

CASE STUDY:

EXPANDING THE THREAD! CREATIVE WAYS TO DEVELOP TEACHERS AND LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS

SALTERNS ACADEMY TRUST

Alice Raeburn
Deputy Headteacher: Quality of
Education (Trafalgar School)

*Using the Golden Thread
for strategic teacher and
leadership development
across a whole trust*



Salterns
Academy Trust



TSHC
Teaching School Hubs Council

CONTEXT:

Salterns Academy Trust is a small, growing Trust based in Portsmouth. We pride ourselves on being outward facing and embrace the opportunity to build relationships and work closely with education colleagues to ensure we are at the forefront of developments which can benefit our students.

Although geographically close to the city of Portsmouth, our school contexts vary significantly. We are a Trust that celebrates the autonomy of our schools and recognises that a one size fits all model is not the solution, whilst simultaneously collaborating where strengths can be shared. We are passionate about inclusion and ensure that every child gets an excellent education.

“The leadership team make it incredibly difficult to want to leave!”

THE NEED:

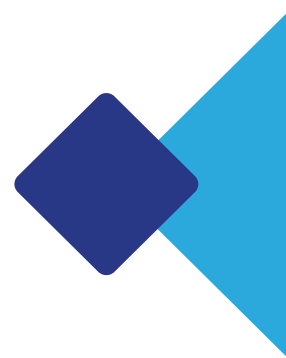
The trust has used NPQs to support sustainable but fast-paced development. Due to significant growth over the past five years, developing teachers and leaders at all levels has been of pivotal importance to continue to drive standards forward in the quality of education. This has resulted in two clear priorities.

Priority 1:

Recruiting and retaining teachers for our growing schools by ensuring our CPD offer strengthens practice and results in students receiving an excellent quality of education.

Priority 2:

Building capacity in our leadership team to support outreach work across our schools and beyond, to continue to have a positive impact on the wider community of Portsmouth.



THE SOLUTIONS:

Prioritising CPD

This is a central strand running through both our School and Trust Improvement Plans. Using the example of the ECF, we are committed to being 'research informed' and as a result are incredibly outward facing. Ensuring we give both time and budget to support teachers and leaders in seeking and partaking high quality CPD.

An example of this can be seen through our INSET planning, where teachers visit a school or educational setting to explore an area of their own CPD interest, based on our Trust Teaching and Learning Principles.

The result?

This has empowered teachers to drive their own professional learning and as a result, we have seen a measurable positive impact on practice in the classroom. Staff voice also demonstrates the high value placed on CPD and the tangible impact of this on their own practice. Staff retention within the Trust is high.



Implementation of the ECF creating a network of support.

This has been pivotal to our priorities, ensuring that we are strengthening the training and support that both ECTs and teachers receive. Our approach of being relational, supports the aim of the ECF in ensuring ECTs develop a strong network of support. A small, but effective tweak to all CPD sessions across our schools is that we begin with a quick 'connect before content' activity. This encourages teachers to get to know each other, developing trusting relationships which then better support collaboration.

The result?

Teachers and leaders regularly collaborate to moderate assessment and share planning across our schools. Staff voice shows that wellbeing is strong. At one of our schools, a teacher commented during an external review that "The leadership team make it incredibly difficult to want to leave!"

Strategic selection of Mentors.

We have carefully selected experienced Curriculum Leaders and Lead Practitioners to be mentors for our ECTs. Their engagement with the ECF not only benefits ECTs but also enables them to use the framework and apply this when designing professional learning for their teams.

The result?

All teachers across our schools are accessing and benefiting from the ECF through subject specific CPD.

Committing resources to facilitating external training.

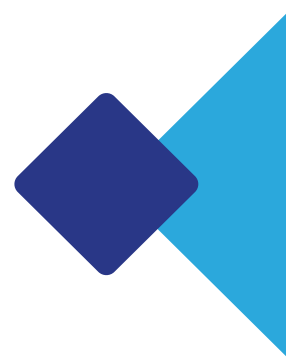
As a Trust, we have become a hub within Portsmouth to facilitate all ECF training. This has been a big commitment in terms of time and the hosting of events during the school day. It has involved leaders from both schools and beyond, working collaboratively to plan and facilitate the ECF, attending training with colleagues across the country.

The result?

As a result of this facilitation, the knowledge and skills of leaders within our Trust has been strengthened. Internal CPD that these leaders have designed has been modelled on good practice from the ECF which is then impacting the development of more and more teachers. This is also enabling us to have a wider reaching impact on students.

Expanding the thread!

