

	POLICY TITLE:	Professional Growth
Kingsmead Academy T/A Kingsmead School		
Committee/Person Responsible for Policy:		Head Teacher Finance, Strategy, Personnel & Risk Audit sub-committee
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Growing Great Teachers

Our policy for
Professional Growth

Growing Great Teachers

‘Growing great teachers’ is Kingsmead’s professional growth policy that puts improving and maintaining the highest quality of teaching at the very heart of the process. It focuses on genuinely continuous professional development.

Introduction

The challenge to us all within Kingsmead is to always improve, to always get better; to continually grow. We need to reinforce the status of our wonderful profession and promote individual teacher wellbeing in order to unlock the skill, passion and discretionary effort that undoubtedly exists within our teachers. The quality of our teaching is at the top of our agenda, we view our teachers as our greatest asset and therefore our professional growth processes must exist to ensure that our teachers are able to be the very best they can be. This in turn leads to improved teacher performance and improved outcomes for our students.

Kingsmead has removed traditional ‘performance management’ and replaced it with ‘professional growth’; providing a different perspective and a new direction designed to challenge thinking, promote deep reflection, collaboration and change for the better.

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent approach to the development of our teachers and our expectations in terms of the high standards to which all our teachers aspire. It is a policy based on professional trust. It is assumed therefore, unless evidence suggests otherwise, that Kingsmead teachers are meeting the Teachers’ Standards.

Purpose

Our ‘Professional Growth’ policy outlines the approach that we take to help our teachers to become the very best they can be and supporting them to take the next steps while creating a culture that encourages them to stay and grow with us.

Professional growth has several purposes:

- To build and enhance expertise, and secure continuous growth and improvement
- To enable reflection on strengths and successes, and areas for further growth
- To recognise and promote a culture of professionalism.

Effective professional development is a core part of securing effective teaching. It requires a desire and willingness to continually improve with a shared commitment for teachers to support one another to develop so that our students benefit from the highest quality teaching. We cannot achieve this level of professional learning alone. This policy is designed to change the way we view accountability and professional development. It is a process that requires a commitment from all teachers to active practical and cognitive engagement; to seek further growth in their professional knowledge that provides solutions to the issues we face as teachers. Professional growth in Kingsmead is ‘done by’ not ‘done to’ our teachers.

We have a sense of belief and pride in what we do and that we can be the very best, driven by a sense of moral purpose and a desire to continuously improve.

We regard professional development as a key driver - not only of staff development, but also of recruitment, retention, wellbeing, and school improvement. There can be no improvement without the teacher.

Our 'Professional Growth' policy outlines the approach that we will take to help our teachers to make the very best of themselves professionally; supporting them to make the next steps in the development of and creating a culture that encourages them to stay and grow with us in Kingsmead.

Continuous Professional Growth

Effective, and genuinely continuous, professional growth...

- Builds and enhances knowledge and expertise to bring about changes in practice
- Has a narrow yet significant focus
- Acknowledges that knowledge and expertise is domain specific
- Recognises that novice and experts learn differently
- Focuses on what works, challenges existing assumptions and is, therefore, evidence-informed
- Involves collaboration with colleagues and peer support
- Is sustained over time and includes frequent opportunities for learning; experimentation and practice, reflection and evaluation, honest frequent feedback and solutions-focused coaching.

The education of our students is our first concern, and we are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. The Teachers' Standards define the minimum level of practice expected of teachers from the point of being awarded qualified teacher status (QTS). The Teachers' Standards also set out a number of expectations about professional growth.

Teachers should:

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

Effective Professional Reflection

Rather than starting with how to do professional development, we should be clear about what we hope to achieve and what teachers already know and do. Therefore, professional growth involves effective reflection. Our Shared Expectations – Kingsmead’s key principles for great teaching - form our benchmark for reflection, review and evaluation in order to ensure that our teachers identify areas for further growth.

As a solutions-focused school, we need to ensure our practices focus on solutions, not problems, on finding answers within our colleagues rather than having them externally imposed often as superficial, targets which all too often become forgotten. We also need to ensure that we help our teachers build on their strengths first before they start fixing their areas for development.

