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Schools and academies

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# Powerful professional learning: a school leader's guide to joint practice development

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education

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# Purpose of this guide

This guide is aimed at senior leaders in schools, continuous professional development (CPD) leaders, teaching and learning leaders and those leading teaching schools. Joint Practice Development (JPD) provides more effective (and potentially cheaper) ways of schools supporting the mutual learning of teachers, students and others through working more closely together across schools. The purpose of this guidance is to draw on a recent National College research and development (R&D) project, which involved five teaching school alliances developing and assessing approaches to implementing JPD in practice. The guide sets out to illustrate what JPD is, what it can do and the role of school leaders in enhancing its value in improving school outcomes.

## The role of teaching schools in research and development

The role of teaching schools is set out clearly on the National College website<sup>1</sup>. Here it is stated that at the heart of the teaching school model is collaboration. Teaching schools have a responsibility to form an alliance with other schools and strategic partners such as local authorities and higher education institutions. The purpose of this is to build their capacity to support other schools in the wider network. Six key tasks are set out for teaching schools that reflect their role in promoting high quality teaching and learning from initial teacher training (ITT) through to senior leadership. They are expected to:

- play a greater role in recruiting and training new entrants to the profession (ITT)
- lead peer-to-peer professional and leadership development (CPD)
- identify and develop leadership potential (succession planning and talent management)
- provide support for other schools
- designate and broker SLEs
- engage in research and development activity

The National College has set up a national research and development network to support teaching school alliances to engage in research activities. This provides a forum for networking between teaching school leaders and teachers, opportunities for training, sharing expertise and wider dissemination of what works. Three national research and development themes were identified by the teaching schools and three associated research projects set up to address them have been funded by the National College for 2012–14:

- What makes great pedagogy?
- What makes great professional development which leads to consistently great pedagogy?
- How can leaders lead successful teaching school alliances which enable the development of consistently great pedagogy?

These projects started as the JPD research was completing but the second and third themes are particularly pertinent to the JPD research that informed this guide.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/index/support-for-schools/teachingschools/teachingschools-programme-details.htm>

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# Contributors to this guide: the JPD project teaching school alliances

In September 2011, the first wave of teaching schools were invited by the National College to apply to participate in a range of research and development projects being set up by the National College in partnership with researchers and consultants. The joint practice development research with the University of Sussex was one of these projects. From the 39 applications received from teaching school alliances, the National College and university researchers selected 5 that most closely met the published criteria of having a strong track record on sharing practice with other schools, practitioner research and enquiry and collaborative innovation in teaching practice. In addition, they had set out plans of what they intended to pursue through the JPD research.

These five alliances each received a grant to meet the costs of being involved in the JPD research project with the University of Sussex, October 2011–July 2012. The schools involved specifically in this research project do not reflect the total number of schools involved in each alliance but are a subset, though the intention is to spread the JPD work across the alliance and, in some cases, beyond it to other schools.

This guide has been produced by the school staff involved in these five teaching school alliances, together with Jo Tregenza, Judy Sebba and Phillip Kent, the research team from the University of Sussex. The principles it presents and examples given are drawn directly from the JPD research and as such do not represent the full range of activities that might take place under the auspices of JPD.

## The five teaching school alliance JPD projects

### 1. Harrogate & Rural Teaching Alliance (HART)

The HART Alliance is a well-established network of 14 primary schools based in Harrogate and the surrounding areas of North Yorkshire that has formed its own company. The alliance for the project consisted of:

- lead teaching school, Askwith Primary School
- eleven other small rural primary schools mainly in the villages around Harrogate: Lothersdale, Goldsborough, All Saints, Spofforth, Burnsall, Killinghall, North Rigton, Sicklinghall, Scotton Lingerfield, Darley and Beckwithshaw
- two larger urban primary schools in Harrogate: Bilton Grange and Pannal
- North Yorkshire Local Authority (LA) and Leeds Metropolitan University (HEI)

A focus on progressing ‘outstanding’ teaching led to the development of two JPD projects in addition to the wide range of activities that the alliance was already undertaking on initial training, Quality First, newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction, middle leadership, senior leadership and early years. The JPD projects involved NQT peer observation and observation of ‘outstanding’ teaching using IRIS<sup>2</sup> technology.

### 2. Gateway Teaching School Alliance, Nuneaton

The Gateway Teaching School Alliance is based around the geographical areas of Nuneaton and Leamington. The alliance for the project consisted of five primary schools and one secondary school including:

- lead Teaching School: Milby Primary School
- four partner primary schools: Sydenham Primary (Federation with Lighthorne Heath), Stockingford Infants, Wembrook Primary, St Nicolas C of E

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<sup>2</sup> <http://irisconnect.co.uk/>

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- partner secondary school: Higham Lane School

The JPD project involved ‘student learning detectives’ observing across the schools and feeding back to enhance the quality of teaching. The JPD project introduced student lesson observation through six learning detectives from each school who led evaluation of learning and shared practice across the alliance. Learning detectives was the term chosen by the alliance to identify children who were trained to focus on the learning that takes place in the classroom or school environment.

### 3. Denbigh High-Challney Teaching School Alliance, Luton

This is an urban alliance based mostly in Luton with one secondary school in Putteridge and one in Enfield. The two lead schools form a collaboration (sometimes referred to as a ‘soft federation’) with a joint executive headteacher. The alliance for the JPD project consisted of four secondary schools, one primary school, and a sixth form college:

- lead teaching schools: Denbigh High School, Challney High School for Boys
- partner schools: Beech Hill Primary School, Oasis Academy (Enfield), Putteridge High School, Luton Sixth Form College

A set of six projects, collectively termed the ‘JPD research project’, was finalised at a meeting of all the schools in December 2011, each project working across at least two schools and the work started in January 2012. The appointed manager for the whole JPD research project was the Associate Principal of Denbigh High, whose general role in the alliance is to manage professional development and R&D.