As a Trust, we have considered how we can use best practice from the ECF to bridge context specific gaps that have arisen as CPD needs for us. One example is a 'New to UK Teaching' course which we have designed in response to a growing number of our



teachers being recruited from abroad. Across our Trust this year we have 13 members of staff who have joined us from Jamaica, South Africa and the USA. Our planning follows the blocks of learning from the ECF and has provided an introduction to UK teaching for colleagues with the aim of rapidly developing their understanding of the UK teacher standards as well as supporting them in networking and settling into life as teachers in Portsmouth. In addition to this training, we also support these teachers in a similar way to ECTs with regular mentoring as well as observations and feedback, a reduced timetable and opportunities to team teach and observe other colleagues. Our first CPD session began with an extended connect before content activity and a traditional British afternoon tea!

The result?

Whilst this is a new training programme for us, initial feedback is that it is helping develop teacher confidence in the classroom as well as enabling networking and the building of relationships to support each other both in and outside of school. It has provided a better understanding of our students' needs, allowing teachers to plan more effectively and build those essential relationships.

Steppingstone leadership CPD.

A further example of expanding the thread has been our internal Trust Middle Leaders course. This CPD has been designed as an opportunity for strong, ambitious practitioners and those new into leadership roles. This has been run across the Trust with colleagues involved from across all our schools. This has created an excellent opportunity for sharing practice, building relationships and collaboration.

The result?

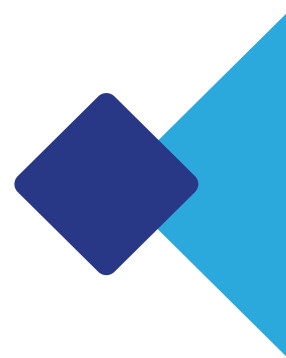
Last year, 60% of those who completed this Trust training course went on to sign up for NPQ's and 100% of them have remained working within the Trust this year.

Committing to the implementation of the NPQ's.

Completion of the suite of NPQs has helped to develop leaders' skills and knowledge in the specialist areas. Across the Trust we currently have 25 leaders who have completed or are completing an NPQ. In addition to this, 5 senior leaders from across our Trust have completed training through HISP with either EDT or BPN and are now facilitating the NPQs for colleagues from across the region.

The result?

Whilst having a positive impact on individual practice, this is also enabling outreach work to take place by many of our leaders which, in turn, is further developing their own practice, within their school.



Home grown teachers!

In a climate where recruitment into teaching (and especially shortage subjects) is tough, we have had to be creative. We have focused on finding the right people through attending local recruitment fairs as well as marketing initiatives at our own school events. A recent example was our branded goody bags packed with information about the school and key information advertising available roles which were handed out at one of our Open Evenings. We have also run morning sessions for people who might be interested in getting into teaching to come into school and get some hands-on experience to help them make an informed decision as well as working with local colleges and universities to do a similar offer for students. We have also used HLTA and SEND roles to attract people into specific subjects, where we then supported them to successfully complete their teacher training.

The result?

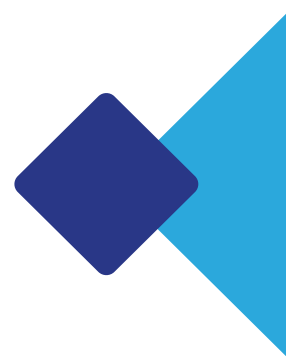
In the past 2 years we have successfully supported 5 members of staff to change their role within the school and train to teach.

THE SUMMARY:

We have worked hard as a Trust to ensure that the golden thread links CPD at all levels and provides progression for all teachers at every stage of their career. As a result, we have seen a huge increase in teaching and learning strengths across our schools. We have successfully created a culture of continuous professional development where staff feel empowered to take part in CPD, which is linked to their specific development needs.

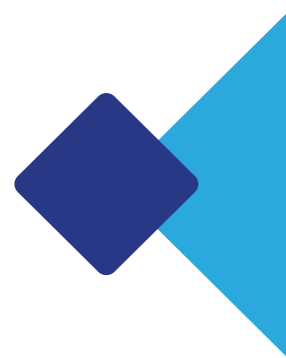
We have seen an increase in staff retention and the growth of leadership positions within our schools which is ensuring, as the Trust grows, that effective outreach work can take place both across the city and beyond.

As we continue to grow, we aim to ensure that all leaders have had the opportunity to complete an NPQ. We are planning to grow our team of facilitators of both internal and external CPD to ensure leaders reap the benefits of this in developing their own knowledge and skills, and in turn those of their teams. We are confident that this will continue to be impactful in ensuring our aim of providing an excellent and inclusive education experience for all our students.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Facilitating ECF sessions and NPQs has had a huge impact on leaders' practice and in turn, the practice of their teams.
2. Expanding the thread! The use of the ECF principles in designing our own CPD to bridge context specific gaps.
3. The impact of prioritising building relationships and networking through connection before content, on well-being and staff retention.



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