 49 %)	A few (0 to 19 %)	Don't know Or missing		Yes : gone up	No change	Yes : gone down	Miss-ing
create conditions for pupils to feel the confidence to learn [A.1]	50-79% [c]	77[a]	19	3	0	0[b]	no change [g]	35[e]	61[d]	1	4[f]
use ICT data bases to monitor pupil progress [A.4]	0-19%[i]	27	19	25	26	4[h]	missing[l]	51[j]	44[k]	0	5

Part one: Item [A.4]

In contrast to item [A.1], the results for item [A.4] show that the percentage of staff in a school using ICT data bases to monitor pupil progress is highly variable amongst respondents from nursery and primary schools. In other words the percentage of schools responding to the four categories - 'nearly all', 'most', 'some' or 'few' - is approximately evenly distributed and suggests a lack of consensus between survey schools on the importance of this aspect of teacher support for pupil learning. A small percentage (4% denoted by **h**) of respondents did not comment on the percentage of staff who contributed to item [A.4] in their school. In terms of changes over time, the overall majority of respondents (51% denoted by **j**) said that there had been an increase in the percentage of teachers in the school who use ICT data bases to monitor pupil progress. However a substantial minority (44% denoted by **k**) of responding schools reported that the status they reported for this item [A.4] amongst staff had not changed over the last two years.

Similar to the interpretation for item [A.1] the overall distribution of responses for item [A.4] from nursery and primary schools can be compared to the responses from individual school staff. In the case of the example school the respondent estimated that only a few teaching staff in the school ('0-19%' denoted by **i**) use ICT databases to monitor pupil progress. Also the respondent from the example school did not give any indication of changes in the last 2 years in relation to this aspect (ie the response from the example school was 'missing'). In this case the example school staff may want to examine possible reasons for the difference between their responses on this item and the overall distribution of responses and what this may – or may not - suggest about the quality of teacher support for pupil learning in their school.

In the next sections, parts one and two, the results from the survey will be presented. Please note that in the description of results, the categories for 'nearly all' and 'most' have been combined in some cases.

Part One : The findings about professional learning in the school

A. Teacher support for pupil learning

A clear majority of respondents from primary and nursery schools, 70% and above, reported that 'nearly all' their staff created conditions for pupils to feel the confidence to learn, set individual learning targets for pupils and regularly monitored pupil learning and progress. At least 35% of the respondents reported an increase in all aspects of active teacher support for pupil learning over the last two years. Most dramatically, 56% of respondents in primary and nursery schools had noticed a significant rise in the use of the setting of learning targets for individual pupils by teachers in the last two years.

However, no clear consensus emerged on the use of ICT data bases by teachers to monitor pupil progress and on whether teachers actively seek and use feedback from pupils. In spite of this, respondents reported a sharp increase of 52% in the use of ICT data bases to monitor pupil progress by teaching staff within their school over the last two years.

- **How do the responses from all schools about teacher support for pupil learning compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do you see as the practical implications for teacher support for pupil learning in your school?**

What percentage of teachers in this school :	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools in each category					Changes in your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools reporting a change in the last two years			
		Nearly all (80 to 100 %)	Most (50 to 79 %)	Some (20 to 49 %)	A few (0 to 19 %)	Don't know Or miss-ing		Yes : gone up	No change	Yes : gone down	Miss-ing
create conditions for pupils to feel the confidence to learn [A.1]		77	19	3	0	0		35	61	1	3
ensure pupils receive constructive feedback about their work [A.2]		55	37	6	1	0		41	55	1	4
set learning targets for individual pupils [A.3]		70	19	7	3	0		56	40	0	4
use ICT data bases to monitor pupil progress [A.4]		26	20	24	26	4		52	43	0	5
have low expectations of children [A.5]		0	3	4	91	2		3	72	19	6
actively seek and use feedback from pupils [A.6]		26	33	27	11	3		35	57	1	7
regularly monitor the learning and progress of individual pupils [A.7]		73	20	5	1	1		42	54	0	4

B. Professional learning

'Nearly all' teaching staff were reported to be learning with colleagues and learning from each other in over 72% of nursery and primary schools, and 48% of respondents indicated that 'nearly all' teachers were taking responsibility for their own professional learning. However, there was less consensus among respondents on the extent to which teaching staff learn more about pupils' learning and are learning more about subject knowledge. Use of e-learning by teachers was also reported to be variable between primary and nursery schools, although 60% of respondents acknowledged that there had been a significant rise in the use of e-learning by teaching staff over the last two years. Use of performance management to enhance professional learning and the use of professional development profiles/portfolios have increased in over 50% of respondents' primary and nursery schools over the past two years.