The six projects were:

- Transition primary-secondary – across two schools developing a ‘pre-transition passport’ that allows pupils to demonstrate what work they are capable of doing to inform year 7 form tutors.
- Transition secondary-sixth form college – developing video diaries as a means of recording students’ experiences to improve the learning to learn skills of the students moving from the secondary school to the sixth form and engaging parents more in the college.
- Phonics for secondary trainees – an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) project funded by the teaching agency in which JPD was used by 12 secondary trainees who attended Beech Hill Primary School over a period of three weeks to observe phonics teaching, which they then incorporated into their subject lessons in the secondary school.
- Student leadership – in which nine year 9 pupils identified as ‘teaching partners’ from Denbigh went to Lampton School for training as student observers<sup>3</sup> and then observed teaching and gave feedback to teachers initially in their own schools with a view to developing this across schools.
- Student behaviour – 4 teacher trainees were identified at each school across a range of subjects. Twelve teaching partners (see previous project) observed the trainees on a weekly basis for 10–15 minutes in lessons in which behaviour was identified as a concern and gave feedback.
- Improving teaching and learning – in which 15 teachers from across four secondary schools worked in triads using a joint practice programme with IRIS technology to develop ‘outstanding’ teaching and learning.

The selection of projects reflected priorities for the alliance, as well as the capacity for JPD work among the teaching staff in each school. Some projects were led (or co-led) by schools other than the lead schools. Alliance JPD funding was allocated to each participating school in the form of ‘bursaries’ for ‘cover’ to teachers who took responsibility for leading and writing up the projects.

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<sup>3</sup> Students Leading Learning [<http://www.lampton.org.uk/teaching-school/courses/>]

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#### 4. Kesgrave-Farlingaye Teaching School Alliance, Suffolk

This is a semi-rural alliance in the county of Suffolk, based in and around the city of Ipswich with one school in Haverhill. The lead school is a joint partnership – the two schools have had a positive relationship for several years prior to the teaching school alliance being formed. The alliance for the project consisted of seven secondary schools (with possible expansion to primaries in the future):

- lead teaching schools: Kesgrave High School, Farlingaye High School
- partner schools: Claydon High School, Copleston High School, Northgate High School, St Alban’s Catholic High School, Samuel Ward Academy (in Haverhill)

The focus for improvement was based on a collective concern for the new Ofsted inspection standards<sup>4</sup> for ‘outstanding’ teaching, and the expectation that this should be evident for all teachers in all lessons, and observable in the learning outcomes of students. ‘Teacher triads’ or, in some schools pairs, followed ‘lesson study’ methods and procedures adapted from guides published by the National College<sup>5</sup>. The alliance worked for two terms within schools and plans to develop cross-school collaboration, with triads working across schools from September 2012.

#### 5. Southfields-Belleville Teaching School Alliance, South London

This is a mixed primary and secondary school alliance based in South London in the areas of Southfields, Wimbledon and Putney. Schools in the teaching school alliance that were involved in the JPD project were:

- lead teaching schools: Southfields Community College in Southfields and Belleville Primary School in Clapham
- partner schools: Ursuline Girls’ Catholic School in Wimbledon and Hotham Primary School in Putney

In the context of the revised Ofsted criteria, the schools set out to progress towards outstanding teaching through peer observation of lessons, some of which were recorded. Two teachers from each of the two primary schools met four times to undertake peer observations (some of which were video-recorded), followed by discussion, collaborative lesson planning, sharing resources, learning walks<sup>6</sup>, shared training, joint reflection time and phone conferencing. Two English teachers from each of the two secondary schools undertook two cross-school visits just with teachers and an additional one with year 8 students to observe lessons and feed back.

<sup>4</sup> Ofsted, March 2012, The evaluation schedule for the inspection of maintained schools and academies from January 2012, [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090098](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090098)

<sup>5</sup> National College for School Leadership, 2005, Network leadership in action: Getting started with Networked Research Lesson Study (Booklet 1), Network leadership in action: Networked Research Lesson Study in practice (Booklet 2), Network leadership in action: Networked Research Lesson Study tools and templates (Booklet 3). <http://networkedlearning.ncsl.org.uk/collections/network-leadership-in-action/nlg-networked-research-lesson-study-tools-and-templates.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> The Learning Walks model was created by the University of Pittsburgh’s Institute for Learning (IFL) based on research by Professor Resnick, <http://www.ri.net/middletown/middletownstandard/learnwalk.html>

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# What is Joint Practice Development?

JPD is not something radically new. It is about making school-based professional development more effective by thinking explicitly about how it is structured and facilitated. But moving from a CPD model to a JPD model is challenging and requires sustained thought and leadership. For example, it could involve rethinking how the five INSET days are used in schools, or group of schools. All five of the alliances involved in the project say they will now work to replace CPD with JPD in their alliances.

JPD was defined by Michael Fielding and colleagues<sup>7</sup> as ‘...learning new ways of working through mutual engagement that opens up and shares practices with others’. It captures a process that is truly collaborative, not one-way, and the practice is being improved not just moved from one person or place to another.

Traditional approaches to CPD are largely based on transferring knowledge or ‘best practices’ from an expert presenter to his or her audience. Research shows that this is rarely effective<sup>8</sup>. By contrast, JPD is a process by which individuals, schools or other organisations learn from one another. It has three key characteristics; it:

- involves interaction and mutual development related to practice
- recognises that each partner in the interaction has something to offer and, as such, is based on the assumption of mutually beneficial learning
- is research-informed, often involving collaborative enquiry

In ‘A self-improving school system: towards maturity’ Hargreaves (2012, p9) describes JPD as ‘a joint activity, in which two or more people interact and influence one another’ – in contrast to the non-interactive, unilateral character of much conventional ‘sharing good practice’. He notes that ‘it is an activity that focuses on teachers’ practice, what they do, not merely what they know’ and, finally, ‘it is a development of the practice, not simply a transfer of it from one person or place to another, and so a form of school improvement.’ He stresses the critical importance of the ‘development’ as what distinguishes it from traditional CPD. Hargreaves notes that JPD requires partnership competence – social capital (reciprocity and trust), collective moral purpose and evaluation and challenge. Schools in the five alliances in the JPD research attributed significant progress to being equal partners in the JPD.

JPD can be orchestrated within a single school. The five alliances involved in this R&D project all explored ways to structure JPD across two or more schools. Many schools involved in school-to-school support work (for example, those working as national leaders of education / national support schools) and in federations and chains have experienced the benefits of JPD-style approaches – even if they don’t actually call it this<sup>9</sup>. For example, the Ofsted report on national support schools<sup>10</sup> noted mutual benefits for the development of leadership capacity and effectiveness of schools working in partnership, though the support school model differs from JPD in identifying one partner as ‘expert’. Partnership between schools in the National Support Schools programme, ‘provided professional challenge and support, offered examples of good practice, allowed a flexible approach and presented a wide variety of opportunities for staff to develop their skills within and beyond their own school context’.