The evidence we use to reflect on performance and development will not be solely based on student data or a small number of lesson observations. **The school, therefore, will have no high stakes observations and rejects the notion that our teaching staff should be held to account for data-driven targets that no one individual can be solely accountable for.** Instead, Kingsmead is committed to developing a professional culture which drives quality assurance from within; an enabling process rather than an imposed top down process.

Evaluating Your Process

Kingsmead wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers take personal responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development. Professional growth will be linked to school, subject or phase improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers and, of course, the students they teach.

As long as our teachers continue to meet the Teachers’ Standards, and engage in the process of professional growth, pay progression will be automatic and not linked to any mechanism of traditional ‘performance management’. We expect teachers to progress up the pay scale as the norm.

In order for our process of professional growth to be successfully completed the following criteria need to be addressed:

- Teachers will reflect on their successes, strengths and areas for further growth against Our Shared Expectations.
- This reflection at the start of the cycle will help to better establish an individual focus for professional growth which is then further detailed in the ‘professional growth plan’. Each teacher, therefore, needs to carefully reflect on their current context, standards and practice to ascertain the most impactful development focus.
- The focus will then be discussed and established with the support of a colleague. To aid this discussion and the establishment of a challenging focus a script is recommended. This discussion will take place in October.
- This focus is then sustained over a significant amount of time and all staff are required to engage in opportunities for learning and experimentation, reflection and evaluation,

feedback and coaching. It is intended that professional growth and learning, rather than just being confined to meetings in specific times and places, will become embedded into teachers' everyday work practices.

- Teachers will regularly reflect on their progress of the 'professional growth plan' as they design lessons to purposely practise the focus of their ongoing learning and subsequently reflect on the effectiveness of any changes in practice.
- This sustained development work will be presented to subject or age group colleagues at the end of the cycle for the benefit of reflection, accountability and sharing effective practice.

All staff are also required to engage fully with any whole school professional growth priorities.

In addition, any Upper Pay Scale teacher, TLR holder or member of staff with a specific responsibility will have a goal(s) linked to Department Learning Plans or Whole School Strategic Priorities.

Senior Leadership Teams will have goals linked to Whole School Strategic Priorities and are recorded on the leadership goal plan.

Professional Growth Plan

What knowledge and skills do we need to address the learning needs of our students? In order for our teachers to answer this question, they are asked to take control of their own professional learning and plan for how they will meet the needs of their class or a specific class; 'the professional growth plan'.

For professional growth to be truly continuous and sustained over time, each teacher formulates a 'professional growth plan'. This requires each teacher to reflect on current practice and subsequently build their expertise through sustained focused inquiry and frequent purposeful practice. Early Career Teachers (ECTs) are not required to undertake this task as they have a separate programme of support and development. This individual and unique plan will identify what we hope we will learn or do differently, and the approaches to achieve this; content and process. The professional growth plans also require our teachers to identify the possible impact of their work on students' outcomes although it is recognised that in the complex process of teacher growth, impact on students' outcomes is difficult to directly correlate. Nonetheless, this policy is built on the assumption that changing a teacher's practice will change the students' learning experiences and therefore impact their outcomes.

Therefore, the 'professional growth plan' requires the learning to be ongoing and in-depth as this is more likely to have far more positive impact on practice and outcomes for students than brief and superficial 'training' that lacks focus and context.

In the 'professional growth plan' a clear goal is set by each teacher – a focus on what to change or develop further with intended impact. We value the importance of autonomy and choice in the focus of each individual's development and we understand that providing staff with opportunities to substantially affect and direct their own goals, practice and inquiry is a powerful motivator. Our

professional learning must be driven by an individual's motivation to become even better rather than being told what to do. Those teachers who set and monitor their own goals are those who will continue to grow as professionals. We will, therefore, provide effective training, opportunities and time that will give our teachers the chance to work on a focus of their choosing that positively affects the students they teach.

The focus for this bespoke plan will, of course, be chosen within defined parameters and our teachers are expected to connect their work to the class(es) and the subject taught as well as whole school priorities.