- **How do the responses from all schools about professional learning compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do you see as the practical implications for professional learning in your school?**

What percentage of teachers in the school :	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools in each category					Changes in your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools reporting a change in the last two years			
		Nearly all (80 to 100 %)	Most (50 to 79 %)	Some (20 to 49 %)	A few (0 to 19 %)	Don't know Or miss-ing		Yes : gone up	No change	Yes : gone down	Miss-ing
learn together with colleagues [B.1]		75	21	3	0	1		38	58	0	4
experiment and innovate in their work [B.2]		30	42	21	5	2		31	60	3	6
learn from each other [B.3]		72	20	7	0	1		32	64	0	4
take responsibility for their own professional learning [B.4]		48	29	19	3	1		31	64	0	5
give priority to learning more about pupils' learning [B.5]		34	30	27	6	3		30	63	1	6
engage in team teaching [B.6]		12	17	20	47	4		21	71	1	7
learn about their own learning [B.7]		20	14	32	22	12		22	65	3	10
use performance management to enhance professional learning [B.8]		54	26	10	7	3		56	37	1	6
use professional development profiles/portfolios [B.9]		39	18	15	21	7		52	40	0	8
systematically feed back the outcomes of external courses to colleagues [B.10]		48	25	17	8	2		32	59	3	6
give priority to learning more about subject knowledge [B.11]		22	32	23	17	6		18	72	1	9
use e-learning [B.12]		16	27	28	21	8		60	31	0	9

C. Support for professional learning

School level support in terms of dedicated time for professional learning and development was variable across schools participating in the survey with provision of protected time for joint planning and development and for classroom observation for 'nearly all' teaching staff reported by only 42% at best. Interestingly, between 29% and 40% of respondents have observed an increase in these activities in their schools over the last two years.

Opportunities are provided in the majority of schools for job rotation, work shadowing and time for mentoring staff in new roles but for only a small proportion of their teaching staff. There are, however, more widespread opportunities across teaching staff to take on leadership roles within the school.

- **How do the responses from all schools about support for professional learning compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do you see as the practical implications for support for professional learning in your school?**

What percentage of teachers in the school :	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools in each category					Changes in your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools reporting a change in the last two years			
		Nearly all (80 to 100 %)	Most (50 to 79 %)	Some (20 to 49 %)	A few (0 to 19 %)	Don't know Or miss-ing		Yes : gone up	No change	Yes : gone down	Miss-ing
have dedicated time for classroom observation [C.1]		32	15	19	32	2		40	52	3	5
receive training in how to work and learn in teams [C.2]		32	18	17	27	6		26	63	3	8
have opportunities to take on leadership roles [C.3]		48	35	13	3	1		43	52	0	5
have dedicated time to be mentored in a new role [C.4]		18	19	19	34	10		30	57	3	10
experience job rotation [C.5]		13	8	23	51	5		17	69	6	8
have opportunities for work shadowing [C.6]		10	11	19	55	5		19	70	4	7
receive financial support from the school for award-bearing courses [C.7]		17	10	15	50	8		23	67	2	10
have some protected time for joint planning and development [C.8]		42	8	11	36	3		29	61	4	6

D. Collaboration and culture

81% of respondents said that 'nearly all' teachers took collective responsibility for pupil learning while 75% said that 'nearly all' teachers shared a common core of educational values. 62% or more of respondents reported that 'nearly all' teachers regularly discuss teaching methods, share professional experiences and successes and are members of at least one professional team, and that this culture has noticeably increased in a quarter or more of respondents' primary and nursery schools over the last two years. A majority of respondents indicate that the staff room is used at break time for professional links by most teaching staff; although this is not universally true with 24% of respondents reporting that only 'some' or 'a few' teaching staff use the staff room for this purpose.