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<sup>7</sup> Fielding, M, Bragg, S, Craig, J, Cunningham, I, Eraut, M, Gillinson, S, Horne, M, Robinson, C & Thorp, J, 2005, Factors Influencing the Transfer of Good Practice, Nottingham, DFES Publications

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/publicationDetail/Page1/RR615>

<sup>8</sup> eg Hargreaves, D H, 2011, Leading a self-improving school system, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership, <http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinf?d=154604&filename=leading-a-self-improving-school-system.pdf>

Levin, B, 2004, Making research matter more. In Education and Policy Archives, 12 (56): 1-20,

Nutley, S M, Walter, I & Davies, H, 2007, Using Evidence: how research can inform public services, Bristol, The Policy Press

<sup>9</sup> Chapman, C, Muijs, D, Sammons, P, Armstrong, P & Collins, A, 2011, The impact of federations on pupil outcomes, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership; and Hill, R, Dunford, J, Parish, N, Rea, S & Sandals, L, 2012, The Growth of Academy Chains, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership

<sup>10</sup> Ofsted, 2010, Developing Leadership: National Support Schools, Manchester, Ofsted

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So, what does JPD look like in practice? This guide sets out examples of practical approaches developed by the five teaching school alliances involved in the project. These approaches include:

- structured peer observation between teachers, often linked to joint planning and improvement in triads or pairs through lesson study-type models
- training students to feed back on learning and teaching, working within clear protocols
- focused enquiries on specific themes across schools, for example using Learning Walks<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Learning Walks model was created by the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Learning (IFL) based on research by Professor Resnick, [http://ifl.lrdc.pitt.edu/ifl/index.php/professional\\_development](http://ifl.lrdc.pitt.edu/ifl/index.php/professional_development)



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# What is the relationship between JPD, CPD and performance management?

Traditionally, the main process for supporting schools with professional development and teachers with their own subject knowledge and pedagogy has been through CPD. In a survey of schools judged to have effective CPD, Ofsted<sup>12</sup> concluded that:

- great CPD comes from strong CPD leadership
- staff are trusted and involved in identifying and implementing any necessary improvements
- consistently high standards in teaching and learning come from clear policies
- CPD is made available to the whole school workforce
- school-based CPD is supported by ‘judicious’ use of external support
- learning is discussed openly and reflected on
- coaching and mentoring is made effective use of as part of CPD programmes

Many of these positive features are characteristic of JPD – trust, open discussion and reflection on learning and reciprocal coaching. The Ofsted survey also identified key barriers to improvement in CPD, which included weaknesses in self-evaluation and the evaluation and assessment of the value for money of CPD. These similarly need to be addressed in JPD.

The current dominant form of professional development for most teachers is exchange of information which is known to be unlikely to lead to improvements in practice<sup>13</sup>, often involving a common process whereby a teacher goes on a course and then returns to school to work on a development or practice. This is a hierarchical process in which one person or a small group (the course leader(s)) is considered to be the expert and the other the learner. Similarly, performance management (PM) involves a hierarchical structure where one person is perceived to be the expert.

JPD does not involve attending courses and is not hierarchical. Instead, it assumes that two or more people (which could include students) support each other’s development through sharing and reflecting on practice, informed by evidence from research. Studies of collaborative CPD<sup>14</sup> suggest that CPD based in the classrooms of the teachers involved led to better student and teacher outcomes. This can take many forms, such as lesson study or student lesson observation, as illustrated in this guidance. JPD might be used to support PM, but this needs to be very carefully considered because it can cause a conflict of roles, in particular when involving people of unequal status. However, as Ofsted noted of CPD, JPD needs to be accompanied by quality assurance processes and regular evaluation. Given schools are developing more in-house professional development due to the pressures from financial stringencies<sup>15</sup>, it is critical that these activities are quality-assured and evaluated to provide checks on any unintended tendency to reproduce and spread negative practice.

JPD can and should be aligned to priorities set out by the school for development. It is not just about teachers getting together and sharing. The principles such as that of recognising one another’s contribution to development can be aligned with more formal ‘programmes’ such as the Improving Teacher Programme, Outstanding Teacher Programme and the National College’s Middle Leadership Development Programme.

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<sup>12</sup> Ofsted, 2010, Good Professional Development in Schools, Manchester, Ofsted

<sup>13</sup> Pedder, D, Storey, A, and Opfer, D, 2009, Schools and Continuing Professional Development in England: the State of the Nation, Synthesis Report, London, Training and Development Agency for Schools

<sup>14</sup> Cordingley, P, Bell, M, Rundell, B & Evans, D, 2003, The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning. In: Research Evidence in Education Library, London, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=132>

<sup>15</sup> Groves, M, Goodfellow, M, O’Brien, B and Forster, S, 2012, Funding the future: how schools are responding to funding changes, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership

## A summary of some main differences between CPD and JPD

	CPD	JPD
<b>Outcomes for pupils</b>	<p>Evidence suggests positive outcomes for pupil learning are rare</p> <p>Pupils rarely participate in leading CPD and are seldom asked to provide evidence of improvement from their teachers' CPD</p>	<p>Changes in pupil attitudes reported likely to lead to improvement in time</p> <p>Pupils may take a leading role in development through, for example, lesson observation across schools. This can lead to greater self-reflection by them and improvement</p>
<b>Outcomes for teachers</b>	<p>In general, little evidence of impact from 'traditional' CPD, though collaborative CPD more effective</p> <p>Teachers remain isolated, in particular in small schools, from peers with 'common interest'</p> <p>Offering or receiving 'good practice' does not lead to improvement</p>	<p>Reflection on own practice becomes embedded and ongoing leading to improvement</p> <p>Teachers establish networks across schools providing ongoing relevant challenge and support</p> <p>'Peer-to-peer learning in which development is fused with routine practice' (from Hargreaves<sup>16</sup>)</p>
<b>Outcomes for leaders</b>	<p>Leaders are mostly in a 'provider' role taking sole or main responsibility for in-house CPD</p> <p>Leaders are responsible for 'dissemination'</p>	<p>Leaders identify 'talent' – those that will lead JPD in each area (Hargreaves) – support and challenge is provided by them within each school and across schools</p> <p>'Dissemination' is undertaken by all participants in the partnerships</p>
<b>Time and cost</b>	<p>Many teachers can be involved simultaneously, eg through development days</p> <p>Staff often out of school requiring cover and disrupting continuity</p>	<p>Requires initial investment of staff time, likely to mean smaller numbers involved</p> <p>Activities often class-based so less cover needed</p>

<sup>16</sup> Hargreaves, D H, 2012, A self-improving school system: towards maturity , Nottingham, National College for School Leadership, p8

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# Organisation and structure

## Who was involved?

In the five teaching school alliances in the research, the JPD projects were mainly organised by members of senior management teams. In the primary schools, the projects tended to be led by the headteacher, whereas in the secondary schools, they were more often led by the deputy or assistant headteacher.