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

The 'professional growth plan' is a 'live' document and the expectation is that it is reflected on and referred to frequently, adjusted where appropriate, but it always forms the basis of our continuous professional growth. A major part of our professional learning is trying out things in practice. Teachers are, therefore, expected and encouraged to purposefully practise; to design lessons that force them out of autopilot and ensure a deliberate focus on experimentation within their classroom. To ensure that growth is continuous and progress ensured, our teachers are expected to engage also with professional support.

Professional Support

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

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

Feedback

Providing people with feedback on how they are doing against their goals increases the chances of those goals being reached. Any feedback for the teacher should, therefore, focus on the agreed development area and should be provided as soon as possible after any support or visit has taken place. Feedback from classroom observation should be feedback as information and where

possible, and appropriate, be non-judgemental. The subsequent conversation is where the learning and action should take place and this structured professional dialogue focuses on the further development of an area of need for the teacher and/or their students. These conversations will be challenging, yet respectful, dialogue about improvement. Therefore, during this conversation the teacher and the 'coach' will always identify a next step; as feedback without goal setting, is just information.

Observation

Kingsmead recognises that lesson observation is a poor method for judging the quality of teaching. **Therefore, lesson observations will not be graded and will not be used as a single indicator of performance or as a single indicator for assessing whether the Teachers' Standards have been met.**

However, it also recognises that feedback from observing and being observed are essential to growing great teachers. Consequently, lesson observation within Kingsmead has two main purposes:

- To help the teacher you are observing become even better
- To learn from the teacher you are observing.

All staff are expected to engage with the available professional support as a means of further developing their own practice. If observation is the preferred method of professional support then the timing and focus for the observation will be determined by the teacher being observed. During the course of the year all teachers are required to receive feedback on their professional growth focus in order to build and enhance expertise and secure continuous growth and improvement.

Feedback enables reflection on strengths and successes, and planning of next steps necessary for further growth. Therefore, any professional support including observations of practice will be carried out in a supportive and developmental manner by a pre-designated colleague, usually the teacher's line manager.

Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and those teachers receiving additional support will receive more professional support to enable more rapid growth. An individual teacher is free to request additional support to receive further feedback in order to support their continuing growth.

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

Those with responsibility for curriculum development will also use professional support including classroom observations as a means of evaluating curriculum design and implementation. The

length and frequency of any professional support or progress check will vary depending on specific circumstances.

UPPER PAY SCALE

The Upper Pay Scale is a salary range available to qualified teachers who have been assessed as being eligible to be paid at this level. Moving on to the Upper Pay Scale is often referred to as 'crossing the threshold'.

To move onto the Upper Pay Scale our teachers must demonstrate that:

- They are highly competent in all of the Teachers' Standards and have an extensive knowledge and understanding of how to use and adapt a range of teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies.
- They have fully engaged in the process of professional growth leading to an extensive knowledge of curriculum, assessment and pedagogical developments within their relevant phase or subject.
- Their achievements and contribution to their school are '**substantial and sustained**'. We believe that as long as they have met the Teachers' Standards that they have met the 'substantial' criterion. The 'sustained' criterion should be two years or more working at this level.
- They have the potential and commitment to undertake professional duties which make a wider contribution to their school. This will often involve working beyond their own classroom and possibly their school to guide the professional growth of other teachers. This may include the sharing of good practice, mentoring and coaching, and providing demonstration lessons for less experienced colleagues. Upper Pay Scale teachers are expected to promote collaboration and work effectively as a team member.

As it is a voluntary process, teachers should make the Head Teacher aware in writing that they wish to be considered to progress on to the Upper Pay Scale explaining their sustained and substantial contribution. Applications can be made at any time during the academic year but only once a year.

When teachers move on to the Upper Pay Scale they must maintain their teaching and professional standards. The school will provide the support they need to be able to do this so that they continue to make a substantial and sustained contribution to the school and the development of their colleagues' skills for the benefit of all learners.

Progression within the Upper Pay Scale Range will be automatic providing staff continue to fully meet the Teachers' Standards, engage in the process of professional growth, and sustain a substantial and wider contribution to the school. We expect teachers to progress up the pay scale as the norm.

The challenge to us all within Kingsmead is to always improve, to always get better; to continually grow professionally as great teachers.