Close to 60% of respondents reported that 'nearly all' of their teaching staff felt they had a heavy workload and that this feeling had risen among staff in 52% of the schools in the last two years. Perceptions of teacher's job satisfaction and the amount of stress experienced by teachers are quite variable across the schools participating in the survey. 66% of respondents said that 'some' or 'a few' of their teaching staff wanted to leave the profession, although it should be noted that 28% of respondents were unable to comment on this.

A clear majority of respondents reported that 'nearly all' their teaching staff communicated regularly with parents and members of the wider community.

- **How do the responses from all schools about collaboration and culture compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do these comparisons suggest about collaboration and culture in your school?**

What percentage of teachers in the school :	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools in each category					Changes in your school	Percentage of nursery and primary schools reporting a change in the last two years			
		Nearly all (80 to 100 %)	Most (50 to 79 %)	Some (20 to 49 %)	A few (0 to 19 %)	Don't know Or miss-ing		Yes : gone up	No change	Yes : gone down	Miss-ing
take collective responsibility for pupil learning [D.1]		81	14	3	1	1		38	59	0	3
share a common core of educational values [D.2]		75	22	3	0	0		35	60	1	4
use the staff room at break times for professional links [D.3]		46	25	14	10	5		19	69	5	7
are satisfied with their job [D.4]		32	43	16	2	7		23	50	20	7
say their workload is too heavy [D.5]		59	21	11	7	2		52	40	3	5
are involved in seeking solutions to problems facing the school [D.6]		50	31	14	4	1		41	53	1	5
are members of at least one professional team [D.7]		68	15	6	3	8		25	66	0	9
regularly discuss teaching methods [D.8]		62	26	10	2	0		31	64	1	4
share their professional experiences and successes [D.9]		65	28	5	1	1		32	64	0	4
see the school as stimulating and professionally challenging [D.10]		46	31	13	3	7		30	61	0	9
routinely share information with parents and the community [D.11]		73	18	7	1	1		28	67	0	5
want to leave the profession [D.12]		1	5	14	52	28		21	54	7	18
say they experience undue stress in their work [D.13]		21	15	21	34	9		38	48	5	9

E. Research and professional enquiry

Over half of all of teaching staff are informing their practice and their approach to change through the use of good evidence and through the regular collection, analysis and use of data. This trend has increased in 41% or more of primary and nursery schools over the last two years. However, only a minority of teachers are using external practical and relevant research to inform their work and 71% of respondents report that only 'some' or 'a few' of teachers carry out classroom based research in their school. Of course, a key question is whether teachers who engage with research activities are also sharing their findings with colleagues.

- **How do the responses from all schools about research and professional enquiry compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do these comparisons suggest about research and professional enquiry in your school?**

What percentage of teachers in the school :	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools in each category					Changes in your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools reporting a change in the last two years			
		Nearly all (80 to 100 %)	Most (50 to 79 %)	Some (20 to 49 %)	A few (0 to 19 %)	Don't know Or miss-ing		Yes : gone up	No change	Yes : gone down	Miss-ing
base their approach to change on the use of good evidence [E.1]		56	34	5	2	3		41	54	0	5
carry out classroom-based research [E.2]		9	13	24	47	7		21	72	2	5
routinely collect, analyse and use data and evidence to inform their practice [E.3]		46	33	13	6	2		53	42	0	5
seek out and use external research that is relevant and practical to inform their work [E.4]		8	24	33	28	7		25	66	2	7

F. External links and networking

The findings indicate that generally only a minority of teachers have access to external professionals and networks. Of the professionals supporting teachers' work in schools, LEA advisors and support staff seem to be the most consulted. 47% of respondents reported the use of LEA advisers by 'nearly all' their teaching staff and that their use had increased in at least a quarter of schools.

There was wide variation in the reports by respondents of the extent to which teaching staff actively sought ideas from colleagues in other schools or used professional associations for professional learning.