Leadership from senior managers in the form of support, protected time and clear messages about the priority given to JPD, gives it status and contributes to its overall effectiveness. All teachers in alliance schools will not be involved in JPD at the same time. In some alliances, leaders or stakeholders make decisions about who would be involved in JPD projects. For example, some schools in the research were not involved in specific projects, others were 'sleeping partners' who listened to reports and feedback, sometimes added questions or comments, but they did not actively engage in the work. Nevertheless, it is helpful to engage as many staff as possible through, for example, celebrating the positive outcomes of JPD at assemblies, whole-school conferences, the website and newsletters.

## Role of senior leaders

Hargreaves<sup>17</sup> poses two questions for school leaders in a JPD project – 'What could I offer someone else?' and 'What would I like to gain from someone else?' He suggests these should be applied at both the individual and school level. They are pertinent to the school leaders' role in JPD in that they encourage leaders to engage with others on an equal footing, recognising that each can learn from the other.

In the most successful JPD projects, the leaders of the group enabled participants to engage with research evidence and discussions in order to identify priorities and development. The senior leaders across the alliance need to ensure JPD alignment with the strategic priorities of the alliance, and that progress is monitored and evaluated. Assuring quality and maintaining the focus of the learning, while balancing that with the need to support peer learning and trust requires sensitive handling in order to maintain stakeholder ownership at the core of effective JPD. Leaders need to set a clear budget and cost out elements such as supply cover, input from lead specialists and time for engaging in research activity. Baselines can be created to enable participants to measure effective progress. Finally, assessments are planned to measure impact.

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<sup>17</sup> Hargreaves, D H, 2012, A self-improving school system: towards maturity , Nottingham, National College for School Leadership

# How the research on JPD is evident in practice

The University of Sussex research team reviewed the research on JPD<sup>18</sup> at the start of the project and comments from the teaching school alliances were incorporated into this review. The key 10 points to emerge are presented below, illustrated by examples that emerged from the JPD research in the five alliances.

## Ten key messages from research about JPD exemplified

Aim	Implications for practice	Examples from the teaching school alliances
<p>1. <b>Clearly articulated aims and improvement priorities</b> frame effective JPD.</p>	<p>Each alliance partner draws on its wider school community to prioritise aims and to evaluate and revise these regularly – through reference to development plans, student surveys, staff meetings, discussions between governors and staff and governors and students.</p>	<p>In the Denbigh High-Challney Alliance, six priorities were identified through discussions with students, staff and development plans for the JPD projects, including literacy in year 7. They sought to improve this through the Year 7 NQT project on phonics in which NQTs observed phonics teaching in the partner primary school.</p>
<p>2. <b>Developing trust is crucial</b> for effective JPD in which mutual challenge is involved. JPD involves engaging in observation and evaluation of teachers’ practice rather than merely exchanging information, which is the current dominant form of CPD for most teachers.</p>	<p>School leaders need to demonstrate the spirit of partnership through modelling the actions and working on challenges that will assist in securing others to act similarly. Trust grows as successful development is experienced.</p>	<p>In the Southfields-Belleville Alliance, some teachers engaging in peer observation noted concerns which were addressed through use of a clear protocol for giving feedback enabling trust to be established and constructive outcomes (see Example 1).</p>
<p>3. <b>Building on existing relationships and networks</b> is the most effective strategy for JPD. Acknowledging established relationships in order to build on these provides a strong basis for JPD. Check out assumptions that the network participants share a common understanding of their aims, roles and functions.</p>	<p>Identifying and analysing how people and activities in the alliance are connected provides a basis for targeting action. Established relationships can be mapped, by drawing a diagram showing the networks in which the schools participate and identifying ‘gaps’ in existing networks that might need to be addressed.</p>	<p>The HART Alliance had been running for several years as a means of providing ITE, NQT support, middle leader and headteacher development in a rural area in which there are many small isolated primary schools. The JPD projects built on these existing strong relationships.</p>

<sup>18</sup> Sebba, J, Kent, P & Tregenza, J, 2010, Joint Practice Development: What does the evidence suggest are effective approaches?

Aim	Implications for practice	Examples from the teaching school alliances
<p>4. <b>Developing effective networks</b> requires careful thinking and planning by school leaders in order to co-ordinate the work of alliances and support teachers' practice.</p>	<p>Develop a mutual understanding about how different 'networks' support the research and development activities of the alliance. A clear distinction should be made between networks that complement JPD and those in which JPD is the core activity.</p>	<p>The Kesgrave-Farlingaye Alliance developed a very clear research and development vision: "Our aim is to create a research and development team across schools that celebrates and informs outstanding practice." Many teachers contributed to this through meetings, conferences and 'speed-dating' sessions at which those from different schools reported back on progress on the JPD work.</p>
<p>5. <b>Recognition of respective roles and contributions</b> of schools is critical to success.</p>	<p>Mutual partners each have something to offer and gain, avoiding the negative effects of 'badging' that attribute higher status to one partner. The teaching school alliance leaders can 'broker' the relationships that best make use of the resources across the alliance.</p>	<p>In the Denbigh High-Challney Alliance the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for all partners. Leaders from one or two schools led each of the six projects. In the Southfields-Belleville Alliance there was much discussion about the pairing of teachers for the peer observation work in order to ensure they progressed on the basis of 'equal status' yet provided sufficient challenge to improve practice.</p>
<p>6. <b>Multilevel (distributed) and multisite leadership</b> should be viewed as essential.</p>	<p>School leaders provide the big picture, setting the vision, encouraging participation and locating necessary resources. Multilevel steering groups of staff and students lead specific areas of activity while network facilitators ensure that the JPD is designed, developed, focused and sustained.</p>	<p>Two schools that encouraged participation and managed the JPD budget democratically led the Denbigh High-Challney Alliance. Staff working in small cross-school teams led each of the six projects on transition (Key Stages 2-3 and Key Stages 4-5), phonics, student behaviour, student leadership and teaching and learning (see Example 4).</p>
<p>7. <b>Challenge and support</b> is vital to building capacity for sustainable JPD, achieved through approaches such as Lesson Study, which can lead to significant student gains.</p>	<p>Reciprocal coaching, peer lesson observation across schools and Lesson Study provide challenge by opening up teaching practice to feedback from others. Using video enables peer observation and coaching to be more easily integrated into teachers' busy daily lives.</p>	<p>All five alliances used lesson observation that provided both challenge and support. The Kesgrave-Farlingaye Alliance adapted Lesson Study in several different ways using pairs as well as triads where timetables did not allow for three teachers to be involved simultaneously (see Example 2).</p>