- **How do the responses from all schools about external links and networking compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do these comparisons suggest about external links and networking in your school?**

What percentage of teachers in the school:	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools in each category					Changes in your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools reporting a change in the last two years			
		Nearly all (80 to 100 %)	Most (50 to 79 %)	Some (20 to 49 %)	A few (0 to 19 %)	Don't know Or miss-ing		Yes : gone up	No change	Yes : gone down	Miss-ing
actively seek ideas from colleagues in other schools [F.1]		30	32	28	8	2		32	62	3	3
use university staff for professional learning [F.2]		5	8	15	64	8		15	75	3	7
use professional/subject associations for professional learning [F.3]		16	21	29	24	10		15	76	0	9
use LEA advisers/support staff for professional learning [F.4]		47	25	16	10	2		27	63	5	5
use private consultants for professional learning [F.5]		5	6	10	52	27		12	71	2	15

G. Teaching Assistants

Close to three quarters or more of respondents reported that 'nearly all' teaching assistants were valued by teachers, shared responsibility for pupil learning and actively contributed to the school as a professional learning community. In a majority of schools there were also good opportunities for professional development for these staff. In all aspects, respondents reported a dramatic increase in the recognised value and general professional role of teaching assistants in schools over the last two years.

- **How do the responses from all schools about teaching assistants compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do you see as the implications of these comparisons for your school?**

What percentage of teaching assistants in the school :	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools in each category					Changes in your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools reporting a change in the last two years			
		Nearly all (80 to 100 %)	Most (50 to 79 %)	Some (20 to 49 %)	A few (0 to 19 %)	Don't know Or miss-ing		Yes : gone up	No change	Yes : gone down	Miss-ing
are valued by teachers [G.1]		93	6	0	0	1		46	49	0	5
share responsibility for pupil learning [G.2]		74	20	4	1	1		50	45	0	5
have opportunities for professional development [G.3]		85	9	5	0	1		58	37	0	5
actively contribute to the school as a professional learning community [G.4]		77	15	6	1	1		53	42	0	5

H. Non-teaching support staff

The majority of respondents reported that non-teaching support staff played a significant role in the school community and that there were opportunities for professional development for these staff. In almost half of schools, 'nearly all' these staff share responsibility for pupil learning. Approximately a third or more of respondents indicated that the value and professional role of these staff to their school and community had risen over the past two years.

- **How do the responses from all schools on questions concerning non-teaching support staff compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do you see as the implications of these comparisons for your school?**

What percentage of non-teaching support staff in the school :	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools in each category					Changes in your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools reporting a change in the last two years			
		Nearly all (80 to 100 %)	Most (50 to 79 %)	Some (20 to 49 %)	A few (0 to 19 %)	Don't know Or miss-ing		Yes : gone up	No change	Yes : gone down	Miss-ing
are valued by teachers [H.1]		86	11	1	0	2		33	60	0	7
share responsibility for pupil learning [H.2]		48	20	12	17	3		31	62	0	7
have opportunities for professional development [H.3]		69	16	7	5	3		42	51	0	7
actively contribute to the school as a professional learning community [H.4]		60	21	11	6	2		36	56	0	8

Part Two : Findings on factual information about the school

A. School Facilities

The overwhelming majority of primary and nursery schools have one staff room for general use (90%) and are located on one site (93%). In addition, 53% of schools have at least one departmental staff room for staff use.

- **How do the facilities in your school compare with those in the schools surveyed? If you have more or fewer facilities why do you think this is the case?**
- **What are the implications for your school?**

	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools									
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 and above	Missing
No. of sites school operates on [A.1]		0	93	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
No. of general staff rooms [A.2]		2	90	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
No. of departmental staff/work rooms [A.3]		37	31	7	5	3	0	3	2	2	10

B. CPD Management

In 88% of primary and nursery schools a staff member/staff members has/have specific responsibility for managing CPD. In a small minority of schools (9%), there is no member of staff with named responsibility for overseeing CPD in the school.

The weekly number of hours typically allocated to the manager/coordinator to carry out her or his CPD managerial role varies between zero and two hours, accounting for 70% of all responses. A minority, 14%, of CPD managers reported 3 hours or more per week of allocated time to perform their role. However, the high 'missing' and 'zero' hours percentage responses could include those 12% of respondents who answered either 'no' or did not respond to the question regarding whether a member/members of staff have specific responsibility for coordinating/managing CPD.