Aim	Implications for practice	Examples from the teaching school alliances
<p>8. <b>Knowledge that meets local needs</b> significantly improves JPD. When CPD is based in the classrooms of the teachers involved, better student and teacher outcomes are achieved.</p>	<p>The teaching school alliances are identifying their own priorities and using existing research or conducting their own research to address these needs. They are involved in the design, delivery and follow up activities associated with the research.</p>	<p>The local needs of the small isolated schools in the HART Alliance led them to work across schools in the NQT and 'outstanding' teaching projects in order to reduce isolation and enable teachers to support others teaching the same year group or key stage (see Example 5).</p>
<p>9. <b>Student participation in decision making and governance enhances the effectiveness of JPD.</b> Recent evaluations suggest that students' participation in evaluating teaching and learning establish ownership and leadership in the school leading to better outcomes.</p>	<p>Student involvement as JPD partners through governance, leadership and evaluating teaching and learning will challenge schools to improve. Students will need opportunities to be 'trained' in observation and feedback.</p>	<p>Three of the alliances involved students in lesson observation as part of the JPD project. The Gateway Alliance focused exclusively on 'learning detectives' in which students from years 1–9 were trained in lesson observation and feedback. They then observed lessons in their own school and in other schools which were reported to be improving teaching and the pupils' engagement in learning (see Example 3).</p>
<p>10. <b>Addressing competing priorities</b> by supporting schools to integrate these effectively is vital. School to-school learning benefits when school leaders create cohesion by directing new initiatives at already-planned changes, thereby counteracting initiative overload.</p>	<p>JPD is not an additional extra but a means of increasing capacity and synergies across activities. The benefits experienced will convince schools that JPD can reduce rather than exacerbate competing priorities.</p>	<p>In the Gateway Alliance, some schools identified specific weeks when the learning detectives' work took place. Students were released from a range of subjects to reduce disruption in any one subject and the observation and feedback focused on previously identified priorities.</p>

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# Approaches taken to JPD in the projects

This section presents the main approaches taken by the schools in all five alliances in the JPD research project. It does not attempt to provide comprehensive coverage of all the ways in which effective JPD can happen. Other sources describe different approaches that might complement JPD such as Williams' Teacher Learning Communities<sup>19</sup>, Harris's Collaborative Inquiry<sup>20</sup> and Stoll et al's Professional Learning Communities<sup>21</sup> that might be found helpful.

## Protocols for peer observation

All five alliances had elements of peer or student lesson observation in their JPD projects. This reflects the strong research evidence of the efficacy of these approaches<sup>22</sup>. When embarking on a lesson study approach or any form of peer observation, it is important to first consider protocols that state agreed positions on what will be observed, how the feedback will be given and who will have access to it.

In the Southfields-Belleville Alliance the schools developed a protocol for giving feedback from the peer observations. These were some of the issues they considered:

### **EXAMPLE 1: Towards a protocol: Southfields-Belleville Alliance**

What key principles/values underpin Joint Practice Development?

- Atmosphere of trust/openness/honesty/support
- Supportive and non-judgmental

Practice

- Before:                      Verbal briefing – regarding context of class/teacher  
   Conversation about expectations/initial thoughts
- During:                      Non-judgmental  
   Develop a note-taking methodology  
   Video lessons and meet to 'share the discovery'
- After:                        Time for feedback  
   Time to follow up  
   Action/activity  
   "I took away..." "why don't you try..." feedback

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<sup>19</sup> eg <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6025223>

<sup>20</sup> eg Harris, A & Jones, M, 2012, Connecting professional learning: leading effective collaborative enquiry across Teaching School alliances, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership

<sup>21</sup> <http://networkedlearning.ncsl.org.uk/knowledge-base/programme-leaflets/professional-learning-communities/professional-learning-communities-04-summary.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Sebba, J, Kent, P & Tregenza, J, 2010, Joint Practice Development: What does the evidence suggest are effective approaches?

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## Lesson Study<sup>23</sup>

Lesson Study is a school-based professional development initiative described in detail on the Lesson Study UK, National College and CfBT websites<sup>24</sup> and by the National Staff Development College in the USA<sup>25</sup>. It aims to enhance teaching and learning through the methodology of professional sharing of practice. A group of three teachers collaborate, identifying a research theme or overarching aim that is pupil-centred and relates to the school's vision of what qualities they wish to encourage in their students. Having decided on the overarching aim, the group meet to plan a research lesson that will realise this aim. Typically, the group of three teachers take it in turns to teach, observe the overall lesson and observe three students in particular, followed by a meeting to reflect on their observations and revise the next teaching plan. Lesson Study was used in different ways by three of the alliances in the JPD research and an example from one of them is given below.

### **EXAMPLE 2: Edited extracts from the reflections of one school in the Kesgrave-Farlingaye Alliance on using Lesson Study**

The focus for improvement in the alliance was based on a collective concern for the new Ofsted inspection standards<sup>26</sup> for 'outstanding' teaching, and the expectation that this should be evident in all lessons. Our focus for this project was the progress made by learners within the lessons that would also have an impact upon their long-term outcomes and achievement. We wanted to be able to identify and measure the learners' progress and, most importantly, check that the learners themselves knew what progress they were making.

We began by working as one triad in school, basing our work upon the National College's 'Networked Research Study'. This included joint planning of the lesson, observation of full 100-minute lessons by two colleagues with a focus upon three case study students, joint evaluation of the lesson and student interviews. As part of the teaching school alliance we discussed some lesson observation triads that had previously been undertaken by staff at two other schools where they had involved one of the two lesson observers in taking the plenary for the lesson; this was also planned jointly.

It was evident in the lesson observations that there was a clear focus on students making progress and hence an impact on learners' outcomes. A PE teacher took the plenary in the English lesson that highlighted the transferability of learning skills. For the teachers involved, it heightened our awareness of the need to sustain learning throughout that period of time, through both scaffolding and consolidation, make effective use of self and peer evaluation to measure and evaluate progress and ensure that students were fully aware of the role they played in their own learning. Some students noted that the observations were highlighting this for them.

The individuals involved have tweaked and refined their own teaching practice as a result of the lesson observations and a CPD training session on outstanding practice will be delivered to colleagues at the school to share our learning. Working as part of the JPD project has been beneficial with other schools sharing what they had learned, albeit in different contexts, as well as what hadn't worked, allowing us to make choices and decisions as we began our school process. Furthermore, in our research development meetings, colleagues at other schools brought a fresh pair of eyes to some of the feedback we shared and asked questions about what we were doing that allowed us to evaluate our learning more objectively. Subsequent planning for further research development across the alliance brought requests from 20 staff at [the school] to be involved, just over half our teaching contingent, indicating that the initial feedback from those involved in the pilot triad has motivated others.

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<sup>23</sup> [www.lessonstudy.co.uk](http://www.lessonstudy.co.uk)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinfo?id=133216&filename=nlc-getting-started-with-networked-research-lesson-study.pdf> [http://www.cfbt.com/evidence-foreducation/pdf/2LessonStudy\\_v9\(Web\).pdf](http://www.cfbt.com/evidence-foreducation/pdf/2LessonStudy_v9(Web).pdf)

<sup>25</sup> [www.nsd.org/members/tools/tools2-04.pdf](http://www.nsd.org/members/tools/tools2-04.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Ofsted (March 2012), The evaluation schedule for the inspection of maintained schools and academies from January 2012, [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090098](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090098)



The barriers for JPD were essentially the practical and logistical arrangements: time to plan and space on the timetable without excessive cover being incurred with associated costs. Furthermore, while geographical distance might be a barrier in some respects, geographical closeness could also be a barrier of sorts. In the alliance you have colleagues who might know one another well, but come from competing schools; often there is movement of staff across the schools as well as some of the participants having children at the other participating schools. This knowledge can be both an advantage and a disadvantage.

Our main learning has been to consider the way in which self and peer evaluation strategies should be presented to students to secure progress; the use of the student voice in evaluating lessons was crucial to our success. It also highlighted the need for differentiation not only in content, but also in the task being set and the required skills for successfully completing it. Finally, it made us reflect on the nature of lesson observation itself. The current focus on the Ofsted schedule has led to a drive for 'rapid' progress; observable and measurable in 20 minutes. While this is significant, we also felt that the 'sustained' nature of the progress, consolidating throughout a 100-minute lesson as well as across a series of lessons, became more prominent for those of us involved. It moves from the 'soundbite' culture to the substance of the learning. It also reminds us that non-hierarchical lesson observation, without grades, has an important place in the professional development of colleagues. In school we will continue to work in triads for lesson observations, working with colleagues in a JPD context in this and through other avenues.

In general, Lesson Study, adapted as necessary to suit the context, has emerged as a powerful approach to improving outcomes, leading to significant progress in teaching and some evidence of impact on learning<sup>27</sup>. The principles resonate strongly with the characteristic identified by Hargreaves in being a joint activity, focusing on practice and, in particular, on the development of that practice.

## Learning Walks<sup>28</sup>

Learning Walks are a structured approach to gathering evidence of progress against a clearly defined issue, and planning ways forward. They are used to gather evidence about the quality of learning and teaching. What sets the Learning Walk apart is its collaborative nature. Learning Walks are carried out by a team of people perhaps from across schools in an alliance. Several schools in the five alliances used Learning Walks prior to undertaking peer observation of lessons as a means of preparing students and teachers for lesson observation work.

It is important to define the focus, design the best way to gather evidence, refine the tools used and collectively use the evidence gathered to identify areas for development. The team members are chosen to reflect the needs of the project and can consist of representatives of all the stakeholders involved such as teachers, support staff, pupils, parents and governors as well as senior leaders. Collectively agreeing the parameters of the project and deciding the activities that will be undertaken during the walk ensures the views of all stakeholders are represented. Learning Walks are an effective way to support JPD by enabling teachers to take part collaboratively across different schools.

<sup>27</sup> Waterman, S, 2011, A study of Lesson Study's impact on student achievement, Silicon Valley Mathematics Initiative, [http://www.svmimac.org/images/A\\_Study\\_of\\_Lesson\\_Study\\_Impact\\_on\\_Student\\_Achievement\\_2011.pdf](http://www.svmimac.org/images/A_Study_of_Lesson_Study_Impact_on_Student_Achievement_2011.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> [http://ifl.lrdc.pitt.edu/ifl/index.php/professional\\_development](http://ifl.lrdc.pitt.edu/ifl/index.php/professional_development)

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## Engaging students in evaluating teaching and learning

The research of the late Jean Rudduck<sup>29</sup> exemplified the role of students in effective JPD. She suggested: 'The pupil voice movement... is based on the premise that schools should reflect the democratic structures in society at large. Under this conception, the school becomes a community of participants engaged in the common endeavour of learning.' Some schools have developed ways of working that are informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, exemplified by UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools work<sup>30-32</sup>, which involves students in the governance of the school and evaluating teaching and learning. In this way, students become JPD partners in promoting school improvement. Across the five alliances involved in the JPD project, three involved students in evaluating teaching and learning and two of these, the 'Teaching Partners' project in the Denbigh High-Challney Alliance and Gateway Alliance's learning detectives focused specifically on this, as illustrated below.

### **EXAMPLE 3: Learning detectives at Higham Lane Secondary School, Gateway Alliance**

At Higham Lane Secondary School, six students, two from each of years 7, 8 and 9, trained as learning detectives. Within the same school, five teachers have been observed by pairs of learning detectives over one week. The teachers volunteered to be observed. The students discussed what they believed good learning looked like:

- interaction with the teacher
- students working collaboratively, eg in pairs / groups
- students actively engaged in learning, eg writing on whiteboards / showing their learning to the class
- students participating in learning throughout the lesson

Learning detectives agreed the focus of the observation, for example, questioning, waiting time with the teacher. Learning detectives were trained specifically to look at what the students were doing and what they were learning rather than what the teacher was doing. A pro-forma was designed and used as a checklist. Learning detectives visited lessons, observed learning and gave feedback to the learners, having discussed this first with the assistant head (leading this project). Learning detectives took photographs of learning and discussed the learning taking place, trying to use as many learning words as possible. Both learning detectives and teachers completed an evaluation sheet at the end of the lesson.