- **How do the responses from all schools about the time commitment for CPD management compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do you think are the reasons why you may be able to commit more or less time for CPD management?**
- **What are the practical implications for your school?**

	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools		
		Yes	No	Missing
A member/members of staff has/have specific responsibility for coordinating/managing CPD [B.1]		88	9	3

	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools						
		0	1	2	3	4	5 and above	Missing
Total number of hours per week allocated to the manager/coordinator of CPD [B.2]		37	19	14	8	2	4	16

C. Participation of teaching staff in National Initiatives

Across all primary and nursery schools only a minority of respondents reported that school staff were involved in each individual National CPD and leadership development initiative outlined in the survey. However across all National initiatives (C.1 to C.9), 83% of schools have at least one teacher involved.

In only up to 19% of primary and nursery schools was one or more member of the teaching staff reported to be involved in sabbaticals, Best Practice Research Scholarships, professional bursaries and teacher international professional development over the last two years.

Again, for the NPQH scheme, CPD for Early Professional Development for second and third year teachers, and for staff involved in other national Initiatives over the last two years, only 19% to 40% of respondents reported the involvement of one or more members of their staff. 56% of respondents did report the involvement of at least one member of staff in deputy head training courses. Only 6% of primary and nursery schools have one or more advanced skills teachers. Note also that between 1% and 53% of respondents did not answer these questions.

- **How do the responses from all schools about the participation of teaching staff in National Initiatives compare with the position in your school?**
- **If you or your colleagues have participated in National Initiatives, what are the benefits, and how are these fed back into the school?**

	The response from your school	Percentage of Nursery and Primary School responses							
		0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6 and above**	**Missing**
Number of teaching staff involved in the last two years in sabbaticals [C.1]		76	3	1	1	0	0	1	18
Number of teaching staff involved in the last two years in Best Practice Research Scholarships [C.2]		75	3	2	0	0	0	1	19
Number of teaching staff involved in the last two years in professional bursaries [C.3]		72	7	2	0	0	1	0	18
Number of teaching staff involved in the last two years in teachers' international professional development [C.4]		65	7	6	3	1	1	1	16
Number of teaching staff involved in the last two years in NPQH [C.5]		48	35	4	1	0	0	0	12
Number of teaching staff involved in the last two years in Early Professional Development for teachers in their 2nd and 3rd year [C.6]		59	15	4	1	1	0	1	19
Number of teaching staff involved in the last two years in Deputy Head training courses [C.7]		31	49	5	1	1	0	0	13
Number of teaching staff involved in the last two years in other national initiatives [C.8]		28	10	2	1	1	0	5	53
Total number of Advanced Skills Teachers [C.9]		93	5	1	0	0	0	0	1

D. Use of management information for school improvement

All responding primary and nursery schools use at least one of the named data sources listed below (D.1 to D.8) to inform school improvement processes. 76% or more of respondents reported that each one of six named types of data listed in the survey were used for school improvement purposes, the percentage dropped to 51% who reported using PIPS data. 7% of nursery and primary schools reported that they did not use the Autumn Package. Almost three quarters (72%) of respondents did not answer the question asking what other data was used for school improvement.

- **How does the use of data for school improvement as reported from all schools compare with the use of data in your school?**
- **How do you use data for school improvement?**
- **What help do you think you might need with collecting and interpreting data and where would you get this help?**

	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools		
		Yes	No	Missing
Autumn package used [D.1]		88	7	5
Panda used [D.2]		90	5	5
OFSTED reports used [D.3]		94	2	4
ALIS/YELLIS/PIPS used [D.4]		51	34	15
LEA analysis of data used [D.5]		91	4	5
School based/other attainment data used [D.6]		91	4	5
Pupil/parent/staff or other questionnaire data used [D.7]		76	17	7
Other data for school improvement used [D.8]		17	11	72

E. Reviewing pupil outcome and progress data

The use of pupil outcome and progress data varies considerably depending on the position held by staff within the school. Over 90% of primary and nursery school respondents reported that pupil outcome and progress data was reviewed by the headteacher and individual class teachers. A slightly lower majority of 81% or more of respondents reported that members of the governing body and the Senior Management Team were reviewing pupil outcome and progress data, although a not insignificant percentage of 13 to 16% of respondents did not comment on this aspect. Overall, all primary and nursery respondents are involved in at least one form of review of pupil outcome and progress data.

Respondents in only a minority of schools, between 40 to 47%, affirmed the involvement of the Key Stage Teams or support staff in reviewing pupil outcome and progress data, although responses in the missing category here were also high, ranging between 28 and 44% of all responses from primary and nursery schools.