A learning detective commented: "The learning detectives are a great way to see how pupils are learning but also I can reflect on my own lessons." Comment from a teacher: "...really interesting to see potentially disruptive students respond in a more positive way knowing that their peers are liable to comment on the way they are learning." The improvement in behaviour was the most significant and immediate outcome of this project in addition to increased student engagement in lessons and positive changes in attitude. Jamie, a year 7 learning detective reported back to the rest of the school on behalf of the learning detectives:

#### **Extracts from Jamie's Learning Detectives Report**

As part of our commitment to helping learners succeed, a number of students have been trained to recognise good learning. As learning detectives we will sit in lessons and record what good learning we see. The learning detectives will be helping the students in class to recognise what good learning is, therefore students will know they are learning well and can learn more efficiently. We do not look at what the teacher does, only the students.

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<sup>29</sup> p135 Flutter, J & Rudduck, J, 2004, Consulting Pupils: What's in it for Schools? London, RoutledgeFalmer

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.unicef.org.uk/rrsa>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Impact-Evidence/External-evaluation/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/print/index/resources/leadingschools/personalisedlearning/management-personalised-learning/student-voice-and-choice/student-voice-and-choice-vignettes>

We attended two trips, which trained us to be learning detectives. Our first trip was at The Chase, when we found what learning detectives do. Our second trip consisted of going to Milby Primary School where we did some final preparation before sitting in on our first class. Over the period of the two trips we discovered what it meant to be a learning detective and how we could take the role of being learning detectives back to our own school.

So far, as fully trained learning detectives we have sat in a total of five classes, which each brought out... interesting results which were all very positive and informative... you could really see students enjoying their learning, using different skills, taking responsibility and acting in a mature and polite manner. It was also good because the students helped us by behaving and learning how they usually would, which meant that our results would be precise and truthful to the class.

We have made a couple of improvements in the past couple of weeks... Instead of us keeping going in and out of the lesson (which could possibly distract the students) we would go into the class for one period of time, preferably between 25 and 30 minutes, and then feed back what we found to Mrs X [Project co-ordinator]. Then, finally, to the class which we were in.

We... will change our checklist of good learning so it gives more information... and stronger feedback. We should hopefully also be showing some people who maybe struggle with learning what good learning is by taking them into one of the classes we sit in on.

To finish, we hope to take the learning detectives even further, making it another good part of our school.

The key issue to emerge from the JPD projects involving students in teaching and learning was the importance of effective training for students to give feedback sensitively. Some alliances addressed this by focusing initially on learning rather than on teaching, which de-personalised the feedback for the teacher and encouraged the whole class to take greater responsibility for learning. A further contributing factor to successful outcomes seems to be starting with teachers who have volunteered to participate.

## Linking JPD to existing projects

Any initiative or different way of working benefits from being coherently linked to existing activities. This also enables better use of resources and time. A member of staff required to complete a project for a further qualification provides the ideal resource to lead a JPD project, as was the case in Sydenham Primary School's learning detectives project in the Gateway Alliance, where a member of staff was pursuing the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). Some of the JPD projects across the five alliances built on existing developments, in particular with ITE and NQTs. Some of these existing projects were being supported through grants from the Teaching Agency or other sources. Bringing together these strands of work provides greater coherence and synergy for everyone. Two illustrations of this follow:

### **EXAMPLE 4: Phonics for secondary ITE trainees (funded by the Teaching Agency)**

Twelve trainees from across the secondary schools in the Chiltern Training Group (CTG) linked to the Denbigh High-Challney Alliance attended Beech Hill Primary School over a period of three weeks (part of their primary placement): they observed teaching of literacy lessons in which phonics were being used, participated in collaborative planning sessions, and (during their third visit) engaged in team teaching. On return to the CTG, these trainees led tutorials in which they taught small groups of other trainees how to teach phonics. Their presentations were monitored and reviewed by staff from Beech Hill Primary and the training group.

Time was spent planning and agreeing a sequence of learning objectives along with modelling and explaining how to teach phonics by making relevant subject-related links. Trainees were asked to develop a resource that would help year 7 students to improve access to learning. Trainees' views and the resources produced have been collated and uploaded to the CTG e-Portfolio.

The trainees reported gaining a better understanding of the principles of phonics and the relevance to pupils and their learning within secondary schools. They expressed greater confidence in using phonics to support pupils' learning. Some have already implemented phonics approaches in their teaching placements this year, which has been favourably reported on by the trainee support tutors and trainees have reported positive pupil outcomes. At least two trainees (PE and Maths) have reported how their engagement with the project has been an advantage in gaining employment in schools that are keen to improve their whole-school literacy.

### **EXAMPLE 5: NQT teaching and learning**

As part of the NQT induction programme, six NQTs from across three small rural schools, including the lead teaching school in the HART Alliance, volunteered to participate in a JPD project progressing 'outstanding' teaching. A central meeting led by NQT mentors on principles of teaching and learning was held. 'Model' lessons were viewed and discussed at the meeting. The NQTs established protocol and targets for observations, eg Assessment for Learning (AfL), questioning etc. All six observed and assessed each person's lesson across schools using the Ofsted criteria – the lessons were recorded using iPads and later IRIS technology. The six NQTs discussed the feedback and set the next target. Regular meetings were held to discuss pedagogy and impact on progress was assessed through questionnaires completed by the NQTs.

When interviewed by the research team, the NQTs reported really valuing the project and one suggested it was the best 'training' that they had ever had. In particular, the joint nature of the work and the equal status that they shared had enabled them to open up, be honest and trust each other.

As a result of the project they "now have a much deeper understanding of the meaning behind teaching and learning" and watching other people was more helpful and led to "not just thinking about teaching but becoming critically reflective". They were able to "see other schools implement the same theories", which helped them to understand how theories could be applied in different ways. It also gave them a deeper understanding of the Ofsted framework.

Teachers reported that "children have made clear progress" as a result of the project, for example, in one class all children made one sub-level progress in the NQT's first term and in another class, following the support through the JPD project, the NQT had made more use of praise, which had led to the greater participation of years 3 and 4 children. Children in one class used better questioning in response to the modelling of higher order questions and, in another, the NQT focused on talk and modelling and reported that children are now coming to the front and explaining to the rest of the class, understanding discussion techniques such as listening and waiting.

The NQTs have remained in contact and will be undertaking the same project with the next cohort of NQTs. Findings from the NQT project are being presented at LA-wide conferences for NQTs.