- **How do the responses from all schools about the individuals and groups who review pupil outcome and progress data compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do you see as the practical implications for your school?**

	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools		
		Yes	No	Missing
Pupil outcome and progress data is reviewed by the headteacher [E.1]		96	0	4
Pupil outcome and progress data is reviewed by the SMT [E.2]		81	3	16
Pupil outcome and progress data is reviewed by heads of year/department or Key Stage team [E.3]		47	9	44
Pupil outcome and progress data is reviewed by individual class teachers [E.4]		93	4	3
Pupil outcome and progress data is reviewed by support staff [E.5]		40	32	28
Pupil outcome and progress data is reviewed by the governing body [E.6]		81	6	13

F. Professional development in schools

At the whole school level, over three quarters of temporary and supply staff are included in the school CPD policy and respondents from a similar proportion of schools reported governors' active contribution to the professional learning community in the school. 56% schools have been accredited with, or are working towards, Investors in People status.

Of primary and nursery school headteachers, 42% were reported to have participated in the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads (LPSH) and 36% to have participated in the NCSL's Talking Heads online community. About 16% of primary and nursery Heads have participated in both the LPSH and Talking Heads programmes.

- **How do the responses from all schools about the level of professional development activities compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do you see as the practical implications for your school?**

	The response from your school	Percentage of responses from nursery and primary schools		
		Yes	No	Missing
The headteacher has participated in an LPSH programme [F.1]		42	51	7
The headteacher has participated in the Talking Heads on line community [F.2]		36	54	10
Investors in People accreditation has been achieved [F.3]		39	55	6
The school is working towards Investors in People accreditation [F.4]		17	49	34
Temporary and supply staff are included in the CPD policy [F.5]		78	17	5
Govenors actively contribute to the school as a professional learning community [F.6]		76	17	7

G. External links and networks

Overall, 96% of respondents have at least one formal working link with other schools. The majority of respondents reporting any external link activities primarily listed involvement in either within phase networks and/or membership of a cross phase cluster/pyramid group, with 67% and above stating involvement in one or both of these two activities.

Only a small minority of schools (under 20%) is a Specialist, Training or Beacon school, or is involved in the NCSL networked learning community scheme. 18% of primary and nursery schools are part of the Excellence in Cities initiative. Furthermore, 10% are in an Education Action Zone. Again, a low percentage of primary and nursery respondents reported other formal working links. A not insignificant minority of respondents (between 24% and 40%) did not answer these questions.

- **How do the responses from all schools about the extent of their external links compare with the position in your school?**
- **What do you conclude from these comparisons?**

	The response from your school	Percentage of Nursery and Primary School responses		
		Yes	**No**	**Missing**
The school is in a cross-phase cluster/pyramid group [G.1]		79	15	6
The school is in a within-phase network [G.2]		67	24	9
The school is in a Sixth Form consortium [G.3]		2	68	30
The school is in an Education Action Zone [G.4]		10	65	25
The school is in an Excellence in Cities initiative [G.5]		18	58	24
The school is a Training school [G.6]		16	60	24
The school is part of the NCSL Networked Learning Communities [G.7]		6	66	28
The school is a Beacon school [G.8]		9	67	24
The school is a Specialist school [G.9]		6	62	32
The school has other formal working links [G.10]		15	45	40

H. Funding for professional development (2001/2002)

Of the three funding sources named in the questionnaire, it can be seen from Table H that the Standards Fund is the principal source of funding for staff professional development in the year 2001 to 2002, with the school budget contributing some significant funds and only a few respondents reporting other funding sources for supporting professional development of staff in primary and nursery schools.

The Standards Fund percentiles[2] are summarised in Table H. It can be seen that 50% of respondents report funding of between £3,255 and £10,069 from this source of finance for staff professional development in their school (indicated by the upper and lower quartile values). The median or 'average' figure reported by nursery or primary respondents was £5,980 of staff professional development funding coming from the standards fund. However, the overall range of professional development funding from the standards fund appears to be quite considerable (i.e. ranging from £1,500 to £22,378 on the basis of the 10th and 90th percentiles).

The school budget provides a smaller proportion of funding allocated specifically for staff professional development. Table H shows that the median or 'average' amount allocated by respondents in nursery and primary schools is £2,000 from the staff budget for professional development for the year 2001/02. At the extremes, the 10th and 90th percentiles indicate a range between £200 and £6,500.

Only a handful of respondents in nursery and primary schools completed the section on funding from other sources for staff professional development (82% were 'missing'). Of responding schools, 25% reported no other funding source available to them for staff professional development (indicated by the lower quartile). The middle 50% of schools received between zero and £4,103 of financial funds from other funding sources for development of their staff for the year 2001/02.

Of course, when interpreting these findings, it is important to note that school size is a key factor in the level of CPD funding available to schools.

- **How does the budget for professional development activities in your school compare with the median budget for all schools?**
- **What conclusions do you draw from this?**

Table H : Percentiles[2] of the staff PD budget sources for 2001/02

	The response from your school	Percentiles				
		10%	**25% (lower quartile)**	**50% (median)**	**75% (upper quartile)**	**90%**
from the Standards Fund [H.1]		1500	3255	5980	10069	22378
from additional allocation from the school budget [H.2]		200	1000	2000	3410	6500
from other funding sources [H.3]		0	0	1000	4103	8000

Note: figures shown to nearest £. It should be noted that between 28% and 82% of questionnaire respondents did not report on the funding of staff professional development in their school for the year 2001/02

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[2] **Understanding the median, quartiles and tenth and ninetieth percentiles**

Median (50th percentile) : The median is the value for which half the surveyed schools reported a higher figure than the median and half reported a lower value than the median. It is also the 'average' value for schools participating in the survey on this item.
Upper Quartile (75th percentile) : The upper quartile represents the highest (ranked) value reported by up to 75% of the surveyed schools.
Lower Quartile (25th percentile) : The lower quartile represents the highest (ranked) value reported by up to 25% of the surveyed schools.
Tenth Percentile (10% value) : The tenth percentile is the highest (ranked) value reported by up to 10% of the surveyed schools.
Ninetieth percentile (90% value) : The ninetieth percentile is the highest (ranked) value reported by up to 90% of the surveyed schools.

I. School figures reported on the use of supply cover for 2001/2002

Table I shows that the middle 50% of (ranked) responses given by respondents in primary and nursery schools on the use of supply cover over the academic year 2001/02 were between 27 and 110 total supply days (indicated by the upper and lower quartiles). The 'average' or median number of supply cover days 'bought in' over the academic year was 60 total supply days.

However, supply teachers 'bought in' specifically to cover for the CPD of school staff comprises only a subset of schools' total supply cover days. Table I reveals that, the median or 'average' number of days bought in per school for CPD purposes is equal to 31 days for the year - roughly half of the average total supply teaching days reported by responding schools. 75% of schools bought in up to 62 days supply cover specifically for CPD purposes. Staff in 25% of schools bought in between zero and 9 CPD cover days only for the academic year 2001/02. 10% of respondents reported using 100 days or more of supply cover specifically for CPD purposes for the year.

Again, when interpreting these findings, it should be noted that school size is a factor in the number of 'bought in' supply cover days.

- **How do the responses from all schools about the quantity of supply cover allocated for professional development activities compare with the position in your school?**

Table I : Percentiles[2] of the total number of days covered by supply teachers for 2001/02

	The response from your school	Percentiles				
		10%	25% (lower quartile)	50% (median)	75% (upper quartile)	90%
Total number of teaching days covered by supply teachers in 2001/02		12	27	60	110	198
Total number of CPD days covered by supply teachers in 2001/02		9	20	31	62	100

Note: It should be noted that between 25% and 29% of questionnaire respondents did not report on the total number of days covered by supply teachers for the year 2001/02

Conclusion and further issues

The eplc team hope this general report has provided useful information for you and your staff - not only as a summary of the features of professional learning communities in English primary and nursery schools at one point in time but also a tool that your school staff can use to stimulate discussion and questions during self evaluation and staff development activities.

We also plan to carry out further statistical analysis of the survey data in order to examine the possible dimensions of eplcs via a factor analysis of particular groups of items. Most crucially however we will be examining the link, if any, between the features of eplcs and pupil academic outcomes and looking at the relative value that may be added to pupil performance in the context of professional learning communities. This aspect of the study is particularly important given few previous studies have addressed this key issue.

Finally the eplc research team would like to thank you once again for participating in this survey.