## **Assessing outcomes from JPD**

A key issue in undertaking JPD is to ensure that while developing trust on the basis of equal partnership there is sufficient rigour and on-going challenge to maximise positive development. A range of measures is being used in the five alliances to record progress in teaching and assess the impact on pupils. In all cases lesson observations are being recorded, in three alliances using the IRIS technology or iPads and others using evaluation sheets or teacher reflective journals or both.

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Wider benefits, for example, reports of improved communication across the whole school need to be recorded systematically if schools are to assess the value for money provided by JPD in comparison to more traditional CPD. Course attendance costs are easier to document, but the amount of time spent reflecting on lesson observations needs to be taken into account in planning so should be recorded.

The focus of JPD is very much on teaching and therein lies a danger that pupil progress and learning passes unnoticed. Higham Lane learning detectives, Southfields-Belleville peer observation and Denbigh High-Challney student behaviour project all set out to focus on the students rather than the teachers, partly to reduce the teacher anxiety and resistance in relation to observation. Teachers receiving feedback on student learning will anyway relate this directly to their teaching and so we can expect both to be the targets for change. A range of methods can be used to assess progress in pupils:

- video / photographs during lesson observation enables comparisons of student responses over time
- recording / evaluation sheets during lesson observation enable comparisons over time
- routine summative data on pupils such as reading tests, eg in the Southfields-Belleville Alliance the predicted pass rate (of 79 percent) was exceeded (to 93 percent) following two JPD sessions focusing on phonics
- specific surveys, questionnaires or interviews of pupils (and teachers) to assess progress in outcomes

However, evaluation cannot be left to chance and a clear plan for assessing the impact at student, teacher, school and alliance levels is needed.

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## Use of research

The knowledge transfer literature<sup>33</sup> has emphasised the important role of social and professional networks in contributing to whether research is used in practice. A main factor identified in effective JPD by Fielding et al (2005) was the opportunity to build on existing established relationships. Many bases for these more and less formal existing networks were noted; such as individual friendships, previous colleagues, or subject departments working together across schools. Crucially, in these existing relationships and networks, trust and motivating and energising one another had already been established, so building on these gave a strong platform from which to develop.

However, Fielding et al noted that these established relationships can support complacency over time or activities can break down where partners 'fall out'. Continual rather than a one-off exposure to research has greater impact, teachers needing sustained opportunities to link their understanding of research to their knowledge of teaching<sup>34</sup>. There was little evidence of this across the five alliances in the JPD project and further developments are needed to bring new relevant research findings to teachers and school leaders in an accessible and timely way.

In addition to the national research and development network and related on-line community, the designations of national leaders of education (NLE) and specialist leaders of education (SLE), whose role includes leading action research within and across schools with more emphasis on peer-to-peer and school-to-school learning, provide an important potential resource for developments in pedagogy. Effective school leaders are seen less now as leading one institution and more about leading the teaching profession.

Schools will need to seek research-experienced support for accessing research and for developing the skills to engage in action research in the classroom and across schools. Higher education institutions often have resources and skills for locating research evidence and supporting research in schools and can therefore play a key role as strategic partners in JPD in teaching school alliances.

The National Teacher Research Panel (NTRP)<sup>35</sup> was set up to promote the teacher perspective in research in education and to increase the number of teachers engaged in the full spectrum of research activity. It is an independent group of practising teachers that encourages school staff to make better use of existing research and get involved in research. It offers research guidelines, advice on how staff can contribute to national research projects and conferences aimed at sharing practitioner research.

Sources for locating research summaries relevant to classroom practice include:

- the EPPI<sup>36</sup> Centre for summaries of systematic reviews on a range of education topics
- the DfE Schools Research Bulletin<sup>37</sup> that summarises research reports as they are published
- the Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit<sup>38</sup> is an accessible summary of educational research on 21 topics

How schools can engage with research effectively is described in detail in: Leading a research-engaged school by Sharp et al<sup>39</sup> and in relation to effective collaborative enquiry in Harris and Jones<sup>40</sup>. This is a major task for the future if teaching is to become genuinely evidence-informed.

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<sup>33</sup> eg Cooper & Levin 2010, Mitton et al, 2007, Nutley et al, 2007

<sup>34</sup> Hemsley-Brown, J & Sharp, C, 2004, The use of research to improve professional practice: a systematic review of the literature, Oxford Review of Education, 29(4): 449-470

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.ntrp.org.uk/>

<sup>36</sup> <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/>

<sup>37</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/b0058454/schoolresearch12](http://www.education.gov.uk/b0058454/schoolresearch12)

<sup>38</sup> <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinfo?id=17249&filename=leading-a-research-engaged-school.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Harris, A & Jones, M, 2012, Connecting professional learning: Leading effective collaborative enquiry across teaching school alliances, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership

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## Concluding comment

The JPD research engaged in by the five teaching school alliances suggests that the full extent of the potential benefits of JPD are yet to be realised. Only a small proportion of the entire teaching force is at this point aware of JPD and what it might offer. Working closely with a colleague in a non-threatening context can enhance professional competence and stimulate valuable reflection about one's own practice. According to the teachers involved in the research, JPD can be very powerful in improving practice. All thought this was a positive, valuable experience. Joint planning as part of Lesson Study, the use of peer lesson observation and evaluation of lessons by students were particularly effective.

Examples of evidence of improved teaching and learning included:

“... you could really see students enjoying their learning, using different skills, taking responsibility and acting in a mature and polite manner”

(Quote from a learning detective in the Gateway Alliance)

“... one NQT suggested that the JPD undertaken through peer observation across schools was the best ‘training’ that they had ever had. ”

(HART Alliance)

“... trainees reported gaining a better understanding of the principles of phonics and the relevance to pupils and their learning within secondary schools. ”

(Denbigh High-Challney Alliance)

Teachers noted the importance of keeping the focus clear and tight. Securing quality time for in-depth dialogue about planning or reflecting on lesson observation is a challenge. JPD requires confidence on the part of the participants, but it also enhances it. In order to be successful the participants have to be committed to the process so as not to let each other down. Peer learning relationships require participants to be willing to both challenge and be challenged. Approval and support of the senior leader team and identifying ways to capture the progress using video, cameras, written narratives, record sheets and standard data are crucial to assessing the success of JPD.

Overall, the schools reported enormous benefits in working together and are continuing to do so. They found that planning and feeding back outcomes of the work with others in the alliance and beyond both validated and challenged their current practices. We hope this guide will encourage you to do so too.

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